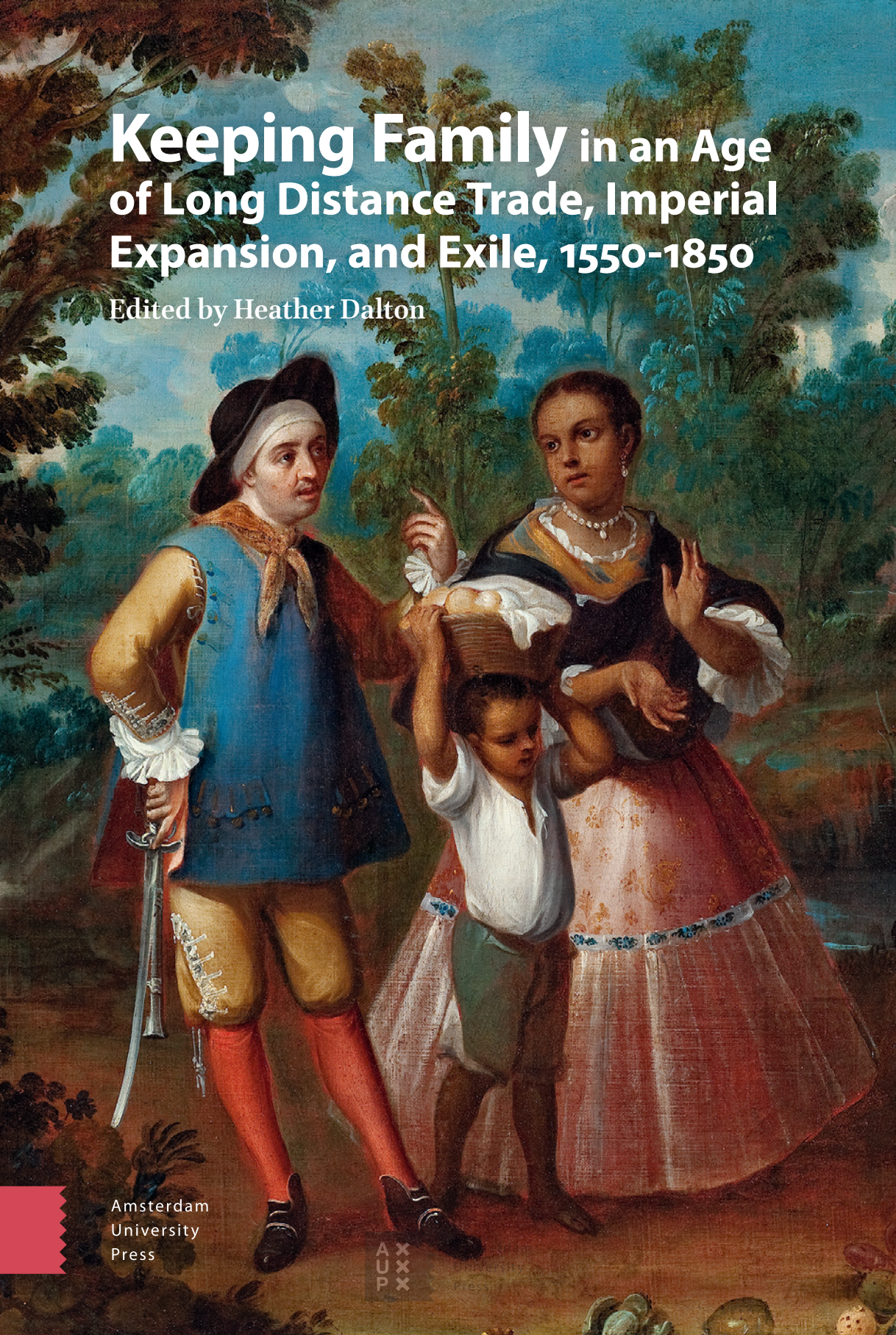


Keeping Family in an Age of Long Distance Trade, Imperial Expansion, and Exile, 1550-1850

Edited by Heather Dalton



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Cover illustration: Juan Patricio Morlete Ruiz, 'X. From Spaniard and return backwards, hold yourself suspended in mid air' (*X. De español y torna atrás, tente en el aire*), circa 1760, Mexico. LACMA (Los Angeles County Museum of Art).

