

[Merchant Circular Letters Database](#)

Announcement published by Veronica Santarosa on Thursday, January 28, 2021

Type:

Online Digital Resources

Location:

France

Subject Fields:

Business History / Studies, Digital Humanities, Early Modern History and Period Studies, Economic History / Studies, European History / Studies

Dear Colleagues,

I am delighted to inform you of a new database added to the website of 'Fiducia: Merchant Relationships in Practice — From the Personal to the Impersonal? 18th-19th Centuries' Led by a multidisciplinary team, the project empirically tests one aspect of the widespread narrative of modernization — that commerce became increasingly impersonal at the turn of the nineteenth century — using archival data (1750-1850 for major French cities) from three sets of documents merchants routinely dealt with : notarized powers of attorney (“procurations”), introduction letters (“lettres d’entrée en relation”) and printed circular letters (“lettres circulaires”). The new webpage hosts a database of 2,022 printed commercial circulars from the archives of 5 great French trading houses : Greffulhe Montz, in Paris ; Briansiaux, in Lille ; Foache, in Le Havre; Veuve Guérin, in Lyon; and Roux, in Marseilles. The data are stored on the servers of TIGR Humanum and can be viewed by clicking the following link: <https://fiduciaie.huma-num.fr/>

Fiducia stopped receiving long-term funding, but the program lives on with several additional projects in the planning or in the making that enlarge the scope of inquiry to related questions on the depersonalization of commerce and extend the dataset both in the time-series and in cross-sectional dimensions, including drawing comparisons across European cities. We encourage scholars who would like to engage in an exchange on these topics or to participate in these additional projects to contact us at one the following addresses: Arnaud.BARTOLOMEI@univ-cotedazur.fr or aokisan@umich.edu

We also thank you in advance for forwarding this message to all of your colleagues who might have an interest in this project.

Arnaud Bartolomei (Université Côte d’Azur, CMMC) and Veronica Santarosa (University of Michigan Law School), on behalf of the Fiducia Team

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