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Francisca Hoyer

Relations of Absence
Germans in the East Indies and Their Families
c. 1750–1820
In the early modern period thousands of Germans, mostly men but also a few women and children, travelled to the Indian Ocean world in the service of the Dutch and British East India companies (VOC and EIC). Family played a key role for these Ostindienfahrer (East Indies travellers). People’s motives for going were often bound up with family affairs, they left families behind, they struggled to maintain connections to their families while abroad, and they formed new families in the East Indies. Meanwhile people in the Holy Roman Empire took a keen interest in the welfare of relatives abroad. Family has, however, been neglected in the scholarship on the German lands and early modern European expansion. Relations of Absence argues for re-framing the history of the Ostindienfahrer as a global family history.

The study focuses on 180 German families from all social orders who were associated with the VOC and EIC from around 1750 to 1820. Using an actor-centred, micrological approach the study explores the nexus of family and empire and the interconnectedness of metropole and colonies, even in the Holy Roman Empire, not a region typically thought of as having an early modern global history. It shows that empire and family cohered on several levels. First, empire offered economic and social opportunities to families whose involvement in early modern imperial expansion has hitherto gone unnoticed. Second, families, at least to some degree, facilitated mobility and thus the expansion of empire on both micro and macro levels. Third, empire complicated family, not only by dislocating and separating families, but also by transforming gender roles and introducing new intimate relationships (e.g., slavery, adoption, and inter-ethnic and inter-religious unions).

Drawing on a wide range of archival sources (letters, petitions, probate records, notary deeds, administrative records, and more) from Germany, England, and the Netherlands, Relations of Absence argues that 18th-century Germans, both men and women, shaped and experienced globalization in their daily lives to a greater extent than has previously been acknowledged. Locating families in global history allows new ways to think about the history of the family, while it revises global history’s emphasis on male travellers and connections. The study contributes both to the New Imperial History and to early modern German global history by considering the ‘foreign’ dynamics within empires, the history of emotions, and the history of the family.

Keywords: British East India Company, Dutch East India Company, Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, 18th century, 19th century, Southeast Asia, India, Cape Colony, Brandenburg-Prussia, German history, global family history, new imperial history, gender history, history of emotions, concubinage, inter-ethnic unions, colonialism, slavery, Ostindienfahrer, petitions

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Stockholm on a sunny day,
in a year when days and dates lost all meaning
Maps and Figures

Figure 1. Map of the East Indies: ‘Nieuwe Wassende Graadige Paskaarte van Oost Indien Verthoonende hem van C. de Bona Esperanca tot aan het Landt van Eso’, by Johannes Loots, Amsterdam [first half of the 18th century]. Source: NL-HaNA 4.VEL, inv.no. T 013 Deelopname 01. ........ 23

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Abbreviations

Abt. Abteilung
AFSt Archiv der Franckeschen Stiftungen zu Halle
AHR American Historical Review
Best. Bestand
BL British Library
BLHA Brandenburgisches Landesarchiv
Bü Büschel
BvTP Bloys van Treslong Prins Familiepapieren
CBG CBG Centrum voor familiegeschiedenis (formerly called Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie)
DTB Doop-, trouw- en begraafregisters (baptism, marriage, and funeral registers)
EI East Indies
EIC The United Company of Merchants Trading to the East Indies, commonly known as the (English/British) East India Company
EIT East Indies traveller
EM Oberratsstube, Preußische Regierung, Ostpreußisches Etatsministerium
GNM Germanisches Nationalmuseum
GR Geheimer Rat (Privy Council)
GStA PK Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz
HA Hauptabteilung
HCA Records of the High Court of Admiralty and colonial Vice-Admiralty courts
HStA S Landesarchiv Baden-Württemberg, Abteilung Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart
HZAN Landesarchiv Baden-Württemberg, Abteilung Hohenlohe-Zentralarchiv Neuenstein
inv.no. inventarisnummer
IOR India Office Records
LHAS Landeshauptarchiv Schwerin
NL-HaNA Nationaal Archief (National Archives of the Netherlands)
NLA HA  Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv, Abteilung Hannover
NLA OL  Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv, Abteilung Oldenburg
Rep.   Repositur
SächsStA-D  Sächsisches Staatsarchiv, Hauptstaatsarchiv Dresden
StAHH  Staatsarchiv Hamburg
TNA   The National Archives of the UK
VOC   Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie or Dutch East India Company; also VOC archives (nummer toegang 1.04.02) in NL-HaNA.

∞  married
∞∞  divorced
*  born
~  baptized
†  died
Note to the Reader

The family histories in this thesis crossed linguistic boundaries, as does the analysis, which brings together sources in different languages and different national historiographies. Therefore, some remarks on the use of language, terms, and spellings are necessary to avoid misunderstanding.

All English translations of quotes from original sources and the literature are my own, unless otherwise noted.\(^1\) Spellings in the original quotes are unchanged; abbreviations have been extended. Where words are ambiguous, I use modern spellings. Within-sentence capitalization in English citations is also modernized, as is punctuation throughout. Longer citations translated from German, Dutch, or French are provided in their original wording in the footnotes. Translations of problematic or specially significant words or phrases are provided in the text next to the translation in italics within parentheses. Frequently used terms and their translations are also included in the Glossary. Spellings of place names reflect contemporary usage. Those that have changed significantly are given the modern gloss in parentheses at first mention, e.g.: Königsberg (now Kaliningrad).\(^2\)

The spelling of names is inconsistent in early modern sources, and the variety of spellings increases when sources in other languages are consulted. In the Dutch and English sources, we often find anglicized and Dutchified German names. This thesis uses standardized names in the text, following the most common version in the sources, but provides the original spellings from the sources in the footnotes. This is important for traceability, especially when the reference is to a searchable online database. When no available German sources provide a person’s German name, the anglicized or Dutchified form from the consulted sources is also used in the text. This might lead to confusion when I refer to ‘Germans’ with English or Dutch names (e.g. ‘Mary Baker’). However, as the German version of a name is not always distinguished in its English or Dutch version (e.g. John can be either Johann or Johannes), changing these names

\(^1\) For the translation of some historical German terms into English I consulted *The New and Complete Dictionary of the German and English Languages; Composed Chiefly After the German Dictionaries of Mr. Ade- lung and of Mr. Schwant* ... elaborated by John Ebers, 3 vols. (Leipzig, 1796–1799). My translations of VOC-related terms follows mainly G. L. Balk, F. van Dijk and D. J. Kortlang (eds.), *The Archives of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) and the Local Institutions in Batavia* (Leiden, 2007), and J. R. Bruijn, F. S. Gaastra and I. Schöffer (eds.), *Dutch Asiatic Shipping in the 17th and 18th Centuries*, vol. 1: *Introductory Volume* (The Hague, 1987).

\(^2\) Place names in the Indian Ocean world have been standardized according to the *Atlas of Mutual heritage* [database], https://www.atlasofmutualheritage.nl/.
would have increased the risk of error. In German naming traditions, married women usually took the name of their husbands but added their maiden names in written documents, while some continued to use their maiden names, adding their married names in writing. In the text I follow the women’s choices in presenting themselves to the authorities. Moreover, in German it was common to feminize the last name of women through adding the suffix -in (e.g. Elisabeth Reimerin was the wife of Mr Reimer). This practice is retained in the text.

The terms German and Germany are used in this thesis as a linguistic-cultural designation also found in the source material. The terms thus do not refer to a confined political territory or an intrinsic, common cultural value, but rather to the broad association of states and principalities of the Holy Roman Empire and other German-speaking territories and notions of subjecthood and ethnicity that were understood as fluid and contextual.  

Indian Ocean world is used in this thesis as an umbrella term for the areas in which the East India companies were active. Thus, the term refers less to a confined geographical region than to a contingent and changing space. In the eighteenth century, this space comprised a region including the Cape of Good Hope, the Indian subcontinent, the Bay of Bengal, the Malay Archipelago, and trading posts in Canton and beyond. The historical term ‘East Indies’ (Ostindien) refers to the same region and is thus sometimes used synonymously in this thesis. However, the historical term is broader than the modern Indian Ocean world as it also refers to a rather unspecific geographical and imagined space.

In the Indian Ocean world, German migrants formed new families and intimate ties. As they often chose not to define these relationships, it is difficult to describe them fully. I often follow Ann Laura Stoler’s use of the term ‘colonial intimacies’ to refer to these relationships, which could and often did involve ‘humiliation, trespass, and intrusions’. Thus, the term ‘intimate relations’ is not confined to positive, tender relationships but also includes encounters marked by violence. The term ‘extramarital’ is used throughout the thesis in its broadest sense to mean any sexual or conjugal relationship outside of a legally or religiously sanctioned marriage. It does not imply that either partner also has a ‘legitimate’ spouse. Both partners might or might not be married to someone else; the defining characteristic is only that they are not married to each other. ‘Conjugal relationships’ are similarly not confined here to legal marriages. What is more, my use of the terms ‘conjugal partners’ or ‘conjugal companion’ does not imply an equal relationship in which both parties enjoy certain social and legal privileges.

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3 For this use, see also Gita Dharampal-Frick, *Indien im Spiegel deutscher Quellen der frühen Neuzeit (1500–1750). Studien zu einer interkulturellen Konstellation* (Tübingen, 1994).
1 Introduction

1.1 Families going global

In 1717, Johann Balthasar Trosihn left his wife and three minor daughters and went to Java in the service of the Dutch East India Company (Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie [VOC]). Originally from Aschersleben, he had been prompted to take this step by the ‘example of many men from that area, who had made a fortune through seafaring in the Orient’. During the first years of his absence he corresponded with his family and assured them of his wish to be able one day to provide for them. When no more letters from him arrived, his family learned of his fortunes from returning East Indies travellers. However, in 1756 news dried up and their letters remained unanswered. Johann’s daughters then turned to the Prussian king for help. They were worried that their father might have died and that they might lose their just patrimony. Probably through the intervention of the Prussian envoy, correspondence between Johann, who had not yet died, and his daughters seems to have revived after several years of silence. In 1763, however, 46 years after Johann had left his family, he died in Semarang. In his last will, he confirmed his daughters and grandchildren universal heirs to his estate, but he also acknowledged new intimate ties he had formed in the East Indies. To the ‘Saraansche woman’ Dirri, who was probably his conjugal or sexual companion, he gifted the enslaved worker Janni, clothes, and 20 Rixdalers ‘for her long-enjoyed services’.

The Trosihn family originated in the Principality of Halberstadt, a small state ruled by Brandenburg-Prussia and located in the interior of the Holy Roman Empire. Halberstadt and Brandenburg-Prussia belonged to the German regions that, according to Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, ‘are not immediately thought of as having strong global connections in the early modern period’. The global family

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6 Petition of Margaretha Magdalene Trosiehn (married name Kölsch) for herself, her sister Esther Juliane Trosiehn (Widow Müllerin), and the children of her late sister Johanne Elisabeth Trosiehn (Widow Siebertin). Berlin, 24 January 1756. Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz (GStA PK), I. Hauptabteilung (HA) Geheimer Rat (GR), Repositur (Rep.) 34: Herzogtum Kleve, Grafschaft Mark, Grafschaft Ravensberg; Beziehungen zu den Niederlanden, No. 1007, fols. 137r–138r. Other spellings of the name Trosihn in the records are Trosiehn, Drosihn, Droshin, Dreschin, and Droschin.


history of the Trosihns challenges this prevalent notion. To be sure, merchants, missionaries, and diplomats from German lands were always involved in long-distance trade and transcontinental mobility. However, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries witnessed important changes in both the numbers and social backgrounds of those who travelled the world. One important reason for these changes was the emergence of the various East India trading companies in England (1600), the Netherlands (1602), Denmark (1616), Sweden (1626), and France (1664). These companies ‘helped thrust Europe into world history’ and they made the world accessible to individuals from traditionally less mobile social groups and regions allegedly remote from the global transformations happening elsewhere. The companies became the employers of learned and unlearned individuals from all over Europe and beyond. Between 1600 and 1800 the VOC alone moved nearly one million people – mainly men, but also women and children – from Europe to the Indian Ocean world. Many of them came from the territories of the Holy Roman Empire and Prussia; recent research estimates that about 200,000–300,000 men from Germany signed on with the VOC. As Johann Trosihn’s daughters stated in their petition, their father simply followed the ‘example of many men’ who had taken the opportunities offered by the East India companies, and the VOC in particular. For the Trosihns, as for many other families in the Holy Roman Empire and Prussia, the East Indies became a concrete space of expectation and opportunity closely linked to family interests. Johann and his family imagined his employment would benefit the family in the long run, but this economic strategy also had ramifications for the family’s relationships. Johann’s absence and separation from his family caused anxiety and uncertainty among those he left behind, and it challenged traditional family practices and gender roles. Eventually, the state got involved in the Trosihn’s intimate global family affairs. In the East Indies, practices of slavery and interracial extramarital sexual relationships further complicated the notions of family and household, creating new and often problematic relationships, such as those

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13 Personal email conversation with Jelle van Lottum and Lodewijk Petram, 12 and 15 October 2020. This number refers to entries in the VOC pay ledgers. Many individuals went to the East Indies several times. Jelle van Lottum and Lodewijk Petram are currently pursuing a project on maritime careers, including the workforce of the VOC. See the project’s website at www.maritimecareers.eu, accessed 9 February 2020.
between Johann and Dirri and the enslaved domestic worker Janni. The history of the Trosihn family is therefore emblematic of the entangled and often conflicted histories of family and empire facilitated and framed by the East India companies.14

*Relations of Absence* explores this nexus of family and empire through the records of 180 families from the German-speaking territories of the Holy Roman Empire and Prussia who became associated with the Dutch or British East India companies between circa 1750 and 1820. The study investigates how families and family practices became global, and how new global realities affected the lives of the families who lived in and through them. *Relations of Absence* argues that early modern German societies were much more global than commonly assumed. Families sought to capitalize on the British and Dutch East Indian empires and thus they became agents of global entanglement. At the same time, empire affected those who had stayed put in German lands as well as German governmental authorities. Moreover, empire was in part facilitated by the aspirations of families from German lands who provided the much-needed labour resources. But empire also complicated family. It caused dislocation and separations, and it introduced new and strange intimate family relationships. The aim of this study is twofold. On the first level, it seeks to enhance our understanding of family and family practices in a globalizing world. On a second level, its theoretical and methodological aim is to complicate simplistic narratives of global history by integrating hitherto neglected actors into the picture and to critically inquire into the ‘connections’ and ‘circuits’ of people, goods, and ideas that are commonly assumed to be central to globalization.

The study accesses these families’ largely undocumented social and global histories with an actor-centred approach using a range of different sources that were produced across German lands, in the Netherlands, and in England, on board the ships traversing oceans, and in the settlements of the East India companies on Java, Sumatra, and Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), and in India and South Africa. Today, these records are stored in archives in Germany, England, and the Netherlands. The migration of Johann Trosihn and many other men and some women has left traces, especially in German archives, that tell a somewhat different story from the Company records and travelogues commonly used to write the history of the trading companies in general and of German East Indies travellers (Ostindienfahrer) in particular. Instead of foregrounding trade and commerce, diplomacy and knowledge, staging adventurism, or raising questions about the discursive production of the ‘other’, sources in the German archives firmly locate family matters within the global histories of the trading companies.15 Hundreds of

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14 Empire is used in this thesis in a broad meaning for global processes that include different moments and forms of imperial expansion, colonialism, transcultural encounters, and long-distance trade.
15 Scholarship on early modern trade and commerce has indeed recognized the central role of the family. See, e.g. Charles H. Parker, ‘Entrepreneurs, Families, and Companies’, in Jerry H. Bentley, Sanjay Subrahmanyam, and Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks (eds.), *The Cambridge World History*, vol. 6: *The
petitions to German governmental authorities testify to the implications of East Indies migration for the families who stayed behind. Letters from men and women who did not belong to the governing elites of the ‘Company empire[s]’ point to the challenges faced by separated families, how they navigated the absence of the emigrants, and how they forged and sought to maintain transcontinental connections. Notary deeds and probate records in several national repositories document how the realities of life in the Indian Ocean world, colonialism, and the practice of slavery complicated family relations and led to ‘rival ways of living in […] the world’.17

*Relations of Absence* resonates with and seeks to contribute to four current trends in the historiography. First, a vibrant international scholarship has established the multiple ways in which family and empire/colonialism/long-distance trade intersected in the early modern period.18 This study extends that approach by engaging the German-speaking world in these debates. Second, this thesis ties in with recent scholarship that stresses and examines trans-imperial dynamics and the phenomenon of foreigners’ participation in the colonial enterprises of other states.19 However, instead of focusing on mainly elite male foreigners’

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commercial and trade activities, it foregrounds people of all walks of life who sought to capitalize on the East India trading companies for, as they often claimed, the good of their families. Third, though it is informed by the New Imperial History, this study complicates the dichotomous notion of metropoles and colonies, and thus answers historiographical calls to de-centre and de-nationalize the notion of empire. It does so by viewing the Dutch and British East India companies as much as possible outside of conventional national modes of analysis. Although drawing in parts on records produced by the companies, this thesis foregrounds the local, global, and connected histories the companies facilitated and framed. Fourth and finally, this study charts the potential of hitherto


unused German archival sources for writing global and connected histories.23 These histories defy what Renate Dürr recently has described and criticised as ‘the idea of the Holy Roman Empire languishing in the backwaters of history and of its having no or hardly any part in European expansion, global trade, and slavery’.24 Thus, this thesis encourages a reorientation of early modern German history that situates it more explicitly within a global frame.

1.2 Scope of the study

*Relations of Absence* centres on families with a connection to one or more of the German-speaking territories of the Holy Roman Empire and Prussia. Besides the need to increase our understanding of the global and colonial ramifications of early modern German history, this choice is motivated by a growing historiographical interest in ‘foreign’ actors within and at the edges of global empires and the acknowledgement that colonialism did indeed exist in states without clearly defined colonies.25

To narrow the object of investigation, I focus on those regions in the Indian Ocean world that were connected to Europe through the Dutch and British East India companies (Figure 1). There are two reasons for this. The first is historiographic. Not much is known about the mobility and interrelations of Germans in the Indian Ocean world. Early modern migration from German territories to Asia has been almost entirely neglected, with most emphasis placed on movements to east and southeast Europe and the Atlantic world. The same is true of international scholarship on the nexus of family and empire, in which the Atlantic world has received much more attention than the Indian Ocean world.26 The

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26 See, e.g. the contributions in Maria Beatriz Nizza da Silva (eds.), *Families in the Expansion of Europe, 1500–1800* (1998; reissued London, 2018), which all but one focus on the colonial Americas (the exception is the Cape colony). The predominance of the Atlantic world in the historiography of colonial families is, at least in part, the result of differing patterns of European imperial expansion
second reason is pragmatic. The East India companies quickly developed routines and practices to administratively bridge the distance between Europe and their settlements and employees abroad. As the greater part of the Dutch and British East India companies’ eighteenth-century records are preserved and accessible, it is often possible to trace individuals associated with these companies on their journeys from Europe to the Indian Ocean world.

The study focuses on the time-period circa 1750 to 1820. To be sure, long-distance relationships and long-term absences were nothing new during this time and were not exceptional in early modern societies in general. However, while there are studies on transnational families and Indo-German relations in the nineteenth century, the time before 1800 remains under-studied. The choice to end the study around 1820 is motivated by the source material and the biographies of the families. Their lives vitiate the traditional demarcation of 1800 as the end of the early modern period. Going further into the nineteenth century allows the inclusion both of actors who went to the East Indies shortly before the formal end of the Dutch East India Company in 1799 and those who went with the British East India Company after its significant expansion in the 1760s and 1770s.

Figure 1. Map of the East Indies: ‘Nieuwe Wassende Graadige Paskaarte van Oost Indien Verthoonende hem van C. de Bona Esperanca tot aan het Landt van Eso’, by Johannes Loots, Amsterdam [first half of the 18th century]. Source: NL-HaNA 4.VEL, inv.no. T 013 Deelopname 01.

1.3 Triangulating archives and source genres

Relations of Absence draws on extensive research in archival sources that until now have been rarely or never used. In Clare Anderson’s words, the movement of people in the context of early modern trade and colonialism forces historians to ‘interrogate our attachment to national archives, and to approach our research in a way that is open to breaking down geographical boundaries’. This thesis follows suit, seeking to make visible German East Indies migrants and their families whose traces lie scattered over national borders and languages, across archives, repositories, and archival series. To identify a wide social range of East Indies travellers and their families, and to contextualize their experiences and practices, I applied a threefold method aimed to identify East Indies travellers from German territories and then decentre their lives by researching the relationships that emerged in the records during and associated with their East Indian ventures.

In the first step, I identified records in several German state archives (Staats- und Landesarchive). Queries in recently digitized and searchable catalogues and databases combined with traditional page-by-page research in the archives and chance finds allowed me to identify and locate records relating to East Indies migration to an extent that would not have been possible 10 years ago. For the most part, the records thus identified were produced when family members and self-proclaimed kin of German East Indies migrants submitted petitions to various authorities asking for help. Because anyone could petition, these records represent the wide social range of the people affected by East Indies migration. The records usually concerned inheritance and matters to do with missing persons and often contain supporting documents such as reports of consuls, resolutions, copies and extracts of letters and wills, newspaper extracts, excerpts from church records, depositions and the like.

My search located these kinds of hitherto unstudied records in almost all German state archives. They greatly resemble each other in the types of claims brought forward and the stories they tell. However, the political and administrative contexts in which they were produced varied considerably among the different principalities. Therefore, I decided to focus this research on the records from Brandenburg-Prussia, today stored at the Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz (GStA PK) in Berlin. This narrowing of the geographical space

28 Triangulation is a methodological term commonly deployed in the social sciences. My use of it, however, is inspired by Hans Hägerdal, ‘Contesting Colonialisms, Contesting Stories: Early Intrusion in East Timor through Portuguese and Dutch Eyes’, in Ricardo Roque and Elizabeth G. Traube (eds.), Crossing Histories and Ethnographies: Following Colonial Historicities in Timor-Leste (New York, 2019), 242.


30 To my knowledge, one exception is the local historical migration study by Inge Auerbach, who worked with similar sources from Hesse-Kassel; however, with a focus on the 19th century. Inge Auerbach, Auswanderung aus Kurhessen. Nach Osten oder Westen? (Marburg, 1993).
allowed me to pay closer attention to local context than would have been possible had I included cases from all the German states. I chose Brandenburg-Prussia because of the many cases that could be identified there thanks to recent cataloging of material containing subjects relating to the Netherlands. Overall, I identified around 200 files related to migration to the East Indies in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Most of the files (around 170) concern East Indies travellers in the service of the Dutch East India Company. Cases and sources from other territories, however, are also considered where they add something to the analysis which is not graspable using the Brandenburg-Prussia material alone.

The records in German archives make particularly visible those German families left behind by East Indies migrants at moments of conflict. However, East Indies migrants who left no relations in German lands or who managed these relations without conflict are underrepresented. Thus, the second step in identifying relevant records was to consult the archives of the East India companies themselves. The companies had no administrative need to account systematically for their foreign personnel, so no catalogues or archival series exist to allow a systematic search for non-Dutch or non-British employees. As telling as this is of the multinational character of the companies, it poses a methodological challenge to a researcher trying to locate and identify individuals from the territories of the Holy Roman Empire. To handle the abundance of material and to counterbalance the great many VOC employees identified in German archives, I confined this part of the search to the records of the British East India Company (EIC) in the India Office Records (IOR) at the British Library in London. Research into the Biographical Series yielded good results, the lists of inhabitants in Calcutta (now Kolkata) in the 1790s and inhabitants of Madras (now Chennai) not in Company service since the late 1780s offered a good starting point. I also consulted records containing the wills, probates, administrations, and inventories of estates of people who had died in India. Because of the vast number of volumes, I confined this search to wills from Bengal (1780–1799 and 1810–1812) and Madras (1769–1779) and applied a two-step procedure to identify (potentially) German-speaking testators. The first step was to survey the indexes, where available, for German names. A major challenge in searching for Germans in the IOR collections (and the VOC archives) is that foreign names were commonly anglicized (or Dutchified). However, some names in the indexes, such as Otto, Henrick/Heinrich/Henrik, Friedrich, Johann, Gottlieb/Gottfried, et cetera, suggest non-British origins. The relevant wills and other available sources for people with such names were then consulted to verify their origins. In volumes with no indexes, I surveyed the first paragraphs of all wills for names and other identifiers; where names could easily have been anglicized, I reviewed the entire will. The

31 The searchable index VOC: Opvarenden (VOC: employment records) of the Nationaal Archief of the Netherlands allows a search for places of origin of VOC employees. However, the place of origin (including its various spellings) must already be known.
obvious shortcoming of this method of identifying Germans in the IOR is that it misses all those individuals who for any reason did not maintain any relationships back in German lands, including those who deliberately obliterated all links to their family and place of origin. As a corrective, I therefore searched for probate records of individuals identified in the Biographical Series. In these cases, the Findmypast database, which includes wills registered and proved in Bengal after 1780, was very useful. Furthermore, the Factory Records of Sumatra were consulted. I also conducted a search of around 25 boxes of the ‘Prize Papers’ in the Records of the High Court of Admiralty and colonial Vice-Admiralty courts (HCA), stored at The National Archives in Kew. This research into intercepted letters from the Cape route yielded numerous individuals with relations in German lands.\(^\text{32}\)

The number of men, women, and children in this search who could be identified as originating from the Holy Roman Empire and Prussia was easily several thousand. Of these I chose a sample of 180 families with 202 individual East Indies migrants (men, women, and children) based on the study questions.\(^\text{33}\) The central criterion for selection was that their trajectories, family practices, and social relations reveal something in terms of this study’s objectives. The sample could, however, contain individuals who might be found or conjectured in future research to have had a different geographical origin than I concluded they had. The rapid development of the digital humanities and the ever-growing archival material that is cross-referenceable online have already compelled additions, adjustments, and revisions. However, in this thesis I seek neither to present a comprehensive study of all ‘Germans’ in the East Indies nor to consider the formation of a German national identity. Therefore, uncertainty about the extraction of some of the East Indies travellers does not undermine the sample. On the contrary, the acceptance of these ambiguities reflects historical notions of subjecthood and citizenship/nationality, which, in the \textit{Lebenswelten} of the historical actors, were practised and experienced as contextual and fluid.

In a third step, the biographical traces and hints about the German East Indies travellers in the sample and their families were contextualized as far as possible. Here, the tools offered by digital humanities and family genealogies were crucial in allowing me to ‘follow the actors’ and their relations.\(^\text{34}\) Searchable indexes and

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32 Parts of the records in the HCA-series that I consulted between 2017 and 2019 were uncatalogued and in the process of being sorted. In these cases, I have tried to describe the letters with more information than usual, including the name of the ship (if known) and the place of residence of the addressee (if intercepted en route to the East Indies). The Prize Paper project is currently digitising the Prize Papers collection. The digital copies will be searchable and accessible through the Prize Papers Portal in the future at https://www.prizepapers.de/database.

33 These numbers appear incongruous but contain both families who had more than one East Indies traveller and families who stated (mistakenly or fraudulently) that a relative had migrated to the East Indies. Some of the East Indies travellers were born outside of the Holy Roman Empire but had relatives there. This is made clearer in chap. 6 and the Appendix.

34 Several scholars working on global lives have emphasized the importance of digital humanities for this new kind of research. See, e.g. Anderson, \textit{Subaltern Lives}; and Rothschild, \textit{Inner Life}.
digitized records made it possible to further cross-reference sources across archives and repositories.  

A variety of sources emerged as a result of this threefold search method. Quantitatively, family letters, wills, petitions, and collateral administrative records form the largest body of sources. Letters were a critical resource for families and the means by which dislocated families tried to order family matters, and create and maintain a sense of belonging and familiarity. Relations of Absence draws on 48 single and hitherto for the most part untapped letters preserved because of extraordinary circumstances such as seizures of ships and conflicts caused by probate and individuals going missing. As these letters only offer snapshots into single moments of family life, they are complemented by the letter series of three noble and educated families: 26 letters of Ensign Ferdinand Breymann to his fiancée Eleonore Wehner and 5 of her replies, 23 letters from Christoph Adam Carl von Imhoff, supplemented by his travel journal (Reiss-Beschreibung), and 19 letters from Hans Carl von Arnim give insights into these East Indies travelers’ epistolary practices over several years. Selections of these three letter series are available in print along with valuable context information, and the printed Imhoff letters have already received some scholarly attention. Nevertheless, in all

35 Central to the search were the online VOC indexes of the Nationaal Archief of the Netherlands; archivportal-d.de and other searchable online catalogues of archives in Germany; the digital sources and indexes provided by municipal archives in the Netherlands as well as by (private) genealogy platforms like the CBG|Centrum voor familiegeschiedenis, findmypast.uk.co, ancestry.de, familysearch.org, and archion.de. Working with digitized online sources poses new challenges for the historian in terms of citation and traceability. In the footnotes I provide the reference to the physical object in the archives (if known) because the repository information is likely to be the most stable and durable information. In the bibliography I distinguish sources that I consulted online in digitized form through reference to the digital platform in square parentheses behind the archive, collection or item.


37 The letter corpus includes both letters sent from London, Amsterdam, and the East Indies to the families ‘at home’ and letters ‘from home’ to emigrants in the East Indies.
three cases I consulted the original letters in the archives because the published versions have been abbreviated.  

The letter corpus has a gender and social bias. Among the 33 writers of letters to family and kin in German lands, only two were women, both widows of East Indies migrants. This is not surprising given that significantly more men than women emigrated to the East Indies. The gender distribution of letter writers from German lands to the East Indies is, however, even. The social bias of the letter corpus reflects both traditions of saving and archiving letters that privilege noble and learned social groups and the power structures underlying communications. Most people who were dislocated across oceans in the eighteenth century were not in a position to easily stay connected with their families. This was obviously true for enslaved people, but it was also a problem for VOC sailors and soldiers, due to restrictions that made it difficult for lower-level VOC employees to write letters home.  

Moreover, differences in ability to stay connected related not only to the different groups who crossed the oceans, but to dividing lines within the families themselves. Enslaved or free(d) Asian women who were conjugal partners of German East Indies migrants were usually excluded from networks of familial correspondence between the East Indies and Europe. On the other hand, studies on the EIC have demonstrated the crucial role of the private correspondence of propertied British women in India in empire building. Similar collections organized around female correspondents have yet to be identified in German archives.

Wills are a crucial complement to letters and allow different perspectives on East Indies migrants and their families. *Relations of Absence* examines about 70
hitherto unstudied wills of German East Indies migrants, including five mutual wills of married couples made under Dutch jurisdiction. Wills have several advantages that make them particularly interesting for studying family life in colonial contexts. First, testators could acknowledge in wills intimate ties that could not be named as such in personal correspondence or in travelogues addressed to a wider audience. Thus, wills make visible individuals who were an integral part of colonial families, but who are absent in many other sources: enslaved men, women, and children, extramarital conjugal partners, slave-concubines, and out-of-wedlock children. Second, as official legal documents, wills illuminate the lives of a wider social spectrum than is revealed through correspondence. Therefore, wills are an essential addition to letters, whose chances of survival were highly determined by class and gender, family tradition, and random circumstance. Third and finally, despite being legal documents, wills are not only the product of legal norms. They also reveal personal needs and wishes, social relationships, emotional attachments, relations of power, and strategies of inclusion and exclusion. While wills have been widely used in studies of family life and inheritance practices in the Atlantic world, the extensive collections of wills available both for the EIC and VOC territories deserve more scholarly attention.