Cover design: Coördesign, Leiden

Lay-out: Crius Group, Hulshout

ISBN 978 94 6372 231 5

e-ISBN 978 90 4854 425 7

DOI 10.5117/9789463722315

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For my goddaughter, Francesca,
and her sisters, Sian and Anna.

In loving memory of your mother, Lawrie Sale (née Gale),
who, like her forbears, kept family across the Atlantic.



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Acknowledgements

Keeping Family in an Age of Long Distance Trade, Imperial Expansion and Exile, 1550–1850 was initially inspired by an Australian Research Council (ARC) Discovery Early Career Award project I held at the University of Melbourne from 2014 to 2017: ‘Creating the Atlantic World: transnational relationships and family ties in trading networks and voyages of discovery, 1480–1580’. My aim to approach the sixteenth-century Atlantic World through a wide lens – not as an isolated ocean, but as an ocean linked to other places – was further expanded by research, reading, and attending conferences around the world during the period of my fellowship. Three events in particular stand out: attending ‘Emotions, Families and Households in Early Modern Europe’ (a panel at *Emotions: Movement, Cultural Contact and Exchange, 1100–1800*, organised by the ARC Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions and the Freie Universität in Berlin in July 2016); giving a paper at ‘Strangers in the City: Migration, Identity and Place 1200–1700’ (a panel at the 13th International Conference on Urban History, organized by the European Association for Urban History in Helsinki in August 2016); and arranging ‘Keeping it in the family: mobility, exchange, and adaptation in an age of discovery, trade expansion and settlement’ (a panel at *Mobility and Exchange 1400–1800*, organized by the Australia and New Zealand Association for Medieval and Early Modern Studies in Wellington in February 2017). My intention to capture some of the interesting ideas I had been exposed to at these and other gatherings was compounded by the variety of interesting and creative responses to my call for contributions for *Keeping Family*. The result is this collection of essays, exploring how people created, maintained, sustained and reformed family, or at least the idea of family, against often overwhelming odds.

It is a pleasure to see this book in print and I thank all ten authors for their hard work and patience. I am particularly grateful to Katie Barclay for her much needed advice regarding the introduction to this collection, and to the anonymous reviewers of my first draft for their thoughtful feedback. I also want to acknowledge the timely guidance and support Erika Gaffney at AUP has provided since receiving my book proposal in March 2018 – thank you.

Heather Dalton
Melbourne, March 2020



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Introduction: Keeping Family

Heather Dalton

The aim of *Keeping Family in an Age of Long Distance Trade, Imperial Expansion and Exile, 1550–1850* is to come to new understandings of the foundations of our interconnected world and of the families who contributed to it. During the era covered, 1550 to 1850, family networks transcending national ties and traditional boundaries relating to gender, class, religion, and race were central to the project of discovery, trade expansion, settlement, and ultimately empire building. It was a period of great flux, and roles and relations within and outside households were increasingly affected by travel. The essays in this collection investigate families where separations occurred in order to trade, or to maintain the maritime and military infrastructure and settlements that enabled that trade to flourish. While many individuals and family units chose to uproot, travel and labour in unfamiliar surroundings, others, such as slaves and convicts, were forced to do so. Moreover, while some travelled within their own countries, others went much further, crossing multiple oceans. Each of the eleven essays looks at how families and family businesses were kept going over distance and how relationships were maintained while dealing with change and separation. Some also reveal how individuals created new family after losing contact with their kin.

