

ACA, Cancillería, reg. [?], fol. 143v

Document Summary

Document type: Royal citation / compulsion letter (*littera citatoria*), with contumacy clause.

Issuer: Yolans (Violant de Bar), Queen of Aragon, acting in the exercise of royal jurisdiction.

Addressee: Cresques Bonafos, a Jew of Figueres (*Iudei de Ffigiis*).

Petitioner: The wife (*uxor*) of Cresques Bonafos, described as a poor and miserable person (*pauperis et miserabilis persone*), who presented a supplication either named Regina or directed to the Queen (see n. 4 below).

Date: 29 March 1387, given at Barcelona. Verified (*vidit*) by de Ponte.

Content: The queen commands Cresques Bonafos to appear before her court, either personally or through a legitimate representative procurator, on the day following the next Sunday of Quasimodo (the first Sunday after Easter, 1387), concerning his wife's legal claims. If he fails to appear or to reach an amicable settlement with his wife, the queen will proceed against him on the supplicated matters, his absence or contumacy notwithstanding, as right, reason, and judicial custom require.

Language: Latin, with standard Aragonese chancery abbreviations and orthographic conventions.

Reconciled Transcription

Yolans, etc. Cresques Bonafos Iudei de Ffigiis gratiam sui [?].

Ad [humilem?] [?] supplicacionem Regine uxoris tue pauperis e[t] miserabilis persone, tibi dicimus et mandamus et te per presentes citamus quatenus visis [presentibus?] die post dominicam proximam de quasimodo in antea secuturam coram nobis pro [e]scadon[e?] [?] iura de tue uxoris per te vel tuum legitimum responsalem procuratorem totaliter comparere, ali[oquin] lapso dicto termino quem tibi pro o[mn]ibus e[t] singulis dilationibus

peremptorie assignamus, [nisi?] comparueris ut praefertur vel cum dicta Regine te amicabiliter conveneris, nos procedemus in et super supplicatis adversus te per praefactam uxorem tuam prout de iure et ratione ac ritu iudic[um/eorum] [?] rep[p]erimus faciendum,

tua absentia seu contumacia in aliquo non obstante. Datum Barch[in]one xxix die marcii anno a Nativitate Domini M CCC LXXXVII. Vidit de Ponte.

Annotated English Translation

Yolans [Violant],¹ etc.² To Cresques Bonafos,³ Jew of Figueres, [we send?] his [grace/greeting] [?].

At the [humble?] supplication [made] to the Queen [—or: of Regina—],⁴ your wife, a poor and miserable person,⁵ we say to you and command, and by the presents we cite you,⁶ that upon sight [of these presents?],⁷ [you are to appear] on the day after the next Sunday of Quasimodo,⁸ following hereafter, before us, concerning the [claim?]⁹ of the rights of your wife, either by yourself or through your legitimate representative procurator,¹⁰ to appear fully.¹¹ Otherwise,¹² the said term having elapsed — which [term] we peremptorily assign to you for all and each delay¹³ — [if] you have not appeared as aforesaid,¹⁴ or amicably settled with the said [Queen / Regina],¹⁵ we shall proceed on and concerning the supplicated matters against you, through your aforesaid wife, as we find [it necessary] to do by right, reason, and the custom of judges [—or: of the Jews—],¹⁶ your absence or contumacy notwithstanding in any respect.¹⁷ Given at Barcelona, the 29th day of March, in the year of the Nativity of the Lord 1387. Seen by de Ponte.¹⁸

Footnotes

Unresolved Ambiguities

1. **Line 1 — *gratiam sui*:** The phrase between the addressee's identification (*Iudei de Ffigiis*) and the *supplicacionem* clause remains unclear. It likely represents the salutation formula (*salutem et gratiam* or *gratiam suam*), but the exact wording cannot be confidently established from either the manuscript image or the HTR output.
2. **Lines 1-2 — *Regine*: name or title?** The word *Regine* in the phrase *ad [humilem?] supplicacionem Regine uxoris tue* admits two readings with different historical implications: (a) "Regina" as the wife's proper name (genitive); (b) "the Queen" as the recipient of the supplication (dative). Resolution requires comparison with parallel formulae in Violant's registers — specifically, whether citations issued by the queen use the construction *ad supplicacionem Regine* to mean "at the supplication [presented] to the Queen" or whether the genitive-of-petitioner construction is invariable. See nn. 4 and 15.
3. **Line 4 — *[e]scadon[e]*:** The legal term describing the nature of the wife's claim remains uncertain. Possible readings include *excadencia* (maturity/falling-due of an obligation), *occasione* (concerning), or another contracted form. The word is critical for understanding the substance of the underlying dispute. See n. 9.

