

Claude Project, Opus 4.6

March 9, 2026

Fourteenth Century ACA Transcriptions and Translations

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mar-24-transcribe-f29v.jpg

I have a document in Catalan, again in fourteenth-century Gothic secretarial hand. The document was written in 1387. I am uploading a page that has most of the letter, but it is missing the first 25 words. Here is how the letter begins: Fem vos saber que depuis que vosaltres hit petis son venguts aci a nos certs missatgers de la Illa de Cerdanya ab tals ardots del mal scament... After these words, the document continues on the image file that I have uploaded. Please do your best to transcribe this document.

Show more

6:21 AM

Thinking about transcribing fourteenth-century Catalan Gothic secretarial script from 1387

Thinking about transcribing fourteenth-century Catalan Gothic secretarial script from 1387

Let me examine the manuscript image closely.

Meticulously deciphered medieval Catalan manuscript with extensive paleographic analysis

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Here is my Stage 1 transcription. This is a rich but genuinely difficult text — several passages gave me trouble, and I've flagged them accordingly. I'll present the full text incorporating the opening you supplied, then note my key uncertainties.

Document identification: Royal letter in Catalan from Joan I to his ambassadors at the papal court (Avignon), concerning the military crisis in Sardinia and the urgent need to secure papal tithes (dècimes). Dated Barcelona, 24 March 1387. Sealed with the secret seal. Scribed by Pere Amell; authorized by Francesc çà Costa (vice-chancellor) and P. de Beniure.

Transcription:

[Opening supplied by Jonathan:]

Fem vos saber que depuis que vosaltres hit petis son venguts aci a nos certs missatgers de la Illa de Cerdanya ab tals ardots del mal scament

[From image, f. 29v:]

de aquella que amos cove prestament soldejar e trametre cert nombre de ballesters e altres companyes axi de caual co se peu ab armes per deffensio de la dita ylla e guardar co qes hi te per nos tuyr [?] ço de fer hauem manat e passar [?] moss Gre[?]me poy de[?]nos [?] Governador de Caller e del alguer que ab les dites companyes e ab paga dels solars [?] tres [?] qui ja hi son llur[s] [?] pueros [?] dmer [?] ala dita ylla e puesca als mills que appellare hi son e per aco one [?] de malleuar diuerses quantitats de moneda no sens gran preu e dan dela nra cor[ona] estimats ques mellor suportar aytals dapnatges que si aquella ylla se perda ala nra corona co que deu no vulla faets co[m]pra [?] armateyr [?] que los dits e moltes altres manlleuts faedors per saluament dela dita ylla e reintegrar aquella. Per ço ques pray [?] a nra senyoria siam [?] quitats e satisfets de les decimes per les quals anos atorgadores per lo sant pare deus hauem donar spal correch [?] e principal entrels altres affers dela nra missatgeria ques per nos començada perque es de gran necessitat en pregam dein [?] e manam co ab millor ma-

ior expressio podem que dexat [?] tots altres affers justeyrs [?] e supliquets ab gran cura e diligencia sobretota al pare sant del arregament dels dits decimes nos faça prestament segos que les demanam e enuiats nos les bolles mantinent per correu cuijtat car siats certs que gran perill porta haud [?] en la triga e per çous en estreny prou [?] curiosament e expressa[ment] ço segos los nants [?] que hauem ja dona[ts] es j[a] ay e lagui [?] de poch dies seria irrecupabla [?] dampnatge. Dada en Barch[ino]na sots nre segell secret a xxiiij dies de marc del any M CCC lxxxvij Rex subsignada ab me Pere Amell.

[Right margin, authorization:]

ffs çà Costa

in P. de Beniure

[Bottom, distribution note:]

ffuit missa Garcie [?] archiepo Cesaraug[ustano] R[?] pro decr[?]s et

et ey [?] nuncio de França

Key uncertainties and notes:

Line 3 — per nos tuyr [?]: The phrase after "guardar co qes hi te" is difficult. I read per nos tuyr ("to protect for us"), which makes contextual sense — "to guard what is held there for our protection." But the letterforms are not entirely clear, and tuyr (from tuir, to protect/defend) is attested but uncommon. Alternative readings might include per metre-y or per nos tuhir, but I'm not confident in any of them.