Keeping Family stands at the crossroads of two branches of social history: family and migration. Since the late 1960s historians have increasingly studied the practices, rituals and relationships that have given meaning to the lives of ordinary people.¹ In 1996 M.E. Bratchel pondered whether the family should be ‘analysed primarily as a political, a social or an economic force’.² Seventeen years later, the editors of *William and Mary Quarterly*’s special issue ‘Centering Families in Atlantic Histories’ accepted that it could be both and were confident defining family as ‘cultural, economic, legal,

¹ The first issue of the *Journal of Family History* appeared in 1976. Other publications and journals followed, including *History of the Family* (1996) and *Family & Community History* (1998).

² Bratchel, 4.

political, social – and even biological ... an idea, an ideology, a strategy, an economic or political unit, and a lived experience'.³ The history of the family has continued to be challenged, enriched by discussions regarding the effectiveness of family networks and categories such as class, race and gender. Histories of family and migration, inextricably intertwined with histories of empire, bring those issues of definition to the fore. As Phillip Buckner and R. Douglas Franci explain in the introduction to their edited collection, *Canada and the British World: Culture, Migration, and Identity* (2006), migration history in the Anglophone world grew out of an attempt by John Darwin at Oxford University, Rob Holland at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies at the University of London, and Carl Bridge at the Menzies Centre for Australian Studies at the University of London 'to break the mould in which imperial history was being written'.⁴ By 1999 Alison Games recognized that although many historians had been drawn to the topic of migration, there was more to be learned from focusing in on 'the reconstructed experiences of real individuals who lived in precarious colonial communities'.⁵

Sarah Gibson's essay in *Canada and the British World* reconstructed such experiences through letters, as do several of the essays in this collection.⁶ In 'Self-Reflection in the Consolidation of Scottish Identity: A Case Study in Family Correspondence, 1805–50' Gibson points out that while the letters of the Brodie family may be 'terse in describing the economic and social upheavals,' they can be illuminating when it comes to expressing ways of 'retaining affective ties with emigrated relatives'. She points out that historians of colonialism had 'turned to the historical category of the self as another analytical tool with which to describe social and cultural change'.⁷ Perhaps it was this focus on 'the self' that led Sarah Pearsall to lament on the 'headlong flight from family history,' which had occurred as historians focused on individuals. She pointed out that although early modern people may have been 'increasingly individualized,' they 'were deeply grounded in families and communities'. By focusing on the medium of family letters crisscrossing the late eighteenth-century Atlantic, Pearson's 2008 book reveals how the self is negotiated through family, pointing out that across time and space such letters reveal that 'claims of enduring love, news shared,

3 Hardwick, Pearsall and Wulf, 205.

4 Buckner and Franci, 8.

5 Games (1999), 6, 10.

6 Buckner and Franci, 8.

7 Gibson, 30–32.



carping, bickering, requests for money' are universal themes.⁸ Such letters also highlight the fluidity between business/political/public and domestic/private spheres, especially in relation to family networks.

While it was once warned that equating women's history with the family could lead to the delegation of both to the private sphere, this has not turned out to be the case. Indeed, in 1988 Louise Tilly pointed out that in order to examine the lives of ordinary women and their relationship to institutions, historians needed to 'move closer to family history'.⁹ For example, in 2007 a special issue of *History of the Family* presented 'new research on the ways in which women and their families survived economically and socially without a male household head (temporarily or permanently) and the ways in which society responded to such families'.¹⁰ In her study of family in the French Atlantic, published in 2016, Jennifer Palmer surmised that, while 'gender continued to usurp race as the primary category that structured household relations', 'empire also caused gender hierarchies to break down and transformed gender roles within the family'.¹¹ As Ann Laura Stoler and other scholars (including Adele Perry, Elizabeth Buettner, Annette Burton, and Adele Pinch) have demonstrated, intimate relationships were not simply personal – they were political. The family was and is a key site in which the meanings of race, gender, power, culture and rule are produced, negotiated and challenged.¹²

