Slavery, Family, and Gentry Capitalism in the British Atlantic

From the mid-seventeenth century to the 1830s, successful gentry capitalists created an extensive business empire centred on slavery in the West Indies, but interlinked with North America, Africa, and Europe. S. D. Smith examines the formation of this British Atlantic world from the perspective of Yorkshire aristocratic families who invested in the West Indies. At the heart of the book lies a case study of the plantation-owning Lascelles and the commercial and cultural network they created with their associates. The Lascelles exhibited high levels of business innovation and were accomplished risk-takers, overcoming daunting obstacles to make fortunes out of the New World. Dr Smith shows how the family raised themselves first to super-merchant status and then to aristocratic pre-eminence. He also explores the tragic consequences for enslaved Africans with chapters devoted to the slave populations and interracial relations. This widely researched book sheds new light on the networks and the culture of imperialism.

S. D. Smith is Senior Lecturer in History at the University of York. He has previously edited ‘An Exact and Industrious Tradesman: The Letter Book of Joseph Symson of Kendal’ (2002).
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More information
For he that hath, to him shall be given:
and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even
that which he hath.

***

For AS, DS, and AJJS
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Fire, fire – grand copper, grand copper.

Michael Scott, Tom Crengle’s Log (originally published 1820–33; New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1927), 574

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List of Abbreviations

BA Barbados Archives, Cave Hill, Barbados
BL British Library, London
BPL Boston Public Library, Boston, Massachusetts
CKS Centre for Kentish Studies, Maidstone, Kent
CSPC (A&WI) Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies (1860–)
CLRO Corporation of London Records Office
CRO Carlisle Record Office, Cumbria
HH:WIP Harewood House, West Yorkshire, West India Papers
HSP Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia
IGI International Genealogical Index
JA Jamaica Archives, Spanish Town Jamaica
JBMHS Journal of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society
LBMH Library of the Barbados Museum & Historical Society, Bridgetown, Barbados
MCD Corporation of London Records Office, Mayor’s Court Depositions
MHS Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston
NA:PRO National Archives: Public Record Office, London
NAS National Archives of Scotland, Edinburgh
NEHGR New England Historical and Genealogical Register
PEM Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts
PRONI Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, Belfast
WRA West Riding of Yorkshire Archives (WRA), Sheepscar Branch, Leeds
Map 1. Major trade routes of the British Atlantic.