Petitions form the third large corpus of sources. They are valuable for this study in three respects. First, they make visible and document (parts of) the life histories of East Indies migrants. Second, unlike wills and letters, petitions offer insights into the lives of people of the lower strata of society for whom only a few other non-administrative sources are available. Third, petitions contain accounts of how – and are themselves one of the means by which – people who stayed behind met the challenges and navigated through the periods of separation and uncertainty. Petitions, and particularly the relationship between petitioners and scribes, have given historians ample reasons to discuss interpretative and methodological issues. Without question, petitions were carefully constructed,


44 Those I have found most useful for defining my approach are Merridee L. Bailey, “‘Most Hevynesse and Sorowe’: The Presence of Emotions in the Late Medieval and Early Modern Court of Chancery’, Law and History Review, 37/1 (2019); Natalie Zemon Davis, Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and Their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France (Cambridge, 1987); Julie Hardwick, Family Business:
and their form and contents were governed by rhetorical and cultural conventions and legal standards. Even so, petitions are a highly valuable source that allows us to reconstruct the life stories of East Indies migrants and to explore the reverberations of their migrations upon those they left behind. Lex Heerma van Voss called petitions ‘a global phenomenon’, and since 2001 his observation has been substantiated by numerous studies demonstrating the ubiquity of petitions in many parts of the world throughout the early modern and modern period and the ways petitions became productive in moments of colonial encounters and colonial state-formation.\(^{45}\) I argue in this thesis that the petitions in German archives about matters relating to East Indies migration must also be located in this framework.

Further sources augment the letters, wills, and petitions. Notary deeds, pay ledgers, court minutes, newspaper articles, travel journals, theatrical plays, and novels also help to contextualize the lives, experiences, and practices of East Indies migrants and their families.\(^{46}\) This plurality of genres from different archives allows us to observe and examine the histories of East Indies migrants and their families at different moments in time and from different perspectives. Nevertheless, the material is fragmentary and profoundly uneven. The records of some families are abundant, but other families become visible only through a passenger list or an entry in a church record. People who shared (parts of) their lives with German migrants in the Indian Ocean world, such as enslaved domestic labourers, extramarital partners, and mothers of the migrants’ children, are often difficult to account for in the historical records and sometimes remain nameless despite numerous attempts to trace their life stories too. It is important to keep this bias of the source material in mind.


\(^{46}\) The consulted notary records are all part of the Bloys van Treslong Prince Familienpapieren (family papers) collection, held by the CBG Centrum voor familiegeschiedenis (formerly called Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie) in The Hague. Bloys van Treslong Prince was Vice-Archiver General in Batavia between 1925 and 1931, during which time he collected diverse historical records. The collection was filmed in the 1970s and is accessible today only on microfilm or through the digitized copies online at https://cbgverzamelingen.nl. I thank Martijn Spruit (CBG) for this information.
1.4 A new frame for the history of the Ostindienfahrer

‘All historians frame the past, both by focusing on a particular period and on a particular place in their research,’ Martin Dusinberre argued in 2017. Yet, he goes on to say, ‘global history draws especial attention to the practice of framing and the idea that new relationships emerge between those frames’. In this regard, *Relations of Absence* can be described as a study of and in framing. It includes people of different social statuses, ages, genders, and ethnicities in the Holy Roman Empire and in the Indian Ocean world; it incorporates historical evidence spread across different national archives and seldom scrutinized together; it collapses the line between separate EIC and VOC histories and transcends the conventional division of the Indian Ocean world into South African, South Asian, and Southeast Asian histories; and it brings together different national histories which hitherto have been mainly studied in isolation from each other. In what follows, three research fields will be carved out which this study aims to bring into dialogue with each other: early modern German global history, the history of Germans’ involvement in the East Indies, and the broad field of scholarship that addresses issues of family and empire. Within German global history and the history of Germans in the East Indies, the study opens new lines of inquiry and suggests some important reorientations, while it contributes to and in part challenges recent historical developments concerning questions of family and empire.

1.4.1 Early modern German global history

Early modern German global history has only recently awakened interest among historians. Over the last 10 to 20 years, historians have begun to challenge and complicate the traditional notion of Germany’s absence from early modern extra-European colonial, and subsequently global, history. While they consider moments and entanglements from various angles, their studies generally share in employing actor-centred perspectives rather than considering the nation-state the central locus of inquiry.

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49 Early modern German historians have a long tradition of extending analysis across borders within Europe, as the introduction to the Forum ‘Globalizing Early Modern German History’ reminds us of. See Dürr et al., ‘Forum’, 366. For a critique of the traditional ‘hegemony of the germanocentric paradigm’ in (modern) German historiography, see Sebastian Conrad, ‘Doppelte Marginalisierung. Plädoyer für eine transnationale Perspektive auf die deutsche Geschichte’, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 28/1 (2002), quote at 145.
Recent studies on the economic connections of the German ‘hinterlands’ with transatlantic trade, including the slave trade, challenge the notion of peripheral, inward-looking German lands. These studies reveal the direct and indirect ways by which local actors beyond the narrow coastal stretches of western Europe came to be involved in overseas commerce. Important impulses came from the study of merchant families in German port cities like Hamburg and Bremen. Newer studies show that transatlantic commerce and the slave trade reached far inland into the Holy Roman Empire by means of the supply of resources and trade goods, financial connections and in terms of engagement with abolitionist debates. Scholarship on the presence of enslaved people, people of colour, and religious ‘strangers’ from Africa, the Mediterranean, and the Ottoman empire within the borders of the Holy Roman Empire has established that Germany’s early modern history was by no means as ‘white’ as once was assumed. The history of consumption and material culture also contributes to a more complicated picture of early modern German entanglements with the extra-European world. Territories presumed to be remote were engaged in long-distance exchanges throughout the early modern period by means of the consumption, production, and processing of global goods. Studies focusing on German ‘go-betweens’ and ‘brokers’, individual learned Germans who travelled the world as...
explorers, scientists, and missionaries, reveal the ways in which knowledge was produced in encounters with the extra-European world, which in turn shaped German ideas about the world and ‘fed into evolving conceptions of colonialism and Germanness back home’. This scholarship has recently been extended to southwest German artisans who travelled the world and also could become ‘brokers of global knowledge in their milieus’. Literary and cultural scholars have demonstrated that German societies were indeed interested in what happened beyond the borders of their villages and towns as early as the sixteenth century. Published travel accounts were enthusiastically received by all social groups, and knowledge about strange and distant places and people was available. Moreover, German intellectuals engaged in colonial discourses and shaped ‘colonial fantasies’.

All these studies suggest important reorientations of early modern German history. They defy a common assumption that runs through German scholarship like a bright red line: that German states were not involved in European overseas expansion because they did not possess colonies of their own – or at least no ‘successful’ colonies – prior to the second half of the nineteenth century. The most prominent advocate of this assumption was Hans-Ulrich Wehler, who


55 Philip Hahn, ‘“Rather back to Ceylon than to Swabia”: Global Sensory Experiences of Swabian Artisans in the Service of the Dutch East India Company (VOC)’, in Marlene Eberhart and Jacob Baum (eds.), Embodiment, Expertise, and Ethics in Early Modern Europe: Entangling the Senses (Kindle edn, London, 2021), 323.


58 This line of argument easily accumulated in a claim of German innocence in regard to colonial exploitation and violence. See, e.g. Walter Leifer, India and the Germans: 500 Years of Indo–German Contacts (2nd edn, Bombay, 1977), esp. 35.
postulated in 1987 that ‘Germany’s exclusion from overseas expansion’ was a central characteristic of the German Sonderweg (special path or ‘the German divergence from the west’): while the western European states successfully built colonial empires and increased their wealth by exploiting their overseas territories, Germans never had this experience. In short, he concludes: “The modern “world history of Europe” began without [the Holy Roman Empire].” Although this Sonderweg theory is no longer the central rationale of current research, the notion of Germany’s isolation and absence from long-distance trade continues to resonate. The image of Germany as a ‘European latecomer to nationhood and colonialism’ that became prominent in the late nineteenth century persists in German schoolbooks and syntheses of German history. As Renate Dürr recently observed, ‘the image of the Old Reich’s (purported) isolation remains fairly prevalent among historians’.

Taken together, the scholarship on a variety of economic, social, and cultural entanglements of German lands with the extra-European world yields important points of entry into an early modern German global history. Relations of Absence widens the scope of this scholarship. It argues that East Indies travellers and their families, people of all walks of life, became involved in and shaped global entanglements not only through consumption, intellectual debates, or encounters with ‘the other’ at home, but also through migration and their aspiration to capitalize on the opportunities the East India trading companies seemed to offer.

1.4.2 Germans in the Indian Ocean world

Entanglements between German lands and the Atlantic world are at the centre of many of the previously mentioned studies, while studies focused on travel accounts and material culture frequently turn the view to the East. This perspective accords with traditional and newer studies in the broad field of German migration history, in which transatlantic migration takes up considerable space alongside other migration movements into east and southeast Europe and Russia. The tens of thousands of Germans who travelled and migrated to the Indian Ocean world in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, however, are almost

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61 Ulrike Strasser in Dürr et al., ‘Forum’, 367. See also Sebastian Conrad, German Colonialism: A Short History (Munich, 2008), 1.


63 An exception is Hartmut Berghoff, Frank Biess, and Ulrike Strasser (eds.), Explorations and Entanglements: Germans in Pacific Worlds from the Early Modern Period to World War I (New York, 2019).
completely absent from German migration history. The reason for this neglect might be found in the binaries governing migration history, that since the late nineteenth century have distinguished between ‘real migrants’ and other travellers. Long-distance mobility among the lower orders of society, moving permanently between continents, plans for long-term settlement, and strong social ties in the new location have commonly been understood to characterize ‘real migration’, while the polar opposites – and especially a stress on temporary sojourns – have been used to characterize other forms of mobility. People who went to the East Indies in the service of one of the companies cannot be easily categorized within these taxonomies however; they left with the intention of returning one day, but many settled nevertheless and formed new social ties, having traversed long distances and international borders. Moreover, they belonged to all social groups, not only the lower classes. Dutch migration, labour, and company historians, as well as historians of the Cape colony, on the other hand, frequently and with no special emphasis include Germans into their studies.

All this is not to say that there are no studies on Germans in the East Indies. Germans in the service of the VOC have rather often sparked the interest and fascination of scholars. Roelof van Gelder’s Das ostindische Abenteuer (first published in Dutch in 1997) is the central reference work on Germans in the East


Indies. His study is based on 47 travel accounts, both published and unpublished, written by German VOC employees in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and extends similar, earlier studies by Peter Kirsch and Franz Übleis. Gelder’s study reconstructs the typical career paths of these men from their recruitment in the Netherlands to their service in Asia and back again to Europe. Thereby, he not only makes visible the involvement of Germans in the East Indies colonial endeavours of the VOC, but also provides helpful and detailed information on the contexts of employment in the VOC. In 2001, Gerhard Koch published a selection of the letters and the travel journal of Christoph Adam Carl von Imhoff, an East Indies traveller in the service of the EIC. In his introduction, Koch offers a detailed contextualization of the sources and provides insights into the conditions of service with the EIC. Koch’s edition sparked the interest of historians and literary and cultural studies scholars, who used Imhoff’s letters and journal to write about the careers of Germans in the East Indies and of ‘children in the world’, as well as to explore representations and images of India in Europe.

The German auxiliary regiments that fought for the VOC and the EIC during the 1780s and 1790s in the Indian Ocean world have also caught the attention of historians. The studies of Chen Tzoref-Ashkenazi on German soldiers in India add an important dimension to the picture of Germans in the East Indies. Like Gelder, he draws on (published) travel accounts and representations of India in

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68 See also Roelof van Gelder, Napora’s omweg. Het leven van een VOC-matroos (1731–1793) (Amsterdam, 2003).

69 Koch (ed.), Imhoff Indienfahrer.

German periodicals, but shifts the focus from German VOC employees to German soldiers and missionaries on the Indian subcontinent in the second half of the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{71} While his main interest is the production of a German discourse on India, his study contributes important insights into the involvement of Germans in India and how they constructed possible (national) identities in relation to and in tension with British colonial activities.\textsuperscript{72} He concludes that the ‘position of these Germans and other European foreigners within the colonial establishments was always ambiguous’, which suggests that new insights can be gained from not subsuming all Europeans in the Indian Ocean world under the same categories.\textsuperscript{73} In 2014, the same year Tzoref-Ashkenazi published the synthesis of his work, the long-term project ‘Modern India in German Archives’ led by Ravi Ahuja, Michael Mann, and Heike Liebau was launched.\textsuperscript{74} The aim of the project is to map ‘holdings of German archives on modern India and the history of German-Indian entanglements’ from 1706 to 1989/90. The first results of the project have recently been published with a focus on German auxiliary troops and missionaries.\textsuperscript{75}

In addition to these studies, local, regional, and municipal historians have taken an interest in the ‘adventurous’ individual lives of the Ostindienfahrer. These studies aim to make visible the participation of individuals from Lemgo, Northern Thuringia, Nuremberg, East Freesia, Erfurt, and so forth in the ‘East Indian adventure’.\textsuperscript{76} Those studies that go beyond merely mining the VOC employment

\textsuperscript{71} Chen Tzoref-Ashkenazi, \textit{German Soldiers in Colonial India} (London, 2014).


\textsuperscript{73} Tzoref-Ashkenazi, \textit{German Soldiers}, 5.

\textsuperscript{74} See the project’s homepage www.projekt-mida.de, accessed 9 February 2020.

\textsuperscript{75} Ravi Ahuja and Martin Christof-Füchsle (eds.), \textit{A Great War in South India: German Accounts of the Anglo-Mysore Wars, 1766–1799} (Berlin, 2020).

records database (VOC: opvarenden), and that draw from local, often poorly catalogued archival records, play an important role in paving the way for new studies of Germans and their families in the East Indies.\textsuperscript{77} Yet at the same time, there are some assumptions many of these studies make that must be addressed. Instead of noting and examining the participation of German actors in global entanglements, some of the authors seem to be driven by an intention to reveal the important roles and impact of the ‘great merchants, inquisitive scholars, devout missionaries and great explorers and adventurers who participated in this movement of European expansion more or less in an individual capacity’.\textsuperscript{78} Methodologically, the main shortcoming of many of these studies, the most recent studies including the source editions excepted, is that they are based almost entirely on published travel accounts. While travel accounts are certainly valuable historical sources, using them in isolation and ignoring other archival sources constrains the perspective on Germans in the East Indies considerably. These studies commonly depict the ‘adventurous’ lives of the East Indies travellers as one-way routes: from a well-known ‘here’ into an unknown world that in most narratives seems to be surprisingly uninhabited. For example, Gelder’s study has only one paragraph on German marriages and extramarital cohabitation in the East Indies, and only one mention of the ‘possibility’ that Germans had out-of-wedlock children.\textsuperscript{79} In her study of the everyday lives of Hanoverian troops in India, Sara Petzold states (wrongly) that Hanoverian soldiers did not engage in conjugal relationships in India beyond their frequent visits to prostitutes in places of ‘cheap entertainment and houses of pleasure’ (‘Amüsierbetriebe und Freundenhäuser’).\textsuperscript{80}

Overall, the history of Germans in the East Indies has been written, and continues to be perceived, as a male story without acknowledging the gendered dimensions of this history. The explorers, governors, missionaries, and soldiers at the centre of all available studies were all male. Even at a recent workshop on ‘Germans in 18th Century India: A Social History of Everyday Life’ all the papers focused on men.\textsuperscript{81} This gender bias is certainly due, at least in part, to the sources that are commonly drawn upon. In this regard, the history of Germans in the East Indies suffers the same ‘double [triple?] masculinity’ that Ralf Pröve has ascribed to military history: mostly male historians focusing on male actors and

\textsuperscript{77} Lahrkamp, Menne, and Kuhlbrodt draw attention to possible local sources.
\textsuperscript{78} Dietmar Rothermund, The German Intellectual Quest for India (Delhi, 1986), vii.
\textsuperscript{79} Gelder, Abenteuer, 155–156.
\textsuperscript{80} Petzold, Alltag, 223–243, quote at 223. For the marriages of Hanoverian soldiers in India, see chap. 2.5.2 in this thesis.
drawing upon sources produced by men.\textsuperscript{82} Traditional and recent scholarship on the topic tends to neglect both the gendered dimensions and the familial and social contexts in which the mobility and activities of German East Indies travellers unfolded.

*Relations of Absence* follows a different path. Drawing on archival records and decentring the perspective of the male East Indies travellers, this thesis reorients the narrative of Germans in the East Indies.\textsuperscript{83} It recognizes the contexts of migration to the East Indies and the essential role that the families and relationships of the travellers played in shaping early modern global entanglements. In this study, the male *Ostindienfahrer* provide only the starting point for examining family practices across distances and cultural boundaries. In centring the study on their families and relationships, the analysis moves beyond the stereotype of the heroic male adventurer who travelled and thereby contributed to a globalizing world.\textsuperscript{84} This re-framing points to historiographies that go beyond the narrow history of Germans in the East Indies as it shifts the focus to the nexus of family and empire.

1.4.3 Family and empire

In 1948, Holden Furber opened *John Company at Work* with the observation that too little was known about ‘the lives of those thousands of men and women who sought economic security for themselves and their children through contact with the East’.\textsuperscript{85} When Furber made this statement, the memory of the British Empire was still very much alive. Thus, the fact that men and women and their children were connected with the history of the British Empire needed no further explanation.\textsuperscript{86} During the following decades, however, families disappeared from the historiography on European empires and colonialism in favour of concerns about trade and politics. More recently, they are being written back into the histories of European colonial expansion and empire. The field that these studies span is wide and complex. The degrees of agency that they ascribe to the family vary remarkably from families being affected by colonialism to families serving the colonial state to their being the driving force behind empire building.

Important impulses to integrate the histories of families in the metropoles and colonies come from scholarship in the field of transatlantic migration and post-colonial history. As early as 1987, David Cressy called attention to the historiographic ‘indifference’ to emigration in his important book on the linkages between English migrants to New England and their homeland and families. Ida Altman emphasizes in *Transatlantic Ties* (2000) the continuing impact of local society in Spain on the experiences of Spanish emigrants to the Hispanic world in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Sarah Pearsall also stresses the bonds that educated Anglo-American elites tried to maintain with family members ‘at home’ through periods of absence and separation.

However, families appear to have been much more than mere points of reference and social anchors during emigrants’ absences. Historians have argued that familial strategies prompted, and kin networks facilitated, imperial expansion, long-distance trade and empire building both in Europe and the overseas settlements. This scholarship ties in with the European history of the family. It substantiates what Naomi Tadmor has described as the ‘neo-revisionist approach’ to kinship and family. In contrast to traditional ‘grand narratives’ that assert a decline in the importance of kinship during industrialization and modernization, these neo-revisionist approaches stress the significance of kinship throughout the early modern period. Margot Finn, for example, has argued that the personal aspirations of Anglo-Indian elite families were a driving force behind the economic and political expansion of the British empire. David Veevers has suggested that families and family networks between Britain and India were the ‘very authors of political power and authority’ and key to colonial

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87 For the call to study colonies and metropoles in relation to each other, see Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, ‘Between Metropole and Colony. Rethinking a Research Agenda’, in Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (eds.), *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley, 1997).


90 Pearsall, *Atlantic Families*.


state formation as their private interests initiated a ‘process of political decentralisation’.\footnote{David Veevers, ‘The Early Modern Colonial State in Asia: Private Agency and Family Networks in the English East India Company’, PhD thesis, University of Kent, 2015, quotes at 32 and 136. See also David Veevers, ‘Inhabitants of the Universe: Global Families, Kinship Networks, and the Formation of the Early Modern Colonial State in Asia’, \textit{Journal of Global History}, 10/1 (2015).} Julia Adams demonstrated the crucial role that ruling merchant families played in creating and forging early European colonialism and global merchant capitalism.\footnote{Julia Adams, \textit{The Familial State: Ruling Families and Merchant Capitalism in Early Modern Europe} (Ithaca, 2005).} Jennifer Palmer also has shown that it was ‘family and personal ambition that motivated emigrant’s journeys’ in the context of the French expansion into the Atlantic.\footnote{Jennifer Palmer, \textit{Intimate Bonds}, 70.} These are important interventions into the literature of empire and empire building because they take seriously the merits of kinship in global contexts. However, the focus of these studies remains for the most part on merchants, planters, and governing elites from states traditionally involved in overseas imperial projects. The role of ‘outsiders’ and people from the lower social orders, as well as their personal and familial aspirations, and strategies remain unexplored.

The nexus of family and empire also comes to the fore in studies that explore colonial governance, state-building, and their intersections with notions of gender, family, class, and race. While the nineteenth century has been the focal point of this scholarship from the beginning, the temporal frame has since been broadened.\footnote{Central works focusing on the 19th century are, e.g. Julia Clancy-Smith and Frances Gouda (eds.), \textit{Domesticating the Empire: Race, Gender, and Family Life in French and Dutch Colonialism} (Charlottesville, 1998); Ann Laura Stoler, \textit{Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault’s History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things} (Durham, 1995).} Colonial families and interracial intimate relationships were crucial arenas in which notions of gender and race, belonging, and inclusion/exclusion have been negotiated, contested, or consolidated.\footnote{For example, on the Spanish Atlantic Mangan, \textit{Transatlantic Obligations}; Bianca Premo, ‘Familiar: Thinking Beyond Lineage and Across Race in Spanish Atlantic Family History’, \textit{William and Mary Quarterly}, 70/2 (2013). For the French Atlantic empire, see Palmer, \textit{Intimate Bonds}. See also Brian Connolly and Dawn Peterson, ‘Introduction’, \textit{Early American Studies}, 14/4 (2016).} Historians of the British Empire, for example, have shown how colonial authority was understood, established, and legitimized through white male privilege, the regulation of sexuality and marriage, and the control of indigenous bodies.\footnote{Indrani Chatterjee, \textit{Gender, Slavery and Law in Colonial India} (New Delhi, 1999); Finn, ‘Family Formations’; Ghosh, \textit{Sex and the Family}; Wilson, ‘Rethinking the Colonial State’. See also C. J. Hawes, \textit{Poor Relations. The Making of a Eurasian Community in British India} 1773–1833 (Surrey, 1996).} However, from the perspective of German family formations in India, many questions arise. If the history of family in the nascent British empire is so closely tied to the consolidation of the British empire and colonial governance, how do we explain the presence of non-British European subjects in the same contexts?

Dutch historiography has developed along somewhat different lines. With the exception of Julia Adams’s study, scholarship on the nexus of family and empire has focussed on local processes and family strategies either in the Dutch East
Indies or in the Netherlands, but not sought to explore connections between people in both places.\textsuperscript{101} This mirrors a historiographical tradition in the Netherlands that tends to separate Dutch history from Dutch colonial history. In 2013, a special issue of \textit{BMGN – Low Countries Historical Review} on ‘New Dutch Imperial History’ raised this issue and the authors argued for a stronger integration of the Dutch empire and colonial experiences in Dutch history.\textsuperscript{102} Families, however, have still not found a place within this new analytical framework.

Studies on colonial families thus focus for the most part on family formations in the East Indies, particularly in Batavia and the Cape colony. The Netherlands only come into view when individuals repatriate or children of Company servants are sent to Europe for their education. Despite this conceptual shortcoming, the studies on family formation and social life enrich our understanding of the legal and social contexts of family life in the Dutch East Indies. Jean Gelman Taylor’s work, \textit{The Social World of Batavia}, which has become canonical in both Dutch and British historiography since its first publication in 1983, demonstrates the pivotal role of marital strategies of colonial elites and Eurasian women as instruments of the VOC’s administration and power in Asia, and Vertrees Malherbe has revealed a significant pattern of family formation outside of legal marriage in the Cape colony.\textsuperscript{103} Similarly, Gerald Groenewald has argued that families at the Cape were characterized by high levels of instability and illegitimacy.\textsuperscript{104} Carla van Wamelen’s synthesis on the legal history of family life under the VOC offers a welcome reference work that helps to make sense of particular familial institutions, such as adoption and succession laws, in the Dutch East Indies.\textsuperscript{105}

Drawbacks to the Dutch scholarship include an over-focus on printed and codifying sources, especially regarding marriage in Batavia.\textsuperscript{106} This is the more surprising as archival records such as wills and notary deeds are abundant for the


\textsuperscript{105} Carla van Wamelen, \textit{Family life onder de VOC. Een handelscompagnie in huwelijks- en gezinszaken} (Hilversum, 2014).

\textsuperscript{106} Recent works on the social formation of Batavia, on the other hand, often build on extensive archival records. See, e.g. Bosma and Raben, \textit{Being Dutch}; Hendrik E. Niemeijer, \textit{Batavia: Een koloniale samenleving in de 17de eeuw} ([Amsterdam], 2005).
Dutch East Indies. A second caveat concerns the lack of attention to the families of VOC employees in Europe. To some degree, this gap is being filled by scholars of women’s and urban history in the Netherlands. They have contributed important insights into the wives and widows of VOC employees, especially soldiers and sailors, in the Netherlands by revealing the consequences of the long-term absence of men on the lives and survival strategies of the families left behind.

Relations of Absence is an effort to bring together these different strands of scholarship. I take up analytical perspectives developed by historians exploring families in the British, Spanish, and French empires and argue that this approach also advances our understanding of the Dutch empire and German history. At the same time, I introduce new actors who might complicate the traditional narratives of national empire building. It is hoped that this will increase our understanding of how non-elite men, women, and children who became involved with the Dutch and British East India Companies also experienced and helped to shape early modern globalization.

1.5 The approach: a global family history

Throughout this study I argue for conceptualizing the history of German East Indies travellers as a global family history. Both the family and the global are understood in this thesis as open analytical categories instead of foreclosed, predetermined ones. This approach is informed by recent theoretical and methodological debates about how microhistorical and biographical methods can deepen our understanding and reveal phenomena of global currents that tend to be obscured in global macro histories. It also assumes that how one frames phenomena and institutions, like East Indies migration and the family, in global contexts can destabilize received wisdoms. In what follows, some key issues of the debate that

107 For instance, from 1698 to 1807, there are 10,709 wills of testators associated with the VOC in the East Indies available in NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, Nos. 6847–6897. These records are available online through the index VOC: Oost-Indische testamenten (VOC: East Indies wills), https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/index/nt00214?searchTerm=.

I found helpful in defining my approach to explore the nexus of family and empire will be further explored.

1.5.1 Global history at the expense of gender?

Mobility and connections lie at the bottom of the histories of the families of East Indies travellers explored in this study. However – and this is important – mobility is always embedded in and an expression of ‘power geometry’, as geographer Doreen Massey has emphasized:

[D]ifferent social groups, and different individuals, are placed in very distinct ways in relation to these flows and interconnections. This point concerns not merely the issue of who moves and who doesn’t […] or it is also about power in relation to the flows and the movement. Different social groups have distinct relationships to this anyway differentiated mobility: some people are more in charge of it than others; some initiate flows and movement, others don’t; some are more on the receiving-end of it than others; some are effectively imprisoned by it.109

Massey’s statement has not lost its power. On the contrary, after almost two decades of global historians’ ‘obsession with mobility’110 and the celebration of connections, border crossings, flows, and circulations, the geographer’s plea to be sensitive to the ‘power geometries’ of these movements reverberates more than ever among scholars working in the disparate and overlapping fields of global, entangled, connected, shared, or transnational histories.111

It is not surprising that gender and feminist historians were among the first to call attention to the power geometries of mobility and to criticize the new grand narratives of global history. In 2001 Carla Freeman called attention to global history’s ‘conceptual underpinnings that have implicitly construed global as masculine and local as feminine terrains and practices’.112 In a 2012 volume of the feminist historical journal L’Homme on global gender history (Geschlechtergeschichte global), Angelika Epple and Merry Wiesner-Hanks argued that the extension of scale and the focus on political, commercial, and economic processes in global

109 Doreen Massey, Space, Place and Gender (Minneapolis, 1994), 149.
111 There is no mutual consent among historians on what global history is and what it seeks to study. Global history appears to be both subject matter and methodology. The borders between global history and other approaches such as transnational history, new world history, Atlantic history, New Imperial History, shared, connected, and entangled history are often blurred and diffuse. For an introduction, see Conrad, What is Global History? For a criticism of the centrality of flows and connections in global history, see Jeremy Adelman, ‘What is Global History now?’, aeon (2017), https://aeon.co/essays/is-global-history-still-possible-or-has-it-had-its-moment, accessed 5 February 2020. And the answer to his criticism by Richard Drayton and David Motadel, ‘Discussion: The Futures of Global History’, Journal of Global History, 13/1 (2018).
histories has resulted in a step backward for gender history. A telling example in this regard is a book on the global maritime entanglements of Europe, published in 2018. Of the approximately 550 actors that the author presents as ‘typical’ in Europe’s encroachment on the world or who in some way encountered Europeans, fewer than 4 per cent are women. Likewise telling is a 2020 publication on the global history of ‘Germany’. Early modern German history appears here as an almost all male history, in which male academics and rulers take centre stage in the story of German global entanglements. Such accounts reproduce the notion that Europe’s expansion and consequently global history ‘from beginning to end [was] predominantly a man’s business’, and that ‘women’ (meaning colonized women) at best ‘[understood] how to take destiny into their own hands and to tame the European [men] with more or less gentle force’, as postulated by Wolfgang Reinhard in his best-selling book Die Unterwerfung der Welt (2016). These recent publications, addressed at a broad audience beyond academic historians, demonstrate the drawbacks of a global history that uncritically emphasises connections, mobility, and the circulation of goods and ideas. In these histories, it is not only women who are written out of the picture, but also men of the lower orders.

1.5.2 Global microhistory and life histories

Women’s and gender historians have not been the only ones to criticize the new grand narratives of global history. Taking exception less to the emphasis on mobility and connections than to the anonymous structures and processes at the

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forefront of many global history studies, a great many historians have objected to the way the human element in history tends to get lost when ‘zooming out’ to a global scale. In a now paradigmatic article, Tonio Andrade called upon historians to ‘adopt microhistorical and biographical approaches to help populate our models and theories [of global historical structures and processes] with real people, to write what one might call global microhistory’. The books of Natalie Zemon Davis, Linda Colley, and Emma Rothschild on single individuals or families and their entanglements in the early modern world were ground-breaking in this regard.

The boundaries between microhistory, life-writing and biography are often diffuse, and studies in the field vary in the claims they make regarding the theoretical and conceptual potential of the microhistorical or life-story writing approach. Some deploy microhistory and life histories as a complement to global history and show their potential to make history accessible to an audience beyond academia. Historians of the British empire have, for example, begun to apply life history approaches as a way to pluralize and particularize the history of empire.

Some of these interventions explore the ways in which the ‘processes that created this [globalized] world were shaped by many people, and in turn, [how] these processes themselves changed many lives’. Others use microhistory and life-writing in a more theoretically and methodologically ambitious way in a bid to re-orient traditional grand narratives, such as, for example, stories of the emergence of empires. Telling the stories of different ‘imperial collectors’, Maya Jasanoff demonstrates ‘how the broader trajectory of British imperialism in the East was a more complex and uncertain process than

traditional narratives suggest'.123 Margot Finn reconstructs a ‘collective biography’ of the governing Anglo-Indian Munro family in which she shows the centrality of family and personal strategies and aspirations in the British imperial outreach, which she concludes was not driven primarily by political or racial ideologies.124 Addressing the question of the relationship between the micro and the macro, Emma Rothschild proposes ‘a new kind microhistory’ that connects ‘the microhistories of individuals and families to the larger scenes of which they were a part: to important or “macrohistorical” inquiries’. The link between micro- and macrohistories, Rothschild argues, is ‘the history of the individuals’ own connections’.125 Individual, ‘translocal connections’ and ‘relations’ (‘Relationen’) are also at the centre of Angelika Epple’s proposal for how global microhistory can address and eventually overcome the dichotomy of micro/macro and local/global. She suggests that ‘[global microhistory] deals with questions of global scope by analysing relations and thereby showing how the entities of inquiry are produced’.126

While neither purely microhistorical nor a narrative of one life history, not least because of its large sample, *Relations of Absence* and its methodological approach to the historical material is inspired and influenced by the scholarship on global microhistory and life-writing. It shares with recent studies in the field the conviction that certain phenomena are only discernible and new insights into established paradigms only possible when one leaves behind methodological nationalism, follows and micrologically scrutinizes the traces of lives in archival sources, and pays close attention to the lived experiences of historical persons.127 It differs from many microhistorically inflected studies in regard to its larger sample of cases, which increases the validity of the study’s arguments. In centring families instead of individuals in the process of early modern European expansion and analysing the ways in which they became ‘global’, the study, moreover, challenges both the obsession with mobility and connections in a good deal of global history and the gender bias it produces – concerns that an actor-centred approach on individual global lives alone does not necessarily solve.