4. **Line 7 — conditional particle:** The presence of *nisi* ("unless") before *comparueris ut praefertur* is logically required by the contumacy clause but paleographically uncertain. See n. 14.
 5. **Line 9 — *iudicum* vs *Iudeorum*:** The abbreviated form *iudic-* does not permit confident distinction between "of judges" (generic procedural reference) and "of the Jews" (reference to Jewish legal custom). This is the most historically consequential ambiguity in the document. See n. 16.
 6. **Line 2 — *ad humilem*:** The first word of the supplication formula is unclear. Both *humilem* ("humble," standard in supplication formulae) and *dictam* ("said," proposed by the HTR) are possible. *Humilem* is more formulaically expected for an initial citation; *dictam* would imply reference to a prior supplication already known to the recipient.
 7. **Identity of de Ponte:** The chancery official who verified the register entry has not been identified. Cross-referencing with other *vidit* notations in the registers from this period may clarify whether this is a *protonotarius*, *vicecancellarius*, or another officer.
1. Yolans: Violant de Bar (1365–1431), queen consort of Joan I of Aragon. The Catalan/Aragonese form *Yolans* (from the Occitan/French *Yolande*) is standard in the chancery registers for her self-designation. The *etc.* abbreviation here suppresses the full royal titlature (*Dei gracia Regina Aragonum etc.*), which would have been expanded in the original letter sent to the recipient but is routinely abbreviated in the register copy. ↵
 2. The use of *etc.* to abbreviate the queen's titles and the greeting formula is standard chancery practice in the register copies. The full protocol would have included the complete royal titlature and a salutation. ↵
 3. Cresques Bonafos: A Jewish man of Figueres. Both *Cresques* (from Latin *Crescas*) and *Bonafos* (from *Bonafós*, "good fortune/fate") are well-attested Jewish names in the Crown of Aragon. The orthographic form *Cresques* (with *-ques*) reflects Catalan influence on the Latin register entry. The manuscript may read *Bonafos* or *Bonifas*; the HTR output reads *Bonifas*, but *Bonafos/Bonafós* is the more common attested form for this name in Catalan Jewish communities. ↵

4. **This reading involves a consequential ambiguity.** The manuscript reads *Regine* (or *Regno/Regino*), and two interpretations are possible: (a) *Regine* is the dative of *Regina* (= the Queen), meaning "at the supplication [made] to the Queen by your wife." Under this reading, the wife is unnamed, and the supplication was directed to Violant, who then acts on it by issuing this citation. This is perhaps the more natural institutional reading: the queen acts *ad supplicationem* (at the supplication presented to her), and the petitioner is identified only as *uxor tua, pauperis et miserabilis persone*. (b) *Regine* is the genitive of *Regina*, a proper name — the wife's name being Regina (a known Jewish name, from Hebrew *Malka*, "queen"). Under this reading, the formula is: "at the supplication of Regina, your wife, a poor and miserable person." This follows the standard chancery construction *ad supplicationem* + genitive of the petitioner's name. Both readings are grammatically defensible. The decisive factor may be whether the same formula appears elsewhere in Violant's registers with *Regine* clearly functioning as a dative ("to the Queen") rather than a genitive naming the petitioner. In comparable royal citations from the Crown of Aragon, the genitive-of-petitioner construction is far more common, but citations issued by the queen herself might naturally incorporate a self-referential dative. **Flagged for resolution through parallel formulae in the registers.** ↵
5. *Pauperis et miserabilis persone*: The designation *persona miserabilis* ("miserable person") is a technical legal category in late medieval Iberian law, not merely a description of emotional state. It encompasses widows, orphans, the destitute, and other legally vulnerable individuals who are entitled to bypass ordinary jurisdiction and appeal directly to the sovereign's justice. In the Crown of Aragon, this principle derives from Roman-canonical tradition and is codified in various *furs* and *constitucions*. The wife's claim to *miserabilis* status here provides the jurisdictional basis for the queen's intervention in what might otherwise be a matter for local or communal Jewish courts. ↵
6. *Tibi dicimus et mandamus et te per presentes citamus*: "We say to you and command, and by the presents we cite you." Standard tripartite citation formula combining a declaration (*dicimus*), a command (*mandamus*), and a formal legal citation (*citamus*). The *per presentes* ("by the presents") is the standard reference to the document itself as the instrument of citation. ↵
7. *Quatenus visis [presentibus?]*: The reading is uncertain. If *visis presentibus*, the phrase means "upon sight of these presents" — i.e., the obligation to appear is triggered by the recipient's receipt of the letter. This is a common variant in citation formulae. The HTR reads *visis presentibus*; the manuscript is compressed in this passage. ↵
8. *Die post dominicam proximam de quasimodo in antea secuturam*: "On the day after the next Sunday of Quasimodo, following hereafter." Quasimodo Sunday (*Dominica in albis* or *Quasimodo*) is the first Sunday after Easter, named from the introit of the day's mass (*Quasi modo geniti infantes...*; 1 Pet. 2:2). In 1387, Easter fell on 11 April, making Quasimodo Sunday 18 April and the appearance deadline Monday, 19 April 1387. The citation is dated 29 March, giving Cresques approximately three weeks to arrange his appearance or appoint a procurator — a standard timeframe for intra-Catalonian citations. ↵

