

Replied
23/4/1956.

Cedar House
Grantchester

22 April 1956

Dear Russell - Gebett,

Thank you for your letter; yes I certainly promised Dr Botz a paper for May, though I hope (I can't exactly remember) that I didn't promise to cover the whole question of early Catalan trade in a short talk! I have tried to compromise in my subject between the two general and the two particular so that any remarks I make won't be so general as to be valueless nor so firmicky as to have no meaning for (the majority I suppose) who are not economic historians.

The time you suggest will suit me quite well. I assume I will have something under the bonnet so that we will be free for a "coffee break" at about 11.0.

Yours sincerely

Arthur Holbert

THE COMMERCIAL REVOLUTION IN BARCELONA IN THE MID-
THIRTEENTH CENTURY.

This paper draws attention to the critical and dramatic nature of a very short period, the middle decades of the thirteenth century (the 1230s to 1260s) in the commercial history of Barcelona. The earlier achievements of the citizens of Barcelona in the field of trade and their power to influence the circumstances of trade are briefly mentioned and their limitations suggested. Attention is drawn to the striking progress made in various fields during the period under review - the rejection of foreign influence, the development of monetary and commercial techniques, the increasing control over the coinage, the development of consular organization and soundly based overseas contacts, the winning of a large amount of autonomy in the direction of commercial affairs and so on. It is argued that this is probably the period in which the original 'good customs of the sea', the nucleus of The Book of the Sea Consulate, were written down.

Some of the reasons underlying this striking transformation in Barcelona's economic position are suggested and particular emphasis given to the rôle of cooperation between the city and the King of Aragon.

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