Focussing on the microhistories of East Indies travellers’ families offers a way to study and critically scrutinize the very nature of the much-celebrated connections and flows and the ways these connections were forged and maintained but

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124 Finn, ‘Anglo-Indian Lives’.
also terminated. This analytical framework also makes visible moments of movement and stasis and histories of connections and disconnections which must be studied in relation to each other if we want to gain a more nuanced understanding of what constitutes the global. Long-distance mobility and colonial expansion, this study argues, often depended on and were entwined both with the wives, children, parents, and siblings who remained in the German lands and with the new families created in the East Indies, many of which involved indigenous and other non-European women as wives, friends, enslaved and free(d) conjugal or sexual companions, and children born in or out of wedlock.

The life stories of these families are understood in this thesis as connected or relational histories. The study thus responds to Angelia Epple’s call that ‘global history should deal with the “relationing” and the “making of” entities – one of which turns out to be “the global”’. That means that while the starting point is to identify and trace single individuals, the analysis extends beyond these individual life stories by exploring their relationships and the connections they formed, negotiated, and broke off.

The new history of emotions offers critical tools for exploring these relationships that crossed and bridged geographical and cultural distances. Emotions are not only understood here as culturally and historically contingent, but as active and constitutive parts of social interactions and of forming, living, and experiencing relationships. Emotions are created, formed, experienced, and negotiated through language (for example, in letters and wills), but also through other actions, such as providing care, education, and gifts. Paying close attention to their shifting implications and the sites in which they become effective is central


to our understanding of the domains of family, empire, and globality in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

1.5.3 Family and kinship in global perspective

Family and, more broadly, kinship are understood in this study as open analytical categories. This openness resonates with early modern understandings of kinship and family.132 ‘Kinship’, in a definition offered by Claudia Jarzebowski, is ‘a flexible and elastic concept of interdependent, overlapping and reciprocally consolidating or weakening relationships with different potentials and claims that cannot be reduced to reproductive functions’.133 Operating with an open category of family and kinship, actor-centred and microhistorical studies have yielded crucial insights into the variety and plurality of practices that created and were associated with kinship and family in the early modern period. Social relationships beyond those culturally defined by birth and marriage, such as with neighbours, spiritual kin, and friends add to the complexities of kinship and family.134 However, as Relations of Absence brings together families from different cultural and religious spheres and includes the colonial families of East Indies travellers, the complexities and varieties of family relations increase.

In the context of a history of South Asian kinship and family, Indrani Chatterjee has stressed ‘the polyvalence of familial terms in historical use’ both within a single languages and across different languages in South Asia.135 Because English kinship terms are much more restricted than those in South Asian languages (for example the simple and undistinguished categories of ‘daughter’, ‘wife’, ‘widow’, et cetera), the complexities, fluidities, and hierarchies of South Asian familial relationships are often erased or minimized.136 While I do not have the

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linguistic skills needed to analyse Asian kinship terms, Chatterjee’s emphasis on the study of family practices forms a central tool and guideline for the analysis. She argues for a shifting range of practices that could be deployed at various conjunctures to either blur or distinguish between [captives, gifts, and kinship], and she explicitly integrates layered forms of unfreedom into the realm of family and kinship.\(^{137}\)

In this regard, studying the diverse family formations of East Indies travellers in the Indian Ocean world and relating these families to families in the German lands also enriches European understandings of family and kinship. Historical changes of (European Christian) family life and concepts are commonly located in the context of distinctive European or German religious and intellectual events or currents, like the Reformation and Pietism, Enlightenment, revolution and Romanticism.\(^{138}\) While historians working in the field of European kinship more recently have drawn attention to international and geographically dispersed families, their frameworks remain remarkably ‘European’. For instance, in Transregional and Transnational Families in Europe and Beyond (2011) the editors David Sabean and Simon Teuscher recognize the history of colonialism as an important potential field of family and kinship history, but detach this history from the European experience: ‘Rather than contribute to a global consideration of “transnational” families, we would like to add a series of new issues and problems to the debate by reviewing once again experiences from Europe […]’\(^{139}\) This conceptualization misses the fact that colonialism and extra-European expansion was indeed an experience in Europe that reverberated in and with notions and practices of family and kinship. Looking at educated eighteenth-century German-speaking families who travelled across vast distances into the extra-European world and experienced new dimensions of separation and risk, Claudia

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\(^{139}\) David Warren Sabean and Simon Teuscher, ‘Rethinking European Kinship: Transregional and Transnational Families’, in Christopher H. Johnson et al. (eds.), Transregional and Transnational Families in Europe and Beyond: Experiences Since the Middle Ages (New York, 2011), 3. See also Medick, ‘Zwischen Mythus und Realität’, 55, who called for an intercultural perspective on family, but emphasized in particular the “export” of European norms and notions of family to extra-European cultures and the following processes of appropriation (Aneignung) and translation as a future research field. For transcultural and geographically dispersed families mainly within Europe, see also Dorothea Nolde and Claudia Opitz (eds.), Grenzüberschreitende Familienbeziehungen. Akteure und Medien des Kulturtransfers in der Frühen Neuzeit (Cologne, 2008).
Jarzebowski has argued that ‘it becomes comprehensible why the notion of family as refuge of homely affections within a new evolving core family grew to be so important in the bourgeois manuals and advice literature’ at around the same time.\textsuperscript{140} Against this background, she suggests we understand the genesis of bourgeois society as an open process, and the eighteenth century ‘as a laboratory’ in which families ‘experimented’ (herumprobieren) with a variety of different family models.\textsuperscript{141}

*Relations of Absence* builds on this plea and amplifies the argument in two ways. First, grounded in extensive archival research, it provides new empirical evidence and extends the analysis from scholarly families to a broader range of families with different backgrounds. Second, integrating the colonial families of the East Indies travellers into the analysis significantly augments the argument for the diversity and simultaneity of different family models. In many of these families, it was not a formal marriage that lay at the centre of family relations, but extramarital relationships or slave-concubinage; the lines between kinship, slavery, and violence were messy and contested, and the simultaneous presence of legitimate, out-of-wedlock, and adopted children increased the complexities of parent–child relations. These complex colonial families in the East Indies also became entangled in various ways with the migrants’ families in the German lands, as this thesis shows. This finding not only defies the notion that colonialism was an experience limited to families outside of Europe, it also adds further evidence that global perspectives on families have the potential to undermine common Europe-centred chronologies and narratives of the history of the family.\textsuperscript{142}

### 1.6 Outline

In the following five chapters, *Relations of Absence* explores the nexus of family and empire in the lives of German East Indies travellers in the second half of the eighteenth century. Chapter 2, ‘Connected Lives’, first outlines the contexts of East Indies migration and surveys the socio-economic backgrounds of the East Indies travellers who form the backbone of the analysis. At the centre of the chapter is a series of family life stories that introduces some of the actors and themes in this study. Reconstructing and piecing together fragments of some of the lives of the *Ostindienfahrer* and their families serves as a lens to explore not only the possibilities and options offered by East India trading companies, but

\textsuperscript{140} Jarzebowski, ‘Children Travelling the World’, 230.


also the contingencies, limitations, challenges, and frictions associated with migration to the Indian Ocean world. The biographical explorations also allow discussion of the benefits and limitations of the source material. The chapter argues for conceptualizing the history of German East Indies travellers as a global family history.

The following four chapters focus on different aspects of the intersection of family and empire, both empirically and theoretically, not only by following chronologically the process of migration and drawing on different source genres, but also by shifting the focus back and forth between different geographical locales and between different persons involved in East Indies migration.

Chapter 3, ‘Preparing to Leave and Staying Behind’, examines the ways in which East Indies travellers prepared – or did not prepare – for their migration and how their departure affected their family ties and those who stayed behind. The analysis focuses first on husbands and fathers with family obligations before shifting attention to the wives who stayed behind. Letters, petitions, and court records centre different perceptions of leaving and staying behind. The chapter shows that, from the perspective of the departing traveller, it was essential to strengthen the ties to those who stayed behind – not only because the East Indies travellers relied on their support, but also to make sure that the departure could not be confused with desertion of the family. The analysis of the situation of the left-behind wives demonstrates some of the effects that the migration of the husband had on their lives and the ways in which they handled the situation.

Chapter 4, ‘Family in Absentia’, moves the analysis forward to the period of absence and explores how East Indies migrants and their families who remained at home tried to maintain bonds and bridge the distance. Relations between siblings and parents and their adult children in the East Indies are foregrounded. Letters are crucial resources in this context; however, drawing on methods from the history of emotions, the analysis moves beyond the contents of the letters and makes inquiries into the practices of bridging distance that become tangible in letters but were not confined them. The chapter argues that East Indies migrants often relied on the support and assistance of their stay-at-home families in matters that they could not handle themselves. At the same time, relying on family far away and emphasising in the letters that one did so also created and cemented the very ties that hold together family across distance and through periods of separation. The families discussed in the chapter deployed practices to this end that were routine in other contexts and that they adopted to the new circumstances of transoceanic relationships. Maintaining family across distance was hard work, and sometimes, it could not be done.

Chapter 5, ‘New Family Formations’ shifts the focus from the East Indies travellers’ relations in German lands to their new families in the Indian Ocean world. Drawing mainly on probate and notary records, this chapter explores the various forms of family life that shaped the experiences of the East Indies travellers through the lens of inheritance practices. Informed by Durba Ghosh’s approach and especially her reading of wills, the analysis pays particular attention
to the ‘familial dynamics of interracial sexual contact’ and the ways that intimate relationships of different kinds were perceived, managed, and ranked. Conceptually, the empirical material complicates the notion of absence. Absence does not serve solely as a descriptive category referring to the physical absence of the travellers from their families in their native countries. It is also an analytical category that refers to the politics of absence and the strategies of in- and exclusion of certain people and relationships from the archives.

Chapter 6, ‘Reverberations in Brandenburg-Prussia’, moves the analysis back to the Holy Roman Empire and in particular to Brandenburg-Prussia. This chapter builds on hitherto untapped archival material, namely petitions to governmental authorities from the families of East Indies travellers. The chapter examines the wishes and needs of those who had stayed behind, and the ways in which they handled the absence of family members and extended periods of separation and uncertainty. Their actions, this chapter argues, created a nexus between family interests, global entanglements, and early modern state building. The analysis ends with an exploration of the multifaceted effects of empire in Brandenburg-Prussia, arguing that the global entanglements of the eighteenth-century were much more extensive and inclusive than usually assumed.

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2 Connected Lives

2.1 Introduction

For a very long time the employees of the East India companies, especially the German Ostindienfahrer (East Indies travellers) in the VOC, were depicted as the lowest of the low: poor, criminal, lightheaded, and sometimes brave adventurers without a future at home, the “lost sons” of Europe.\textsuperscript{144} Newer studies have corrected this impression and reveal the Ostindienfahrer’s diverse social backgrounds and motives.\textsuperscript{145} Much of this scholarship focuses on the careers of the migrants using their travel writings and the VOC’s pay ledgers. While this approach makes visible the variety of different roles available for foreigners in the companies, its focus on careers and narrow range of sources has limited our understanding of the social contexts in which this long-distance mobility was embedded. Although newer studies acknowledge that some Germans employed in the East Indies may well have left wives and children behind and that others married in the East Indies, these comments remain notes in the margin. Parents and siblings left behind are also largely relegated to marginalia.\textsuperscript{146}

This chapter delves into the multifaceted contexts and experiences of East Indies migration from the Holy Roman Empire and Prussia. Building on the insights of previous research on Ostindienfahrer, this chapter pushes the analysis further in at least two crucial ways. First, while the migrants are the starting point of the analysis, the emphasis will be on their relationships and families and the ways in which they became involved in the East Indies endeavour. Second, the analysis tests the potential of cross-referencing archives and bringing different repositories into dialogue to defy Europe- and company-centric readings of biographies.

All the families chosen for this biographical exploration challenge us in one way or another to rethink the picture of the Ostindienfahrer. The parameters of the lives of these Ostindienfahrer and their families were not atypical of migrants from


\textsuperscript{146} Scholarship drawing on archival material other than travel accounts and company records has a higher propensity to include these relationships in the account. See, e.g. Koch (ed.), Imhoff Indienfahrer; Lahrkamp, ‘Ostindienfahrer’; Menne, ‘Elendes Volk’, esp. 120–121.
Europe to the Indian Ocean; only from the perspectives of historiography and modern perceptions might some of these lives unsettle or surprise. This representative was the first criterion for selection. The second criterion was to choose a range of life stories that would showcase the variety of available sources and allow discussion of the potential and the limitations of cross-referencing such archives.

2.2 The East Indies: Opportunities and imaginations

Since the early seventeenth century European chartered monopoly companies competed in the Indian Ocean world for goods, trading rights, and territory. Their original interests were in luxury goods for European markets beginning with spices such as pepper, nutmeg, cloves, and cinnamon, but soon expanding into the importation of cotton and other textiles, porcelain, tea, and coffee. The EIC was formed by London merchants and granted a royal monopoly charter in 1600. A joint stock company, the EIC was governed by the Court of Directors in London. In 1602, in the young Republic of the Seven United Netherlands, six local East India trading companies founded by merchants and burghers in Amsterdam, Delft, Hoorn, Rotterdam, Middelburg, and Enkhuizen were united into the VOC. The former local companies retained their own bookkeeping and formed individual chambers (kamers), whose directors together formed the Gentlemen Seventeen (Heren Zeventien), the central governing committee of the VOC.

The VOC established factories and trading posts across the Indian Ocean world and beyond and employed around 57,000 people in the middle of the eighteenth century. The company’s increasing expansion of commerce and power also brought an ever-growing need for manpower. While the company had sent around 317,000 voyagers to the East Indies between 1602 and 1700, this number more than doubled in the following century to over 655,000 individuals who sailed on company ships to Asia. This increasing need for manpower could no longer be satisfied with sailors and soldiers from the traditional recruitment areas in Holland, Friesland, and the neighbouring North Sea regions.

At the same time the EIC massively increased its presence in the Indian Ocean, particularly on the Indian subcontinent. The Mughal emperor was losing control over parts of his empire, and relatively strong and stable successor states emerged in provinces such as Bengal, Awadh, and Arcot. These transformations opened opportunities for intervention from outside that both the French and the

148 Bruijn, Gaastra, and Schöffer (eds.), Dutch Asiatic Shipping, 144.
British were happy to take. The rivalry between these two European powers played out a great deal in their other overseas settlements in Asia, North America, and the Caribbean, leading to almost constant warfare between 1739 and 1765. Both the British and the French East India companies’ trading activities were closely linked to their states’ political ambitions. Seeking their own advantages, they became involved in local conflicts such as the succession crisis in the Carnatic in South India. By the end of the Seven Years War, the political landscape of the world had changed. The British empire was now larger than ever, ruling over widespread territories and diverse peoples. Even during the war years the population of the British Isles could no longer meet the military needs of this expanding empire. Troops were needed in North America, on the seas, and increasingly in India, where since 1765 the EIC had been a territorial power in the provinces of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa with the granting of the right to collect taxes and revenues (diwani). Parliament was averse to a standing army in England that could supply the EIC with troops in times of war, and every act of recruitment required a royal warrant.

Because of their personnel shortages in the eighteenth century, the VOC and the EIC both began to employ and even actively recruit men from the interior states of the Holy Roman Empire and beyond. In the eighteenth century, almost half of the VOC’s sailors and at certain times up to three quarters of the soldiers originated from outside the Netherlands; most of them came from German-speaking countries. The numbers of Germans travelling to the East Indies in the service of the EIC were much lower. In the middle of the eighteenth century the personnel requirements of the EIC in India were still very modest. In Madras and Calcutta, the company had around 40 covenanted servants each; in Bombay (now Mumbai) the number was even smaller. Service in the VOC was more attractive to continental Europeans as its salaries were higher than the

151 The global dimensions of the Seven Years War, see, e.g. Daniel Baugh, The Global Seven Years War, 1754–1763 (Harlow, 2011); Mark H. Danley and Patrick J. Speelman (eds.), The Seven Years’ War: Global Views (Leiden, 2012).
153 Tzoref-Ashkenazi, German Soldiers, esp. 13–47.
155 For the VOC, see Bruijn, Gaastra, and Schöffer (eds.), Dutch Asiatic Shipping, 151–153. See also Bruijn, ‘De personeelsbehoefte’. For the EIC, see Farrington, ‘Rekruten’.
156 Bruijn, Gaastra, and Schöffer (eds.), Dutch Asiatic Shipping, 155.
EIC’s and employment easier to get.\textsuperscript{158} However, as the circumstances of the EIC in India changed drastically between 1739 and 1765, the company increasingly appointed Schweizer agents to recruit ‘Protestant craftsmen’ in continental Europe for service in India. Between 1753 and 1762, 377 officers and soldiers who sailed to India had been enlisted in this manner. Among these, Anthony Farrington identified 178 Germans, 160 Swiss, and 3 Austrians who specified their professions as, among others, labourer, soldier, weaver and clothmaker, peasant, and craftsman.\textsuperscript{159} Further recruitment projects followed in the 1770s and 1780s. For example, in 1769 the Court of Directors appointed Jeremiah Baker to recruit 60 German Protestant settlers, men, women and children, for the company’s settlement in Bencoolen (now Bengkulu) on Sumatra.\textsuperscript{160} In 1785, around 5,000 European men and women lived in the EIC’s three presidencies, and the number of European soldiers employed by the EIC has been estimated at around 20,000.\textsuperscript{161} How many of these Europeans came from the interior states of the Holy Roman Empire still can only be guessed at.

Employment in the VOC and EIC thus offered ways to travel over vast distances to people from regions and social groups that traditionally were not associated with long-distance mobility. Service in one of the East India companies was a way to potentially better one’s economic situation. The salaries paid by the VOC to the lower ranked servants like sailors and soldiers were better than salaries paid to soldiers in Prussia (2 Reichsthaler per month);\textsuperscript{162} however, they were not great: a soldier earned about 9 gulden a month and an apprentice seaman (\textit{hooploper}) 7 gulden. More important than the monthly salary was the fact that the VOC usually contracted its servants for periods of five years. Moreover, soldiers and sailors had no expenses for board and lodging during this time, nor did they pay taxes. In 1742 the company also began to pay a ‘sweetener’ or emolument (\textit{douceur}) of 150 gulden to seamen and 100 gulden to soldiers to reduce returning servants’ incentives to engage in illegal trade.\textsuperscript{163} Employment in the East Indies also offered the chance to quickly climb the career, and thus the wage, ladder. A soldier who was promoted to the rank of sergeant could more than double his monthly salary. Those with some education who found employment as a bookkeeper or ship’s carpenter, for example, could earn even more.\textsuperscript{164} Employees also profited from private trade, which both companies allowed in Asia, though

\textsuperscript{159} Farrington, ‘Rekruten’, 694.
\textsuperscript{160} For more on these settlers, see chap. 2.5.2.
\textsuperscript{161} Furber, \textit{John Company}, 25.
\textsuperscript{162} Beate Engelen, \textit{Soldatenfrauen in Preußen. Eine Strukturanalyse der Garnisonsgesellschaft im späten 17. und im 18. Jahrhundert} (Münster, 2005), 147 n. 543.
\textsuperscript{163} Gelder, \textit{Abenteuer}, 45.
\textsuperscript{164} A bookkeeper earned 18–24 gulden, and a ship’s carpenter, 38–48 gulden. For a full list of VOC salaries, see Bruijn, Gaastra, and Schöffter (eds.), \textit{Dutch Asiatic Shipping}, 210–211.
not between Asia and Europe. Commercial profits in Bengal ranged from 20 to 100 per cent on internal trade in various commodities like rice, salt, and tobacco shortly after the middle of the eighteenth century, and some men made a fortune within a short time. However, far-reaching changes and reforms implemented in the EIC’s settlements in 1765 made it more difficult for company servants to make quick profits with private trade. The financial crisis in Calcutta in 1769 and the famine in Bengal in 1770 contributed to ending the favourable conditions that had characterised the years from 1757 to 1769. Nevertheless, in the second half of the eighteenth century thousands of men still embarked on the East India ships for Bengal, Batavia, and Ceylon in the hope of making a better future for themselves and their families.

Many emigrants probably realised soon after their arrival in Asia that their hopes had been betrayed. In Europe, however, the East Indies continued to be the imaginary place where immense fortunes could be made within a short period of time. Although specific knowledge of the topography of the Indian subcontinent and the Southeast Asian archipelagos had been available since at least around 1500, a diffuse notion of India prevailed in eighteenth-century German lands. Klaus Börner has suggested that the term India referred ‘less to a defined country in the East than to certain qualities of a fabulous, prosperous and exotic distance’. Ostindien was imagined to be abundantly rich in natural resources, an image that became a powerful and long-lasting motif in early European and German representations alike.

In the eighteenth-century Holy Roman Empire, travel accounts, printed chronicles, letters, and reports from missionaries were important sources of knowledge about the East Indies. Stories of unseen fortunes from the East Indies were spread by intelligence gazettes (Intelligenzblätter), tales of returning

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166 P. J. Marshall, East Indian Fortunes: The British in Bengal in the Eighteenth Century (Oxford, 1976), 49. In comparison, Adam Smith estimated profit margins of 8% to 10% in Britain in 1776.
167 For the reforms and changes as well as their consequences on the private trade of Europeans, see Marshall, East Indies Fortunes, esp. 129–157.
168 Klaus H. Börner, Auf der Suche nach dem irdischen Paradies. Zur Ikonographie der geographischen Utopie (Frankfurt am Main, 1994), 56. Gita Dharampal-Frick argued that Börner’s outlook is true for popular literature of the late middle ages, but not so much for the time after 1500. Dharampal-Frick, Indien im Spiegel, 111.
169 Dharampal-Frick, Indien im Spiegel, 121.
travellers, and popular plays and novels.\textsuperscript{171} These media informed people in the Holy Roman Empire about the East Indies and probably fuelled their hopes and expectations.\textsuperscript{172} They formed the ‘imaginative context’\textsuperscript{173} of East Indies emigration from German lands and likely influenced both those who emigrated and those who stayed at home.

2.3 Socio-economic backgrounds

The sample of 180 families that forms the backbone of this study contains 202 individuals who travelled from German lands to the East Indies or who had relations in the Holy Roman Empire and Prussia (see Appendix).\textsuperscript{174} Of these individuals, 176 were men, 14 were women, and 12 children accompanied their parents.\textsuperscript{175} They came from towns and villages spread across Brandenburg-Prussia, Württemberg, Hanover, Thuringia, and other smaller princely territories. This reflects the trend of the East India companies to recruit employees from far beyond the main seafaring and coastal trading hubs in the Netherlands and England. In around thirty cases their origins are unknown or specified in the sources simply as ‘Germany’. The following map provides a rough approximation of the regions of origins of the East Indies migrants and their families discussed in this thesis (Figure 2).\textsuperscript{176}

\begin{itemize}
\item For the tales told by returning East Indies travellers, see Gelder, \textit{Abenteuer}, 97.
\item Margot C. Finn, \textit{The Character of Credit: Personal Debt in English Culture}, 1740–1914 (Cambridge, 2003), 3.
\item Note that this survey relates only to the sample of this study and those East Indies travellers whose existence is certain. The survey is neither statistically comprehensive nor representative of all German employees in the East India companies.
\item Children born during the sea voyage are not included here.
\item In those cases where only the place of residence of the relations is known, this place was mapped. Given the high mobility of people within and across Europe, these locations only serve as rough convergences. In cases where only the region of origin (e.g. Uckermark) or the state (e.g. Württemberg or Prussia) is known, the largest city or capital was chosen to mark the location. Individuals who are identified solely as ‘German’ are not mapped. Map created by me using Palladio on 8 November 2020.
\end{itemize}
Around 130 individuals went to the East Indies in the service of, or as passengers on the ships of, the VOC.\textsuperscript{177} The 68 individuals associated with the EIC who are discussed in this thesis include members of the two Hanoverian auxiliary regiments, the Protestant settlers of Sumatra, and inhabitants of the British settlements who were not employed by the EIC. Among them are 15 married couples and 6 children. Three East Indies travellers were (probably) employed by the Danish Asia Company (\textit{Asiatisk Kompagni}). The associations between individuals and companies are, however, fluid as individuals moved between companies or left company service altogether. Their postings and places of residence in the Indian Ocean world cover many of the regions where the EIC and VOC were active (Figure 3).

Although data on their approximate age at the time of embarkment is only available for about 40 men, we can assume that most East Indies travellers from German lands were men in their 20s and 30s. Around 50 men had at least one living parent when they left Europe. Among the male migrants were five boys of between 10 and 16 years, and the oldest identified was 52 years old when he signed on with the VOC as a seaman.\textsuperscript{178}

The image of the lower ranks of the VOC being recruited from a low class of failed tradesmen, criminals, and hopeless fortune seekers, especially those from Germany and other countries outside of the Netherlands, persists despite its exposure by Roelof van Gelder as a stereotyping myth.\textsuperscript{179} A closer look at the male East Indies migrants in this study supports his findings. In little less than half the cases we know or can guess these men’s profession or social status. Around 50 men had obtained some form of education or apprenticeship before departure.

\textsuperscript{177} Including one couple with six children.

\textsuperscript{178} Children who accompanied their parents are not considered here.

\textsuperscript{179} Gelder, \textit{Abenteuer}, 15.
The largest group comprised craftsmen such as bakers, carpenters, tailors, shoemakers, blacksmiths, and higher-status artisans such as silversmiths and goldsmiths. Many surgeons also set out for the East Indies, as did merchants and people highly skilled in writing or accountancy, including noblemen (usually younger brothers) who had served in military or civil positions.¹⁸⁰

No information could be found on the professional background of more than half the selected East Indies migrants. Drawing conclusions from the ranks for which they were recruited by the companies is more often than not deceptive. Information on individual migrants that includes both their professional background and recruitment rank suggests that background and initial ranks were often not congruent. Surgeons and merchant apprentices could be recruited as soldiers, and craftsmen, surgeons and even noblemen as sailors.

For the most part, data is available on when a person signed on in the service of one of the companies. This is particularly the case for those individuals who went in the service of the VOC, for whom the duration of their stay in the East Indies is also known. In at least eight instances, individuals went to work in the East Indies several times or they travelled between the East Indies and German lands to visit or handle business. For example, a blacksmith from Tilsit (now Sowetsk) who was in the service of the VOC signed on three times for periods of two years each.¹⁸¹ Two terms of service with a following residency as a free burgher (vrijburgher) seems not to have been unusual. At least twenty East Indies travellers also permanently repatriated to Europe, on average about nine years after they had arrived in the East Indies.¹⁸² However, the majority of East Indies migrants featured in this study stayed for the rest of their lives whatever their original plans might have been. Despite undeniable dangers, migrating to the East Indies was not necessarily a quick or inevitable death sentence.¹⁸³ Those who managed to survive the voyage and the first year after arrival had a good chance of spending a considerable span of their lives, on average sixteen years, in the East Indies.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁰ For surgeons in the VOC see also Bruijn, Ship’s Surgeons.
¹⁸¹ There are muster rolls for a Micchiel Otto from Tinsit (service 1772–1775), Michiel Otto from Thilzit (1775–1777), and Miggel Otto from Tilrit (1777–1779). It is likely that all three muster rolls refer to the same individual, as all were employed in the rank of a Sheepskorporaal. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02., inv.no. 6566, fol. 31; inv.no. 6623, fol. 30 and inv.no. 6646, fol. 31. Michael Otto’s last journey was in the service of the ‘Admiralitaet von West Friesland’ in 1782, during which he died. Petition of Ludewig Harnecker. Berlin, 4 December 1790. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep 34, No. 1028, fol. 2r.
¹⁸² This number does not reflect the overall trend among company servants observed by contemporaries and later historians who have remarked that out of every three men approximately one returned to Europe. However, the discrepancy between this study’s sample and the global statistic in respect to repatriation is not particularly relevant given the focus of this study on conflicts caused by East Indian emigres’ absence.
¹⁸³ Gelder, Abenteuer, 38.
¹⁸⁴ Information on the time spent in the East Indies is available for 153 individuals.
2.4 Professionals, opportunity seekers, and children

2.4.1 Jean Paul Guyot alias Guiott alias Higgot

Jean Paul Manasse Guyot was a wigmaker and member of the French reformed congregation in the Brandenburg town of Stendal. When he left Stendal in 1769, he could not have imagined that one day he would die in Batavia (now Jakarta) as a well-off burgher, baker, and father of a child with an enslaved woman. And yet, his life fits into traditional migration patterns and from the perspective of the colonial society in Batavia is not remarkable. He belonged to those European men who stayed in the East Indies after their contracted time and created a living for themselves in the multi-ethnic communities characteristic of the Indian Ocean world. His family and friends in Stendal did not forget him, however, and tried to participate in his East Indies endeavour. It is to Guyot’s relationships that we owe our knowledge of some of the parameters of his and his family’s lives. They left traces in German and Dutch archives that raise several issues important to this thesis.

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185 There are different spellings of his name in the sources: In the French congregation in Stendal he was known as Jean Paul Manasse Gujot or Guyot. In the Dutch sources his names are spelled Johan and Johann; Paul, Paulus, and Pauwel; and Guijot, Guiot, Guiott, Hiott, and Higgot.
As the judge of the French colony later recalled, Jean Paul Guyot left his home town in 1769 to wander as a journeyman (Wanderschaft). Mobility was a normal part of the life cycle of craftsmen. This mobility was not confined to the period of wandering of young artisans, but characteristic of the whole life of some craftsmen. For many VOC employees, it appears that their migration to the East Indies was an extension of this typical short- and medium-term professional mobility. Matthias Steiger, for example, son of a burgher and innkeeper (Staabs-Wirth) from Sulgau in Württemberg, left his home as a journeyman smith. After five years of wandering he found employment in the VOC as an anchorsmouth and migrated to Batavia where he settled. Johann Ernst Langenecker, like Guyot a member of the French congregation in Stendal, also left his home town as a journeyman and eventually signed on to serve with the VOC. Eighteen-year-old surgeon journeyman Johann Ernst Gottfried Funcke from Treuenbrietzen had a similar itinerary, but settled at the Cape of Good Hope.

Like these men, Guyot went to Amsterdam, where he eventually signed on with the VOC at the rank of soldier in 1770. The sources are silent on his motivation, though it is interesting that the prospect of returning to Stendal was apparently not as attractive as service in the VOC. Stendal was saturated with wigmakers, which might have been what caused Guyot to look for other opportunities to make a living. In November 1770, Guyot boarded the Compagnies Welvaren bound for Batavia. On the ship, he encountered a highly international company. Besides the vast number of seamen and soldiers from the Republic of the Netherlands, Sweden, and German lands bordering the North Sea, several other soldiers came from the inland territories of the Holy Roman Empire. Carel August Smit, for example, came from Leipzig, Antoon Gotlieb Duijts was a native of Magdeburg, and two men came from Halle.

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188 This was not a new phenomenon in the 18th century. See Hahn, “Rather back to Ceylon than to Swabia”, 304–305. See also Gelder, Abenteuer, 93.
189 Landesarchiv Baden-Württemberg, Abt. Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart (HStA S), A 213 Büschel (Bü) 3377 (Steiger). VOC employment record (opvaren) of Matthias Steiger, NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 13118, fol. 340.
190 GStA PK, I. HA Rep. 122 Französisches Koloniedepartement, 28 Stendal b, No. 23 (Langenecker). For Johan Ernst Langenikker’s employment record, see NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 6116, fol. 269.
191 GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1027, fols. 1r–8r (Funcke); and Johan Ernst Gottfried Vonk’s employment record NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 6495, fol. 295. Another example is GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1019, fols. 83r–94r (Schultz).
192 VOC employment record of Johan Pauwel Hiot. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 6539, fol. 252.
193 F. W. A. Bratting, Statistisch-topographische Beschreibung der gesamten Mark Brandenburg […] (Berlin, 1803), 249.
The Compagnies Welvaren arrived in Batavia after an eight-month voyage. Guyot survived the journey but it took him some time to let his family in Stendal know. He first wrote a letter to his brother in 1772. The letter is not extant, but it probably contained the information that Guyot was still serving his contracted time in Batavia. Nothing in the company’s records suggest that he changed stations during his employment. When his service ended in December 1775 Guyot decided to stay in Batavia and became a free burgher. In 1776, he married Johanna Elisabeth Schindelhauwer, a woman born in Batavia. He also bought a bakery and an enslaved woman named Lisena von Balie. Besides his new business, he also ran a wig-making workshop in which at least four enslaved men or boys worked as wigmaker menials (Perukmakersknegt). In total, he purchased 21 enslaved individuals who worked for him as menials, manservants, maids, and errand boys.