9. The word in the manuscript is difficult: the transcription reads *scadon* or *escadon*, which may be a contracted form of *excadencia* (Catalan *escadença*: the maturity or falling-due of an obligation, or a legal claim arising from the lapse of a right) or possibly *occasione* (concerning/on the occasion of). The HTR garbles this passage entirely. The full phrase appears to be "concerning the [claim/maturity?] of the rights of your wife," but the exact legal term remains uncertain. ↵
10. *Per te vel tuum legitimum responsalem procuratorem*: "Either by yourself or through your legitimate representative procurator." The *procurator responsalis* is a legal representative specifically authorized to respond (*respondere*) on behalf of the principal in judicial proceedings — a more specific designation than a general procurator, conferring the power to enter pleas and accept judgments. ↵
11. *Totaliter comparere*: "To appear fully" — i.e., to make a complete and legally binding appearance, not a partial or conditional one. ↵
12. *Alioquin*: "Otherwise." The transcription reads *alii*, which I expand as *ali[oquin]* — the standard adversative conjunction introducing the contumacy clause in citations. *Alias* is also possible. ↵
13. *Quem tibi pro omnibus et singulis dilationibus peremptorie assignamus*: "Which [term] we peremptorily assign to you for all and each delay." The peremptory assignment means that this single deadline encompasses all possible extensions or adjournments (*dilationes*): the cited party cannot request postponements beyond this date. This is a standard feature of royal citations exercising summary jurisdiction. ↵
14. The conditional particle introducing this clause (*nisi*? = "unless") is uncertain in the manuscript. The logic of the contumacy clause requires a conditional: "unless you have appeared as aforesaid, or amicably settled..." Without it, the sentence structure collapses. The manuscript reading *in* or *ni* at this point could be *ni[si]* with an abbreviation mark. The word *comparueris* (perfect subjunctive: "you shall have appeared") is the reading proposed from the manuscript; the passage *ut praefertur* ("as aforesaid") is standard legal backreference to the appearance requirement stated earlier. ↵
15. *Vel cum dicta Regine te amicabiliter conveneris*: "Or amicably settled with the said [Queen / Regina]." This clause offers an alternative to formal judicial appearance: the cited party may reach an amicable agreement (*amicabiliter convenire*) with the petitioner. The same ambiguity noted in n. 4 applies to *Regine* here — it could be the petitioner's name (Regina) or a reference to the Queen (Violant) as the party with whom settlement must be reached. If the former, the agreement would be between husband and wife; if the latter, the settlement would be submitted to the queen's approval. The former reading (wife as counterparty) is more typical in private-law disputes. ↵

16. **This reading involves a consequential ambiguity.** *Prout de iure et racione ac ritu iudic[um/eorum] rep[p]erimus faciendum*: "As we find [it necessary] to do by right, reason, and the custom of judges [or: of the Jews]." The contracted form in the manuscript (*iudic-* with a terminal abbreviation) admits two expansions: (a) *iudicum* (of judges): "by the custom of judges" — a reference to standard judicial procedure. (b) *Iudeorum* (of the Jews): "by the custom of the Jews" — a reference to Jewish law as the applicable legal framework. If the latter, this passage would indicate the queen's willingness to adjudicate the dispute *secundum ritum Iudeorum* — according to Jewish legal custom — a well-attested practice in the Crown of Aragon, where Jewish communities (*aljamas*) maintained considerable juridical autonomy under royal protection, and royal courts sometimes applied Jewish law in disputes between Jewish litigants. The choice between these readings has significant implications for understanding the relationship between royal and communal jurisdiction over Jewish subjects in late fourteenth-century Catalonia. **Flagged for archival verification.** ↵
17. *Tua absentia seu contumacia in aliquo non obstante*: "Your absence or contumacy notwithstanding in any respect." The standard contumacy clause, warning the cited party that failure to appear will not prevent the court from proceeding. *Contumacia* in medieval procedural law refers specifically to willful disobedience of a judicial summons. ↵
18. *Vidit de Ponte*: "Seen by de Ponte." A verification formula indicating that a chancery official named de Ponte reviewed and authenticated the register entry. The *vidit* notation is standard Aragonese chancery practice, typically placed after the dating clause to confirm that a senior official (often a *protonotarius* or *vicecancellarius*) had reviewed the document before registration. ↵