

09/06/2017

## Barcelona airports were the busiest internationally in Spain up until 1936



The thesis "History of Barcelona Airports and Airlines Operating from 1931 to 1936" reviews the history of commercial aviation in Spain until the beginning of the civil war and documents for the first time the importance of the commercial airdromes, precursors of the El Prat airport, in international air traffic until the beginning of the Spanish Civil War.

This academic work analyzes the aviation sector in Catalonia and Spain from a historical perspective and the importance in the air traffic until 1936 of the airdromes precursors of what is nowadays the El Prat International airport – the La Volateria and Latécoère airdromes - as well as of the School of Naval Aeronautics' hydroplanes base.

The documentation analyzed provides for the first time comparative data of the airdromes of Barcelona and Madrid regarding number of flights, passengers - with a significant percentage of foreign passengers - cargo of goods and postal mail, and allows to affirm the predominant and strategic role played by the three airports in the Catalan capital, with the largest amount of international traffic in Spain.

The work shows the historic route of each of Barcelona's aerial facilities and the development and movements of the airlines operating there - using previously unheard of material - which

show how all lines connected Barcelona to various European and Moroccan destinations; and the postal lines to South America from Spain operated only through the Catalan capital.

Among the most significant historical data is the creation, in 1916, of the La Volateria airdrome, where the Catalan School of Aviation was inaugurated that same year. It was also where the first aircrafts of the Catalan aeronautical industry were tested, built in the Pujol workshops located in Sant Martí district of Barcelona.

There was also the installation of the Naval Aeronautical School, with the Naval Aeronautical Workshops, the "transportable airbase" ship *Dédalo*, and the hydroplane base.

The research is the first glimpse into the past of aviation history, as a work of scientific research conducted within the local, Catalan, Spanish and international contexts, evidencing what this exciting history of aviation consisted of and signified at a time in which air travel represented the greatest technological advance.

**Lluís Corominas Bertran**

Department of Contemporary History

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

[lcorominas@hotmail.com](mailto:lcorominas@hotmail.com)

**References**

PhD thesis. *History of the airports of Barcelona and of the lines that operated from 1931 to 1936*, Lluís Corominas. Defended in the doctoral program of Contemporary History. Directed by Joan B. Culla.

[View low-bandwidth version](#)