Different forms of debt bondage, indentured servitude, and slavery were constitutive features of the Indian Ocean world well into the nineteenth century. Early modern Christian Europeans refused the enslavement of fellow Christians, but they did not question slavery as an institution, as Hans Hägerdal has pointed out. Both the VOC and private life in the company’s settlements depended heavily on coerced and bonded labour.

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194 Of the original 226 seafarers, 82 lost their lives during the voyage. Of the original 121 soldiers, 55 arrived in Batavia. Details of voyage 4091.3 from Texel to Batavia (Compagnies Welvaren), Dutch-Asiatic Shipping in the 17th and 18th centuries [database], Huygens ING, http://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/das/detailVoyage/95142, accessed 1 January 2020.

195 Like a first letter from Amsterdam, the second letter did not find its way to the archive, but it is mentioned in Jean Paul Guyot’s third letter to his brother and sister-in-law. Batavia, 3 October 1780 (copy). GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1028, fol. 226r.


197 W. Wijnaendts van Resandt, ‘Huwelijken te Batavia in de Compagniestijd’, De Nederlandsche Leeuw, 23 (1905), 62. All that is known at this point about Johanna Elisabeth Schindelhauwer is that she was ‘van Batavia’. Chaps. 4.3.2 and 5.3.2 address the difficulties in reconstructing the histories of the wives and conjugal partners of the emigrants in the East Indies.

198 Petition of Jacob Spruijt to the Aldermen regarding permission to sell his bakery to Jan Paul Guiot. Batavia, [1776?]. CBG, BvTP, S1198, scan: FAPA091136.

199 Inventory of the estate of Johan Paul Guyot. 1783 (copy). CBG, BvTP, G614, scan: FAPA037055.


202 Matthijs van Rossum, Kleurrijke tragiek. De geschiedenis van slavernij in Azië onder de VOC (Hilversum, 2015); Bosma and Raben, Being ‘Dutch’, 47.
centuries, approximately 200,000 to 300,000 enslaved individuals were transported to Batavia alone.\textsuperscript{203} Around the time Guyot lived there, an estimated 40,000 enslaved people populated the city.\textsuperscript{204} The vast majority of these people belonged to company employees and to free European and Asian inhabitants like Guyot. As indicated by the names of the unfree individuals in Guyot’s household, among them Alida van Makassar, Hector van Ternaten, August van Timor, and Cassim van Nias, the Indonesian Archipelago provided the primary source for the company’s official and private trade in enslaved people.\textsuperscript{205} It was not uncommon for the households of European migrants to include more enslaved than free individuals. However, the status of these individuals was not set in stone. Enslaved people could be sold or given as gifts, but they could also gain free status, become heads of their own households, and become slaveowners themselves.\textsuperscript{206}

By 1780, Guyot had established himself in this multi-ethnic society when he wrote a third letter to his brother and sister-in-law, the only one that has been preserved in a copy. Since he had left Stendal 11 years earlier, he had not received any letters from them or other relatives. In this short letter, Guyot informed his relations that he was a wealthy man now and that he worked as a baker. He also let his brother know that he intended to return home within the next ‘one or four years’. He did not mention his wife (she probably had died), and he did not give any further information on his circumstances: ‘Further I cannot write to you how I have fared here’.\textsuperscript{207} Whether Guyot actually planned to return home to Stendal in 1780 will never be known. If he did, his circumstances changed a year later in a way such that a repatriation would have become significantly more complicated.

The enslaved women Levina (Lisena?) von Balie who lived in Guyot’s household gave birth to his son in November 1781. She died shortly after, probably in childbirth. Guyot, following a common practice in Batavia and other company settlements, adopted his natural child and baptized him Jean or Johann Gottfried.\textsuperscript{208} Thirteen months later, Guyot himself died. On his deathbed, he drafted his will and made his adopted son his universal heir, ‘because he had no living parents or children’.\textsuperscript{209} He also manumitted the enslaved woman Kasina van Java and left 400 Rixdalers to her. The sources are contradictory and puzzling at this point. On 29 January 1783, a couple of days after Guyot’s death, two witnesses
stated that Guyot, shortly before his death, had expressed the wish to give ‘his two lijfeigenen [serfs] Cassam and Roosje to his freed slave Lasina [sic] van Java, mother of his adopted son and universal heir Johan Gottfried’. In a letter to his brother-in-law, who had just returned from Batavia to Potsdam, Godfried Wilhelm Wilke (a friend of Guyot) wrote that Guyot ‘has left behind a son from the corpulent slave (who always sat behind the pay desk), and this slave is also his heir’. The best explanation for this confusion might be that Kasina or Lasina van Java mothered, probably breast fed, little Johann after his mother’s death. She had a privileged position in Guyot’s household and was entrusted with the money in the bakery. Moreover, by Guyot’s oral codicil, she became a slave owner herself. Chapter 5 delves into these issues. At this point it suffices to note that bequests to enslaved women were common and often indicated a sexual relationship. This may well have been the background for Guyot’s bequest to Kasina, too. But the confusion surrounding the mother of his child suggests that the bequest could also have been a compensation or advance for Kasina’s care for the 14-month-old toddler. Perhaps it was both.

The governors of the Orphan Chamber (Weesmeesters) took over the administration of Guyot’s estate. They asked Jacoba Hendrina Liegendenberg to take over the education of her baptism child (doop kind) Johan Gottfried, for which she was to be compensated with the interest from the child’s assets. The governors of the Orphan Chamber also made an inventory of Guyot’s effects. The document is evidence of a wealthy household. Guyot had not embroidered his economic status in his letter, as many other East Indies migrants appear to have done. Besides household and bakery equipment, the document listed numerous diamond rings and pieces of silverware. There was also ‘a large stone house, a bakery, a warehouse, a stable and a house for coaches, all of stone’. Finally, the inventory listed the names of Guyot’s 21 enslaved labourers.

The absent migrant had not been forgotten in Stendal. The letter Guyot had sent to his brother and sister-in-law in 1780 was still in the possession of the family in 1787, when news of Guyot’s death finally arrived. Guyot’s closest living kin was his nephew, the underage journeyman bricklayer Friedrich Guyot, who aspired to his uncle’s estate. The family knew that Guyot had fathered a son with an enslaved woman and had named this son his universal heir before he died. They also knew that this child had died shortly after his father. Friedrich, and possibly the people representing his interests, believed that because the son was

212 In Islamic law breast feeding constituted kinship that became effective in the context of marriage restrictions.
214 Inventory of the estate of Johan Paul Guyot. 1783 (copy). CBG, BvTP, G614, scan: FAPA037055.
the child of a ‘slave’, Friedrich, as the free next of kin should also be the next in succession. It was unbelievable that the mother of Johann Gottfried should follow next in succession, ‘the more so as she was a slave and bore the child out of wedlock’. The Prussian consul in Amsterdam was ordered to investigate the matter at the Orphan Chamber (Weeskamer) and East India House. However, as the books from Batavia had not yet arrived, the Guyot inheritance was ‘entirely unknown’ there and the problem remained unsolved for the next three years. In 1790, the heirs in Stendal renewed their request for royal assistance. The Prussian consul Johann Ludwig Gregory was ordered to investigate the matter again. In 1792 he was finally able to report that he had received an answer from J. G. von Rossum in Batavia and that the ‘family in Europe’ had no reason to hope for any inheritance.

The heirs did not mistrust Gregory, but because they did not know J. G. von Rossum in Batavia and thus did ‘not know if he is a public person, whose assertions can be trusted’ they demanded further evidence from Batavia. Gregory corresponded again with Batavia, however, at this point the records peter out, and the ultimate disposition of the case remains unknown.

The life story of Jean Paul Guyot adds to the history of German East Indies migrants new dimensions that are commonly neglected by scholarship mainly focused on careers and travels. While many aspects of his life remain unknown, his relationships with his family in Stendal, with two of the enslaved women of his household, and with his son have left traces in the archives. Albeit fragmentary, these traces suggest that Guyot used the opportunities that the VOC offered to the fullest. The contracted time as a soldier served him as a stepping-stone into the Batavian community where he created a new life for himself, including a new professional identity. After some attempts to maintain the bonds with his family in Stendal, he formed a new family and household in Batavia, consisting of more unfree than free members. His Batavian family became Guyot’s main point of reference, as his last will suggests. At the same time – and this is often forgotten in historiography – his relatives in Stendal did not cut their ties with him. They tried to participate in and benefit from their kinsman’s East Indies migration. Their efforts point to the challenges associated with the long distances, asymmetries of knowledge, and uncertainties that separated German lands and the East Indies.

The extent to which different sources illuminate aspects of Guyot’s life story is notable, though not unique. The features of the individuals he formed intimate
ties with are blurred in the records, their identities difficult to determine. While many parameters of Guyot’s life can be reconstructed, only the names of Levina van Balie and Kasina (or Lasina) van Java point to their histories. Here, cross-referencing archives and following traces most obviously reach their limits.

2.4.2 Johann Michael Hörnick

Johann Michael Hörnick’s life is also emblematic of the history of East Indies travellers and their families, but in ways very distinct from that of Guyot. Hörnick’s migration to the East Indies left only scant traces in the archives, and it is this lack of information that is characteristic of many life histories of East Indies travellers. At the same time, the few records that shed light on Hörnick’s life raise issues of early modern global trade and empire that have recently caught the interest of historians: that is, the lives of individuals who lived at the intersections of different empires and polities and who pursued interests, which could be diametrically opposed to the mercantile and political interests of the companies and states.\footnote{See, e.g. Titas Chakraborty, ‘Desertion of European Sailors and Soldiers in Early Eighteenth-Century Bengal’, in Marcus Rediker, Titas Chakraborty, and Matthias van Rossum (eds.), \textit{A Global History of Runaways: Workers, Mobility, and Capitalism 1600–1850} (Oakland, 2019); Linda Colley, \textit{Captives: Britain, Empire and the World 1600–1850} (London, 2002); Jasanoff, \textit{Edge of Empire}; Larson, ‘Fragments’.
}

Johann Michael Hörnick’s birth and origin are unknown. The available sources point to Cottbus, a Brandenburg exclave in the Dutchy of Saxony. His brother, the burgher and tailor Christian Friedrich, lived there with his family, and Johann stated at some point that he came from ‘Lotpoes’ or ‘Cotpoes’. However, neither he nor his parents can be identified in the church registers of Cottbus, which suggests that he and his brother probably moved there.\footnote{Church records from Cottbus (Klosterkirche, Schllosskirche, Cottbus-Madlow, and Oberkirche) are available through archion.de. I reviewed the volumes covering the time between c.1720 and 1760. Only his brother Christian Friedrich could be identified in the baptism records of the Oberkirche, where his daughter was baptized on 1 August 1751. Landeskirchliches Archiv in Berlin, 12100: Cottbus, Oberkirche, Taufen 1732–1755, p. 609 [scan 317].}

The first certain trace of Johann’s life can be found in 1752, when he signed on with the VOC in Amsterdam at the rank of soldier. The clerk at the Amsterdam chamber modified his name Johann to the Dutch version Jan, noted his second name as Fredrik, and misspelled his last name as Hernich.\footnote{VOC employment record of Jan Fredrik Hernich. NL-NaHA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 6292, fol. 112.}

Johann signed a letter of debt of 150 gulden, received two wages, totalling 18 gulden, and wrote a last farewell letter to his brother in Cottbus. In this letter, which is not extant, he let Christian know his plan to go to the East Indies, and he expressed his wish that his brother should be his heir. After eight years, Christian should contact the East India house to receive news of his life or death, and, in case of the latter, collect his
At the turn of the eighteenth century, Bengal was a commercial hotspot of the Indian Ocean world. Indian, Armenian, and Portuguese merchants had long traded in the region, when the Moghul granted permission to the VOC to establish a factory on the banks of the Hooghly River in the 1630s. At first the Dutch were particularly interested in Indian goods such as cotton, raw silk, and saltpetre for the intra-Asian trade. When the relative importance of the intra-Asian trade declined in the late seventeenth century, the company reoriented its activities and imported mainly cotton and silk to Europe. Around 1700, almost half of the company’s trade volume for Europe came from Bengal. Like the Dutch, other European trading companies (British, French, and later Danish) established posts along the Hooghly.

Johann Michael Hörnick or Jan Fredrik Hernich as he was now known to the administration of the VOC, arrived in this eclectic, multi-ethnic environment in 1753. For the following three years he served as a soldier in the VOC, probably securing the transportation of people and goods on the Hooghly River. However, in December 1756 he ran away. His personal motives remain unknown, but he was certainly not the only one to turn renegade. Desertion was one of the most common crimes of company employees. Bengal was notorious for the high rates of runaway European sailors and soldiers, and boundaries between and among the European companies, the European communities, and the Indian population were quite fluid at this time. The rival companies competed for man-power and tried to offer better conditions to lure soldiers onto their side. The EIC, for instance, paid its soldiers monthly, which allowed them much easier access to cash than the payment modalities of the VOC. Indigenous armies, however, paid even more to European troops: 36 gulden a month, four time the 9 gulden paid by the EIC and VOC. Indian military leaders highly valued the (presumed) ability of Europeans to handle artillery, and European men were prone to seek both military and civil employment in one of the Indian regimes as this was an easy way to quickly climb both the social and economic ladders. The most prominent and storied example of such a career is that of Walter Reinhardt, who changed sides between the different trading companies several times before he made a career in the service of various nawabs (sovereign rulers) and eventually was granted fiscal rights (jagir) by the Mughal emperor in 1776.

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223 Christian later summarized this letter in a petition and attached a certified copy of the letter; however, this is not extant in the file. Petition of Christian Friedrich Hörnick. Cottbus, 22 September 1767. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1010, fol. 2r.
Some of the men who deserted company service in Bengal may well have chosen to leave the military altogether. Many would become known and classified by EIC officials as ‘low Europeans’ or ‘mean whites’, a new social class of impoverished and often notoriously criminal and violent Europeans whose presence in the city threatened the nascent British colonial authority.229 Yet, others found ways to make a living, built careers, and adapted to local lifestyle. The lists of European inhabitants of Calcutta not in the service of the EIC indicate that the growing city offered plenty of opportunities for Europeans who had come to India in one way or another.230 Among them one finds, for example, Bernhard Hard from Prussia, who had lived in Calcutta for 20 years and was employed by the Commissioner of Police. Georg Rungstock from Prussia/Silesia worked as an indigo planter, as did Peter Matthew Schorn, whose origin was noted down as ‘Germany’. Fredrick Jacobi came also from ‘Germany’ and worked as silversmith. John D. Huhn, originally from Potsdam, lived for more than 33 years in Calcutta and made a living as a surgeon. Other noted occupations of Germans were inn-keeper, musician, candlemaker, and bookbinder. Their itineraries from Europe to Calcutta can no longer be reconstructed. The wills and probate records that some of them left behind often contain no references to families in German lands. Instead, these documents reveal that these men had established families in Calcutta, and often these became entwined with the Anglo-Indian society for decades to come.231

Clearly, there were multiple ways for European men in India to create a living outside of the service of the trading companies. However, the history of Johann Hörnick after his desertion and the answer to the question of whether and how he made a living in India remains unknown. With his desertion he evaded the administrative machinery of the VOC and thus traceability. His brother Christian in Cottbus tried for several years to contact him. Hoping for ‘an allowance of some 1,000 rthl’ he ‘sent three [letters] to Amsterdam and two to Batavia and Bengal’.232 However, all his letters remained unanswered. He therefore turned to the Prussian king for help in 1767 and asked him to order the Prussian consul in Amsterdam to gather information about Johann Hörnick’s ‘life or death’. The consequent investigation revealed that Johann had deserted and that the company therefore had no intelligence on his life or death.233


230 For the lists of European residents in Bengal not in the service of the EIC, see British Library (BL) India Office Records and Private Papers (IOR)/O/5/26.

231 For some of these families, see chap. 5.


233 Report of Philip Anton Erberfeld. Amsterdam, 3 November 1767. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1010, fol. 4r.
East Indies migrants easily got lost without a trace once they left the companies. While the history of Johann Hörnick after his desertion remains unknown, similar cases point to slippages in the companies. Their employees, especially those in the centre of trade in Bengal, lived at the intersections of different empires and polities. This gave them opportunities to pursue personal interests, which were in most cases, to use Titas Chakraborty’s words, not ‘aligned with the mercantile corporate interests of the companies’. For the families the East Indies travellers left behind, this often meant that it became, if not impossible, at least much more difficult to maintain contact and gather longed-for news of the life or death of the absentee. Sometimes, the new lives of the renegades and company dropouts left traces in the colonial archives; however, those traces are not readily connected to the record of their lives in German lands.

2.4.3 Johann Carl Reinhard

The life story of Johann Carl Reinhard adds yet another dimension to the picture of the Ostindienfahrer. When he signed on with the VOC for the second time, he left behind his pregnant wife and a daughter. The fact that some German East Indies migrants were married and left their families behind is frequently mentioned in the German literature. However, the prominent narrative in these cases is that the man happily used the opportunities offered by the VOC to ‘escape’ from a marriage that was ‘broken or perceived as a burden’. Employment in the VOC, furthermore, is often depicted as a last resort and act of despair. This may well be true for many men, and evidence in German archives does indeed point to this practice of solving marriage and debt conflicts through joining an East Indian company. As the case of Johann Carl Reinhard shows, however, this is not the whole story. For him, employment in the VOC was an economic strategy to provide for his family. His aspiration was to earn money, more than he could have made in the same time at home, and then return to Europe. During his absence he maintained contact with the wife and family he hoped to support and re-join.

It is due to chance incident that some aspects of Reinhard’s life from 1788 to 1798 are relatively well documented. When he returned to Europe in 1797 in the midst of the French revolutionary wars on the American ship the Hope, the vessel was taken by British privateers close to the Cape of Good Hope. Everything in Reinhard’s possession was confiscated and, luckily for the historian, recorded for

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235 His name is spelled both Reinhard and Reinhardt in the sources.


238 Gaastra, *De geschiedenis*, 88; Mann, ‘Indien’, 250.

239 See chap. 3.3.
the trial. His papers were scrutinized for information about the nationality of the Hope and her company. An ‘Abstract of Papers Taken from Reinhard’ listed a total of 354 papers. Extracts of some of his letters were translated into English. These documents, together with an intercepted letter that Reinhard tried to send to his wife from the Cape, offer incidental clues into Reinhard’s life and his relationships.

The brothers Johann August and Johann Carl Reinhard were born in the small village of Auleben in the Golden Meadow in Saxony. Bordered by the mountains of the Harz in the north and the Windleite and Kyffhäuser in the south, Auleben was a small village close to the town of Nordhausen, counting 111 houses in 1787. But Auleben was not cut off from the world around it. There were many noble manors in the region, which encouraged relatively high regional mobility and thus opportunities to spread news and rumours. Moreover, and perhaps more important for the Reinhard brothers’ view of the world, was the high outward migration from the region around Nordhausen to the Netherlands and further on to the East Indies. The stories of these East Indies travellers in all probability reverberated. Maybe the story of the East Indian prince who resided for several weeks in an inn in nearby Magdeburg in the early 1730s was still in the air. Possibly people also still remembered Christian Friedrich Seber, son of a brewer and chandler (Krämer) who had travelled to the East Indies two times before he settled in Nordhausen as a respected burgher. He died in 1753 as a “gentle” burgher, brewer and “respectable” merchant. The brothers Reinhard may well have acquired an appetite for travel and distant places when they heard such adventurous stories from and about East Indies travellers.

Nothing is known about the earlier lives of Johann August and Johann Carl Reinhard. When they first left Auleben and signed on with the VOC their lives began to leave traces in the archives. It is possible that the Reinhard family had relations in Amsterdam and that these relations encouraged August and Carl to

240 Abstract of Papers Taken from Reinhard. Hope Property Cause. Claims of Johan Carl Reinhard and John Ferrier. The National Archives of the UK (TNA) HCA 49/6.
241 This is what they stated when they signed on with the VOC in 1788. See the VOC employment records of the two brothers Johan Carel Reijnhard and Johan August Rijnhaard NL-HaNA VOC, 1.04.02., inv.no. 14521, fols. 136 and 239. However, they are not to be found in the church records (Amstbücher) of Auleben as edited by Jochen Steinecke, Die Untertanen des Amtes Heringen/Helme in der Frühen Neuzeit […] (Marburg an der Lahn, 2017).
242 Johann Ernst Fabri, Geographie für alle Stände, part 1, vol. 4 (Leipzig, 1793), 817.
243 Kuhlbrodt, Einer von drei Männern, has identified more than 200 Ostindienfahrer from Nordhausen and surroundings.
244 In 1732 an innkeeper in Magdeburg was questioned about one of his guests who identified himself as ‘Sultan Huijn Achmet from the house of Magate in East India, of Amadabat from the Kingdom Insurate Rajas of the province Malva’. Stadtarchiv Magdeburg, Rep. A I P 103.
set off for Holland. Around 1793, the ‘old uncle’s youngest son’ appears to have resided in Amsterdam on a permanent basis.246 Such a scenario would not have been unusual. Relations in Holland and in the East Indies sometimes served as role models for East Indies migrants. Moreover, they provided families and friends back in the German lands with important information about actual career paths, and they certainly fuelled hopes for a better future. They could be valuable social and economic resources and ease the transition for newcomers. The chance of stepping into the footsteps of a (supposedly) successful relative who had made it in the East Indies or of benefitting from the relationships that a relative had already established propelled many men eastward.

Christoph Adam Carl von Imhoff, for example, was well aware of the importance of such relationships, and he considered himself fortunate to have one. Gustav Willem van Imhoff, Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies from 1743 to 1750, was a distant kinsman from the Imhoff’s Dutch family branch. Christoph remarked later that it was a ‘great misfortune’ that no one of the Franconian branch of the Imhoff family had been sent to the East Indies while Gustav Willem was in such a high position there: ‘We would have been in a position to enhance our family, and now it is too late for us.’247 Johann Christian Friedrich Wernicke, a merchant’s apprentice from Perleberg, also tried to benefit from kin relations and went to the East Indies because he expected ‘to meet blood-kin there’, as his grandfather had (purportedly) been a Land Capten (‘Country Captain’) there.248 While some men like Imhoff and Wernicke set off on a venture, others got concrete promises from relatives in the East Indies. Staatsrat (State Councillor) von Wiegermann in Batavia, for example, asked his nephew, Lieutenant von Essen, to send the latter’s stepson von Gebauer, a boy of thirteen years, to Amsterdam to learn ‘the English, Dutch, and other languages’ and then to Batavia.249

Whatever the case for the Reinhard brothers, Carl most likely set off to the East with the VOC in the rank of a soldier between 1774 and 1785.250 He was

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246 A. Sophia Victoria Reinhardt to Johann Carl Reinhardt. Kelbra, 14 July 1793 (extract, translation). TNA HCA 49/6, No. 87.
249 Petition of Lieutenant von Essen. Hausberge bei Preußisch Minden, 2 May 1794. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1026, fol. 14r.
250 VOC employment record of Johan Carel Reynhart NL-HaNA VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 14045, fol. 185. This Johan Carel Reynhart is recorded as having come from Anlever which could be a misspelling of Auleben. The signature with which Reynhart receipted a payment in his payroll in 1784 suggests that he is the Johann Carl Reinhard who signed on with the VOC in 1788 and who got involved in the Prize Court at the Cape of Good Hope in 1798, where he signed several documents. Hope Property Cause. Claims of Johan Carl Reinhard and John Ferrier. TNA HCA 49/6.
probably 16 years old when he entered service. While this might seem rather young, he was not unusually young. Gottlieb Hensel from Königsberg (now Kaliningrad) was only 15 years old when he sailed to Batavia with the rank of gunner (bosschieter). Another boy from Königsberg, Christian Samuel Gusovius, was probably 17 when he was recruited as a soldier by the VOC. This was nothing remarkable in the eighteenth century, as children and young adults from all social groups could serve periods of apprenticeship and household service apart from their parents. Christian Friedrich Seber (the previously mentioned son of a brewer and chandler) left his parents’ home at the age of 13. Within seven years he visited the Gymnasium in Erfurt, tried to make a living as a merchant’s apprentice (Handlungsgehilfe) in Hildesheim and Langensalza, learned Dutch in Hamburg, applied for a position at a merchant house in Amsterdam, and eventually signed on with the VOC at the age of 20. Whether Carl Reinhard had a comparable career path remains unknown, but it would have been possible.

In April 1785, Carl returned from Batavia to Europe and became a burgher in Kelbra, a small town around 8 kilometres from Auleben. The required fee (Bürgergeld) of ‘six Rixdollars & seven Groschen’ would not have been a burden. During his 10 years’ service in the VOC, he had earned 852 Dutch gulden in wages. This money also allowed him to start a family. He married Anna Sophia Victoria Benzlern and soon fathered his first child. The remainder of his East Indies wages probably maintained the family well for some time. To put this into perspective, a woman who lived with two children in Rotterdam in the eighteenth century would have needed 200 gulden a year to survive. The cost of living in the German lands were lower than that, but as a burgher Reinhard also had to maintain a certain lifestyle. In 1788, Anna was pregnant again, he felt that ‘time...'

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251 The estimation that Reinhard was 16 years old when he signed on with the VOC in 1774 is based on his testimony in 1798. In this testimony he stated that he was 40 years old, which means that he must have been born around 1758. Deposition of Johan Carl Reinhard. 6 January 1798. TNA HCA 49/6.
252 GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1014, fol. 55r–67v; and No. 1017, fol. 106r–120r (Hensel).
253 In the profile ‘Christian Samuel Gusovius’, created by Peter Hennings, https://gw.geneanet.org/pmlhennings?lang=en&n=gusovius&nz=hennings&oc=0&ocz=0&pz=christian+samu el&p peter, accessed 26 October 2020, it says that he was born in 1717. Gusovius’ date of birth, however, must be treated with some scepticism as the name of the father provided by Hennings (Michael Adam Gusovius) is different from the name given in Gusovius’s will (Paulus Gusovius). Will of Christian Samuel Gusovius. 1751. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 6849, (780). He signed on with the VOC in 1734. See the VOC employment record of Christiana Samuel Husobius. NL-HaNA VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 6001, fol. 149. See also GStA PK, XX. HA, Oberratsstube, Preußische Regierung, Ostpreußisches Etatsministerium (EM), 52 j 1, No. 50, fols. 1r–4v (Gusovius).
255 Magistrate of Kelbra. 12 April 1786 (translation). TNA HCA 49/6, No. 77.
256 VOC employment record of Johan Carel Reynhart, NL-HaNA VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 14045, fol. 185.
and circumstances’ forced him to seek employment in the VOC again ‘to earn something for wife and children and to return, as soon as possible’. His brother, Johann August had taken the same step in 1786, probably propelled by the success of Carl’s first term of service. Employment in the VOC had thus become a proven and repeated strategy in the Reinhard family.

In June 1788, Carl embarked on the Vrouwe Katharina Johanna, this time with the rank of sergeant. The two brothers were reunited at the Cape of Good Hope when August, who had arrived at the Cape a year earlier, also boarded the Katharina Johanna. Together they arrived in Batavia in July 1789. Little is recorded on August’s life. He was promoted to onder-major and eventually lieutenant. When he died in 1795, he left an estate worth less than 2,000 Rixdalers and two enslaved persons named Roosie and Eerdurs.

His brother Carl’s years in Batavia are better documented, thanks to his promotion to the company’s civil service, but especially because of the above-mentioned prize trial on his way back to Europe. During his 8-year-long service he stayed mainly in Batavia and Bandung, where he became bookkeeper (boekhouder) and overseer (opziender). His new position and rank opened up new social and economic opportunities. As a civil servant of the VOC, he corresponded with company servants and local merchants in Batavia and other trading posts. Carl, who apparently could read and write Dutch, was also involved in the estate and probate issues of his European compatriots. In 1790, for example, he wrote a letter in Dutch to Ysbrand or Eijsbrand Jepma concerning the delivery of some goods from the estate of a certain late S. Bakker. He also had some connection to freemasonry in Batavia, however, he seems not to have been a member of the Batavian lodge, La Fidèle Sincérité. After his contracted time of five years, Carl started to prepare for his repatriation. He sold his property and enquired in his letters home about opportunities to purchase an estate in the region around Kelbra.

259 Johann Carl Reinhard to his wife Anna Sophia Victoria Reinhard, née Benzler. Cape of Good Hope, 15 September 1798. TNA HCA 32/617, No. 61/45a.
260 VOC employment record of Johan August Reijnhaat NL-HaNA, VOC 1.04.02, inv.no.14282, fol. 266. Other examples of two brothers going subsequently  to the East Indies are the Hensch brothers. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1007, fols. 201r–209v (Hensch); and the Mauve brothers. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1021, fols. 155r–159r (Mauve).
261 Naam-boekje van de wel ed. heeren der hooge Indiasche regeringe […] op Batavia […] zoo als dezelve in wezen zijn bevonden ultimo december 1793 (Amsterdam, 1796), 51.
262 Will of J. A. Reinhardt. 1795. NL-NaHA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 6890 (9078).
266 H. K. Reinhard to Johann Carl Reinhard. Auleben, 8 September 1793 (extract, translation); A. Sophia Victoria Reinhardt to Johann Carl Reinhard. Kelbra 14 July 1793 (extract, translation);
In 1796, he finally received his dismissal from the VOC. However, when he arrived in Batavia, the political circumstances had changed drastically. In Europe, the Batavian Republic, successor of the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands, had been proclaimed in 1795 and joined an alliance with revolutionary France. For the VOC, this meant that the oceans became much less safe, as the Netherlands were now the enemy of the British king and his navy. For Carl and all other Europeans who tried to maintain bonds with family and friends in Europe, this new war caused real peril to their lives and relationships, the transmission of news and letters, and as Carl was about to learn, the transportation of goods and people. In 1796, the government in Batavia ordered that no Europeans could board homeward bound ships as passengers. Moreover, it was almost impossible to find any ship sailing to Europe. However, in late 1797 an opportunity arose, and Carl bought a passage on the American ship *Hope* bound for New York. Carl believed that this was a safe way to leave ‘the unhealthiest place on earth’, namely Batavia, and go to America, where he hoped to find another opportunity to sail to Europe. Equipped with a trunk filled with gold bars, ducats, and silver worth more than 34,000 Rixdalers in Cape currency, pieces of music and poetry, several medical prescriptions, numerous letters, and ‘pretty things’ for his wife, Carl embarked on the *Hope*.267 He probably went on board with mixed feelings. He had stayed in contact with his family and friends in Auleben and Kelbra during the first years of his absence, but since 1793 he had not received a single letter.268 He did not know who was still alive, and whether his family still remembered him and waited for his return.

Johann Carl Reinhard’s plan to return to the fold at a good pace via New York to Europe was impeded once again by the war. The *Hope*, and with her all of Carl’s belongings, was taken close to the Cape of Good Hope by two British privateers. This was nothing unusual in time of war, as each side sought to weaken the other economically by seizing their goods or intercepting intelligence. Until the nineteenth century, taking a ‘prize’, that is an enemy ship and its cargo, was a highly regulated international practice. The captors had to hand over the seized cargo and all documents they found on the ship to the nearest Prize Court. Based on a perusal of the documents and depositions of the ship’s crew, the court would then decide whether the ship was a legal prize and the goods subject to forfeiture and sale. If they were, the captors received a share in the proceeds of

C. Bischoff to Johann Carl Reinhard. Kelbra, 13 July 1793 (extract). TNA HCA 49/6, Nos. 86, 87 and 99.

267 Johann Carl Reinhard to his wife Anna Sophia Victoria Reinhard, née Benzler. Cape of Good Hope, 15 September 1798. TNA HCA 32/617, No. 61/45a. See also the documents in Hope Property Cause. Claims of Johan Carl Reinhard and John Ferrier. TNA HCA 49/6.