As we enter the third decade of the twenty-first century there is no trace of that 'headlong flight' from family history Pearson feared, particularly when it comes to looking at how families have been affected by migration and vice versa.¹³ It is now understood more than ever that the idea of who we are is bound up with the idea of where we belong and that, for most individuals, that belonging is rooted in family. Because of this, there is recognition that relationships within the family, and between families, not only have an effect on individuals, they impact the structure of societies. Many of the authors in this collection, including the editor, are first or second generation migrants and live or have lived in societies affected by the trauma of forced exile or stolen generations.¹⁴ We understand that people

8 Pearsall, 242, 1. See also Ishiguro (2019).

9 Tilly, 313.

10 Heijden, Schmidt and Wall.

11 Palmer, 4–5.

12 For gender, intimacies and empire see, for example: Perry (2001); Stoler (2002); Buettner (2004); Ghosh (2006); Finn (2020); and Levine (2004).

13 For example: Payton and Varnava (2019).

14 For example: Cassidy (2006); Nogrady (2019).

removed from their families often struggle to find their identities and feel bereft not just of kin but of culture, and that new families, communities and even nations formed by those people can reflect that trauma for generations. Building on this, the aim of this collection is to contribute to a rethink of the nature of family and its intersection with trade, travel and empire building. Family here is considered in its widest sense, encompassing common law husbands and wives, mistresses, children (legitimate and illegitimate), apprentices, servants and slaves. As the editors of 'Centering Families in Atlantic Histories' point out, the concept of household 'is more applicable across comparative cultural contexts' and, in the three hundred year period covered by this volume, households were the 'key building blocks of society and indeed politics'.¹⁵ While the way identity is formed and reformed in new environments, especially around hybridity, is a staple of migration history, this collection goes further. The essays do not simply register the strain inherent in separation and exile, they examine the family as a site where emotional practices are performed, and pragmatic decisions are made, to 'keep family' by sustaining or reinventing longstanding connections or investing in new connections.

Many of the people discussed in these essays are not just trying to 'keep family' in places considered to be geographically marginal, they are also socially marginalized – even when much wealth is at stake. Several of the essays in this collection – Jessica O'Leary's, Nat Cutter's, and Francesca Bregoli's in particular – demonstrate that studies of family firms and business networks are no longer limited to the realm of economic or business history. Although the idea of a trading network is commonly associated with economic history, it is increasingly understood that relationships matter – that the efficiency and profitability of a trading network depended on the strength of personal ties between people. The role of emotions in maintaining trust and status quo on the one hand, and in driving change on the other, or simply surviving, is at their core.¹⁶ In investigating trading networks through the prism of extended family, some of the essays in this collection enrich our knowledge of trading communities, and all initiate a rethink of the nature of the family in this early period of European expansion.

The eleven case studies utilise a variety of methodological approaches to investigate the tension between the robustness and/or fragility of family ties,

15 Hardwick, Pearsall and Wulf, 211.

16 See, for example: Barclay (2014) and (2020); Lydon (2019); Ruys, Champion and Essary (2019). See also, Barclay, Meek and Thomson (2019); Tarantino and Zika (2019).



each one focusing on the experiences of an individual, family or household in or traveling between the continents of Europe, Asia, Africa, the Americas, and Australia. Between 1550 and 1850 individuals and families began to travel further. In the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth centuries, this movement was generally piecemeal and, in the case of Northern Europe in particular, was overseen by guilds and then larger overseas companies. This changed when, as Alison Games explains in relation to Britain, 'a shift in the state's conception of its role in overseas affairs' led it take an interest 'in mobilising the bodies of subjects, whether in the army, the navy, bound in the hold of a ship, or part of a colonial enterprise'.¹⁷ This may have occurred in mid seventeenth-century England, yet, it occurred later in other places, such as Scandinavia. While some of the essays are set in locations commonly associated with long distance trade, imperial expansion and/or the exile of slavery or transportation, others are not. It is notable that both of the essays located in pre-industrial Finland illustrate the importance of trading networks: firstly, to survival on the Finish frontier in the seventeenth century; and secondly, to stoking the imperial ambitions of larger nations and thus affecting Finnish seafaring families in the nineteenth. The imperial project may have influenced different regions in different ways at different times yet, as this collection reveals, individuals leaving, maintaining and creating families across distance were central to its progress.

