

Joan I, Letter of Credence to the Jurats and Prohomens of Barbastro (25 March 1387)

Document Summary

This document is a letter of credence (*letra de creença*) issued by Joan I of Aragon to the *jurats* and *prohomens* (sworn councillors and notables) of the city of Barbastro in the kingdom of Aragon. The king informs the city that he has briefed Mossèn Jaume Pallerès, a royal councillor and *procurador dels afers de la cort*, on certain matters touching the welfare and patrimony of Barbastro. The letter instructs the city's magistrates to give full credence to whatever Pallerès conveys on the king's behalf, and to act on it as though the king had spoken to them in person. The letter is dated Barcelona, 25 March 1387, and was sealed with the king's small secret seal (*parvo sello secreto*) and countersigned with his signet ring (*pequenyo anyello*). The chancery subscription identifies Pere de Beviure as the issuing secretary.

The document is written in Aragonese, consistent with correspondence directed to an Aragonese municipality. It belongs to the earliest weeks of Joan I's reign (Pere III died on 5 January 1387), and the dispatch of a royal procurator to Barbastro suggests early efforts to consolidate authority and manage local affairs during the succession transition.

Source: ACA, Cancillería, Reg. 1751 (or related register), fol. 30v.

Reconciled Transcription

Hombres buenos sabent que nos havemos informado, Mossen Jaime Palleres consellero e procurador de los afferes de nostra cort d'algunas cosas tocantes bien e patrimonio d'aquexa Ciutat. Por que vos mandamos que a todo aquello que vos explicara de part nuestra dedes plenera creyenza e lo cumplades por obra assi como si nos personalment lo vos deziamos. Dada en Barçelona sub nuestro parvo sello secreto .a. xxv. dias de Março del anyo M.ccc.lxxx.vij. con nuestro pequenyo anyello subsignada.

[Address:] Jurats e prohomens de la Cuytat de Barbastre

[Chancery subscription:]

dominus Rex mandavit
michi P. de Beviure

Annotated English Translation

Good men,¹ know that we have informed Mossèn Jaume Pallerès,² councillor and procurator of the affairs of our court,³ of certain matters touching the welfare and patrimony of that city of yours.⁴ Wherefore we command you that to all that he shall convey to you on our behalf you give full credence, and that you carry it out in deed,⁵

just as if we told it to you in person. Given in Barcelona, under our small secret seal,⁶ on the 25th day of March of the year 1387,⁷ countersigned with our small signet ring.⁸

[Address:] To the jurats and prohomens of the city of Barbastro.

[Chancery subscription:]

The lord King commanded [this]
to me, P[ere] de Beviure.⁹

Footnotes

1. *Hombres buenos*: A standard form of address to urban magistrates in Aragonese royal correspondence, equivalent to the Catalan *prohomens*. The term denotes the leading men of the city, typically those eligible for municipal office.
2. **Mossèn Jaume Pallerès** (*Mossen Jaime Palleres*): Identified here as a royal councillor (*consellero*) and *procurador de los afferes de nostra cort* — a procurator charged with managing the king's affairs. The title *Mossèn* (from the French *Monseigneur*) indicates knightly status. Pallerès appears to be acting as a special royal commissioner dispatched to Barbastro during the early months of Joan I's reign; his broader career and other appearances in the registers remain to be established.
3. *Procurador de los afferes de nostra cort*: "procurator of the affairs of our court." This is a functional designation rather than a fixed institutional office; it describes someone entrusted with handling royal business, in this case specifically in relation to Barbastro. The term *afferres* (Aragonese for *afers* / Lat. *negotia*) is broadly inclusive.
4. *Bien e patrimonio d'aquexa Ciutat*: "welfare and patrimony of that city of yours." The formulaic doublet *bien e patrimonio* pairs the general welfare (*bien*) of the city with its material and jurisdictional patrimony. The deictic *aquexa* ("that [of yours]") is characteristic of Aragonese correspondence addressed to a specific community, personalizing the reference.
5. *Lo cumplades por obra*: Literally "carry it out by deed" — i.e., implement what Pallerès communicates not merely by acknowledging it, but through action. This is a standard reinforcing formula in letters of credence, emphasizing that the credence extends not just to belief but to obedience.
6. *Sub nuestro parvo sello secreto*: "under our small secret seal." The *sello secreto* (Latin *sigillum secretum*) was a smaller seal used for less solemn correspondence and administrative business, as distinct from the *sello mayor* or *sello comú* used for privileges and treaties. The Latin *parvo* ("small") is embedded in the otherwise Aragonese text, reflecting typical chancery code-switching in dating clauses and sealing formulae.
7. 25 March 1387. If this date reflects the Incarnation style of dating (in which the year begins on 25 March), then this letter falls on New Year's Day by that reckoning. However, the Aragonese chancery under Joan I generally used the Nativity style (year beginning 25 December), in which case 25 March

1387 falls within the same year by both reckonings. The date places the document approximately eleven weeks after the death of Pere III (5 January 1387) and Joan I's accession.

8. *Con nuestro pequenyo anyello subsignada*: "countersigned with our small signet ring." The *anyello* (Castilian *anillo*, ring) refers to the personal signet ring used to authenticate correspondence sealed under the secret seal. *Subsignada* ("subscribed/countersigned") indicates that the ring impression served as an additional mark of authentication beyond the seal itself.
 9. **Pere de Beviure** (*P. de Beviure*): A chancery secretary active under Joan I, who appears regularly in this register as the issuing official for royal correspondence. The formula *dominus Rex mandavit michi* ("the lord King commanded [this] to me") is the standard chancery subscription identifying the secretary who drafted or dispatched the document on royal authority.
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Unresolved Ambiguities

1. **".a." before "xxv"**: The small character or punctuation mark before the numeral *xxv* in the dating clause is unclear. It may be a scribal separator, an abbreviation for a preposition, or simply a point. Both the initial transcription and the HTR agree on its presence, but its precise function is uncertain. This does not affect the date reading.
2. **Register and folio identification**: The exact register number and folio have not been independently confirmed from the image alone. The attribution to Reg. 1751, fol. 30v is provisional based on the working context of this project.
3. **Jaume Pallerès**: No secondary literature has yet been consulted to confirm the identification or career of this figure. His role as *procurador de los afferes de la cort* may be a commission specific to this mission rather than a permanent office.