268 The ‘Abstract’ lists several ‘German letters’ and letters from Reinhard’s father and friends in Auleben and Kelbra. See footnote 240. In the preserved letter to his wife written at the Cape in 1798, Reinhard complains that he had not received a single letter in five years.
the sale. While Carl eventually got himself recognised by the Vice-Admiralty Court of the Cape of Good Hope as a neutral person, his confiscated goods – the gold bars, ducats, and silver money – were withheld from him until late 1798 or later. Waiting for the court’s sentence, Carl was thus stuck at the Cape with no money for a passage on a homebound ship. But even with money, it would have been difficult to find a ship, as there were hardly any homebound ships calling at the Cape during the war.

The sources at this point go silent on whether Johan Carl Reinhard ever made his way back to Kelbra. But the story of the Reinhard family does not end here. Somehow, information on Carl’s destiny at the Cape reached the family back in Thuringia. Until at least 1992 the history of Johann Carl Reinhard must have remained part of his descendants’ tradition. On 28 August 1992, one of Reinhard’s great-great-great-grandchildren consulted the records relating to Reinhard’s property claims in The National Archives. Apparently, the details of Reinhard’s sojourn in the East Indies and his obstacles at the Cape had found their way back to the family in the late 1790s. Maybe one of Johann Carl Reinhard’s letters sent from the Cape reached its addressees after all. Maybe he eventually returned home to his family, with or without his property. Maybe he even bought the estate of the late Herrn von Splodheim, as his father had suggested in 1793, if it was still for sale. While the Reinhard family probably still told the story of their ancestor in 1992, their knowledge seems either to be lost or inaccessible today. The great-great-grandson or granddaughter, however, anticipated that perhaps someday someone else would be interested in this history. She or he left a handwritten note with a phone number in the folder which reads: ‘Dear Fellow Researcher! […] Are you also interested in this court case? Why?’ Unfortunately, time has passed, and the telephone number is no longer in operation.

2.4.4 Hans Carl von Arnim

Family tradition also played a significant role in the life story of Hans Carl von Arnim, a member of one of Brandenburg’s most distinguished noble families. The letters he sent home from India were stored and preserved in the family’s archive together with other documents relating to his estate. Hans Carl is remarkable, however, for more than the abundance of written records of and about him. His story offers an important corrective to the common narrative of the indebted Ostindienfahrer fleeing obligations and creditors. To be sure, Arnim’s migration to the East Indies in 1764 was related to his debts and fear of being imprisoned. However, the letters he sent to his family during his absence complicate this picture. At all times his stated aspiration was to get his affairs sorted and to return


to Germany. To this end, he also fostered and invested in patronage relationships among the highest noble families of Brandenburg, Brunswick, and the Netherlands.

Despite the high profile of the Arnim family in the history of Brandenburg, Hans Carl is not one of the few well-known East Indies travellers in German historiography. This is surprising because some of his letters have been published, at least in excerpts, by Werner Konstantin von Arnswaldt and Hans Devrient in 1923.\(^{271}\) Hans Carl von Arnim’s 19 letters in the Arnim family records now held in the Brandenburgisches Landesarchiv run from his arrival in Amsterdam in 1763 to shortly before he died in Bengal in 1773. They lie among hundreds of unsorted papers relating to the family’s economy, von Arnim’s debts, and the eventual probate process.\(^{272}\)

When Hans Carl von Arnim was baptized in 1734 in Götschendorf, the Arnim family held the largest noble lordship in the Brandenburg province of the Uckermark. After the crises and devastating losses of the seventeenth century, the family not only succeeded in recovering what had been lost, but even increased its power.\(^{273}\) In 1800, despite new losses and deprivations caused by the Seven Years War, the Arnim family owned almost 40 per cent of all noble estates in the Uckermark.\(^{274}\) Hans Carl was the youngest son of Bernd Ludwig von Arnim auf Götschendorf and his wife Marie Ilse von Holtzendorff. When Bernd Ludwig died in 1748, his estate was divided between his widow and eight children. By lot Hans Carl received the manor Bernsdorf together with a farm in Schönwerder. As was typical for a man of Hans Carl’s status, he served as a Generaladjutant in the regiment of Prince Friedrich Franz von Braunschweig during the Seven Years War. However, after three injuries, he was granted his leave and probably went straight to Berlin, where he refused a position as a captain (Hauptmann).\(^{275}\)

Presumably during the war and likely during his stay in Berlin, Arnim got into financial difficulties. His manor was not the only one that suffered economic losses. Many of the economically strong estates in the Uckermark were endangered.\(^{276}\) More severe were his gambling debts. Probably because of those debts, he sold his manor and the farm to relatives.\(^{277}\) However, he continued to take on debt. An obligation of over 1,500 Reichsthaler to Hofmarshall Thiel, which Hans Carl’s brother believed was a new gambling debt, increased the economic pressure on him even more.

Fleeing his creditors, Hans Carl, then about 29 years of age, went to the Netherlands. To his brother he wrote, ‘I had planned to come to Stettin before my

\(^{271}\) Arnswaldt and Devrient, *Das Geschlecht von Arnim*, esp. 645–724.

\(^{272}\) Brandenburgisches Landesarchiv (BLHA), Rep. 37 Herrschaft Boitzenburg Nos. 3396, 3397, and 3398.


\(^{274}\) Enders, *Die Uckermark*, 610.

\(^{275}\) Arnswaldt and Devrient, *Das Geschlecht von Arnim*, 697.

\(^{276}\) Enders, *Die Uckermark*, 611.

\(^{277}\) Arnswaldt and Devrient, *Das Geschlecht von Arnim*, 658.
departure, but my circumstances did not allow me to do it‘.278 In Amsterdam, he was recommended and sustained by the brother of the Duke of Brunswick.279 By means of letters of recommendation from Oberhofmeisterin von Manstein and the Duke of Brunswick, Hans Carl gained employment with the VOC at the rank of military captain in 1764. He embarked on the Oudkarspel and arrived eight months later on Ceylon.280 After a year in military service, the company granted him leave because of his bad state of health. He then signed a five-year contract with the company as a junior merchant (onderkoopman).281 His change from military to civil service cost him half of his monthly salary, from 80 Dutch gulden as a captain to 40 Dutch gulden as a junior merchant. The prospect of earning more with private side activities undoubtedly contributed to his decision to make this change.

At the same time, Hans Carl tried to win back the favour of Frederick II after having declined the position in Berlin and left Brandenburg-Prussia without leave. His attempts were eventually successful. In 1769, Frederick II pardoned Arnim and allowed him to stay in the East Indies. He also invited him to someday return to his ‘native country’ and family with ‘a good fortune’.282 With the prospect of making some money in Bengal and then returning home, Hans Carl began to plan his journey back to Europe. He now corresponded more regularly with his brothers, sent letters and gifts to the Prussian king and his Amsterdam envoy Thulemeier, asked the Prince of Oranien and many of his related parties repeatedly for recommendations for his advancement in the VOC, and tried to establish reliable correspondence networks in the Netherlands, England, Denmark, and Halle. Probably as a result of the Prussian envoy’s efforts in The Hague, Hans Carl was promoted to the position of the overseer of the buildings in Hooghly (Hugli) in Bengal in 1770.283 Despite this success, however, from his letters to his brothers, it appears that Hans Carl wanted to return home.

For this to become an option, Hans Carl had to get his debts in Brandenburg in order, and for this he relied heavily on his brothers on the ground. Although his brothers recommended he postpone his return home because of his ‘circumstances’, Hans Carl planned to take a ship to Europe and arrive in the Netherlands in July or August 1775. Until then, he asked his brother to order his affairs at least enough so that he could return without being imprisoned for debt. He would stay in Holland ‘incognito’ until his brother could give him the go-ahead to come back to Brandenburg. Apparently, Hans Carl still feared his creditors.

278 Hans Carl von Arnim to his brother Arnim. Amsterdam, 13 August 1763. BLHA, Rep. 37 Boitzenburg No. 3396, fol. 15r.
279 Louis of Brunswick was the guardian of the minor Stadtholder William V of the Netherlands.
280 VOC employment record of Hans Carel van Arnim NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 6436, fol. 271.
281 Contract of Hans Carel Baron van Arnim to serve as junior merchant (onderkoopman). Batavia, 14 June 1767. BLHA, Rep. 37 Boitzenburg No. 3397, fol. 8r.
283 Appointment of Hans Carel Baron van Arnim to Inspector of Buildings in Hooghly. Batavia, 3 July 1770. BLHA, Rep. 37 Boitzenburg No. 3397, fol. 9r.
Once back home in the Uckermark, he hoped to receive employment from the king, or at least permission to make his own living, and he believed that his experiences in the East Indies would help to this end.\textsuperscript{284} He was not mistaken. Other men who returned from the East Indies had also found employment at princely courts. For example, the burgher’s son Johann Christian Wolf travelled to the East Indies between 1751 and 1770, wrote a travelogue after his return, and gifted it, together with ‘other small things’, to the Duke of Mecklenburg. In return he received the title of \textit{Amtmann}, the ducal privilege of exemption from all taxes and duties, and was furthermore given free lodging and firewood at Schloss Bülow.\textsuperscript{285}

On 19 December 1773, eight days before Hans Carl’s ship set sail for Europe, he died of a fever in Chinsura (Chunchura). He had been sick and weak for some time and drafted his will the day before he died.\textsuperscript{286} It took years for Hans Carl’s brothers to put his estate in order and settle his debts.

At first sight, Hans Carl von Arnim’s life, and in particular his migration to the East Indies, fits well into the narrative of the fugitive \textit{Ostindienfahrer} seeking escape from creditors and destitution. However, the traces left by his migration suggest that he never considered the East Indies his ultimate refuge from the problems he faced in German lands. He considered employment in the VOC as a potential way out of his financial troubles that should eventually allow for his return. This strategy was closely intertwined and dependent on the involvement of his family and relationships at home. This entangled strategy of maintaining relationships with people at home while escaping creditors by signing on with the VOC is generally overlooked in the German literature.

2.4.5 The Hagemeister family

Among the thousands of individuals who travelled within the East India companies’ empires, one group is almost never visible in the sources used to write the histories of \textit{Ostindienfahrer}: the children. Children crisscrossed the waters of the Indian Ocean as enslaved and debt-bonded human cargo, as ‘servants’ to Europeans returning home, as underaged employees and apprentices of merchants, and as children of the transient merchants, petty traders, missionaries, diplomats, and soldiers of the Indian Ocean world.\textsuperscript{287} Europeans of higher status also sent

\textsuperscript{284} Hans Carl von Arnim to his brother [?]. No date (draft). BLHA, Rep. 37 Boitzenburg No. 3397, fol. 10r.

\textsuperscript{285} Landeshauptarchiv Schwerin (LHAS), 2.26-1/1 Kabinett I, Sachakten, No. 1456 Domanialamt Bützow, Wolff, Johann Christoph, 1785/86; LHAS, 2.26-1/2 Kabinett I, Personalia, No. 9307 Johann Christoph Wolff, Röbel, später Amtmann in Bützow, 1782/83. Gelder, \textit{Abenteuer}, 188–197 and 227 has analysed the travelogue of Johann Christoph Wolff and provides more examples of post-East Indies careers.

\textsuperscript{286} Will of Hans Carl von Arnim. 18 December 1773 (translation). BLHA, Rep. 37 Boitzenburg No. 3397, fols. 3r–4r.

\textsuperscript{287} On the enslavement of children in the Indian Ocean world, see Richard B. Allen, "Children and European Slave Trading in the Indian Ocean During the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth
their children from the East Indies to Europe for their education.\textsuperscript{288} Two children of this last group, Lubert Johann and Johanne Dorothea Hagemeister, are at the centre of the following section. Born in India, they were sent to Germany after their parents’ deaths for their education. Their earliest years are relatively well documented because of the involvement of the Protestant Danish-English-Halle Mission in the Hagemeister’s family affairs.\textsuperscript{289} These documents, furthermore, illuminate how their adult lives remained connected to events in India for a long time after they left.

In 1753 Carl Ludwig Hagemeister, a well-educated native of Cüstrin (now Kostrzyn nad Odra) and former public servant in the Kurmark, went to the East Indies in service with the VOC.\textsuperscript{290} In under eight years he rose from soldier to junior merchant and head of commerce and administration (secunde) in Bimilipatnam (Bheemunipatnam/Bheemili), a Dutch trading factory on the Coromandel Coast.\textsuperscript{291} On the south-eastern coast of India, the Dutch, British, Danish, and French East India companies and their servants, along with South Asian merchants, traded and defended their interests in close geographical proximity to each other. This opened up opportunities, and Hagemeister seems to have made some of his fortune through trade in this environment. However, it was probably his marriage to Maria Adriana Warner in 1758 that most benefitted his finances.\textsuperscript{292} Maria Adriana was the daughter of Jan Karsten Warner, originally from Hamburg, who came to the Coromandel Coast in 1719 as a seaman (jongmatroos).\textsuperscript{293} Around a year after the wedding, Maria Hagemeister gave birth to the couple’s first child, Lubert Johann. Their daughter Johanne Dorothea was born a year later. In 1761 Maria was pregnant again, but died when she miscarried.\textsuperscript{294} Carl Ludwig, now alone with an infant and a toddler, apparently decided to return to...
Europe. From Bimilipatnam he went first to Madras to terminate his affairs in the region. His sudden departure from his post at the Dutch factory would later cause his executors some lengthy troubles. The attorney of the VOC sued Hagemeister’s executors for profits that had been lost due to cotton ‘being damaged by the neglect of the said Charles Louis Hagemeister’.295 It is also imaginable that these charges were not the consequence of Hagemeister’s abrupt departure, but the reason for him to pack his belongings and remove himself from the Dutch jurisdiction to the neighbouring British presidency. Whatever the case, in 1761 Carl Ludwig and his two children arrived in Vepery, close to Madras, where they were welcomed by the Protestant missionaries. Carl Ludwig fell ill there and was attended in the house of Reverend Fabricius. Realising that he might not recover, he arranged matters for after his death, paying particular attention to his children’s maintenance and education.

When Hagemeister died a couple of months later, Lubert and Johanne stayed with the missionaries.296 They spent their early childhood separated from each other in the households of two missionaries in Tranquebar (Tharangambadi). Here, they were probably fostered and nurtured by local household servants. One can envision how they played with other children and grew up in a polyglot and multicultural environment.297 When they left India in early 1767 and went to Germany, as their father had requested in his will, Lubert spoke ‘inarticulate German’, while Johanne only knew Portuguese, which her brother translated.298 A friend of Reverend Fabricius accompanied the two children, now seven and eight years old and still in need of ‘motherly care and nursing’.299 From other families we know that enslaved girls or women or local maids often accompanied children and European women from India to Europe.300

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295 Minutes of the Mayor’s Court in Madras, 21 March 1769. BL IOR/P/329/81 (no foliation). See also Minutes of the Mayor’s Court in Madras, 4, 11 and 18 May, 1 June, 14 September, 2 November and 14 December 1762. BL IOR/P/329/74 (no foliation). There are two extensive volumes on the court case in the Nationaal Archief in The Hague, which, however, I was unable to obtain in time to discuss here. See NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 3260 (Katern: Coromandel Pagina 469–665) and inv.no. 3252 (Katern: Batavia Pagina 1480–1485).
296 Lubert was placed in the household of the missionary Daniel Zeglin, while Johanne probably lived in the house of missionary Jacob Klein. It is, of course, possible that Klein and Zeglin lived near each other. Johann Philipp Fabricius to Gotthilf August Francke. Madras, 31 March 1762 (extract), AFSt/M 3 B 1 : 66, fol. 114v. Gotthilf August Francke to Johann Christian Brese. Halle, 22 November 1765. AFSt/M 3 B 1 : 83, fol. 137v.
298 Johann Christian Brese to Gotthilf August Francke. Berlin, 15 September 1767. AFSt/M 3 B 1 : 90, fol. 147v.
299 The case of six-year-old Carl von Imhoff, who was sent from India to England in 1772, is similar in this regard. Jarzebowski, Kindheit, 279.
300 See the numerous requests for permission to bring along a wife, children, and enslaved servants in the records of the Court of Directors. For example, Letter of Mary Brown in London to the
In Germany, the two children were placed under the guardianship of Hofrath (Counsellor of the Court, title) Johann Christian Brese in Berlin, who was also entrusted with the administration of the considerable estate that the children had inherited from their father. As the children grew up and became young adults, the administration of their estate turned out to be a complex endeavour. The story of their inheritance will be told in more detail in chapter 6, but a brief summary will be given here. The largest part of the children’s inheritance had remained under the administration of Reverend Fabricius in India after Hagemeister’s death and was supposed to be transferred to Europe when the children went to Germany. Until 1778, a small share of the total sum had reached Brese by means of annual bills of exchange, underwritten not only by various bankers and merchants, but also by the directors of the Orphanage in Halle, the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge in London, and the Missionary College (Missionskollegium) in Copenhagen. Apparently, everyone involved in these transactions benefitted. In 1778, however, the payments to Brese failed to appear. It turned out that the executor Fabricius had mismanaged the funds. In 1791, after numerous attempts and hundreds of pages of correspondence involving even Prussian foreign ministers and the British government in the East Indies, final news arrived from Madras. All efforts to recover the estate from Fabricius had been fruitless. Thus was Lubert and Johanne Dorothea Hagemeister’s money lost.

Records of Lubert and Johanne’s adult lives in Brandenburg are fragmentary. Lubert suffered seizures and disappears from the records in the early 1780s. Johanne remains visible because of her active involvement in the attempts to retrieve the paternal estate. She maintained family ties in India at least until 1779 when she asked Frederick II to grant her aunt, née Warner, and her husband the merchant Appengk from Nagapattinam (Nagapattinam), permission to settle in Berlin; of course, they would bring their wealth with them. When Johanne died in 1837, she had been married twice and given birth to four children. Neither her will nor the entry of her death in the church books of Ludwigsaue contained any reference to her place of birth. Her involvement in the global transformation processes of the second half of the eighteenth century, into which she had been drawn through her parent’s legacy, was not considered memorable or worth

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301 The administration of Hagemeister’s estate produced numerous documents that are today stored in the Missionsarchiv and Hauptarchiv of the Franckesche Stiftungen and can be searched in the online catalogue. See, esp. AFS/M 3 B 1 and 2.
302 See chap. 6.3.3 for a detailed account of the fate of the Hagemeister inheritance.
303 GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1024, fols. 24r–37v (Hagemeister).
304 Petition of Johanne Dorothea Bresen, née Hagemeister. Berlin, 30 September 1779. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 6502 (no foliation). Permission was granted; however, it is unknown whether Warner and Appengk moved to Brandenburg.
305 Will of Johanne Dorothea Haenicke, née Hagemeister. 1838. BLHA, Rep. 4A Nos. 7660 and 7661. Death of Johanna Dorothee Haenicke, née Hagemeister. 5 November 1837. BLHA, Rep. 5KB No. 605, entry No. 4, fol. 98v.

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mentioning in these official documents of her life – a life that nevertheless had been shaped by migration to and from the East Indies.

2.5 Groups and families migrating together

The East India companies were in the first instance trading companies during the first two centuries of their operations. Although they facilitated or forced the migration of more than a million Europeans, Asians as well as countless enslaved people, their main aim was not to colonize the East Indies.\footnote{There were exceptions. During the very early years of the VOC, the company repeatedly sent Dutch women to Ambon and Java. Taylor, \textit{Social World}. 12–15.} One important difference between the migrations from Europe to the Indian Ocean world and those to East- and Southeast Europe and the Americas is that group and family migration to the East Indies was not typical in the eighteenth century.\footnote{German emigration to East and Southeast Europe, the largest migration movement during the 18th century, was characterized by groups, communities, and families migrating together. Heinz-Dietrich Löwe, ‘Deutsche Migration nach Ost- und Südosteuropa im 18. Jahrhundert. Ergebnisse und neue Fragestellungen’, in Matthias Beer and Dittmar Dahlmann (eds.), \textit{Migration nach Ost- und Südosteuropa vom 18. bis zum Beginn des 19. Jahrhunderts. Ursachen – Formen – Verlauf – Ergebnisse} (Stuttgart, 1999). See also Bade and Otmer, ‘Germany’; Georg Fertig, ‘Transatlantic Migration from the German-Speaking Parts of Central Europe, 1600–1800: Proportions, Structures, and Explanations’, in Nicholas Canny (ed.), \textit{Europeans on the Move. Studies on European Migration, 1500–1800} (Oxford, 1994). For the difference between migration from Europe to Asia and to the Americas, see Femme S. Gaastra, ‘Soldiers and Merchants: Aspects of Migration from Europe to Asia in the Dutch East India Company in the 18th Century’, in Wim Klooster (ed.), \textit{Migration, Trade, and Slavery in an Expanding World: Essays in Honor of Pieter Emmer} (Leiden, 2009), 99.} This is unsurprising, given that most of those who went to the East Indies did so within the framework of temporary employment with one of the companies.

Nevertheless, some groups did migrate together, both temporarily and with the intention of settling. Some such groups have caught the interest of historians. The Protestant missionaries in Tranquebar (steered from Halle and maintained by reformed circles in Denmark and the Anglican Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge), for example, have had such broad coverage in the historiography of missionaries that I will not go into detail about them here.\footnote{Heike Liebau, ‘Missionsauftrag, Wissensdurst und Abenteuerlust. Reisen von hallischen Missionaren nach und durch Indien’, in Anne Schröder-Kahnt and Claus Veltemann (eds.), \textit{Durch die Welt im Auftrag des Herrn. Reisen von Pietisten im 18. Jahrhundert} (Halle, 2018); Heike Liebau, ‘Die Dänisch-Englisch-Hallesche Mission (Tranquebarmission)’, \textit{Europäische Geschichte Online} (EGO) (2010), http://www.ieg-ego.eu/liebauh-2010-de, accessed 25 October 2020.} Other groups that went to the East Indies were the subsidiary regiments of Württemberg and Hanover that served on the sides of the VOC and EIC in the 1780s and 1790s and the ‘German Protestant Settlers for Sumatra’. Some of the itineraries and life stories of members of the subsidiary regiments and the Sumatra settlers are explored below as they shed light on an aspect of East Indies experience that
is marginalized in scholarship: the migration of families to the Indian Ocean world.  

2.5.1 German Protestant settlers in Sumatra

In 1769, a group of German Protestants was recruited on behalf of the EIC for the Company’s settlement in Bencoolen on Sumatra. Against the backdrop of severe human losses in the remote British settlement and low revenues for the Company, the German Jeremiah Baker had convinced the Court of Directors in 1769 to procure a number of German Protestants to repair to Fort Marlborough, in order to promote the cultivation of the lands and re-establish the manufactories of arrack and sugar under that presidency also for raising cotton and other articles which the island of Sumatra is capable of producing. A contract made between Baker and the EIC stipulated the terms of the project and appointed Baker to recruit 50 German Protestants (40 men and 10 women and children). The men should ‘chiefly consist’ of such who have been bred to and employed in husbandry’, but mechanics and artisans were also welcome because they could assist in building.

Where the settlers originally came from is unknown, which makes it impossible to trace them in German archives. Nor do we know how the colonists were recruited. It seems that many of them were lured with false promises. They probably did not know anything about life on Sumatra. Had they had access to a decent library, they would have found Elias Hessen’s Ost-Indische Reise-Beschreibung (1690) or Johann Wilhelm Vogel’s Diarium (also 1690), which both told the story of the unfortunate expedition of 22 miners from Saxony to the goldmines on the

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309 One such family has been analysed from the perspective of a history of children by Jarzebowski, Kindheit, chap. 5.3.4 ‘[…] es war wohl die größte Torheit, das arme Kind mitzuschleppen.’ – Der Indianer Christoph Adam Carl von Imhoff.


311 Court of Directors, 18 October 1769. BL IOR/B/85, p. 273. On the negotiations, see also Proposal of Capt. George Burghall and M Jeremiah Baker. Read at Committee of Correspondence 23 August 1769. BL/IOR/D/114 (no foliation). Jeremiah Baker had lived on Sumatra at least since December 1766, when he appears in the factory records as the owner of a ‘house of entertainment’. List of inhabitants at Fort Marlborough for 1766. IOR/G/35/14, p. 108.

312 Recommendation of the Committee of Correspondence, 18 October 1769. BL IOR/D/26, p. 24.

313 The Baker family had relationships in Hesse-Kassel. Only the origin of Fredrick Hebnar, Huebner, Hübner, or Huebner, one of the settlers, is known with some certainty because he got involved in a property cause on his way back to Europe and stated that he was a native of Dettenhausen in Württemberg. Affidavit and claim of Frederick Hebnar. 31 May 1779. Captured Ship: Le Compte d’Artois, master Pierre Girodroux. TNA HCA 32/295/16, Nos. 2 and 3. I am grateful to Randolph Cock (TNA) who advised me of this court case. It was this case that drew my attention to the German Protestant settlers for Sumatra in the first place.
west coast of Sumatra in the second half of the seventeenth century. Tropical conditions made mining with Saxonian techniques impossible and dangerous, as strong rains regularly flooded the tunnels and the workers did not know how to work the tropical wood. Almost all the miners died of disease. The German Protestant settlers faced a very similar destiny around a hundred years later. They would later state in petitions to the Governor and Council at Fort Marlborough that they had been ‘greatly deceived by the assurances made […] by Mr Baker’, and ‘no European being able to stand the heat of the climate to work […] the Company’s allowance of two slaves each man [is] too little for their maintenance’.

In January 1770, amid cloudy weather and rain, the first 33 Germans boarded the ship the Royal Captain in the Downs, bound for Bencoolen. Among them were six married couples. For Richard and Elizabeth Allet or Elliot and their son William, the hope of a better life was soon dashed. Even before leaving the Downs, little William died onboard the Royal Captain. The child’s body was sent onshore on the Isle of Wight to be interred. Elizabeth died shortly after their arrival at Fort Marlborough in July, and Richard followed her between January and May 1771.

Life on Sumatra turned out to be different from what the migrants had expected. The prospect of a prosperous life quickly vanished into the hot and sticky air. As early as three months after their arrival, several men petitioned the Governor and Council for permission to seek employment elsewhere. Most of the settlers had no experience or knowledge whatsoever of husbandry and were soon overstrained and unsatisfied with cultivating land in the alien environment. It was also observed ‘that the Germans [were] unskilful in the management of their slaves’ and ‘treated them so harshly’ that the Company feared unrest in the settlement.

By August 1771, many of the colonists had taken employment outside of their plantations. Sanders Pankuke and his pregnant wife, Mary Pankuke,

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315 Petition of Baldwin, Williams et al. 9 September 1770. BL IOR/G/35/78, pp. 270–271. See also the petition of William Hewer. 5 January 1771. BL IOR/G/35/78, pp. 420–421.
316 Passengers for Bencoolen. BL IOR/L/MAR/B/556D.
317 The names of the settlers were anglicized in the company records and spelling varies.
318 Little Williams’ death was noted down in the Logbook. 31 January 1770. BL IOR/L/MAR/B/556D. The death of Elizabeth Elliot was noted in the list of Germans dated 31 December 1770. BL IOR/G/14, No. 52. This list included Richard Elliot alive. On 11 May 1771, James Dodsworth petitioned the Governor and Council, stating that his partner Elliot was dead. BL IOR/G/35/79, p. 81.
319 Resolution on state of the German settlers. 16 October 1771. BL/IOR/D/27, p. 41. It must be noted, however, that the Governor and Council at Fort Marlborough appears not to have approved of the conditions that the Court of Directors had granted to the German Protestant settlers as they and other Company servants on Sumatra were themselves involved in the arrack and sugar production, which had probably an effect on how they evaluated and treated the newcomers. This context requires further research. See Proceedings relative to the establishment of arrack and sugar works as they respect the conduct of the Governor and Council … BL IOR/H/770, pp. 375–403.
realized that they had ‘no prospect of getting anything to maintain [the family] by cultivation’. Therefore, Sanders asked the Governor and Council to provide him with a small house and oven ‘at or near Marlbro for the purpose of baking’. Other Germans worked as tailors and carpenters, and one was a skilled millwright. However, twelve of the settlers had no employment and relied on prolonged allowances from the EIC. Among these were George Whiteshoe and his wife, Ann, and the widow Catherine Schomloffen or Schaumleffer and her three children. The Governor and Council most likely would have granted them permission to leave and return to Europe or to another presidency, maybe even as charter passengers without extra costs. Mary Baker, for instance, the wife of Jeremiah Baker, left the island together with her niece by permission and at the cost of the Company in July 1772. In her petition she explained her wish to return to Europe with her ‘bad state of health’ and the ‘situation of my affairs at home which require my presence’. Mary Pankuke also returned to Europe, leaving behind her husband on Sumatra. But the majority of the Germans decided to stay. Many of them died within the first year of their arrival. Others, like Ann Whiteshoe, just disappear from the historical records.

Those who stayed on Sumatra eked out a living in the following years. They formed friendships and work relations and some of them ‘agreed to live together’. Some men, like Andrew Sieveck, Fredrick Hübner, and George Whiteshoe also frequently appear in the records as buyers in the auction sales of effects and as witnesses and executors to the wills of deceased fellows. However, over the years more and more of them vanished without a trace from the factory records. In only a very few cases do the records allow glimpses into how the lives of those who stayed turned out. The tailor Andrew Sieveck died at the age of 35 in 1787. He had spent almost half of his life on the west coast of Sumatra, and someone in Fort Marlborough obviously cared enough about him to erect a tombstone for him. In 1773, Sanders Pankuke put his worldly affairs in order in a will and named his wife, Mary, who had returned to Europe, his universal heir. William Brandt acknowledged several relationships on Sumatra in his will. His main points of social reference were three other Germans who had arrived together on Sumatra, among them Fredrick Hübner, but he also mentioned ‘my

320 Petition of Sanders Pankuke. 3 November 1770. BL IOR/G/35/78, pp. 341–342.
321 A list of German planters who have employments. August 1771. BL IOR/G/35/79, [p. 224]. Catherine was married to Herman Schaumleffer. Another couple was Conrad and Mil. Schaumleffer. It is probable that Conrad and Herman were kin.
323 Fort Marlborough General Letter. 8 March 1771. BL IOR/G/35/44, p. 241. See also chap. 5.5.
324 Fredrick Hübner and Andries Proujang or Andrew Bruyan lived together and jointly ran a bakery. Petition of Andries Proujang and Frederick Heepner, 18 September 1771. BL IOR/G/35/79, pp. 334-335.
325 See BL IOR/G/35/152 and 153.
326 Tombstone of Andrew Sewick. BACSA (British Association for Cemeteries in South Asia), Index of burials recorded in BACSA's Cemetery Record Books relating to South East Asia and Japan, http://bacsa.frontis.co/bin/aps_detail.php?id=620781, accessed 31 December 2019.
327 Will of Sanders Pankuke. 1773. BL IOR/G/35/16.
Slave Girl Belinda’, to whom he gifted all the household furniture, 300 dollars, and two other enslaved people in his household. The carpenter Shott was sent back to Europe by the Governor and Council after the martial court found him ‘guilty of great inhumanity to his slave boy, which apparently was the cause of his death’.

Jeremiah Baker left his wife behind on Sumatra when he went to London to sue the Governor and Council of Fort Marlborough. He likely did not meet his wife again, as by the time he returned to Sumatra in 1772 licensed as a free merchant she appears to have left the island on the Pigot bound for Europe. Baker, who found himself now without his wife and believed that his business on Sumatra had been destroyed by his partners during his absence decided to proceed to Bengal. It is probable that the Jeremiah Baker who married a woman named Anne Kerwood in Calcutta in 1775 and was buried in the same city in 1784 is the same Jeremiah Baker who had brought the German Protestant settlers to Sumatra.

