Katie Donington, *The Bonds of Family: Slavery, Commerce and Culture in the British Atlantic World*. Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 2020. xiii + 320 pp. (Cloth US\$120.00)

Family records often provide an interesting perspective on social and cultural issues. *The Bonds of Family: Slavery, Commerce and Culture in the British Atlantic World* exemplifies this potential in a deeply-researched study that follows the Hibbert family of England across four generations. Working extensively with primary and secondary sources, including numerous illustrations, Katie Donington provides an astute analysis of the Hibberts' complex business ventures. She also includes seven family trees to "highlight the key relationships relevant to each chapter" (p. ix). With keen attention to this one family, *The Bonds of Family* brings a deeper understanding of the connections between slavery, commerce, and culture.

The introduction, "Family Matters: Slavery, Commerce and Culture," addresses the family's accumulation of wealth and connections to the slave trade, explaining that, "For four generations the Hibbert family story was entwined with the world of transatlantic commerce; slave trading, plantation ownership, colonial commodities, shipping, insurance and credit were the lifeblood of their family economy" (p. 1). Part One, "Family Business: Commerce, Commodities and Credit," describes the family's three main business locations: Manchester, as linen merchants in the 1690s; Jamaica, as plantation owners from the 1730s; and London, as merchants from the 1770s. Collectively, the Hibberts offered their clients "an ease of convenience through the provision of an integrated service which eventually took in not only the sale of enslaved people but also credit, plantation supplies, shipping, warehousing, insurance and distribution" (p. 80). As this business model suggests, acquiring wealth was a prime motivator for expanding their business empire.

Part Two, "Family Politics: Defending the Slave Trade and Slavery," provides a rigorous investigation of these issues. Here Donington focuses on George Hibbert of London, who spent "five decades ... at the forefront of defending slavery." Consequently, he "was increasingly recognised as a leading anti-abolitionist figure" (p. 108–9). George Hibbert also "served as a Member of Parliament (1806–12) and later as Agent for Jamaica (1812–30)" (p. 91). Donington further notes that "George's most lasting political legacy stemmed from his long-standing support for compensation" (p. 135). In addition to discussing the justifications of slavery, this section describes the complex, interconnecting networks of the slave trade that promoted its expansion and reinforces a focus on commerce rather than humanity, even as the momentum toward abolition grew stronger.

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Part Three, “Family Culture: Domesticating Slavery” addresses differences between the Hibberts in Jamaica and London. Donington thus finds that “The Hibberts had to negotiate family politics within the context of both metropole and colony. Their intimate relations were transformed through their engagement with slavery; it created new structures and changed the ways in which family was both imagined and lived” (p. 161). The relationship between Thomas Hibbert senior and Charity Harry, a “free mulatto woman,” for example, appears to have been accepted within Jamaican society, but when their daughters, Jane and Margaret, were sent to England for schooling, they lived with their father’s former business partner rather than a family member, which could have affected the Hibberts’ social standing (pp. 162, 164–65). Donington speculates on a failure to acknowledge the source of their wealth: “One wonders if any of the Hibbert men similarly counterbalanced their domestic comforts with the ethical implications of involvement in the business of slavery ... Distanced from the violence of the plantation, the labour of the enslaved was domesticated and remade into the signifiers of respectability, taste and status” (p. 185). A contrast appears evident between dealing with the reality of slaveholding and addressing slavery as a signifier. In London, the Hibberts sought access to elite social circles through “collecting and connoisseurship” and their “country houses and philanthropy.” Regarding the fashionable London neighborhood where George and Elizabeth Hibbert lived for 28 years, Donington further observes: “Clapham’s social mixture tells a fascinating story of the intermingling between abolitionist and proslavery supporters” and finds that “[a] map of Clapham Common in 1800 demonstrates the close proximity within which the political opponents lived” (p. 200). Collecting rare books and acquiring fine art also enabled George Hibbert to participate in the higher spheres of power and influence. The epilogue, “Family Legacies: After Abolition,” explains how subsequent generations sustained this wealth: “As well as inheriting the wealth that had been generated through slave trading and plantation ownership, John Hubert Washington [Hibbert] was also a recipient of slavery compensation money” (p. 265). As Donington makes clear, although slavery may have ended in the British West Indies in 1833, the challenges for social equality continued.

The Bonds of Family is an engaging, methodically-presented study that brings a unique perspective on the British Atlantic and promises to contribute significantly to studies of Caribbean and British history.

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