These collected essays illustrate that, while there were acute differences in the backgrounds to families separating and coming together at different times in very different places, there were also common experiences. Because of this, *Keeping Family* is structured around themes rather than locales, taking a transnational approach. While nationality is relevant when looking at family and migration, transnational family and business relationships were key to settlement and the establishment of new communities.¹⁸ While some of the essays deal with eras before the establishment of nation states, scholars have pointed out that, contrary to Christopher Bayly's argument that the term 'transnational' is not applicable before the formation of nation states, there were groups displaying characteristics associated with contemporary transnationalism as early as the fifteenth century.¹⁹ The families investigated in this volume demonstrate such characteristics, even if they do not cross national borders: personal mobility; membership of networks transcending distance; adaptability to a variety of locales and

17 Games (2008), 292.

18 Sheaves, 25.

19 Bayly, Seed et al, 1441–1464.

cultures; and a continuing connection to their place of origin. This last point is important for, as Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks has pointed out, interactions and relationships between individuals who are mobile affect those within their network who are not and so even fixed locations can be 'saturated with transnational relationships'.²⁰

Keeping Family is divided into five parts: 'Surviving slavery, transportation and forced labour'; 'On the road: mobility, wellbeing, and survival'; 'In the absence of family, support in a hostile environment'; 'Managing kinship-based businesses and trading networks'; and 'Maintaining the maritime family'. The essays within each part are in date order. The authors have employed different methodologies and a variety of sources, each one offering an account of their specific approach. Many of the essays rest on meticulous research in Dutch, English, Finnish, French, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Spanish, or Latin language archives. However, in the interests of accessibility and brevity, all quotes have been translated into English.

The three essays in Part 1 challenge commonly held assumptions regarding the location and circumstances of cases of slavery, transportation and forced labour. In 'Fractured feelings', Susan Broomhall explores the legacy of forced labour in a location rarely featured in English language histories. Her study focuses on a Korean family taken to Japan during the Imjin Wars of the last years of the sixteenth century. This was a time when many Koreans were taken back to Japan as forced labourers. Craftspeople were very much in demand and the family, who were potters, were encouraged to set up a workshop where they flourished. A monument erected in the early eighteenth century, by a fourth generation descendent of Korean potters, encapsulates the challenges as well as the opportunities managed by this uprooted family. Broomhall considers the wording on this still-standing monument, placing it in historical context. She examines how this family perpetuated its identity, purpose and sense of honour – as Koreans who survived and eventually thrived in Japan – through manufacturing and cultural traditions.

When we think of eighteenth and nineteenth penal transportation, we generally think of convicts sent from the British Isles to America and Australia, or of political prisoners sent from France to Devil's Island and New Caledonia, or British Burma to the Andaman Islands. Eilin Hordvik's 'Forced Separations' reveals a hitherto rarely considered aspect of transportation. While recent studies have revealed that convicts were sent to Australia from Britain's other colonies, Hordvik's essay breaks new

