

ACA, Violant de Bar: Letter to Mossèn Aznar Regarding Jurisdiction in the Kingdom of Valencia

Archive: Arxiu de la Corona d'Aragó (ACA) **Document type:** Royal mandate / administrative letter **Language:** Medieval Catalan **Date:** 19 March 1387 **Issued at:** Barcelona **Sender:** Queen Violant de Bar **Recipient:** Mossèn Aznar, holding the governorship in the Kingdom of Valencia **Scribe:** Bartholomeus Sirvent, by mandate of the Queen

Document Summary

Queen Violant de Bar writes to Mossèn Aznar, who holds a gubernatorial role in the Kingdom of Valencia, instructing him on the exercise of royal jurisdiction in the towns she holds there. She confirms that he should continue to exercise jurisdiction in those places where the king retains jurisdictional authority, just as he did before the towns came into her possession. However, all emoluments arising from the exercise of that jurisdiction — after retention of his customary fees — must be remitted in full to her treasurer or to his deputy, Antoni Rosar, who is to be present at and consulted on all judicial compositions. The queen urges diligence in governing these places well and safeguarding her rights. She explicitly excludes from this mandate any jurisdiction over the Jews and Moors in those territories, stating that separate provision has already been made for them.

Reconciled Transcription

La Reyna

Mossèn Aznar. A nos plau e volem que en los lochs que havem en Regne de València en los quals lo senyor Rey ha la jurisdicció vos usets dela dita jurisdicció e aquella exercitaretz plenament axí com fahiets abans que·ls dits lochs fossen nostres. Açàs [?] volem e·us manam que de tots los emoluments que·n exiran retenent vostre dret façats respondre entegrament a nostre tresorer o per ell a n'Antoni Rosar dela nostra tresoreria qui ara present lo qual volem ésser appellat a les composicions faedores e que aquelles façats ab ell ensemps e no en altra manera. En les quals composicions e en lo exercici dela dita jurisdicció e en altres coses sobre açò faedores vos pregam siats diligent ens hi hajats en tal manera que·n sia ben provehit al bon regiment e estament dels dits lochs e nostres drets hi sien guardats segons que·s pertany. Sabent que d'açò·ns farets agradable servey que molt vos grahirem e conexerets ho en son cas e loch. Entenem emperò e volem que en los juheus e moros que havem en lo dit Regne no usets de jurisdicció alguna ne en altra guisa vos en entrametats com ja hi sia en altra manera provehit. Dada en Barçelona sots nostre segell secret acostumat a xix dies de Març del any M CCC LXXXVIJ. V(idit) de ponte.

Dirigit Aznario pro ista casta [?] tenentim [?] gubernatum in Regno Valencie.

Bartholomeus Sirvent mandato Regine fecit per precepto domine Regine.

Annotated English Translation

The Queen

Mossèn Aznar.(1) It pleases us and we wish that in the towns that we hold in the Kingdom of Valencia(2) in which the lord King retains jurisdiction, you should exercise the said jurisdiction and carry it out fully, just as you did before the said towns were ours. Nevertheless,(3) we wish and command you that from all the emoluments that shall arise therefrom — retaining your customary fee(4) — you shall cause the remainder to be remitted in full to our treasurer, or on his behalf to Antoni Rosar(5) of our treasury, who is now present, whom we wish to be called upon for all compositions(6) to be made, and that you make those compositions together with him and not in any other manner. In which compositions, and in the exercise of the said jurisdiction, and in other matters pertaining thereto, we ask that you be diligent and apply yourself in such a manner that the good governance and well-being of the said towns be well provided for and our rights therein be safeguarded, as is fitting. Know that by doing so you will render us an agreeable service, which we shall greatly appreciate, and you shall know it in due time and place.(7) We intend, however, and we wish that over the Jews and Moors that we hold in the said Kingdom you shall not exercise any jurisdiction whatsoever, nor involve yourself in any other way, since separate provision has already been made for them.(8) Given at Barcelona under our customary secret seal, on the 19th day of March in the year 1387.(9) Seen by de Ponte.(10)

Addressed to Aznar, [holding?] the governorship in the Kingdom of Valencia.(11)

Bartholomeus Sirvent made this by mandate of the Queen, by order of the lady Queen.