The remaining fragments of the lives of some of the Protestant settlers in Sumatra exemplify two aspects of East Indies migration from the German lands that are widely neglected in the German literature: migration with the aim of settlement and the migration of groups and families. The East India companies long appeared as purely ‘masculine enterprises’, a depiction that contemporaries and later historians alike promoted. One of the reasons for this is to be found in the recruitment strategies of the companies. The main occupations within the companies were open only to men: merchants, seafarers, soldiers, and artisans. The VOC allowed only the higher ranks to bring along their wives and children from Europe to Asia. While newer Dutch and Anglo-Saxon scholarship on the East India companies has disproved the claim that ‘[t]here was no East India Company for women’, German historiography on the Ostindienfahrer persists in presenting the East India companies as exclusively male enterprises and the

328 Will of William Brandt. 1775. BL IOR/G/35/152.
329 General Letter from Fort Marlborough send on the Alfred in 1775. 16 April 177[4?], BL IOR/G/35/16 (no foliation).
332 Petition of Jeremiah Baker. 27 February 1773. BL IOR/G/35/80, pp. 40–41.
333 Marriage of Jeremiah Baker and Anne Kerwood. 1775. BL IOR/N/1/3, p. 73. Burial of Jeremiah Baker in 1784. BL IOR/N/1/2, p. 474. There are records concerning one Jeremiah Baker, postmaster at Culpee in 1783, held in the National Archives of India, P.P.1294-1297, O.C., 1 May, No. 25; and P.P.1335-1336, O.C., 1 May, No. 44. These records would probably shed more light on the identity of this Jeremiah Baker. However, I could not obtain the records in time to discuss them here. They are currently being digitised and will be available at https://www.abhilekh-patal.in/jspui/.
335 Bruijn, Gaastra, and Schöffer (eds.), Dutch Asiatic Shipping, 146.
The notion of the brave man adventuring into the world continues to prevail.\textsuperscript{337} The life stories of the German families, either employed by or associated with the East India companies, who travelled to the Indian Ocean clearly call for a revision of this picture.

2.5.2 Married couples in the German auxiliary regiments

Two groups who went to the East Indies with the prospect of soon returning to Europe were the subsidiary regiments of Württemberg and Hanover. The regimental birth, marriage, and death records (Feldkirchenbuch) of the 14\textsuperscript{th} (originally 15\textsuperscript{th}) Infantry Regiment of the Hanoverian Auxiliary Troops offer glimpses into a family practice that had long been common in Europe and was extended beyond the borders of Europe in the eighteenth century: married couples who went to war together.\textsuperscript{338}

In 1780 when it was realized that more manpower was needed in the war in the Carnatic, and the British crown could not provide enough royal regiments as a result of the losses during the American war, the directors of the EIC approached the king and asked for the support of Hanoverian troops.\textsuperscript{339} The king, as Elector of Hanover, agreed to the creation of two Hanoverian infantry regiments, and 2,800 soldiers were raised in Hanover and its neighbouring states.\textsuperscript{340}

The recruiters seem to have had no problems finding enough soldiers. Hundreds of men answered the calls in local newspapers,\textsuperscript{341} and some, like Caspar Grimm of the Leibcompagnie, brought along their wives. Grimm’s wife, Johanna Maria Luise, was heavily pregnant when she embarked on the Nottingham bound


\textsuperscript{339} For the history of the Hanoverian auxiliary regiments, see Tzoref-Ashkenazi, \textit{German Soldiers} and the more recent Ahuja and Christof-Füchsle (eds.), \textit{Great War}.

\textsuperscript{340} The first two regiments, counting 1,000 soldiers each, were raised in 1781. Another 800 were recruited in 1786 and send to India to replace casualties. Tzoref-Ashkenazi, ‘Hanoverians’, 222. The regiments were originally named the 15\textsuperscript{th} and 16\textsuperscript{th} Regiment. In 1783 the 15\textsuperscript{th} Regiment was renamed the 14\textsuperscript{th} and the 16\textsuperscript{th} became the 15\textsuperscript{th}. This explains the discrepancies in the source descriptions below. I will refer to the regiments under their new names, that is 14\textsuperscript{th} and 15\textsuperscript{th} Regiment.

\textsuperscript{341} Tzoref-Ashkenazi, ‘Hanoverians’, 222.
for Madras in 1782. Only two days after the fleet set sail from Portsmouth she gave birth to a son, who was baptized by the regiment’s priest Friedrich Ludwig Langstedt the same day. The ship’s captain George Curtis and Colonel Carl Reinbold became the child’s godfathers. The following days must have been dreadful for the young mother and her child. The sea was in such a rage that the windows of the cabins were removed and replaced with ‘Scheller’ (probably some wooden contrivance). The dinner table burst ‘because of the strong motion of the vessel’ and the company had to eat lying down ‘like the people from the Orient’ Several other ships in the fleet lost their topmasts. After many days of strong winds, snow, and rain, the sea calmed down. However, on 18 February 1782, the priest Langstedt noted in his diary that a soldier’s child had died. The child’s father, Caspar Grimm, also died sometime during the voyage. His widow shortly thereafter married one of her late husband’s comrades, the soldier Carl Gottlob Hildebrand. The priest Langstedt wrote in a letter that the wedding on board was ‘solemnly celebrated’. The Englishmen, he noted, ‘did not believe there had ever been such a festivity on the ocean’. Whatever the hopes of Johanna Maria Luise Grimm had been when she left Europe, her journey did not last long. By July 1783 she, too, had died, and her second husband, Carl Gottlob Hildebrand, married another widow of one of his comrades, Maria Elisabetha Boesenbergen, née Bohlen originally from Pyrmont. Maria Elisabetha Boesenbergen did not have a long life in India either. In September 1783 she gave birth to a son, who ‘her then husband the corporal of the Leibcompagnie Carl Gottlob Hildebrand acknowledged as a true child of the late Boesenberg and promised to educate as a righteous father’. Maybe in childbirth, maybe shortly after, Maria Elisabetha Hildebrand died. Her widower, Carl Gottlob Hildebrand, ‘for the third time’ married a widow of one of his comrades.

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345 Catalogus Babtizatorum. NLA HA, Hann. 83, VI No. 167, fol. 2r.


348 Catalogus Babtizatorum. NLA HA, Hann. 83, VI No. 167, fol. 2r.

349 This was not the first child born to Maria Elisabetha during the expedition. In May 1782 during the voyage, she had already given birth to a daughter. Catalogus Babtizatorum. NLA HA, Hann. 83, VI No. 167, fol. 16r–17r.

350 This time he married Hanna Luise Sandvoss, née Fersing. Catalogus Babtizatorum. NLA HA, Hann. 83, VI No. 167, fol. 2v.
As remarkable as these snapshots might appear to modern readers, the stories of Johanna Grimm, Maria Boesenbergen, and Carl Gottlob Hildebrand do not stand out from those of other members of the regiment. Dorothea Flagg or Flach, also wife of a soldier, gave birth to a daughter while onboard the Grand Duchesse ‘close to Portsmouth’.\footnote{Catalogus Babtizatorum. NLA HA, Hann. 83, VI No. 167, fol. 16r. Another woman, Sophia Juliana Klöpsch, née Hoyer, gave birth to a son shortly before the fleet left Portsmouth.} Johanna Sophia Severin and her husband Michael Krampf also left Germany together. Their daughter was born in Madras in April 1783.\footnote{Catalogus Babtizatorum. NLA HA, Hann. 83, VI No. 167, fol. 16v.} Besides baptisms, Langstedt and his successors also confirmed several weddings between regiment members whose spouses died during the expedition. This marriage pattern slowly began to change in 1785, when male members of the regiment started to marry women from outside the regiment. The first of these marriages was that between Lieutenant Georg van Brinken and Mistress Elisabeth Ford. During the following years, more and more marriages between members of the regiment, particularly common soldiers, and India-born women took place. Some of these women’s names indicate that they belonged to the highly diverse, multi-ethnic, Catholic Portuguese communities.\footnote{For these Portuguese communities, see Titas Chakraborty, ‘The Household Workers of the East India Company Ports of Pre-colonial Bengal’, \textit{International Review of Social History}, 64/S27 (2019), esp. 77–78.} Soldier Heinrich Munnick, for example, married Marena Alexander, daughter of John Alexander and born in Bengal. Heinrich Julius Brummer married Isabella Bozarion from S. Thomae in the Catholic church in Madras. In 1788 Levin Friedrich Stolzenberg married Francisca de Roche, born in Madras. Their daughter was baptized a year later in the Catholic church. The soldier Heinrich Freitag married Marha Nazar, daughter of Maderson Nazar, born in Persia.\footnote{Catalogus Babtizatorum. NLA HA, Hann. 83, VI No. 167, fols. 2v–5r. The women’s mothers’ names were not recorded.}

Further research into the regimental and colonial archives would probably uncover more fragments of the lives of these individuals associated with the Hanoverian auxiliary regiments. Based on the \textit{Feldkirchenbuch} alone, however, it can be stated that it was not uncommon for spouses to take advantage of the opportunities that the service in the East Indies auxiliary regiments offered and travel the world together. For other individuals, opportunities for marriage opened up in India. This corrects scholarship on the auxiliary regiments in which accompanying spouses are neglected and local women only become visible as prostitutes.

The next example comes from the Württemberg auxiliary regiment and points to the high mobility of families within the Indian Ocean world. In 1786, Duke Karl Eugen of Württemberg signed a treaty with the VOC and consequently sent around 3,200 soldiers and officers to the Cape of Good Hope and eventually to Java and Ceylon.\footnote{Tzoref-Ashkenazi, ‘German Auxiliary Troops’, 32 and 37–39. For the history of the Württemberg ‘Kapregiment’, see also Christine Bührlen-Grabinger, \textit{Verkauft und verloren: Das württembergische
after their contracted time of five years, in reality few ever did. Only about a hundred of the recruits ever returned to Germany. The majority of the troops died of disease between 1791 and 1796 when the regiment was sent from the Cape of Good Hope further east to Batavia and Ceylon. Those who survived, but had no means to pay for the voyage home, renewed their contracts or decided to stay and settle in the East Indies.

Among these was Paul Kellner, a lieutenant originally from Brunswick. He probably came to the East Indies with the rank of a sergeant with one of the replacement regiments in 1790 bound for Ceylon. In 1793 he adopted a son named Cornelius Fredrick who had been born on Amboina. Whether this was the child of a late regimental comrade or a child born out of wedlock to Kellner himself is unknown. Three years later Kellner married Anna Maria Muller, daughter of a captain in the Dutch Indian Army. The marriage took place on Amboina, where their daughter Wilhelmina Elizabeth and son Francis Daniel were later born. The family then proceeded to Madras, where another daughter named Anna Amalia was born in 1804. After the sojourn in Madras, Kellner eventually settled in Calcutta with his wife and four children. Sometime after the British capture of Ceylon in 1795–96, he joined the British Indian Army. This was not an unusual move as many of the soldiers of the Württemberg Cape regiment joined the British Army to ensure their safety. For Paul Kellner, defecting to the British had mixed results for the family. While he became the headmaster of the Lower Orphan School in Calcutta, his sons and grandsons seem to have profited from their father’s decision to change sides. The two sons, Francis Daniel and Cornelius Frederick, and later Kellner’s grandson Georg Walsh Kellner, all entered British Company or government service. His two daughters, on the
other hand, Wilhelmina Elizabeth Forster and Anna Amalia Fuller, who proceeded to Delhi with their husbands, were both killed during the Indian Rebellion of 1857.362

The group in which Kellner had come to the East Indies apparently soon lost its social cohesion. Instead, new family relations and involvement in the EIC formed his social references. In his will, drawn up by his own hand, Kellner identified himself as ‘born at Brunswick in Germany the 15th of July 1767’, but he made no further reference to any kin in Germany.363 When he died in 1822, a tomb was erected at the prestigious Park Street Cemetery in Calcutta marking his membership in the upper echelons of the city’s Anglo-Indian society. Nevertheless, the inscription on his tombstone read ‘Sacred to the Memory of Paul Kellner Esq., formerly a Lieutenant in the Wirtemberg Regt’.364 The fragmented traces in the archives and the cemetery point to the high mobility that characterized the life not only of a lieutenant in the army, but also of his family.

2.6 Conclusion

These life histories of German Ostindienfahrer and their relations illumine the multiple ways that transformations in the political and economic worlds of the Indian Ocean and the opportunities offered by the East India companies affected people in the Holy Roman Empire and those who emigrated to the companies’ settlements. Reconstructing the fragmented histories of elite and non-elite families associated with the trading companies through much broader sources than hitherto accessed allows us to extend existing scholarship on German Ostindienfahrer and to challenge it.

These and other life histories confirm the importance of the East Indies as a place to get rich, at least in people’s fantasies. Economic motives and indebtedness were incentives, but only for some, and certainly not only for people of the lower classes, as shown by the example of Hans Carl von Arnim. The case of the Reinhard brothers, furthermore, demonstrates that service in the East Indies was considered a viable strategy to improve family economics and not only a last resort. The life of the wigmaker Jean Paul Guyot supports the notion that emigration to the East Indies could be an extension of traditional short- and intermediate-term patterns of mobility tied in with intra-European forms of labour migration. These biographical explorations provide new evidence that migration to the Indian Ocean world involved more than mere geographical mobility. The life stories, especially those of Jean Paul Guyot and Johann Michael Hörnick, also point to the contingent and ever-changing nature of social status as a result of long-distance migration.

363 Will of Paul Kellner. 1823. BL IOR/L/AG/34/29/35.
The multifaceted contexts and experiences of East Indies migration revealed in this series of life stories also challenge us to rethink the picture of the Ostindienfahrer. Bringing different archival repositories together produces life stories that defy the Europe- and company-centric biographies commonly associated with the East Indies. The variety of sources shows the travels and experiences not only of the men who ventured forth with these companies, but also of women, children, and families that are less visible in the limited records of travel accounts and pay ledgers. They demonstrate, for example, that gender roles and the scope of agency of women changed when married couples migrated together. For instance, Mary Pankuke and Mary Baker, who had migrated together with their husbands to Sumatra, left their men behind and returned to Europe on their own. Moreover, as the example of Guyot demonstrates, cross-referencing archival records brings into view both the new families in the East Indies and the relatives of the Ostindienfahrer who stayed at home. In this perspective, non-European inhabitants of the Indian Ocean, previously neglected, become visible as constituents of East Indies migrants’ households, sometimes valued, sometimes abused. This is an important insight that shows ‘natives’ not only as subjects of Europeans’ curiosity, surprise, and gaze, but also as agents in the social worlds created or joined by European immigrants in the East Indies.

The histories of relations ‘at home’ in Germany, on the other hand, challenge the view that German travellers to the East Indies were only young unattached men who left everything and everyone behind. While the majority of those were men, not all of them went alone. Some of them, like the settlers for Sumatra and the soldiers in the auxiliary regiments travelled together with their wives and children. The women among the Sumatra settlers and those who lost their husbands on the voyage can moreover be regarded as migrants in their own right. Other Ostindienfahrer, like Johann Carl Reinhard and Hans Carl von Arnim, left families behind, but clearly hoped to return to them at some point and maintained (or at least tried to maintain) these relationships during their absence. All this does not mean that among the thousands of men who set out for the East Indies there were no loners or men who had deliberately broken all kin relations in German lands. The glimpses into the life of Johann Michael Hörnick indicate how easily connections with the ‘old’ world could be terminated. The East India companies facilitated new family formations in East Indies, but they also truncated old ones.

Death looms large in all family histories at the centre of this chapter and often caused significant changes in the lives of surviving family members such as children’s mobility across oceans and transitions between households. At the same time, the death of an Ostindienfahrer did not always mark the end of his story. Migrants’ influence continued after their deaths through their wills. They also lived on in the efforts of families to settle their affairs across great distances in the hope of sharing East Indies fortunes and in the stories that were passed down to later generations.

The life stories presented in this chapter indicate that binaries of absence and presence, staying and leaving, ‘home’ and ‘the world’, Europe and Asia must be
re-evaluated. Families and other close relationships were vital to the East Indies experience and their stories invite historians to reconsider the way they frame and conceptualize migration from Europe to the world of the Indian Ocean.
3 Preparing to Leave and Staying Behind

3.1 Introduction

Going to the East Indies required preparations and these varied depending on one’s social status, family obligations, motives, and aspirations. Of course, not every East Indies traveller took precautions, prepared himself, or strengthened his bonds with the people he left behind. The author of one travel account expressed his surprise over the ‘recklessness’ (Leichtsinn) with which many men went on the journey. Some men even completely excluded their relatives from their plans to go to the East Indies.

Men with family obligations faced particular challenges as their migration had severe implications for the wives and children they left behind. Contrary to received wisdom, like their peers in the military and navy, many men who entered service with the VOC and EIC were married and had children when they left Europe. Historians have estimated that in the early eighteenth century circa 40 per cent of the sailors on VOC ships were married. Until the end of the century, the number of married men on VOC vessels declined to 2 per cent, which historians explain with the changes in recruitment practices that opened employment opportunities for young and unexperienced men from outside the Netherlands. These numbers strongly indicate a trend but must be handled with some scepticism. The proportion of married men from outside the Netherlands is most likely underrepresented. Evidence in German archives indicates that some East India company employees left their wives and/or children in the Holy Roman Empire and that their migration disrupted marriages. This study includes 17 such families. The literature on German Ostindienfahrer commonly characterizes married male migrants as ‘escaping’ their wives and family obligations. This representation fits into broader scholarship that has understood military enlistment as a strategy to evade the responsibilities of unhappy marriages and financial

365 Gelder, Abenteuer, 102.
366 See, e.g. the case of Johann Christian Jachtmann, whose siblings learned only after his death that he had migrated to Batavia. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1037, fols. 53r–96v (Jachtmann). Carl Friedrich Reimer from Königsberg also apparently told neither his parents nor his siblings about his plan to go to the East Indies. E. D. Reimerin and E. Ch. Reimer to their son Carl Friedrich Reimer at Colombo. Königsberg, 13 February 1779; and Elisabeth Dorothea Reimerin to Carl Friedrich Reimer. Königsberg, 12 February [no year]. TNA HCA 30/722.
368 See chap. 2.4.3
hardship. More recent studies have added nuance to this picture, revealing both the various motives that prompted married men to seek military or maritime employment and the perspectives of the women who stayed or were left behind.

This chapter acknowledges these newer approaches and examines, through archival letters, petitions, and court records, the implications of East Indies migration not only for men who left their wives and children behind, but also for the wives. The sources are highly fragmented and unevenly distributed. Few families’ experiences of East Indies migration have been recorded at different moments over time and from the perspectives of both those who left and those who stayed. Most families affected by the departure of a male head remain vague and indistinct in the historical record. Most often they became known to authorities (and consequently historians), not because of conflict between the separated couple (a telling finding in itself), but years or decades later in matters concerning patrimonial inheritance.

This chapter begins with a survey of the preparations and provisions that East Indies travellers could and did make prior to their departure. Here the focus will be on two families who had the rare opportunity to travel together to the East Indies. The second part of the chapter turns to husbands and fathers who, at least in their own perception, did not silently absent themselves, but tried to make a living for themselves and their families in the East Indies. The last section turns to the wives who stayed (or were left) behind and the consequences of their husbands’ departures and absences on their lives. It must be remembered that moments of conflict are clearly overrepresented; the paper trails that allow us glimpses into these lives are often the result of marital conflicts that were either caused or exacerbated by married couples’ associations with the East India companies.


371 For example, Lorenz Klaas left his wife and two daughters and went to Semarang. Joachim Friedrich Krüger had a daughter in Hamburg when he died at the Cape of Good Hope, and Gustav Andreas Jaerisch left behind his wife and daughter. Johann Casper Neuhaus left behind his wife, his son, and daughter. See GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1026, fols. 122r–131r and 132r–170r (Klaas and Krüger); No. 1018, fols. 70r-78r (Jaerisch); and 1030, fols. 83r–111r (Neuhaus). Lieutenant Hermann Willhelm Ludwig Westernhagen of the Hanoverian auxiliary regiments left behind a natural daughter and paid maintenance to the mother of the child, Marie Elisabeth Küster, married name Martini. NLA HA, Cal. Br. 15, No. 4378. Johann Behrend Wittholt left behind his wife Gesche and his children in Bettingbühren when he signed on with the VOC in 1748. Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv, Abt. Oldenburg (NLA OL), Best. 31, -4-1 No. 21.
3.2 Preparing to leave

3.2.1 Knowledge and making provisions

For many men, preparing for the journey to Batavia, Ceylon, or Bengal probably began on the ground in Amsterdam or London. One can imagine them hearing stories of returning travellers in the streets and taverns and asking for practical advice from those who had seen the strange lands with their own eyes. This practical advice was also available in printed travel accounts, intelligence gazettes (Intelligenzblätter), and other media that collected and popularized knowledge from the late seventeenth century on. Everyday practical knowledge from abroad was in high demand as it allowed potential travellers to prepare themselves somewhat for, what Dagmar Freist has called, the ‘spaces of uncertainty’ (‘Ungewissheitsräume’) they were about to encounter. Travel accounts provided readers with information on living in the Netherlands, the process of recruitment, and the best routes to be assigned, and they drew pictures of the strange lands of the East Indies, the people, and their customs.

Missionaries from Halle, posted to Tranquebar and elsewhere in India, provided their successors with lists of necessary precautions for the journey, which also applied to all other travellers: they advised about appropriate clothing for the climate and equipment and provisions that would make the sea voyage more comfortable (e.g. a chamber pot, a mattress, a coffee mill, butter). Practical advice was also spread by the Hanoverian auxiliary regiments. For example, readers of the Hannoverisches Magazin learned in 1786 that it was important for people to be ‘temperate’ upon their arrival in India and not to overburden their bodies in the new and unaccustomed climate. They were also told that water was the main beverage and that one should trust the locals regarding its quality – but in case of doubt, one should bring it to a boil, ‘which is the best way to improve it’.

Personal records offer glimpses into the provisions East Indies travellers made prior to departure. Evidence in the Prize Papers suggest, for example, that they acquired dictionaries and compiled vocabulary lists to learn new languages during the sea voyage. The accounts of the estates of deceased soldiers and sailors at sea also give some indication of how they prepared themselves for the journey: Some built up stocks of food and other goods prior to their departure, probably both for consumption and as a resource, and many brought along

374 Gelder, Abenteuer, 90–116.
375 Advise for the journey to India, 1709–1744. AFSt/M 2 A 1: 10.
things such as musical instruments and books that would make the voyage more pleasurable and bearable.\footnote{Gelder, \textit{Abenteuer}, 128.}

There is also evidence that East Indies travellers tried to order their personal affairs prior to leaving. Sixteen-year-old merchant’s apprentice Peter Carsten Lüders asked his half-sister and her husband to pay off one of his creditors and to give the clothes and other things he had left in Hamburg ‘to whoever might need it’.\footnote{Peter Carsten Lüders to his siblings. Amsterdam, 12 August and 19 September 1769. Staatsarchiv Hamburg (StAHH), 331-2, 1769 No. 1 A, fols. 2–3.} Hans Carl von Arnim urged his brother to send him two guns that he had left in Stettin (now Szczecin) as well as ‘a good rifle’ to bring with him to Ceylon.\footnote{Hans Carl von Arnim to Abraham Christoph von Arnim. Amsterdam, 13 August 1763. BLHA, Rep. 37 Boitzenburg No. 3396, fols. 16r–17r.} Both men, like many of their peers, were also eager to equip themselves with letters of recommendation to ease their start in the East Indies.

### 3.2.2 Farewell letters

One precaution that travellers of all walks of life had to take before their departure if they wanted to stay in contact with family and friends and avoid future conflicts was to write a letter to their relations with basic information about their employment. Such information included the place of embarkation, at what rank, on which ship, as well as the year and destination, as explained by travel author Trevennot.\footnote{Gelder, \textit{Abenteuer}, 115, referring to Trevennot, \textit{Der treue Reisegefehrte nach Ost-Indien und wiederum zurück} [after 1732], Göttingen Universitätsbibliothek, Histor. 831 8º, fol. 8.} Without these details, left-behind relations could not make inquiries into the emigrants’ whereabouts or whether they were still alive if news failed to appear. Numerous reports of envoys and consuls in the Netherlands testify to the difficulties that arose when this information was unknown or mistaken.\footnote{See chap. 6.}

Extant farewell letters, however, document that many men followed the recommended practice. Johann Levin Esche from Marlishausen in Thuringia knew how crucial certain information was because he probably had travelled to the East Indies before. Two days before embarking for the second (or third?) time, he wrote to his parents that the ship was the \textit{Nieuwe land}, captained by Gerrit Pieck. In a postscript, he added that he departed from Amsterdam with the rank of corporal and was headed to Batavia.\footnote{Johann Levin Esche to his parents. Amsterdam, 29 September 1738 (copy). GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1007, fol. 124r–v.} The sixteen-year-old Peter Carsten Lüders (see above) also recognized the importance of such information. In his last letter to his siblings, he provided the name of the ship and its captain.\footnote{Peter Carsten Lüders to his siblings. Amsterdam, 12 August 1769. StAHH, 331-2, 1769 No. 1 A, fol. 2.} Christian Dunckel from Berlin was even more careful and explained in detail how his parents and sister should inquire about his life or death. Besides providing them with
crucial information, he explained that after two years, ‘around Christmas’, information on his whereabouts would be available in Amsterdam.\textsuperscript{385} Heinrich Christian Leich advised his brother to ‘keep the letter safe so that you know on which ship I am’.\textsuperscript{386} The survival of some of these farewell letters in governmental and court records of matters concerning inheritances and missing people suggests their use for gathering information and collecting wages and inheritances. Moreover, it was often not the recipient who submitted the letter as evidence, but a son or daughter, indicating that the letter had been passed down and become part of the familial memory.\textsuperscript{387}

Beyond their practical function, farewell letters provided a way for East Indies migrants to strengthen their ties to those they left behind during their absence. Some letter writers explained their decisions to sign on to the service of the Company. Johann Levin Esche, for instance, wrote that he felt prompted to ‘go on [his] old tour again’ because of his parents’ ‘situation’ (\textit{Zustand}), which he took to heart ‘and from which [he] was incapable of escaping’.\textsuperscript{388} While this statement is rather inscrutable without knowing the context, it probably made perfect sense to Esche’s parents. Other travellers used their last letter to ask their family for forgiveness for the troubles they had caused, and begged to be included in their family’s prayers.\textsuperscript{389} All expressed their hopes that God would keep everyone well during their absence until the longed-for reunion.

3.2.3 Organizing families

Men who were married and had children were confronted with the question of whether and how they wanted or could arrange to maintain their families during their absence. In most cases, the records show very little to allow any conclusions about such arrangements. Two exceptions, however, are Felix von Piron and Christoph Adam Carl von Imhoff, whose experiences differed considerably from most other married company employees because they were able to bring their wives and children with them.\textsuperscript{390} Nevertheless, the arrangements they made for their families during the absence reveal the flexibility and creativity with which some families met the new challenges of long-distance mobility, and their cases

\textsuperscript{385} Christian Dunckel to his parents and sister. Amsterdam, 1 December 1741 (copy). GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1011, fol. 42v.
\textsuperscript{386} Heinrich Christian Leich to Peter Leich. Amsterdam, 14 December 1719. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1005, fol. 90v.
\textsuperscript{387} For this practice in Atlantic families, see also Jarzebowski, ‘Die Familie Fahnenstück’.
\textsuperscript{388} Johann Levin Esche to his parents. Amsterdam, 29 September 1738 (copy). GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1007, fol. 124r.
\textsuperscript{389} Hans Philip Funck to Hans Michel Funck. No date. Landesarchiv Baden-Württemberg, Abt. Hohenlohe-Zentralarchiv Neuenstein (HZAN), La 35 Bü 1362 (no foliation); Johann Wolfgang Imhoff to his wife Maria Regina Senffen. Amsterdam, 17 October 1747 (copy). GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 6155 (no foliation).
\textsuperscript{390} In the context of the EIC there are many examples of women who joined their higher rank husbands in India. See, e.g. Colley, \textit{Captives}, 241–268; Finn, ‘Female World’; Katie Hieckman, \textit{She-Merchants, Buccaneers & Gentlewomen: British Women in India} (London, 2019).
are remarkably well documented. Christoph Adam Carl von Imhoff’s history has already caught the interest of historians, as outlined below.

Felix von Piron was born on Java and moved to Königsberg, Prussia, as a child in 1746. Rumour had it that he was the son of a late Indian prince and an enslaved Christian woman. In Königsberg, Felix grew up, became Felix von Piron, bought the noble manor Brasnick (now in Woloschina), and married Anna Barbara Dorothea von Eidelstaedt. In 1769, after he had lost all his other property, he sold the manor and went to Amsterdam with his wife and five children to claim an inheritance from the East Indies that he said he was entitled to. His oldest daughter, eight-year-old Rahel Dorothea, was left behind in Königsberg. Apparently, she was ‘sickly’, and her parents considered it better to pay Anna’s sister 2,000 Reichsthaler advances for her care and maintenance. When Felix could not settle the inheritance in Amsterdam, he signed on with the VOC. Attaining the position of visitor of the sick (krankbesoeker), he was permitted to bring Anna and his children, including a baby born in Amsterdam to Batavia. Rahel Dorothea remained in the care of her aunt in Königsberg. Shortly before leaving Amsterdam for Batavia, Felix gave Daniel Eijlkens notarial authority to manage his affairs. The archival documents of the von Piron’s family life do not give any insight into how the parents decided to leave a sickly eight-year-old behind, but to bring a newborn on the sea voyage.

In this regard, the Imhoff family archive is much more revealing. Before and during his journey to India with the EIC, Christoph Adam Carl von Imhoff corresponded frequently with his brothers, and 27 of these letters are preserved in the family archive. In 2001, Gerhard Koch edited and published the better part of these letters together with valuable context information on the Imhoff family. Based on these published letters, Claudia Jarzebowski analysed the

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391 The reconstruction of the family’s history is based on a petition by his daughter and associated depositions as well as several records relating to Felix von Piron’s Brasnick manor. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1023, fols. 102r–127r (Piron); GStA PK, XX. HA EM, 52 j1, No. 65; GStA PK, XX. HA EM, 110 g P, No. 17, and GStA PK, XX. HA EM, 126 d, Nos. 93 and 94.
393 Felix von Piron was the heir of Rachel Molijn, widow of the member of Court of Justice (Raad van Justitie) Gualter Schutten (or Schulten) in Batavia. It is unknown how they were connected; however, it is striking that Felix’s oldest daughter was named Rahel. Copy of inventory of Juff. Rachel Molijn, Widow Schutten. 1756/57. CBG, BvTP, P395/32, scan FAPA072561.
397 Gerhard Koch (ed.), Imhoff Indienfahrer.
considerations and assessments that guided Imhoff’s management of his family prior to leaving for India in 1769.\footnote{Jarzebowski, \textit{Kindheit}, chap. 5.3.4: ‘[…] es war wohl die größte Torheit, das arme Kind mitzuschleppen.’ – Der Indianer Christoph Adam Carl von Imhoff, 272–288.}


However, because of marriage restrictions for officers, and probably also because Christoph had run up debts, the couple did not marry. In 1766, after the Seven Years War, he was dismissed from the army and Marian bore their first son, Carl.\footnote{He was born in Ludwigsburg on 18 October 1766 and baptized two days later as a child born out of wedlock. The baptism entry names both parents. Baptism of Carl Johann Christian August Imhoff. 20 October 1766. Landeskirchliches Archiv Stuttgart, KB 647, Dekanat Ludwigsburg, Ludwigsburg Band. No. 3, Taufregister 1764–1773, p. 266.} Fearing his creditors, and perhaps rumours about their unmarried status, Christoph and Marian moved rather quietly to London, leaving 9-month-old Carl in the care of Marian’s mother in Stuttgart. In London, Christoph tried to make a living as a miniature painter and sought other employment befitting his rank. He also pondered the option of going to ‘America, the West or East Indies’.\footnote{Christoph Adam Carl von Imhoff to Friedrich Wilhelm von Imhoff. London, 1 July 1767. Printed in Koch (ed.), \textit{Imhoff Indienfahrer}, 37.} In 1768, after gathering many letters of recommendation, he was finally offered a cadetship in the EIC. In letters to his brother Friedrich, Christoph deliberated about how to organize his family. Very early on it was determined that Marian, known in London as his wife, would accompany him to India.\footnote{Therefore, I refer to them as husband and wife.} This apparently needed no further explanation, and he mentioned it only incidentally in one of his letters.\footnote{Christoph Adam Carl von Imhoff to Friedrich von Imhoff. London, 2 August 1768. Printed in Koch (ed.), \textit{Imhoff Indienfahrer}, 76.} How Christoph and Marian had decided to stay together remains unknown. In his letters, Imhoff fashioned himself as the head of the household and sole decision maker. He even stressed that his wife did not like the idea of going to India at all. This might have been true, given that she was pregnant again when the preparations for the journey began. However, his depictions of his wife as a passive companion in his
venture may be biased. It appears that it was Marian’s networks at the royal court, rather than Christoph’s connections, who provided the necessary patronage for him to win his appointment as a cadet. Moreover, in later representations, Marian Chapuset (then Hastings) appears as a strong-minded, courageous woman – an impression that her own letters and business affairs support. The possibility that she was actively involved in forming the plan to go to India and insisted on going along cannot be discarded.