Line 3–4 — hauem manat e passar [?]: The second verb after manat is uncertain. I read e passar ("to cross over / go to"), which fits the context of ordering the Governor to proceed to

Sardinia. The letterforms could also support e parar or e preparar, but passar gives the best sense.

Line 4 — Governor's name: This is the most problematic reading in the document. I see moss Gre[?]me poy de[?]nos, which I cannot resolve into a confident name. The surname ending -nos raises the possibility of Arenós (a major Aragonese baronial family), which would make "poy" potentially a misreading of Pereç — yielding something like "mossèn [Exi]mèn Pereç d'Arenós [?]." But this is speculative. The first name could also be Guillem, Guerme, or something else. The identification of the Governor of Caller e del Alguer in March 1387 would help resolve this.

Lines 5–6 — solars [?] tres [?] qui ja hi son llur[s] pueros [?] dmer [?]: This passage is very difficult. The general sense seems to be that the Governor should go with the new companies and with pay for soldiers already stationed in Sardinia, then proceed to the island and rally the best forces available. But the specific words around pueros dmer and the syntactic connection are unclear. pueros might be a verbal form related to pugui/puguin (subjunctive of poder), and dmer might be d'anar, but I cannot be sure.

Line 6 — puesca als mills que appellare hi son: I read this as "and may [he summon] the best/most that can be called/mustered there" — with mills = millors/mils and appellare = apellar (to summon/call up). The sense fits a military recruitment context.

Line 7 — one [?] de malleuar: The word before de malleuar is unclear. I suspect it's a contracted form of ens convé or nos convé ("it behooves us"), yielding "it is necessary for us to borrow diverse quantities of money." The economic argument that follows is clear: borrowing is costly but preferable to losing Sardinia.

Line 9 — faets co[m]pra [?] armateyr [?]: After ço que Déu no vulla, the next phrase is hard to parse. I tentatively read faets compra armateyr ("make purchase of armament [?]") or possibly faets comptar armateyr ("reckon the armament"), but neither reading is satisfying. The passage may mark a transition from the military expenditure argument to the tithe request.

Line 11 — Per ço ques pray [?] a nra senyoria: I read pray as possibly pertany ("pertains") or plau ("pleases"), yielding either "because it pertains to our lordship" or "because it pleases our lordship [that we be] acquitted and satisfied regarding the tithes." The tithe argument is clear: the Pope granted these tithes, and the ambassadors have been given special charge to secure them.

Line 12 — spal correch: I expand this as special càrrech ("special charge/responsibility").

Line 15 — justeyrs [?]: Uncertain. Possibly justers, posteriors, or a form meaning "secondary/lesser" — the instruction being to set aside all other affairs in favor of the tithe negotiation.

Lines 18–19 — porta haud [?] en la triga: Difficult. Possibly "great peril carries/bears [itself] in the delay" or "great peril has been incurred [haüt] through the delay."

Line 19 — los nants [?] que hauem ja donats: I read nants as a contraction of manaments ("orders/mandates"), giving "according to the orders we have already given."

Line 20 — lagui [?]: Uncertain form, apparently meaning "delay." The sense is clear: "the delay of a few days would be irrecoverable damage."

Distribution note — Garcie [?] archiepo Cesaraugustano: If the archbishop is named García, this would match García Fernández de Heredia, Archbishop of Zaragoza (1383–1411). The second recipient appears to be a nuncio associated with France, consistent with the Avignon diplomatic context.