20 Wiesner-Hanks (2011), 357–379 and (2012), 201.

ground. In examining the experiences of convicted felons transported from the Indian Ocean colony of Mauritius to Australia, Hordvick reveals the pre-convict status of offenders as slaves, as well as freed slaves, indentured labourers and apprentices. Her essay investigates how proximity and the tenuous nature of relationships in their owner's or employer's household made these people vulnerable to accusation; why transportation often meant the permanent severing of family ties in Mauritius; and how individuals, couples and families fared in Australia as convicts and, ultimately, as free citizens' (for those who had been enslaved in Mauritius became free in Australia). Hordvick not only explores the importance of patronage in finding employment, forming new relationships and creating new families in the Australian penal colonies, she explores issues of racial identity that resonate for descendants today. Movement is an integral part of family life and has become part of what the geographer Elizabeth Thomas-Hope calls 'societal meaning'. She emphasises that the modern (and the pre-modern) history of the Caribbean is essentially the history of migration, of arrival and departure and, in this sense, of the continuing interplay between the global and the local.²¹ Jessica Roitman's 'If I should fall behind' centres on Mathilda Percival, a young, free woman of colour, who leaves her husband and child on the Dutch Caribbean island of St Eustatius in 1860 to work on the Danish island of St Thomas. The essay explores how people of colour, women in particular, maintained family relationships at a time when the recently freed lived in conditions very like those of their enslaved neighbours and travel between the islands was essential if a living was to be made. An exploration of gender relations, within and outside the family and in relation to migration, whether forced or otherwise, is central to Roitman's essay, as it is to the other two in this section – and indeed, the majority of the volume's essays. For transported convicts and their families, the separation was enduring and usually permanent.

The essays in Part 2, 'On the road: mobility, wellbeing, and survival', represent the dichotomy inherent in a life on the road. In 'The witch who moved to the wilderness', Raisa Maria Toivo looks at why and how an extended household, with a close nuclear family at its core, moved around Finland in order to avoid persecution, at the same time expanding their household and prospering. In the case of the individuals in 'Family, mobility and emotion in eighteenth-century Scotland', relationships are not centred on conventional households. Katie Barclay takes on board the point made by Hardwick, Pearsall and Wulf that the historical importance of conventional

21 Hope, 88.

family should not be assumed, 'not only because demographic accidents or migration sometimes made kin unavailable but because men and women might prefer for many reasons to build ties instead or as well with other people'.²² Looking at an itinerant couple, and then a couple and their adopted child, Barclay explores how family, emotion and gender relationships were shaped when there was not a stable place of belonging. She shows how family-like structures were formed in relation to landladies, networks of hospitality, and travel. Court records are key to both these essays, revealing how the lack of a stable base could, on the one hand, provide the opportunity of escaping prejudice and prosecution, yet, on the other, expose individuals, especially women and children, to exploitation, neglect and violence.

The essays in Part 3, 'In the absence of family, support in a hostile environment', explore the vulnerability of individuals living far away from family. In both cases, young men in trading environments flounder and are supported by older men who, having been through the same experience, understand the importance of providing support away from home. Although the circumstances and eras are very different, in both essays relationships that transcend national ties and traditional boundaries relating to class are central to individual survival, and ultimately to the project of national expansion. In 'Suffering rewarded' Robert Tomson, a young English apprentice, finds himself alone and subject to the Inquisition in 1550's Mexico after his master's family is wiped out by contagion. While Tomson's record of his experiences, including his subsequent marriage to a rich heiress, implies Godly intervention, Spanish notary evidence suggests that it was Anglo-Iberian mixed race familial networks that sustained him and a Mexican-Iberian who married him. In 'Grieved in my soul that I suffered you to depart from me' Nat Cutter examines the letters of English people living together in the 'English House' in Ottoman Tunis and Tripoli in the 1680s. In these Muslim-dominated cities, merchants, consuls and servants created surrogate families within their household and endeavoured to protect themselves and the more vulnerable members of their communities from harm. Patrick Manning argues that 'the expanded terrestrial and maritime communication of the early-modern world led to the creation of new families and also brought the expansion, displacement, division and destruction of previously existing families' and, in both these essays, the protagonists not only lived close by those who they classed as different from themselves, they had family ties with them.²³