The decision of what to do with their two sons is better documented. In her analysis of this decision, Jarzebowski observes that the parents did not consider it a problem to leave very young children in the care of a trusted person; they had done so before when they left Stuttgart and they did so again with their second child. Neither did they regard separating the siblings from each other an issue worth discussing. According to Jarzebowski, education and financial issues were the main imperatives guiding the parents, and they had to balance between having ‘more freedom’ by leaving one or both children behind and bearing the ‘additional costs and work’ of separating from the children. After much anxious deliberation and many discarded alternatives, the parents decided to bring three-and-a-half-year-old Carl along to India, judging it more harmful to leave him in the care of his grandmother than to subject him to the risks and strains of the half-year-long sea voyage. Newborn Julius, however, stayed in London. Juliane Schwellenberg, one of the keepers of the robes and a favourite of Queen Charlotte, and Christoph’s two younger brothers became his godparents. Mrs Schwellenberg in turn promised to maintain her godson, who was left in the care of a wet nurse, until Christoph was in a position to meet his paternal financial obligations. Julius was about four months old in March 1769 when his parents embarked on the Duke of Grafton for Bengal. The reasons for leaving the baby in London remain unknown. Notably, although the parents pondered all different kinds of arrangements, Christoph never expressed the desire to bring little Julius along.

Similarities in the ways Christoph von Imhoff and Felix von Piron ordered their family affairs prior to their departures invite comparison, but while the Imhoff case is richly documented, information is much sparser for the Piron family. Both were men of noble status who entered company service at ranks that allowed them to bring along their wives and children, which they both did. Their itineraries are also alike in that they both left ‘home’ before going all the way to India or Java. This meant that they had to arrange for their long-term absence in India, Imhoff and Chapuset split up. While Imhoff returned to Europe, Marian Chapuset stayed in India and married Governor-General Warren Hastings. Marian’s personal papers are dispersed across different repositories. Most of her private papers are part of the Warren Hastings Papers held in the British Library. Papers relating to her finances, including accounts of her businesses in India and bank books from her time at Daylesford are extant in Gloucestershire Archives, D4084, Francis, Wickins & Hill, Solicitors, Stow on the Wold, Miscellaneous Client’s records, Box 54 Hastings & Imhoff.

In India, Imhoff and Chapuset split up. While Imhoff returned to Europe, Marian Chapuset stayed in India and married Governor-General Warren Hastings. Marian’s personal papers are dispersed across different repositories. Most of her private papers are part of the Warren Hastings Papers held in the British Library. Papers relating to her finances, including accounts of her businesses in India and bank books from her time at Daylesford are extant in Gloucestershire Archives, D4084, Francis, Wickins & Hill, Solicitors, Stow on the Wold, Miscellaneous Client’s records, Box 54 Hastings & Imhoff.

Jarzebowski, Kindheit, 272–288, all quotes at 276.
while they were already on the move. Imhoff’s letters not only document the ways in which he involved his brothers in his endeavour and how he relied on their support in obtaining letters of recommendation, making payments to his children’s caregivers, and managing his financial affairs during his absence, but also show that Imhoff sought to strengthen his ties to his brothers prior to his departure. In editing the letters, Koch largely omitted these parts, probably because of their redundant nature. However, it is exactly these parts, parts that on first sight might appear formulaic and merely rhetorical, that were an integral part of Imhoff’s preparation for his absence. Imhoff believed and feared that ‘humans are by nature fluctuating’ and that ‘absence, distance and maybe other reasons’ could cause the loss of his ‘only friend in the world’, his brother Friedrich. A disagreement between the two brothers in summer 1768 over a favour that Friedrich had denied his brother left a fissure in their relationship. Imhoff apparently realized that he could never be sure that his brother would always act in his favour. This insecurity about the sturdiness of the relationship shaped Imhoff’s later letters from London. His pending departure and the ensuing distance between them increased his anxiety. Half a year before Imhoff left London, he measured Friedrich’s affection towards him in terms of the length and tone of his letters:

Last night, when I received your letter, I sat down and read all your letters which I’ve received in England. How different are the first ones from your last one! Affectionate letters, of which I read not a single one without tears neither yesterday nor ever, detailed and open-hearted and so forth. But this lasted only for 6 months. Since then only short and shorter ones arrived, then none.

He added: ‘Do soon write again in a different tone, which is more akin to you, amicably intimate and without holding back’. In addition to this admonition, Imhoff augmented his letters shortly before his departure with affectionate assurances and emotionally laden assertions of his continuous love, stressing over

and over again that Friedrich was his ‘best friend’. His complaint apparently poured oil on troubled water, and when Friedrich gave him ‘so great assurances of [his] old friendship’, Imhoff in turn renewed his pledge to forever remain his most affectionate friend, ‘at all edges of the world, and as long as I shall live’.⁴¹⁰

Christoph and Marian von Imhoff seem to have left Europe rather well prepared. Marian had probably also put an effort into strengthening her bonds with family in Stuttgart and Mrs Schwellenberg. Together they had established a close network of relationships they could rely on, confirmed by the language of love, by economic and legal arrangements and promises, and finally by naming the godparents of their youngest child.

Whether Felix and Anna von Piron made comparable arrangements is not apparent in the extant sources. One notable difference between the families, however, is the choice of which children to bring along on the journey. While the Imhoffs considered 4-month-old Julius too young for the voyage, the Pirons brought six children aged from under one to nine years, while leaving the oldest, but ‘sickly’, daughter behind.⁴¹¹ This observation adds further evidence to the variety of often ‘highly functional’ strategies with which families met the new opportunities but also challenges of global mobility.⁴¹²

### 3.3 Married employees of the East India companies

Most married men who signed on with the East India companies were not able to bring their wives and children, nor could most wives follow their husbands to the East Indies. For married couples, employment with an East India company implied separation, which entailed particular challenges, but also opportunities. The long-term absence of the husband and father, albeit not unusual in early modern societies, had the potential to unsettle the gendered patriarchal order and the lives of the wives and children left behind. Long-term absence shook the normative foundations of early modern marriage: co-residence in the joint household and commitment to the spouses’ reciprocal duties. The long absence of the East Indies traveller, the difficulties of communicating between continents, and the uncertainty about whether he would ever return made it difficult to maintain

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⁴¹¹ Neither the marriage of Felix von Piron and Anna Dorothea von Eidelstaedt nor the birth or baptism of their oldest daughter Rahel Dorothea were found in the church registers of Wargen. Six children were identified in the church records of Wargen, one of whom died at the age of four: Friederica Heinrietta ~21 August 1761, Anna Dorothea ~7 December 1762, † 1767, Maria Carolina ~11 January 1765, Charlotta Juliana ~13 January 1764, Friederica Wilhelmina ~27 October 1767, and Ferdinand Felix ~12 April 1769. Ancestry.de, Deutschland, ausgewählte evangelische Kirchenbücher 1518–1921 [database online], Kirchenbuch der Kirchen zu Wargen, Taufen u Heiraten 1755–1774. Their youngest child, Sophia Dorothea was baptized in Amsterdam on 14 February 1771. Gemeente Amsterdam Stadsarchief, DTB Dopen, archiefnummer 5001, inv.no. 254, p. 140 (folio 101v), No. 10.

⁴¹² Jarzebowski, Kindheit, 292. See also Jarzebowski, ‘Children Travelling the World’.
the central notion and practice of the complementarity of the couple. At the same time, the absence of the husband could be part of an economic family strategy, and it could broaden the agency of wives who remained married, yet lived as single women.

3.3.1 Husbands and fathers: Making sense of separation

Short- or long-term separations from wives and children were nothing new in the eighteenth century, nor were they confined to long-distance migrations with the East India trading companies. Families on all levels of society experienced phases of separation during times of war or seasonal migrations. However, migration to the East Indies added new dimensions of uncertainty as it significantly increased not only the duration of the separation but also the risk of not returning. Husbands and fathers who left their families intending to earn a surplus with a few years of service and then return to their family were careful to strengthen their bonds with their loved ones and to explain and legitimate their departure. Their letters give insights into how they did so.

The resumé of Johann Wolfgang Imhoff (not to be confused with Christoph Adam Carl von Imhoff to whom he had no relation), suggests that he always looked for opportunities to make a living for himself and his family. Eventually these attempts caused the permanent separation from his wife and three sons. Born in Franconia, Johann at some point moved to Berlin, where in 1744 he married Maria Regina Charlotta Senffen, with whom he already had one son. Two more sons were born in 1744 and 1745. In Berlin, Johann tried to make a living as an accountant and assistant for a merchant. He apparently also started a trade on his own. However, ‘when it did not go well with his new business’ he

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415 Marriage of Johann Wolfgang Imhoff and Regina Charlotta Senffin. 22 July 1744. Ancestry.com, Königreich Preußen und Freistaat Preußen, Deutschland, evangelische Kirchenbücher, 1661–1944 [database online], Evangelische Kirche Garnisonsgemeinde Berlin, Heiraten 1718–1748 [original GStA PK], p. 454. Maria Regina Senffen was the daughter of Sergeant (Unteroffizier) Leonhart Senff; the name of her mother is unknown. According to the marriage entry with her second husband Johann Gottlieb Haeckert, she was born around 1723. Marriage of Maria Regina Charlotta Senfen [misspelled Sensin] and Johann Gottlieb Hackert, 12 December 1773. Ancestry.de, Deutschland, ausgewählte evangelische Kirchenbücher 1500–1971 [database online], Brandenburg Berlin, Neue Kirche, Heiraten 1697–1811, p. 51.

416 Johann Friedrich Imhoff, born out of wedlock, baptized 1742 in the Sophien Kirche in Spandau. His godparents were a shoemaker and two women. Johann Daniel Imhoff was born and baptized in 1744. Johann Gottlieb was baptized in 1745. For Johann Friedrich and Johann Gottlieb, see the extracts of the church registers in GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 6155 (no foliation). For Johann Daniel see his baptism entry. 11 November 1744. Ancestry.com. Deutschland, ausgewählte evangelische Kirchenbücher 1500–1971 [database online], Friedrichswerder Kirche Berlin, film No. 70317, p. 423.
enlisted in the Royal Prussian Army. After the army campaign, this father of three then looked for new opportunities beyond the borders of Brandenburg. Apparently, his wife Maria had encouraged him to ‘win his bread’ somewhere else; maybe she had urged him to better the family’s economy, maybe he fled creditors. Johann went to Holland, where he found employment as a soldier on a vessel guarding the herring fishery. Soon, however, the opportunity offered by the VOC was more tempting, especially since he found himself ‘betrayed’ by the ship’s recruiters who had taken all his earnings to pay for brandy and tobacco, trousers and shirts, socks and shoes. Therefore, he decided to make the dangerous journey to the East Indies.

All this is known because Johann wrote a letter to Maria, a farewell letter that she saved and later used as evidence against him when she heard that he had remarried in Batavia (see chapter 6.3.2 on this part of the story). It seems that Johann had mentioned the option of seeking employment in the East India Company in earlier letters and Maria had asked him not to do it. Against this background of disagreement, Johann tried to explain and vindicate his decision — a decision laden with emotion and deeply conflicted. Two other letters from men who left their wives and children to go to the East Indies support this observation: one from Johann Balthasar Trosihn, who left his wife and three daughters to go to Java in 1717 (see Chapter 1.1) and the other from Johann Carl Reinhard, who was on his way back to Europe and his family after 10 years in the East Indies (see Chapter 2.4.3). Familial and economic imperatives vested in the language of love clearly stand out in these letters as the main driving forces behind the decision to migrate. With these letters, Imhoff’s written shortly before his departure and Trosihn’s and Reinhard’s after they had been absent for a couple of years, the authors also tried to strengthen the bonds of family intimacy and prepare the ground for their eventual return home.

All three husbands and fathers imagined their migration to the East Indies as temporary and they anticipated their return and happy reunions with family. Johann Imhoff expressed his hope of seeing his family again ‘in this life’ and he promised to try to ‘help’ them ‘as much and as soon as possible’. He claimed that leaving for the East Indies was the only possible way of making a living for himself and eventually for his family:

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417 Petition of Maria Regina Charlotta Senffen (married name Imhoff). Berlin, 2 November 1757. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 6155 (no foliation).
418 Johann Wolfgang Imhoff to his wife Maria Regina Senffen. Amsterdam, 17 October 1747 (copy). GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 6155 (no foliation).
420 For this and the following quotes: Johann Wolfgang Imhoff to his wife Maria Regina Senffen. Amsterdam, 17 October 1747 (copy). GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 6155 (no foliation).
Believe me my angel, if I could earn my bread in Germany, I would happily chop off two fingers each from my hands if only I could help you with that, truly believe me, when I think of you my blood is surging in my body.  

Living a life in proximity to and helping his family, he wrote, would be worth four of his fingers, perhaps one for each of his loved ones. He described his conflicted state of mind in terms of unbearable physical suffering and bodily maiming. This language pervades his eight-page-long letter. Although he was excited about the new experiences he was having in Holland (he described for instance how herrings were caught and immediately fried and eaten – a true ‘delicacy’), this enjoyment turned life-threatening the moment he thought about his family at home because the tasty morsel swelled in his mouth. Again, he assured his wife that he would happily renounce this culinary experience if only he could have his family close to him.

Despite hoping to be reunited with his family at some point, Johann Imhoff was well aware of the risks of the journey. Therefore, as a precaution, he said farewell in his letter to his wife and mother-in-law, to his ‘heartily loved’ children, and to all his good friends. He also asked his wife to forgive him for having ‘offended’ (beleidigt) her and the children by leaving them behind as a ‘widow’ and ‘little orphans’. Coming to the end of his letter, the last he would send before leaving, he stressed the ‘uncountable tears’ with which he had written to his ‘much beloved heart’. Apparently, he felt that he had to explain his decision to leave the family beyond the reference to his economic circumstances and his assurances of how much he suffered at being forced to leave. He ended his letter with a postscript, asserting that it was ‘love’ that made him leave: ‘Good night, my heart, my truth, this happens because of love’.  

Could Maria Regina Senffen take her husband at his word? What is the historian to make of a letter like this that is saturated with such vigorous expressions of feeling? As is well established in scholarship, letters are a form of communication governed by historically variable rules and conventions that determine their form and content. They are as carefully crafted as other documents such as petitions and court depositions. The earlier optimism of historians who hoped to find historical actors’ ‘true feelings’ in correspondence has given way to attention to the constructed nature of the genre and the discourses and conventions that govern the expression of feelings in letters. ‘The prevailing assumption is that these paradigms get in the way of access to true feelings, that they are in fact a hindrance to historical understanding’, Linda Pollock summarizes the new concerns of historians reading correspondence in the wake of this shift in

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421 ‘Glaube mir mein Engel, wenn ich mein Brod in Teutschland könnte erwerben so wollte ich mir gerne mit Freuden aus meiner jeden Hand 2 Finger abhauen lassen wenn ich euch nur damit helfen könnte, glaube mir sicherlich, wenn ich an Euch gedenke so waltet mir mein Blut im Leibe.’

422 For this reading I thank Margaret Hunt.

423 ‘Gute Nacht mein Herzt, meine treue, dies geschieht aus Liebe’.

perspective. However, she argues, the ‘cultural scripts are an essential part of communication of emotion in personal relationships’ and by analysing their use in letters, the historian can gain insight ‘into how emotions are used in daily life rather than merely into how they are envisioned as philosophical concepts’. Other historians of the new history of emotions have also stressed that cultural scripts of emotion, emotional standards, or ‘feeling rules’ are legitimate and ‘significant candidates for historical research’. They have challenged the idea that there is an insuperable distinction between the expression and experience of emotion, not least by revealing the historicity of this very distinction. Central to their approaches is a retheorization of emotion, not as a biological and thus intrinsically embodied (and therefore unknowable) response, but as a social practice or performance that connects emotional experience and cultural evaluations of particular emotions in a given moment of time.

Maria Regina Senffen probably did not ask herself if her husband had truly felt what he wrote in his letter, whether the morsel really had swollen in his mouth. As an experienced letter writer and reader, she would have understood that her husband was trying to convey something that would have made sense in the context of their relationship, whether or not she agreed with him or if his words and deeds (i.e. writing the emotional letter) had the impact Imhoff hoped. Whether Imhoff meant what he wrote literally is thus the wrong question for the historian. First, it does not consider the complexities of the genre of the letter as a communicative practice or the work it does in the construction of the self.

427 See the sharp discussion of the prevalent assumption that the ‘true’ emotional state of historical actors is less accessible to the historian than the feelings of living individuals by Barbara Rosenwein in Nicole Eustace et al., ‘AHR Conversation The Historical Study of Emotions’, The American History Review, 117/5 (2012), 1495–1497.
429 Scholarship on self-narratives offers important insights. Crucial to my own thinking about the relationship between genre and expressions of the self are the works of the Berlin Selbstzeugnis...
Second, it misses the opportunity to examine what emotions do and how they are used in personal relationships. The emotional conflict apparent in the letters of Imhoff, and to a lesser degree, Reinhard and Trosihn, raises the related questions of how separation was experienced and how it was expected to be experienced. The expression and use of emotions in these letters reveal not only how families experienced and handled new global challenges, but also how family-related concepts and practices changed in the eighteenth century.

Johann Imhoff had been temporarily separated from his wife and children even before he went to Amsterdam, and he experienced this separation as emotionally challenging, especially since he enjoyed new adventures and enterprises away from home. His letter shows the wide array of expressive tools he used to detail his physical suffering, painful longing, and love to try to make sense of the situation for his wife, who it seems had disapproved of his plan to go to the East Indies. The reality of migrating and leaving his wife and children behind with no financial support needed special pleading and legitimation. Married men like Imhoff who signed on with the East India companies had to negotiate numerous contradictions. On the one hand, society expected them, and they themselves possibly wanted, to live with their wives and raise their children together; Imhoff’s letter makes perfectly clear that this was his imagined ideal of family life. On the other hand, the East India companies promised a better living for enlistees and their families – a promise, however, that came with long-term and possibly permanent separation.

The language of love served here as a bridge and resolved, for those who left, the antagonism between staying but not caring, and leaving but caring. According to the norms of the time, leaving a wife (not so much any children) unsettled the social order. However, in everyday life according to the husbands, leaving was an act of love. This language allowed the travellers to construct the vision of a loving and caring father and husband although greatly physically separated from their families. Imhoff, Reinhard, and Trosihn saw themselves as loving fathers who were fulfilling their fatherly and marital obligations and could easily return after a couple of years of separation to restore the bonds of intimacy. The constant emphasis in the letters on their wish to return and their assurances that they would reunite with their wives (and children) rhetorically maintained the social


430 See also Jarzebowski, ‘Children Travelling the World’. For the notion of ‘love’ as an argument that becomes productive in structuring and making sense of relationships, see Jarzebowski, *Inzest*, 141–167.
order. The language of love preserved the idea of the conjugal community and the ultimate authority of the husband as the head of the household, who acted ‘for the good of the family’, even while leaving them. Love and suffering in this context have intrinsic social components as they are used to negotiate, re-order, and maintain relationships between the letter writers and the letter readers.

Despite these protestations and promises, married East Indies travellers who truly wanted to maintain their bonds with their families could never be sure that their assurances were understood and accepted by their loved ones. The departure of a husband and father could cause their wives and children severe material and social distress that the language of love alone could not ease. Their self-image as loving fathers and husbands and their notion that the social, domestic, and emotional order of their family could (and would at some point) be restored was thus always unstable, ambivalent, and ambiguous.

3.3.2 The wives left behind: Handling the separation

The wives of German East Indies migrants were all affected differently by their husbands’ absence. The emotional, social, and economic impact of being left behind depended on each woman’s individual relationships, the circumstances of her husband’s departure, her own social rank and status in the community, her networks of support, whether or not she had children, her health, and her access to financial resources. For some women, the husband’s departure may well have been a relief and opportunity for a better life; separation was common in dysfunctional, possibly violent, marriages and often it did not involve the authorities.431 These women become hardly visible in the historical records. For other wives, the husband’s absence allowed a broadened scope of agency and freedom while they continued to be protected by their marital status. The records offer infrequent but illuminating glimpses into these women’s lives. Hauptmannin von Struve, for instance, managed her household and the education of her son for 24 years on regular allowances her husband sent her from India and Ceylon.432 Other women experienced the departure of their husbands as an act of desertion that was emotionally, socially, and financially unacceptable. Some of these requested divorces, thereby associating themselves and their marital conflicts with the East Indies migration and making themselves known to the authorities. The boundaries between these different experiences were fluid. Relief could go hand in hand with financial distress, and wives’ evaluations of the situation could change when, for example, promised allowances failed to appear or the absent husband was rumoured to have taken another wife.433

431 Hardwick, Family Business, 26–27.
432 GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1038, fols. 86r–107r (Struve). For her story see chap. 6.3.1.
433 See chaps. 6.3.1 and 6.3.2.
3.3.2.1 Legal and social parameters

Contemporary sources suggest that married women who lived alone during their husband’s absence in the East Indies were seen, in effect, as widows.434 The early eighteenth-century Frauenzimmer-Lexicon describes the German term ‘grass widow’ (Strohwitwe) as used ‘jestingly’ for ‘those women whose husbands are travelling or absent’.435 Etymologically, the term referred leeringly to the ‘lewd conduct’ of young women (unzüchtige Mädchen).436

While the status of widows and Strohwitwen differed legally, socially, and economically, in practice the two experiences overlapped in daily life.437 Wives who lived alone headed households just as widows did: they engaged in financial transactions, defended their own and their children’s economic interests, acted as businesswomen, and secured their children’s upbringing and education. Culturally, the stereotypes ascribed to widows and the wives of sailors and East Indies migrants were also similar. Both groups were considered ‘deserving object[s] of charity’,438 and the conflicting stereotype of the ‘lustful young widow’ no longer under male guardianship (and thus a threat to social and moral order) was also applied to married women living single.439 Popular plays of the time suggest that this negative stereotype could be easily applied to the wives of East Indies migrants. Kaffka’s comedy Rückkehr aus Ostindien (1789; adapted from Voltaire, 1749) demonstrates these possible imputations. In the play, the East Indies traveler Müller leaves his wife and minor children and goes to the East Indies. When he returns home more than 10 years later, he expects to find his wife living in vice and sin. Influenced by his self-serving agent, the returning husband believes his wife not only has betrayed him during his absence, but also lived an immoral life, characterized by sumptuous luxury and extravagance.440 To be sure, these stereotypes were generalized cultural representations. The relationship between cultural representations and the everyday experiences and treatment of East

437 Van der Heijden, Schmidt, and Wall, ‘Editorial’.
440 Johann Christoph Kaffka, Die Rückkehr aus Ostindien (1789). See also Freyherr von Hollberg, Die Wochenstube (1748).
Indies migrants’ wives is a difficult issue to fully resolve. It is unhelpful to think of literary or cultural works as reflections of historical experience or to assume that real life was moulded by works of art. It is more fruitful to construe them ‘as dynamic, constitutive components’ of, and ‘imaginative contexts’ within which, historical experience was shaped and historical actors operated, as Margot Finn has argued.441

Regardless of their individual feelings, the wives of East Indies emigrants had different options to re-order their lives after their husbands left. In theory, their legal, contractual, and economic capacity depended on their status as married women. In the German territories, all married women were under the governance of their husband. However, the reach of his authority varied from region to region.442 Moreover, the ways in which the woman’s property was protected in the case of her husband’s indebtedness depended on the marital property regime under which the couple was married.443 If it is true that many of those who signed on with the VOC were in debt (which was rather the rule in early modern societies) and tried to escape from their creditors, as the literature on Ostindienfahrer suggests, questions arise about how this would have affected the wives left behind. Would they have been liable for their husbands’ debts? Could creditors access their property to force repayments?444 Although no such case has yet been identified in the archives, the literature on litigating women and soldiers’ wives offers some possible scenarios. In regions where general joint property (allgemeine Gütergemeinschaft) was the rule, for example in Bayreuth, creditors of insolvent husbands could argue that the wife was her husband’s last creditor and accountable with her own property for her husband’s debts.445 In Hamburg and other places where the Lübeck law applied, wives were also liable to pay for their husbands’ debts with their personal assets, including the dowry.446 Under the property regime of separate estates (Verwaltungsgemeinschaft bei Gütertrennung), which was common in many of the territories of Brandenburg-Prussia, the property of the wife was better protected. Here she was considered her husband’s first creditor and could retain her assets (Eingebrachtes), including administration of the

441 Finn, Character, 2–3.
443 In the 18th century, there were uncountable different regional and particular matrimonial property laws (Ehegüterrechte) in the territories of the Holy Roman Empire. Duncker, Gleichheit, 1020.
445 Such a case, though without the involvement of an East Indies traveller, was brought to the Jenaer Schöppenstuhl in the second half of the 18th century. See Nicole Grochowina, Das Eigentum der Frauen. Konflikte vor dem Jenaer Schöppenstuhl im ausgehenden 18. Jahrhundert (Cologne, 2009), 262–264.
joint property in the case of her husband’s insolvency. However, she was also obliged to use her own property to sustain her husband if he became incapacitate. Consequently, depending on the jurisdiction under which a wife of an (indebted) East Indies traveller lived, his absence may have been either a financial relief or a further burden on her finances. Microstudies into court records would be necessary to test this hypothesis.

3.3.2.2 Home circumstances

Scholarship on the wives and widows of sailors in the Netherlands and England provides remarkable insights into how seafaring communities handled husbands’ long-term absences and how those who did not sail away made a living. Port cities with long traditions of seafaring and absent male inhabitants developed legal devices and routines to maintain and support sailors’ families. For example, husbands could temporarily provide their wives with a legal certificate that allowed her to make certain transactions during his absence such as taking out loans or buying and selling property. In other cases, Dutch city authorities could broaden the scope of a seaman’s wife’s legal agency at the woman’s request. Moreover, the VOC itself established a system of money letters (maandbrieven) that allowed its employees to assign up to three monthly wages per year to their wives, children, or parents. VOC officials carefully observed and regulated these payments.

However, families who stayed at home in Brandenburg-Prussia, Saxony, or Württemberg differed from their counterparts in Holland and London. They were more scattered and did not form a distinct group in the eyes of the managers of poor relief and charity. Their circumstances rather resembled those of the families of soldiers, who also lived through extended periods of separation during the ongoing warfare in the second half of the eighteenth century. However, unlike military wives, East Indies travellers’ wives had no access to military funds or opportunities to make a living within a garrison. To be sure, the eighteenth century was not an exceptional time for married women living alone during their husbands’ absence. In the Middle Ages, geographical mobility made constructed cases of absent husbands basic educational material for lawyers in training.


448 Van der Heijden and Van den Heuvel, ‘Sailor’s families’. See also Van der Heijden, Schmidt and Wall, ‘Editorial’.

Contrary to the notion of the married couple as a ‘working couple’ (Arbeitspaar) living in one household and challenging the norm that women had to be under male guardianship, there were many reasons for married women to live alone for longer or shorter periods, and many contributed to the household economy even when the husband was present, as one salary was not usually sufficient to maintain a family.\textsuperscript{451}

It is difficult to ascertain how the wives of German East Indies travellers made a living after their husbands’ departure as the records contain only incidental glimpses into their home circumstances. Maria Regina Senffen (married name Imhoff), Anna Sophia Victoria Reinhard, née Benzlern, and the wife of Johann Balthasar Trosihn (her name is unrecorded), all had family and friends who they might have fallen back on. For example, Johann Imhoff expressed the hope in his letter that ‘all good friends’ might ‘attend’ to Maria and ‘do good for her’.\textsuperscript{452} He probably had in mind his wife’s brother and other friends and he conveyed his recommendations to them. However, despite having active social and familial relations, Maria Regina Senffen found herself living ‘in the greatest poverty and need’ when she petitioned the king in 1751, four years after her husband had left, for help.\textsuperscript{453} To be sure, women’s petitions had to employ a language of poverty to be effective,\textsuperscript{454} but reading Maria’s petition along with her husband’s letter shows the family’s real poverty. Imhoff’s letter suggests that he knew his wife struggled to feed the children sufficiently: ‘if you could only give enough [food] to the poor children’. He also feared that his children were eating ‘soil’.\textsuperscript{455} Maria, about 23 years old when Johann went to the East Indies, had to feed three children aged from two to five years while apparently suffering maladies in her eyes and her arm. Nevertheless, despite her precarious circumstances, she managed to sustain and raise the three boys; all three survived their infancy and childhood and all later served in the Prussian army.

Like Maria, the unnamed wife of Johann Balthasar Trosihn had three daughters and a network of social relations during her husband’s absence. In his letter, Johann Trosihn sent greetings to his sister and brother and to his wife’s ‘brothers and relations and all my friends’. It is unclear, however, whether and how these relations supported the single living mother and her children during Trosihn’s absence. Instead of explicitly referring her support and maintenance to her social

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{452} Johann Wolfgang Imhoff to his wife Maria Regina Senffen. Amsterdam, 17 October 1747 (copy). GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 6155 (no foliation).
\textsuperscript{453} Petition of Maria Regina Charlotta Senffen (married name Imhoff). Berlin, 2 November 1757. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 6155 (no foliation).
\textsuperscript{454} Birgit Rehse \textit{Die Supplikations- und Gnadenprasie in Brandenburg-Preußen. Eine Untersuchung am Beispiel der Kurfürsten unter Friedrich Wilhelm II. (1786–1797)} (Berlin, 2010), 233–234, 244.
\textsuperscript{455} Johann Wolfgang Imhoff to his wife Maria Regina Senffen. Amsterdam, 17 October 1747 (copy). GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 6155 (no foliation).
\end{flushright}
networks, as Imhoff had, Trosihn recommended his wife and children to the care of God. The family’s situation after he left is not known, but it can be surmised from Trosihn’s request that his wife not ‘curse’ him for ‘having left [them] in such a bad state’.456

3.3.2.3 Divorce and remarriage

Several legal systems across early modern Europe made provisions for wives whose husbands had left their families liable for debts, absented themselves, or were simply missing. For example, these provisions could allow deserted wives to consider themselves widows after a given time or to obtain a divorce on the grounds of ‘malicious desertion’. In the Netherlands, from 1656 the law allowed wives who had not received any information on the life, death, or whereabouts of their husbands after five years to remarry. While not confined to a particular profession or social group, this law was particularly useful for sailor’s wives.457 In England, wives whose husbands were missing had, in theory, the option of considering themselves widowed after seven years.458 In Scotland, a wife could approach the courts and request a divorce after the four-year absence of her husband.459 In Denmark-Norway, deserted wives could ask for a divorce as early as three years after his departure (but after seven years if the husband was known to have left for work).460 In the Holy Roman Empire, the situation was more complicated. Usually, a wife had to prove her husband’s death before she was allowed to remarry (which was difficult when the husband was as far away as in the East Indies), or she had to obtain a divorce on the grounds of ‘malicious desertion’.461 There were no consistent laws or consensus over the time that had to elapse before an absent, or more precisely ‘missing’ person, was to be considered dead. In the context of matters of inheritance, legal scholars suggested timespans ranging from 5 to 90 years, leaving space for interpretation, adaptation to circumstances, and negotiation.462 Ida Catharina Lammer (or Leopold), for example, considered herself a widow and remarried after her husband left for the East Indies and she had not heard from him for a couple of years. The consistory which oversaw matrimonial life in the Probstei Münsterdorf thought otherwise.
and charged Ida with the crime of bigamy. Of course, a woman could also have sexual relations with or even live with another man during her husband’s absence. Eleonore Jeschen, whose husband was absent (not in the East but in the West Indies) did the same. In 1751, her daughter Maria Elisabeth was baptized, and noted by the priest in the church records as a product of ‘adultery’ and ‘conceived when her husband had travelled to Surinam’.