Ok, good work on Stage 1. Here is the output from the other HTR for Stage 2: Transcription (Old Catalan)

[Missing intro provided by user: ...ab tals ardots del mal scament]

1. de aqla [aquella] que a nos coue [convé] prestament soldeyar e remetre cert nombre de

2. ballesters e altres companyes axi de cauall co [com] de peu ab armes y deffensio
3. de la dita illa y guardar ço que s'hi té per mes fuyt E de fer homenatges ma-
4. nar [amanar] emparar moss [mossèn] Ximeneperez d'arenós Governador de Caller e del
5. Alguer que ab les dites companyes e ab paga de soldats mees [més] qui ja hi son en-
6. prestosament a la dita illa e prouehir als perills que apellan si son ey aco [aquò]
7. coue [convé] de maleuar [manlevar] diuerses quantitats de moneda no sens gran interes e de la dita
8. ma [manera] tot estimam esser millor supportar aytals dapnatges que si aqlla [aquella] illa se
9. perdia a la nostra corona co [com] que deu no uolla faem [fent] dita e d'esta mateixa que lo dit
10. e molts altres manleuar faedors per saluament de la dita illa e reintegrar
11. aqlla [aquella] segons que-s pertany a nostra senyoria fan guidatges e factures de les deimes
12. per les quals a nos atorgadores per lo dit pare sant [el Papa] hauem donat especial càrrechs
13. e principal cautela e altres affers de la missatgeria que us es per nos comenada
14. perque es de gran necessitat us preguam deim e manam com ab millor ma-
15. yor expressio podem que deuant tots altres affers postferits e supliqueu ab gran
16. cura e diligencia sobrenom al pare sant el arreplegament dels dits deimes nos
17. faça prestament segons que les demanam e d'esta mateixa nos la bulla mantnent per
18. correu cuytat car siats certs que gran perill poria hauer en la triga e per coué [convé]
19. en estremuy axi cuytosament e exposa com segons los ardits que hauem que hora
20. es y car el aguy [algú] de poch dies seria irreparable dapnatge Dada en Barchinona [Barcelona]
21. sots nostre segell secret a xxiiij dies de març del any m cc lxxx set [1387] subsig-
22. nada ab nostre petit anell.

[Signatures]

* Dominus Rex mandavit

* mihi Pere de Beniure

[Bottom left note]

* Fuit missa Garcie archiepo [archiepiscopo] cesaraug [cesaraugustano] et Petro Decretes et

* Raymundo de França

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6:33 AM

Systematically reconciled manuscript readings against HTR output

Systematically reconciled manuscript readings against HTR output

Thank you, Jonathan. Let me work through this systematically against the manuscript image.

Stage 2: Reconciliation

(A) Where the HTR corrects or improves my initial reading

Line 4 — Governor's name: The HTR's Ximén Pérez d'Arenós resolves my most uncertain reading. The letterforms are consistent with Ximenepereç darenós once you know what to look for — the initial X was what I was misreading as Gr-. This is a known figure in Aragonese-Sardinian administration and fits perfectly.

Line 4 — emparar: The HTR's reading helps clarify the verb sequence. Returning to the image, I now read "hauem manat e[m]parar mossèn Ximén Pérez d'Arenós" — "we have ordered and empowered/commissioned mossèn X.P. d'Arenós." The HTR misparses the clause boundary (placing "homenatges" where the image shows "hauem manat"), but it correctly identifies emparar as the second infinitive. My "e passar" was wrong.

Line 5 — soldats: The HTR's "soldats" is clearly correct over my "solars." The word in the image has a clear d before the -ats ending.

Line 5–6 — prestosament ... provehir: The HTR helps unlock this passage. Returning to the image, I now read: "e prestosament [vaja] a la dita illa e provesca als mills que apellar hi son" — "and [that he go] swiftly to the said island and provision/provide for the best [forces] that can be mustered there." The HTR's prouehir is essentially right for the infinitive form, though the manuscript may show the subjunctive provesca. My "pueros dmer" was garbled.

Line 15 — postferits: HTR "postferits" (postponed, deferred) is clearly superior to my uncertain "justeyrs." The instruction is: "setting aside all other affairs deferred, petition with great care." Excellent contextual sense.

Line 16 — arreplegament: HTR "arreplegament" (collection, gathering) is much better than my "arregament." The passage concerns the collection of the papal tithes — this is the right word.

Line 19 — ardots: HTR "ardits" (news, intelligence) is correct over my "nants." This also creates a deliberate rhetorical echo with the ardots del mal stament in the opening — the king frames urgency by bookending the letter with the same word.

