



The two Italies : economic relations between the Norman kingdom of Sicily and the northern communes /

Abulafia, David

Cambridge University Press,
1977

Electronic books History

Monografía

This book is a study of the economic development of different areas of twelfth-century Italy whose commercial interests were closely inter related: the Norman Kingdom of Sicily, famed for the wealth of its rulers, and the maritime ports of Genoa, Pisa and Venice, which were actively extending their trading interests throughout the Mediterranean. On the basis of largely untapped sources in Genoa and other north Italian archives, this book seeks to explain how the north Italian merchants attempted to extend and to protect their interests in the kingdom of Sicily, by agreements with the Norman rulers or with those in Germany and Byzantium who aimed at the conquest of Sicily and southern Italy. Dr Abulafia argues that the kingdom was a major exporter of wheat and raw cotton, and that in the twelfth century the northern merchants gained a substantial hold over these exports. The Norman kings profited greatly from the opportunity to sell the produce of their realm, and in particular of their own estates, to an assured market; the lack of intensive industry in the kingdom left the northerners free to produce textiles out of southern fibres. Thus signs emerge of two Italies, an agrarian and pastoral south, against a north with incipient industrial activity, based partly on the commercial exploitation of the south

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Título: The two Italies economic relations between the Norman kingdom of Sicily and the northern communes
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Editorial: Cambridge New York Cambridge University Press 1977

Descripción física: 1 online resource (xvii, 310 pages)

Mención de serie: Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought: Third Series no. 9

Bibliografía: Includes bibliographical references and index

Lengua: English

Copyright/Depósito Legal: 776966548 1167381093 1180762387 1242478078

ISBN: 9780511560996 ebook) 0511560990 9780521023061 paperback) 0521023068 9780521212113 0521212111 0511865139 9780511865138

Materia: Commerce- History- Medieval, 500-1500 Commerce- Histoire- 500-1500 (Moyen Âge) Commerce Commerce- Medieval

Materia Geográfica: Italy, Northern- Commerce- Italy- Sicily- History Sicily (Italy)- Commerce- History Italie (Nord)- Commerce- Italie- Sicile- Histoire Sicile (Italie)- Commerce- Histoire Northern Italy Italy- Sicily

Enlace a formato físico adicional: Print version Abulafia, David. Two Italies. Cambridge ; New York : Cambridge University Press, 1977 (DLC) 76011069

Punto acceso adicional serie-Título: Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought: Third Series no. 9

Baratz Innovación Documental

- Gran Vía, 59 28013 Madrid
- (+34) 91 456 03 60
- informa@baratz.es