Footnotes

1. The addressee is identified in the Latin address clause as "Aznario" holding the gubernatorial office in the Kingdom of Valencia. His full identity and lineage require further prosopographical confirmation. The title "Mossèn" indicates knightly status.
2. Violant de Bar held a number of towns in the Kingdom of Valencia as part of her queenly dower or *camera* assignment. These were places where the queen drew revenues but the king retained high jurisdiction — a common arrangement in the Crown of Aragon that required careful delineation of administrative authority.
3. "Aças" remains a slightly uncertain reading. In context it functions as a transitional conjunction ("nevertheless," "however"), introducing the condition attached to the grant of jurisdictional authority. Possibly a form of "a cas" or an abbreviated "encara·s."
4. "Retenent vostre dret": a standard formula allowing the official to retain his customary percentage or fee from judicial emoluments before remitting the balance.

5. Antoni Rosar, identified here as an official of the queen's treasury (*tresoreria*). He appears to have been deputized by the queen's treasurer to oversee financial matters in Valencia on site. The phrase "qui ara present" (who is now present) suggests he was physically at court when the letter was issued, or had been dispatched to Valencia for this purpose.
 6. "Composicions": judicial compositions or settlements — negotiated financial penalties in lieu of full prosecution, a major source of revenue from the exercise of criminal jurisdiction.
 7. "Conexerets ho en son cas e loch": a standard formulaic promise of future royal favor, literally "you will know it [i.e., our gratitude] in its proper time and place."
 8. The explicit exclusion of Jewish and Moorish communities (*aljames*) from Mossèn Aznar's jurisdictional authority indicates that these communities were administered under a separate regime — likely through their own officials or through a dedicated royal appointee. This was standard practice in the Crown of Aragon, where Jewish and Moorish *aljames* often fell under distinct jurisdictional frameworks.
 9. 19 March 1387. This date falls in the opening weeks of Joan I's reign (Pere III died on 5 January 1387), a period of intensive administrative reorganization as the new king and queen confirmed, reassigned, and restructured offices and revenues.
 10. "V(idit) de ponte": the validation notation indicating that the document was reviewed (*vidit*) by an official named "de Ponte" before dispatch. This is a standard chancery control mechanism.
 11. The Latin address clause is partially abbreviated and somewhat obscure: "Dirigit Aznario pro ista casta [?] tenentim [?] gubernatum in Regno Valencie." The general sense — that the letter is directed to Aznar as holder of the governorship in Valencia — is clear, but the exact expansion of the intermediate abbreviations remains uncertain. "Pro ista casta" may be a misread or corrupt form.
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Unresolved Ambiguities

1. "**Aças**" (line 3 of body text): The exact form and derivation of this transitional word remain uncertain. Context demands something like "nevertheless" or "however." Possibly "a cas" or a compressed form of "encara·s."
2. **Address clause abbreviations**: "Pro ista casta [?] tenentim [?] gubernatum" — the full expansion of the Latin address formula is not entirely clear. The gist (Aznar as governor in Valencia) is secure, but the intermediate words need further comparison with parallel address clauses from this register.
3. "**ens hi hajats**": The exact pronoun cluster in "ens [?] hi hajats en tal manera" is slightly ambiguous. The meaning ("and that you apply yourself therein") is clear from context.
4. **Identity of Mossèn Aznar**: The addressee's full name, lineage, and precise gubernatorial title require prosopographical confirmation from other documents in the register or from secondary literature on the Valencian administration under Joan I.

5. **Identity of "de Ponte"**: The official who validated the document. His role in the chancery (likely a *protonotarius* or senior chancery officer) could be confirmed through parallel documents.