Line 20 — irreparable: HTR "irreparable" is more plausible than my "irrecupabla" on re-examination of the letterforms.

Distribution note — Petro de Cretes [?] et Raymundo de França: The HTR clarifies the two recipient names. These are the ambassadors at Avignon to whom the letter was dispatched.

(B) Where my initial reading is preferred over the HTR

Line 1 — trametre vs. HTR remetre: Returning to the image, the initial cluster reads more naturally as tr- than r-. More importantly, trametre (to dispatch, send forth) is the standard chancery verb for dispatching military forces, while remetre (to remit, send back) implies return, which doesn't fit. I retain trametre.

Line 2 — per deffensió vs. HTR y deffensió: The image shows a stroke before deffensió that reads as a p with suspension mark = per, not y. "Ab armes per deffensió de la dita illa" (with arms for the defense of the island) is the natural construction.

Line 3 — E de fer hauem manat vs. HTR E de fer homenatges manar: This is a critical divergence. The HTR breaks the clause wrongly. Looking at the image, the capitalized E begins a new clause, and what follows is clearly "de fer hauem ma-/nat" with a line break in manat. The HTR's homenatges is a misparse of hauem + line-break + nat. "And to accomplish this, we have ordered and commissioned mossèn X.P. d'Arenós..." is grammatically and contextually correct. The king is ordering the Governor of Caller to act — not performing homage ceremonies during a military emergency.

Line 7 — dan de la nostra corona: The HTR reads "de la dita ma[nera] tot estimam esser millor," which doesn't parse well. Returning to the image, I see "no sens gran preu [?] e dan de la nostra corona / estimam ques mellor supportar aytals dapnatges..." — "not without great cost and damage to our crown; we estimate it is better to bear such costs than if that island were lost to our crown." The economic argument is clear: borrowing is costly but losing Sardinia is worse. The HTR has garbled the transition.

Line 9 — faem dita e d'esta mateixa: The HTR reading is suspect. D'esta mateixa appears twice in the HTR (lines 9 and 17), which suggests at least one is a hallucination. The passage after "Déu no vulla" transitions to the logic of the manlleutes (forced loans). Returning to the image, I read something closer to: "faets comptar a[r]mateixa [?] que los dits / e molts altres manlleuts faedors per saluament de la dita illa." Neither my reading nor the HTR's is satisfying here — see section (C) below.

Line 11 — siam quitats e satisfets de les dècimes: The HTR's "fan guidatges e factures de les deimes" is garbled. Returning to the image, the passage clearly reads "siam quitats e

satisfets de les dècimes" — "[that] we be acquitted and satisfied regarding the tithes." This is the pivotal sentence of the letter, where Joan I transitions from the military-financial argument to the specific demand: the papal tithes must be collected to reimburse the crown for its Sardinian expenditures.

Line 11 — segons ques pertany: I now prefer a hybrid: the HTR's "segons que·s pertany a nostra senyoria" combined with my "siam quitats." The full clause reads: "segons ques pertany a nostra senyoria siam quitats e satisfets de les dècimes" — "as befits our lordship, [that we] be acquitted and satisfied regarding the tithes." The HTR correctly identified the opening of the clause but garbled the predicate.

Line 13 — e principal entrels altres affers: The HTR's "e principal cautela e altres affers" doesn't parse. The image supports "e principal entre·ls altres affers de la nostra missatgeria" — "and principal among the other affairs of our embassy." The tithe collection is the chief task among several.

Line 17 — enuiats nos les bolles mantinent: The HTR's second instance of "d'esta mateixa nos la bulla" is almost certainly wrong — it is likely an HTR duplication error. The image reads "enuiats nos les bolles mantinent per correu cuijta" — "send us the bulls immediately by swift courier." This is the concrete instruction: once the Pope issues the tithe authorization, the ambassadors must dispatch the papal bulls by fast courier.

Line 21 — Date: HTR reads "m cc lxxx set" (= 1287), which is obviously wrong. The image clearly shows M CCC lxxxvij = 1387.

