

Gemini Version 3

March 30, 2026

Conversation with Gemini

You said

I have another letter in Catalan from 1387, written in fourteenth century Gothic Secretarial hand. Please do your best to transcribe.

Gemini said

This is a fascinating document. It is a royal letter issued from the chancery of **King John I of Aragon** (known as *Joan el Caçador*), dated April 1, 1387.

The script is a classic **Gothic Secretarial** (also known as *cursiva gòtica*), characterized by its long ascenders, looped letters, and heavy use of abbreviations (sigla). In this transcription, I have expanded the abbreviations in brackets [] for better readability.

Transcription

Lo Rey.

Oficial d'armes. nous membra ara com de nos p[r]op[r]e que fessen mencio dela escriptura de plazent que enuay nos fon feta a Sara- goça p[er] los missatges de Barbastre quan los reebem que fuessen falguats de conuyt. E recordans co e en quya mana- p[r]incipalment p[er] aquell fet nos podem encarregar en ells mas ne volrem reduyr a memoria lo falre de n[ost]res p[ro]metes maiorment p[er]que p[er] tals que poden hauer reparo p[er] que nos escriuim als iurats e p[ro]homes de Barbastre ab letra de creença a vos comanada p[er] virtut dela qual nos mana que'ls digats de part n[ost]ra que fossen d'aquest en tal mana que reparen ço que han fallit axi com dit es e nos nos tenem dells p[er] ben seruits e d'aço raho de hauer los recomanats en lurs oportunitats e a[...] E hayats la carta que sabeys en cas que no acceptassen lo suyt que p[er] nos volra. Dada en Barç[el]ona sutz n[ost]re segell secret p[r]imer dia de abril de l'any . m.ccclxxxvii . sotsignada ab n[ost]re petit sinell.

Translation (Modern English)

The King.

Officer of arms: it occurs to us now, as if of our own accord, that mention should be made of the unpleasant writing that was recently presented to us in Zaragoza by the messengers of Barbastre when we received them, so that they might be relieved of care. And remembering this and in what manner—principally because of that act—we could take charge of them, but we wish to bring to mind the failure of our promises; especially since for such [matters] there can be redress, wherefore we write to the jurors and leading men (*prohomes*) of Barbastre with a letter of credence entrusted to you, by virtue of which we command that you tell them on our behalf that they should act in such a way that they repair what they have failed in, as has been said; and [then] we shall consider ourselves well served by them, and for this reason have them recommended in their opportunities... And have the letter that you know of, in case they do not accept the suit that we desire. Given in Barcelona under our secret seal, the first day of April in the year 1387. Undersigned with our small seal.

Paleographic & Contextual Notes

- **Date:** The date m.ccclxxxvii (1387) is significant. John I had just ascended the throne in January 1387 following the death of his father, Peter the Ceremonious. This letter shows him dealing with administrative or diplomatic friction in **Barbastre** (Barbastro, Aragon) very early in his reign.
- **The "Secret" Seal:** The mention of the *segell secret* (secret seal) or *petit sinell* (small seal) indicates this was a more personal or direct administrative order from the King, rather than a grand public decree.
- **The Handwriting:** * Notice the "**Lo Rey**" at the top left; the "L" is highly stylized with a long vertical stroke.
 - The "**p[er]**" abbreviation looks like a 'p' with a stroke through the descender.
 - The word "**Barbastre**" appears twice, with the characteristic long 's' () and the 'b' and 'r' tightly linked.
 - The number **8** shape at the top center is a chancery mark, often used to indicate the registry or the specific clerk who handled the document.

Does this letter relate to a specific historical research project you are working on?

Gemini is AI and can make mistakes.