22 Hardwick, Pearsall and Wulf, 208.

23 Manning, 30.

In Part 4, Francesca Bregoli and Jessica O'Leary look at how very different kinds of family trading networks were initiated, adapted and maintained over distance. Both essays clearly demonstrate that if the family could not be kept intact, then the business would fail, and visa versa. In 'New Christian family networks in the First Visitation of the Inquisition to Brazil', O'Leary places two exiled Jewish brothers, João and Diogo Nunes, in the broader commercial network of New Christian merchant families controlling the sugar trade in north-eastern Brazil during its rapid expansion on the cusp of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Using Inquisition records, O'Leary shows how the success of the Nunes family in running sugar mills and trading sugar across the Atlantic meant they were hounded by the Inquisition, yet they survived because the Portuguese state intervened in order to keep their family network working. In 'Intimate Affairs' Bregoli investigates processes that allowed Jewish merchants in the eighteenth-century Mediterranean area to sustain familial and commercial obligation during long absences. Exploring the letters from the Tunis-based Joseph Franchetti to his sons and associates in Livorno and Smyrna, she demonstrates that while the father was concerned about both his family and his business, the two cannot be separated. Franchetti alternately chides, advises, instructs, expresses affection and reminds his son of the relatives they have left behind. In worrying about honour, religious adherence and profit, his letters reveal that the intersection of family and trade was a constructed practice underpinned by a deeply held morality.

Part 5 focuses on mariner families in Britain and Finland. In *Atlantic Families* Sarah Pearsall cites a ballad by Charles Dibdin which 'issued a siren song of paradoxes calling men to sea: "where men lose their lives, a sure fortune to gain"'.²⁴ In 'These happy effects on the character of the British sailor' Gillian Dooley looks at why and how such ballads were created and circulated in Georgian Britain. The intention of such ballads was often to not only encourage men to go to sea, but to reassure families that they should support them in doing so. Just as soldiers were encouraged to see it as part of their duty to part from wives and sweethearts while remembering and identifying 'with their domestic ties', so were mariners.²⁵ Although the Navy's urgent need for manpower is often epitomised by the image of the press-ganged sailor torn from his wife and children, volunteers greatly outnumbered press-ganged men. As Dooley points out, ballads emphasising

24 C. Dibden, 'Tight Lads of the Ocean,' *Songs and Ballads*, 156 in Pearsall, 55.

25 Hurl-Eamon, 2.

the mariner's longing for home and family and the importance of a wife's support were as much part of the musical repertoire of the middle-class drawing room as they were of the sailor's tavern. They served to reassure those waiting at home that both sailors and officers were serving a disciplined, domesticated navy safely underpinned and strengthened by a network of families. It was important that fears about the social disruption which might well result from long absences and family separations were allayed if Britain's maritime power was to continue growing. It did continue to grow, as did international trade. Finnish shipping companies responded to this by building larger wooden vessels. From the early nineteenth century, merchant shipping became profitable in Finland because a population boom among the landless poor meant there was a ready supply of cheap labour. In 'Maintaining the family: community support for merchant sailors' families in Finland, 1830–1860' Pirita Frigren looks at how families survived as increasing numbers of men went to sea, many of them never to return. She demonstrates that in order to keep their families together, women shared households with other maritime families, cooperated with neighbours and promoted their own issues within a local community that, in return, provided them with support. These maritime essays make an apt conclusion to this volume for they highlight the fact that the growth of trade and empire relied as much on those who went voluntarily as those who were forcefully transported.

It took ingenuity, strength and effort to keep existing families together, and to create and maintain new ones – especially in new and difficult circumstances. Sarah Pearsall's conclusion that the Atlantic economy would not have grown as it did, 'had it not been for the strength of many intimate personal connections between members of families', is just as true for the Mediterranean, Baltic, Indian and Pacific Ocean economies.²⁶ Indeed, families were central to the project of national expansion and empire building – and not merely precursors of it or peripheral to it. While colonial or mercantile authorities may have had an interest in encouraging the formation of families to establish the status quo, movement in itself could challenge categories such as class, gender or race. Away from familiar supports and restrictions, family life could and often did undergo a transformation, which meant that frontiers in particular were 'defined by changing family relationships'.²⁷ As this collection illustrates, the family,

26 S. Pearsall, 33.

27 Manning, 300.

in all its guises, both as a public institution and as a site of intimacy, was the primary site for negotiation and adaptation.

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