Line 22 — ab me Pere Amell vs. HTR ab nostre petit anell: The standard Aragonese chancery formula at this position is "Rex / subsignada ab me [scribe name]" — the scribe's authentication. The HTR's "petit anell" (small ring seal) would be a sealing formula, but the document already specifies "sots nostre segell secret" (under our secret seal) earlier in the same clause. The image supports "ab me Pere Amell" as the scribe identification. However, I flag this at moderate confidence — the letterforms for Pere Amell vs. petit anell are genuinely close in this hand.

(C) Where both readings remain uncertain

Line 3 — per nos tuyr [?] / HTR per mes fuyt: Neither reading is convincing. My tuyr (from tuir, to protect) gives plausible sense: "to guard what is held there for us to protect." The HTR's fuyt (fled?) makes no sense. But the letterforms are ambiguous. I tentatively retain per nos [tuir?] with a flag.

Lines 5–6 — detailed syntax around soldats ... prestosament: The general sense is clear — the Governor is to go swiftly with the companies and with pay for the soldiers already stationed there. But the exact wording between soldats and prestosament remains difficult. The HTR's "mees" could be mesos (months), giving "with pay of soldiers for [three?] months already there." My "tres" (three) in combination with HTR "mees/mesos" is attractive — "ab paga dels soldats tres mesos qui ja hi son" — but I cannot fully confirm this against the image.

Line 6 — e per açò / ey açò: The transition word before convé de manlevar is minor but uncertain. I read e per açò (and for this reason); HTR has ey açò.

Line 7 — gran preu vs. gran interès: Both are plausible in context. Interès is attested in medieval Catalan financial usage, and "no sens gran interès" (not without great interest) fits the borrowing context. But "no sens gran preu" (not without great cost) is also natural. The letterforms are genuinely ambiguous. I tentatively prefer interès based on the more specific fit with manlevar (to borrow at interest), but flag this.

Line 9 — The transition after Déu no vulla: This is the most intractable passage in the document. The text between "com que Déu no vulla" and "que los dits e molts altres manlleuts faedors" is garbled in both readings. The general sense must be something like: "God forbid — [we are] making/contracting these said and many other loans to be incurred for the salvation of the said island and its reintegration." But the exact verb form and any intervening phrase remain unresolved. I provisionally read: "faem [dits e?] comptes [?] a[r]mateixa [?] que los dits / e molts altres manlleuts faedors per saluament de la dita illa e reintegrar aquella" — but this needs archival verification.

Line 14 — us pregam de[i]m e manam: Both readings are similar. The cluster of near-synonymous performative verbs (pregam, deim, manam: we pray, say, and command) is standard escalating chancery rhetoric. Minor orthographic uncertainty only.

Line 16 — sobrenom / sobretota / sobre tot: Neither my reading nor the HTR's is satisfying. The word before "al pare sant" should be a preposition or adverb intensifying the petition. Possibly sobre tot (above all) or sobre açò (regarding this). I tentatively read sobre tot but flag it.

Line 18 — per çous / per convé: HTR "per coué" (because it is fitting) and my "per çous" (therefore to you) are both plausible. I tentatively prefer per çous as introducing the direct address to the ambassadors.

Line 18–19 — en estreny ... cuytosament e express[ament]: The clause conveys urgency. I read "per çous en estreny[em] prou cuytosament e expressament" (therefore we urge you most urgently and expressly). The HTR's "estremuy" is likely estreny[em] with a minim confusion. I'm fairly confident in the sense, less so in exact orthography.

Line 20 — car [a]lagui / car el aguy: The meaning is "for [the] delay of a few days would be irreparable damage." The exact noun form — alaguiment? lagui? agui? — is unclear. The word is likely a nominal form meaning "delay," but I cannot resolve the precise spelling.

Authorization formula — Dominus Rex mandavit vs. ffs ça Costa: I initially read the right-margin authorization as Francesc ça Costa's name; the HTR reads the standard Dominus Rex mandavit. Both formulae occur in this register. Looking at the image again, I see abbreviated letterforms that could support either reading, though the in P. de Beniure on the second line is clear in both. I flag this as unresolved.

(D) Reconciled Transcription

Confidence levels: high = secure reading; medium = best reading among alternatives; low = provisional, needs verification.

Fem vos saber que depuis que vosaltres hit [?] petis son venguts ací a nos certs missatgers de la illa de Cerdanya ab tals ardots del mal stament [high]

de aquella que a nos convé prestament soldejar e trametre cert nombre de [high]

ballesters e altres companyes axí de cavall com de peu ab armes per deffensió [high]

de la dita illa e guardar ço ques hi té per nos [tuir?] [low] E de fer hauem ma- [high except tuir]

nat e[m]parar mossèn Ximén Pérez d'Arenós Governador de Caller e del [high]

Alguer que ab les dites companyes e ab paga dels soldats [tres?] [low] mesos [?] [low] qui ja hi son [medium]

prestosament [medium] a la dita illa e provesca als mills que apellar hi son e per açò [medium]

convé de manlevar diverses quantitats de moneda no sens gran interès [medium] e dan de la [medium]

nostra corona [?] [medium] estimam ques mellor supportar aytals dapnatges que si aquella illa se [high]

perdí a la nostra corona com que Déu no vulla faem [?] [low] comptar [?] [low] atremateixa [?] [low] que los dits [low]

e molts altres manlleuts faedors per saluament de la dita illa e reintegrar [high]

aquella segons ques pertany a nostra senyoria siam quitats e satisfets de les dècimes [high]

per les quals a nos atorgadores per lo sant pare deus [?] [low] hauem donar [?] especial càrrech [medium]

e principal entre·ls altres affers de la nostra missatgeria ques per nos començada [high]

perquè és de gran necessitat us pregam deïm e manam com ab millor ma- [high]

jor expressió podem que dexats tots altres affers postferits e supliquets ab gran [high]

cura e diligència sobre tot [?] [low] al pare sant del arreplegament dels dits dècimes nos [medium/high]

faça prestament segons que les demanam e enuiats nos les bolles mantinent per [high]

correu cuijtat car siats certs que gran perill poria hauer en la triga e per çous [medium]

en estreny[em] [?] prou cuytosament e expressament [medium] ço segons los ardots que hauem ja donats [?] [medium]

és ja [?] ay e lagui [?] [low] de poch dies seria irreparable dampnatge. Dada en Barchinona [high]

sots nostre segell secret a xxiiij dies de març del any M CCC lxxvij Rex subsig- [high]

nada ab me Pere Amell [medium]

[Authorization:]

[Dominus Rex mandavit? / ffs ça Costa?] [low]

in P. de Beniure

[Distribution:]

Fuit missa Garcie archiepo Cesaraugustano et Petro de Cretes [?] et

Raymundo de França

That's where I stand after reconciliation. The letter's argument is clear despite the local difficulties: Joan I informs his ambassadors at Avignon that a military crisis in Sardinia requires emergency borrowing; the papal tithes already promised to the crown are therefore urgently needed; the ambassadors must prioritize securing the bulls and dispatch them by fast courier. The Governor Ximén Pérez d'Arenós has been commissioned to lead the relief expedition.

The most stubborn crux is line 9–10 (the transition after Déu no vulla), and a few noun forms in lines 19–20 remain unresolved. Ready to proceed to Stage 3 whenever you are, or if you have corrections to offer first.

Good work. Let's proceed to Stage 3.

6:41 AM

Expedited completion and readied transition forward

Expedited completion and readied transition forward

One thing I want to flag explicitly: your supplied opening reads "la illa de Cerdanya," but the entire letter is unmistakably about Sardinia — the Governor of Cagliari and Alghero, the island setting, the naval resupply context. I've noted this in footnote 2: Cerdanya in the missing opening is almost certainly a misreading (perhaps from the source folio) of Cerdenya. You'll want to check the original when you're back in the archive.

The most stubborn crux remains lines 9–10, the transition after Déu no vulla. Everything else is either resolved or has a clear best reading with acknowledged uncertainty. Eight items in the unresolved ambiguities section for your eventual archival follow-up.

Aca joani sardinia tithes ambassadors avignon 1387 03 24

Document · MD

Want to be notified when Claude responds?

Claude is AI and can make mistakes. Please double-check responses.