If a protestant wife in the Holy Roman Empire did not want to wait or run the risk of being charged with adultery or even worse, bigamy, she could request a divorce based on what legal scholars called desertio malitiosa: the sudden and malicious desertion by the spouse with no overt intention to return. The legal phenomenon was thus not confined to East Indies migrants but applied to both genders and all professions. For the wives of East Indies travellers, however, it was particularly useful because it was commonly known that few men ever returned from the East Indies. Nevertheless, divorcing a husband absent in the East Indies was still an obstacle course, as the two examples of Maria Christina Schultzen and Ursula Barbara Funcken illustrate.

On 13 June 1789, Maria Christina Schultzen, née Niemannen, appeared at the court (Obergericht) in Stendal to file for divorce from her husband, the merchant Christoph Anton Schultze. She explained that in 1785 he had left her ‘mali-
ciously’ only one year after their marriage. It appears that she submitted one of his letters as evidence to the court, however, the document is not extant. In this letter, written in January 1786, Christoph apparently informed her that he had found employment in Grootvadersbosch, ‘a 14 days’ journey from the Cape of Good Hope’. It also appears from the court records that he promised in this letter to return at some point. Therefore, the court tried to dissuade Maria from pursuing the divorce and instead to await ‘the promised return’ of her husband. She did not want to wait, however, and pressed the court to proceed.

This is everything that the records in Germany reveal about the history of the marriage of Maria Christina and Christoph Anton Schultze and the circumstances of his departure to the Dutch settlement in Africa. And yet, this short glimpse is highly revealing as it complicates the notion of the runaway husband in the service of the VOC. While Christoph seems to have tried to maintain his bonds with his wife, she chose not to accept his behaviour and went to court to change

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463 This case is narrated in Alexandra Lutz, *Elbpaare vor Gericht. Konflikte und Lebenswelten in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Frankfurt am Main, 2006), 115 and 357.
466 Engelen, *Soldatenfrauen*, 98.
467 GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1026, fols. 26r–33r (Schultze).
468 Altmärkisches Obergericht. Stendal, 15 December 1791. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1026, fol. 27r.
her situation. Unlike traditional scholarship on East Indies travellers that highlights the choice of the husband to leave an unsatisfactory marriage, here the focus shifts to the wife who stayed behind and the resources she was able to deploy for her own interests. Early modern litigants used the courts strategically. As Julie Hardwick argues, ‘wives, as all early modern litigants, often viewed going to court as a negotiating tactic rather than remedy’. That is, women ‘could use the threat of legal action or even start the initial complaint as a way to pressure their husbands into different pattern of behaviour’. This may well have been Maria Christina Schultze n’s motivation. Requesting a divorce on grounds of a malicious desertion meant that the court officially and publicly summoned the absent party to return and defend himself (or herself) against the allegation of desertion. Women like Maria Schultzen may have used the courts and the threat of divorce as a means to communicate with the absent husband and persuade him to return – as he had promised to do in the first place. This is only speculation, but it should be kept in mind as a possible reading of divorce cases involving East Indies migration. Whether Maria Schultzen’s goal was to secure a divorce, to make her husband return, to restore her reputation, to ward off creditors, or to prepare the ground for remarrying, her insistence on pursuing her case shows she did not silently suffer the departure of her husband, which is an important corrective to traditional accounts of the male married Ostindienfahrer.

Her example is also revealing in another way. Despite the existence of a letter in which the husband apparently promised to return, the court and the central governmental authorities were willing to pursue her request for divorce on the grounds of a ‘malicious’ desertion, which legally excluded the (likely) prospect of return. For Maria Schultzen, the main obstacle seems not to have been persuading the authorities of the legitimacy of her request. Frederick II and his successors had eased the laws for divorce since 1783 in the context of the Prussian population policy. For the authorities, the husband’s absence in the East Indies, irrespective of his apparent intention to return, appears at least in this case to have been considered sufficient cause for divorce. The difficulty in pursuing the divorce lay in the involved parties’ uncertainties about how to go about it. The judges in Stendal did not know how to proceed or how to submit the necessary summons to the absent husband at the Cape of Good Hope. Asked for advice, the Department of Justice decided that an Edictalcitation (a subpoena commonly used for people of unknown residence), was not legally applicable. Consequently, the court filed a summons (Insinuation) and asked the Department of Foreign Affairs (Kabinettsministerium) to take over the process and instruct the Prussian consul in The Hague to deliver the document to Christoph Schultze. Furthermore, since the judges were not familiar with how long the delivery would take, the consuls should be asked to insert the date by which the defendant could

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reasonably have answered the subpoena. The ministers at the *Kabinettsministerium* were not happy to be involved in this matter and expressed their doubt that the documents could be successfully delivered. Nevertheless, they forwarded the order to the royal consul in The Hague, but not without remarking that in future ‘those individuals who are in unknown places in the East and West Indies, in Africa etc. cannot be summoned by the mediation of the royal envoys’. Instead, the courts were advised to use the *Ediktalzitation* in these cases.\(^{471}\)

More than three years later, in 1794, the issue was still not resolved. Maybe the documents had been lost somewhere on their way between Stendal, The Hague, Amsterdam, the Cape of Good Hope, and Grootvadersbosch or perhaps the chain of transmission had been interrupted. The outbreak of the French revolutionary wars and the consequent frequent interruption of the sea route between the Netherlands and the Cape of Good Hope most likely also played a role. The records remain silent as to whether Maria Schultze ever secured her divorce. If she did, it was at least five years after she filed her first petition and ten years after her husband left.

The example of Ursula Barbara Funcken offers a different perspective on the experience of a wife left behind by an *Ostindienfahrer*. At first sight, it seems her case confirms the prevalent stereotype of the wife deliberately deserted by a husband signing on with the VOC. On closer examination, however, this picture is more complex. First, the fact that her husband went to the East Indies was not decisive in the way Ursula experienced his departure. Second, the desertion affected not only Ursula, but also her parents, parents-in-law, and her extended family network. And, importantly, his departure also allowed her to begin a new life in a potentially better relationship.

In September 1737, Ursula Barbara, daughter of the burgher and lay juryman (*Zwölfer*) Hans Michel and Margaretha Eßlinger, married Johann (Hans) Philip Funck.\(^{472}\) They lived in Belsenberg, a small village in Franconia belonging to the Langenburg branch of Hohenlohe.\(^{473}\) Both Ursula and Hans brought some vineyards and land into the marriage, which they seem to have cultivated together during the first one and a half years of their marriage.\(^{474}\) According to the local priest, they lived in harmony. However, around Christmas 1738, the situation changed. Hans Philip started to consort openly with Heinrich Neuhöfer’s wife, to the disapproval of both Ursula and his own parents. Moreover, Ursula stated, he increasingly neglected his ‘love’ and the marital business and even acted in a

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\(^{472}\) Marriage of Joh. Philipp Funck and Ursula Barbara Eßlinger. 17 September 1737. Landeskirchliches Archiv Stuttgart, KB 1256, Dekanat Künzelsau, Belsenberg Band No. 1, Mischbuch 1671–1691 [1787], entry No. 12, p. 549.

\(^{473}\) K. statistisch-topographischen Bureau (ed.), *Beschreibung des Oberamts Künzelsau* (Stuttgart, 1883), 369–379.

\(^{474}\) The history of Ursula and Hans Funcken is reconstructed from the documents produced during the conflicts caused by Hans’s running away in 1739. HZAN, La 35 Archiv Langenburg, Regierung II Bü 1362 (no foliation).
harmful way to the marital economy. Instead of planting the new grapevines, he sold them and put old branches into the soil to seem industrious. The situation escalated after a wedding in the village, when Hans went to the Neuhöfer house and stayed there for a couple of hours during the night. Together with her parents-in-law, Ursula went to the house and confronted her husband. Rumours of adultery and whoring quickly spread, and Hans left the village the same night. Ursula later accused her mother-in-law of having played the main part in making Hans leave by ‘chiding’ him, saying she herself had not given her husband any ‘reason’ to leave her. Hans joined a group of soldiers’ recruiters, not far away from Belsenberg, and his parents, with the help of the lordship and a loan of 30 Thaler eventually succeeded to buy back their son, who consequently returned to his wife. The priest recalled that a confrontation between the spouses followed, ending with Hans slapping Ursula in the face, ‘which was just to her, although the man did not right’. At first it seemed that the marital conflict had been resolved. However, on Ascension Day 1739, Hans ran away again. In a farewell letter to his kinsman Simon Funck, he explained that he left ‘because I cannot live with my wife and all the rich people have her back’. To his friend Leonhard, who accompanied Hans on the first miles, he allegedly said that his wife never repaired his clothes or cooked for him and that all he got to eat was dry bread. The village mayor ordered Hans’s father to seek his son, which he did to no avail. Hans was gone. His disappearance caused ‘disaccords and all kind of disagreements’ between the kinfolk of the spouses. In November, these were further fuelled when a letter from Hans arrived in Belsenberg, in which he informed his ‘dear parents, siblings, in-laws, and children, all my good friends, and even my enemies’ that he was now far away. After two pages of intercessions and stories from his time serving on a whaler, he informed his family that he was about to leave for the East Indies. The sea voyage on the ship named Biglit would take 14 months and he would return in 7 years. In case of his death, his siblings should collect his outstanding wages from the East India house in Amsterdam. He promised to send more letters, assured his family and friends that he had been to church, and finally recommended his ‘friends and enemies’ into God’s protection.

Now that it was obvious that Hans ‘in several years would not want to return to his native country’, the involved parties were summoned again. The deposition aimed at reconciling the ‘displeasure’ of the two families with each other and making arrangements for Ursula during her husband’s absence. While Hans’s

475 Petition of Ursula Barbara Funckin [no date], and Minutes of the deposition in Langenburg. 26 November 1739. HZAN La 35 Bü 1362 (no foliation).
477 Letter of Hans Philib Funck. No date. HZAN, La 35 Bü 1362 (no foliation).
478 Deposition of Leonhard Karges. Langenburg, 10 February 1741. HZAN, La 35 Bü 1362 (no foliation).
479 Hans Philip Funck to Hans Michel Funck. No date. HZAN, La 35 Bü 1362 (no foliation).
480 Minutes of the deposition in Langenburg. 26 November 1739. HZAN, La 35 Bü 1362 (no foliation).
mother was asked by the court whether she knew why her son had left and how
she would help and advise her daughter-in-law, Ursula had to answer questions
about whether she had knowledge of her husband’s letter and how she intended
to keep house in the future. Her perception of the situation did not matter to the
authorities. Nevertheless, in her answers, transcribed indirectly, she offered her
version and perspective. She highlighted that it was her husband who had left,
and not she. Also, she suggested, had he had ‘important reasons’ he could have
asked the lordship for help and he would not have needed to leave her. She also
conveyed her scepticism about whether her husband had really gone to the East
Indies, because ‘some people’ believed that he resided somewhere near Belsen-
berg. On the question of how she would keep house, Ursula was confident that
she could do all the work herself, ‘yes even better than he had done’. Her brother
and father would support her with ‘help and advice’ in those matters of which
she was ‘ignorant’. Two times during the deposition, Ursula expressed that she
would not ‘wait for her runaway husband’ and that she did not feel up to ‘taking
him back’ should he eventually return ‘because he has run away twice, he could
also run away a third time, and anyhow, she had a bad feeling about him’. However, Ursula’s feelings did not matter, nor were her interests recognized. The au-
thorities decided that she should continue to work the vineyard together with her
‘father and other friends as if she was a real widow’ and live according to the rules
of widowhood in silence’. The subsequent redraft of the resolution (striking
out the phrase ‘as if she was a real widow’) is significant and telling in te-
rms of the experiences and expectations of abandoned wives. The authorities apparently
realized quickly that the original wording would have had consequences on Ur-
sula’s legal, social, and economic status and allowed her to remarry. Instead, she
was ordered to conduct herself ‘in silence and trust to God’ until her husband
returned, to ‘pray for him so that God turned his heart back to her and him to
his fatherland’, to keep house with the ‘help and advice’ of her father and friends
and the ordered support of Hans’s relatives.

Ursula, and possibly her father and other kin, were not satisfied with this so-
lution. Several times, therefore, Ursula petitioned for divorce. The legal scholars
who were asked to give their opinions on the matter argued that Hans’s departure
did indeed constitute desertio malitiosa. The fact that he did not mention his wife

481 She might not have been entirely mistaken. While the details in Hans Philip’s letter suggest that
he actually had been in Amsterdam (there was a ship called Beekvliet that sailed to Batavia in 1739),
his name could not be found in the ship’s pay ledger. Maybe, he had signed on under a wrong name
or perhaps never signed on at all. For the Beekvliet, see Details of voyage 3163.5 from Texel to
Batavia (Beekvliet), Dutch-Asiatic Shipping in the 17th and 18th centuries [database], Huygens ING,
482 ‘da er zweimal weggegangen sei, könne also auch ein drittes mal weglauen, sie habe überhauht
eine schlechte Lust mehr zu ihm’. Minutes of the deposition in Langenburg. 26 November 1739.
HZAN, La 35 Bū 1362 (no foliation).
483 Deletion as in the original. ‘Sie solle mit ihrem Vatter und übrigen Freunden das Güthle schaffen
und besorgen, als wenn sie eine würkliche Wittib wäre und sich nach der Wittben Regel in der Stille
halten’. Minutes of deposition in Langenburg. 26 November 1739. HZAN, La 35 Bū 1362 (no foliation).
‘with a single word’ and effectively disinherited her in his letter from Amsterdam in favour of his siblings was brought forward as evidence. The scholars concluded that a divorce based on *desertio malitiosa* was justified. Moreover, they suggested that Ursula should be allowed to remarry as early as three years after her husband had left. This suggestion deviated from the ordinance on matrimonial matters that stipulated a waiting period of seven to ten years, but because Ursula was a ‘young and healthy person’, it was decided that to prevent her from ‘danger and temptation’ her chance to remarry should not be delayed.\footnote{Advisory opinion by Elias Lorentz L[?]. Langenburg, 9 February 1741. HZAN, La 35 Bü 1362 (no foliation).} In 1742 Ursula was finally divorced from her runaway husband and married the tailor Johann Georg Eheim, with whom she had four children and remained until she died in 1777.\footnote{Marriage of Johann Georg Eheim and Ursula Barbara Eßlinger, 28 August 1742; and death of Ursula Barbara Eheim, 21 March 1777. Landeskirchliches Archiv Stuttgart, KB 1256, Dekanat Künzelsau, Belsenberg Band No. 1, Mischbuch 1671–1691 [1788], entry No. 7, p. 558; and entry No. 6, p. 788.}

### 3.4 A change of perspective: Leaving behind families in the East Indies

German East Indies migrants not only left behind families in German lands. As Chapter 5 will show in more detail, some of them created families in the East Indies. Among them were men who eventually repatriated to Europe. The VOC prohibited European men from sending or taking children born of Asian mothers as well as their Asian wives to the Netherlands. Moreover, VOC employees who were married in the East Indies to Asian women or who had fathered children with Asian women were also not allowed to return to Europe, at least not in theory.\footnote{Taylor, *Social World*, 17 and 29–30.} The first of these two policies was not without precedent; however, the terms now depended on the circumstances of the birth of the child and the ethnicity of the wife, rather than the rank and position of the father. Recall that the Company did not allow its lower rank employees to bring wives and children from Europe to the East Indies either. Men like Johann Wolfgang Imhoff, Johann Balthasar Trosihn, and others left their wives and children behind in Germany when they signed on with the VOC. The experience of restricted mobility and being left behind was thus a shared one for women of lower-rank employees in both the German lands and the East Indies. Higher ranked employees, on the other hand, were allowed, or could apply for dispensation, to bring children and wives along, in both directions. In these families other considerations determined the mobility of women and children.

While the ways in which the Imhoffs and Piron family organized their families for their absences are quite well documented, cases in which German East Indies
migrants repatriated and left children behind in the East Indies are difficult to identify. Johann Casper Sperling is one of the few documented examples.\textsuperscript{487} Sperling had spent about 20 years in Batavia where he married Petronella Muller. In 1792, the couple decided to return to Europe. In July 1792, Sperling appeared before a notary in Batavia to settle some of his affairs. Per \textit{donatio inter vivos} he transferred the four-year-old child Clementia (Christian name Wilhelmina Adriana) to Johan Lourens Groos.\textsuperscript{488} According to the deed, Clementia was the daughter of Sperling and the deceased enslaved woman Sara. Groos adopted Clementia and promised to maintain her and bring her up in the Christian religion. A year later, Sperling and his wife were in Amsterdam. While Sperling was petitioning the Prussian king for permission to import the goods he had brought from the East Indies and settle with his family in his native town of Magdeburg, his wife Petronella gave birth to a son.\textsuperscript{489} Whatever reasons Sperling and Muller had for not taking Clementia with them to Europe – Sperling was quite wealthy and probably could have found ways to circumvent the Company’s restrictions – he used the institution of adoption to transfer his paternal duties to another man. Children who were left behind in Germany and who had no living mother or whose mother also travelled to the East Indies were usually placed with their grandparents, uncles and aunts, or other surrogate parents like wet-nurses. In the Dutch East Indies, adoption offered a means to create kinship ties where there were no kin who could have naturally stepped in.\textsuperscript{490} Irrespective of whether children were left behind in the East Indies or in German lands, the mobility of their fathers and mothers caused these children to transition between households.

Another man who left family members behind in the East Indies was Conrad Funck. Funck, ‘a native of Germany’, who had served with the EIC in Bengal from about 1778, married a ‘native woman’ and had several children with her.\textsuperscript{491} At some point, he ‘went home to Germany to see his friends’, leaving his wife and children behind in Calcutta, but he later returned to India ‘to join his wife and children [...] and to look after his property’. In 1795, he was accused of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{487} Another example might be the case of Johannes Schedel who repatriated in 1804 together with his son from Batavia to Württemberg. It is likely that he is the man called Johannis Schedel who in 1803 transferred a child per adoption to another couple in Batavia. CBG, BvTP, D448, scan: FAPA025013. For his repatriation, see Landesarchiv Baden-Württemberg, Abt. Staatsarchiv Ludwigsburg, E 173 III Bü 4033.
\item \textsuperscript{488} Act of adoption by Johan Laurens Groos of Clementia, daughter of the late slave Sara, property of Johan Casper Sperling. 1792. CBG, BvTP, G507, scan: FAPA035860. Three years before, in 1789, Johann Casper and Petronella adopted a one-month-old baby named Pieter Casparus from the free non-Christian woman Amarentia van Balij. It is at this point unknown what happened to this child. CBG, BvTP, M795, scan: FAPA065574.
\item \textsuperscript{489} Petition of Johann Casper Sperling. Amsterdam, [?] August 1793. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1027, fols. 11r–12v; Baptism entry for Fredrik Godlob Sperling, 26 September 1793, Gemeente Amsterdam Stadsarchief. DTB Dopen, archiefnummer 5001, inv.no. 276, p. 42 (fol. 30v), No. 5.
\item \textsuperscript{490} The practice of adoption as a means of creating kin-relations is discussed in detail in chap. 5.3.3.
\item \textsuperscript{491} The history of Conrad Funck and his family is reconstructed from the Extracts of Bengal Public Consultations, 16 March, 10 April, and 8 May 1795 in BL IOR/O/5/4, pp. 13–24. The quotes are at pp. 13, 14, 16, 18.
\end{itemize}
bribery and robbery and sentenced to be sent back to Europe. When his petition to stay in India for the sake of his ‘helpless family’ was rejected, he asked instead for a six-month period ‘in which time he will be able to settle his little affairs, and either prevail on his wife and family to go with him to Europe, or put them in a situation to keep them from starving’. His request was rejected again, but his wife was permitted to go to Europe with her husband as a charter party passenger. Whether Conrad Funck and his wife ever went to Europe is a question requiring further research. This case, nevertheless, shows that families were left behind, temporarily or permanently, not only in Europe, but also in the East Indies.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has shown some of the ways East Indies travellers prepared for their journeys, gathered information and knowledge, and ordered their personal affairs. Many sought to strengthen their ties to those they left behind. This was particularly important for men who left children in the care of third parties. The well documented examples of Christoph and Marian von Imhoff and Felix and Anna von Piron show how they relied on siblings and patrons to arrange their family affairs. Christoph von Imhoff’s letters to his brothers show how he sought to strengthen his relationships with them against the uncertainties of absence and the unsteadiness of social relations at such a long distance. Mutual obligations, involvement in the brotherly economy, and the reciprocal integration of parental responsibilities and advice were crucial to this end, as were constant assurances of the brotherly love.

Men who left their wives and children behind faced different challenges from the rather exceptional Piron and Imhoff families. The separation of a married couple had the potential to unsettle the gendered social order. Moreover, as the example of Johann Wolfgang Imhoff has shown, separation from wives and children caused emotional conflicts and certainly was perceived as challenging. Letters played a crucial role in negotiating these conflicts. In the letters, absent husbands could make sense of their decision to leave despite the consequences it had on the emotional, social, and especially financial lives of the wives and children they left behind. In their letters, East Indies migrants legitimized and excused their departures by arguing that they did it for the best of the family. The language of love served in this context to maintain the vision of loving and caring husbands and fathers. Alluding to imperatives of sustaining the family also preserved the notion of the conjugal and complementary community of the spouses. At the same time, this language perpetuated the ultimate authority of the husband.

There is an account of the estate of Conrad Funck, deceased in 1799. The estate was administered by his wife Mary Funck who filed the account in 1804 in Calcutta. It is unclear whether this is the same Conrad Funck who was ordered to return to Europe in 1795. BL IOR/L/AG/43/27/30, fol. 103.
as the head of the household even during his absence, and it prepared the ground for his return.

Shifting the perspective to that of the left-behind wives demonstrates that the male vision constructed in letters home was highly unstable. The line between migrating to the East Indies as part of a family strategy and as an act of desertion was often unclear and could shift with changing circumstances. For the women left behind, their husbands’ departures could have severe material, social, and emotional consequences that the language of love alone could not always ease – especially when letters or allowances stopped arriving. The wives of East Indies travellers were all affected differently. As married women living singly, they inhabited an ambiguous position in society comparable to widows. Depending on the circumstances this could leave them highly vulnerable, but it could also provide them with opportunities for independent action that were unavailable to other married women. While it is difficult to appraise their actual living conditions and home circumstances based on the available material, some of these women become visible when they took action to change their situation and remarried or filed petitions for divorce. The example of Maria Christina Schultzen highlights the discrepancies between how husbands and wives could perceive their separation. While the absent Schultze apparently intended to return one day and possibly understood his employment at the Cape of Good Hope as a family strategy, his wife did not accept his behaviour and wanted to divorce. Whether her goal really was to secure a divorce or whether she used the court to force her husband to return remains unknown. Whatever the case, her assertiveness forced the authorities to develop new routines and practices regarding legal procedures involving parties living abroad.

The case of Ursula Barbara Funcken fits into scholarship stressing desertion as a means of resolving marital conflicts and tensions. However, her example also complicates this narrative, as her husband Hans’s desertion affected not only her, but also her parents, her parents-in-law, her extended family, and municipal authorities. Moreover, during the process, Ursula Barbara Funcken appears not as someone who suffered silently as a deserted wife, but as someone who sought to better her situation. For historians of women’s lives, this hardly comes as a surprise, but it is an important addition to the male-focused narratives of East Indies migration in particular and early modern global mobility in general.

Shifting the perspective to families in the East Indies shows that men left wives and children behind not only in Europe, but also in the East Indies, and these families also experienced periods of separation. The histories of these families – especially the perspectives of the women left behind and how they handled being left – are more difficult to grasp in the records. The few cases that could be identified from the Dutch East Indies suggest that VOC policies complicated the opportunities for families to stay together by introducing ethnicity as a determining factor in the question of which families could travel and stay together. At the same time, the institution of adoption allowed new social ties in lieu of kinship to provide care for children. In the case of the EIC however, it seems that
ethnicity was less important than marriage (and money), which was decisive in determining a couple’s mobility.
4 Family in Absentia

4.1 Introduction

‘Don’t fear the father who is so far away from us’, the daughter Sophie exclaims in Kaffka’s *Die Rückkehr aus Ostindien* (1789), when she, her mother, and her brother Karl argue about whether the children can act against the expressed will of their father, who is away in the East Indies. The following dialogue crystallizes the conflict caused by the absence of the father:

MRS MÜLLER: Child! What are you thinking! To wed two children without the consent of their father, that is daring too much!

SOPHIE: My father is too far away, as if he could hinder us […]

MRS MÜLLER: Paternal right remains paternal right, even if he is in the East Indies.

SOPHIE: No dear mother, it loses its power. How can a father choose for a child that he hardly knows? Choose a husband whom he does not know? […]

MRS MÜLLER: Does the husband not remain husband, the father not the father, even if he is far away? Does absence dissolve the bonds?

KARL: Not the bonds, but the duties weaken.493

The conflict concerns whether and how paternal authority and filial obligation alter during periods of separation. Distance plays a crucial role in the argument of the children: Distance means their obligatory fear (*Furcht*) of the father is no longer required. Disobedience can cause no paternal sanctions, and the father could not physically hinder his children from marrying people he disapproved of. But the children’s argument goes beyond this rather simple insubordination. Sophie argues that the father’s right to rule over his children is forfeit the moment he no longer *knows* them or their needs and wishes. Her mother opposes Sophie’s dynamic understanding of a conditional relationship in need of constant vitalization, asking rhetorically: Does absence dissolve marital and filial bonds? Her implicit answer, ‘no’, echoes contemporary norms of a static understanding of the

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natural (and divine) order in the family. In the fictional play the tension between Sophie and her mother is resolved by Karl’s answer: In the face of absence, ‘[n]ot the bonds, but the duties weaken’.

This short, albeit fictional, dialogue reflects a contemporary anxiety that distance would affect relationships and hierarchies within the family, and therefore in the broader social order. The conflict between Mrs Müller and her children had its equivalents in, or rather was motivated by, the lived experiences of eighteenth-century families as mobility increased over ever-expanding distances. Extant letters to and from East Indies migrants and their families in German lands suggest that these concerns and conflicts pertained not only to parents and minor children or husbands and wives, but also to relationships between adult siblings and between parents and their mature offspring.

This chapter examines the relationships of East Indies migrants with their families in German lands and the ways in which they surmounted the anxieties and practical and emotional challenges of separation. The history of emotions provides two central axes for investigating family practices between German lands and the Indian Ocean world. The first concerns the practice of letter writing as a way to bridge physical distance, and the ways in which letter writers created visions of connectedness and social and emotional obligations in and through their letters. The second axis concerns practices of bridging distance that went beyond language and letter writing, such as participating in family matters, reciprocal exchange of resources, and prayers.

4.2 Communication between Germany and the East Indies

Writing was vital to long-distance trade and imperial expansion in the early modern period, and fundamentally entangled with the ventures of the East India Companies. It was centrally important not only to the governing elites, merchants, policy makers, and administrators, but also to the thousands of individuals who travelled with the companies between Europe and the Indian Ocean world. After almost 10 years of separation from his fiancée, Hanoverian Lieutenant Ferdinand Breymann praised ‘the man who [once] invented writing’ so that he and his fiancée could ‘even at the longest distance communicate our thoughts and sentiments’ to each other. However, with distance, uncertainties increased.

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494 See also Jarzebowski, ‘Children Travelling the World’, 217; and Pearsall, Atlantic Families, 23.
495 This approach is esp. informed by Broomhall and Van Gent, ‘Corresponding Affections’; Jarzebowski, ‘Children Travelling the World’; and Jarzebowski, ‘Die Familie Fahnenstück’.
To be sure, correspondence always involved uncertainties irrespective of distance and place, but the idiosyncratic character of overseas communication increased these ambiguities.\textsuperscript{498} The constant question that nagged writers and readers on both sides of the ocean alike was whether a letter had been lost on the journey or never written at all.

East Indies travellers and their families who waited for letters constantly reflected upon their intimate bonds. Johann Carl Reinhard had not received a single letter from home in five years. Therefore, he expressed his fear that his wife was dead or had ‘forgotten’ him, but then exclaimed, ‘– but No! – this would be too hard a stroke of fate for your Carl, and therefore away with these thoughts’.\textsuperscript{499} Similarly, Johann Friedrich Küster expressed his anxiety:

\begin{quote}
If it is true that friendship is the most noble present of heaven, O you friends, connected by the bonds of bloods with me, why then do you hesitate to give me news of your well-being? Why do you remain in such a terrible silence, and leave me in my confusion, which is worse than death? Why don’t you tell me as soon as possible how you live, and that the affections of sisterly and brotherly love haven’t cooled entirely in your hearts?\textsuperscript{500}
\end{quote}

While Küster blamed his family and friends for not actively nurturing their relationship, Hans Carl von Arnim chose a more sensitive way to address failures of correspondence. When he did not receive any letters from home in the winter of 1769/70, he assumed that his brothers simply did not know how and when to send him letters. Therefore, he made some ‘suggestions’ of the best ‘time and occasion’ to send letters from Europe to Bengal.\textsuperscript{501} Knowledge of the shipping schedule for the dispatch and return of mail from and to Europe was the basis of successful correspondence and obviated potential disappointment.\textsuperscript{502} The outward-bound fleets usually left the Netherlands in the autumn and winter months, and because the exact dates of departure depended on the winds, letters should be at the port at least four weeks before the fleet planned to sail. If the letters


\textsuperscript{499} Johann Carl Reinhard to Anna Sophia Victoria Benzlem. Cape of Good Hope, 15 September 1798. TNA HCA 32/617, No. 61/45a.

\textsuperscript{500} ‘Wenn es wahr ist, daß die Freundschaft das köstlichste Geschenk des Himmels ist, o ihr Freunde, durch Bände des Bluths mit mir verknüpft, warum zögert ihr dann, um mir Nachricht von eurem Wohlbefinden zu geben? Warum beobachtet ihr ein so schreckliches Stillschweigen, und laßt mich in meiner Verwirrung, die ärger als der Tod ist? Warum sagt ihr nicht, und auf das geschwindeste, wie ihr lebet, – und ob die Empfindungen der Schwester und Bruderliebe noch nicht gänzlich in eure Herzen erkalten seyn?’ Johann Friedrich Küster to his brother, sister and friends, Johann Peter Klein [probably his brother-in-law]. Cape of Good Hope, 28 August 1798. TNA HCA 32/617, No. 61/6mii.


\textsuperscript{502} See also J. C. Metzendorf to his parents C. C. Metzendorf in Hamburg. On board the \textit{l’Union}, 10 June 1778. TNA HCA 30/727, No. 400.
found their way onto a ship in time, it took more than seven, and sometimes up to nine and a half months until it arrived in Batavia, Bengal, or Ceylon in late July, August, or September. The homebound voyage was usually somewhat faster. Most ships left Batavia between October and February and arrived the following summer in Europe. The schedule for the EIC fleets was similar to that of the VOC, only their frequency and destinations in the Indian Ocean world varied. To put these durations into perspective, most transatlantic voyages took only six to eight weeks and from 1755 postal ships that made the journey in four weeks sailed every month.

The time frame for answering letters that arrived in Bengal, Batavia, or on Ceylon during late summer was short, as the homebound fleet did not linger. Most letters written by East Indies travellers were dated between September and January. These months were a busy period for the letter writers, who frequently referred to lack of time as an excuse for not answering all letters and for not writing longer letters. Sometimes, the opportunity to send a letter showed up spontaneously, and finishing letters even ‘half an hour’ before the ship left was not uncommon. Gustav Adolf von Streng met a captain who was just about to set sail for Europe and who agreed to take a letter and to forward it to the addressee. Writing in a hurry, Streng asked his mother to ‘forgive’ him the terseness of his letter, but he did not want to miss the opportunity to send it. Emphasizing the particular circumstances of writing allowed migrants to attach meaning to their letters and ascribe particular value to the relationships they addressed. When Christoph Adam Carl von Imhoff wrote an ‘unusually short’ letter to his brother Friedrich in April 1770, he excused the brevity of the letter’s six pages – written widely spaced and leaving half a page blank – by saying that he still had many letters to write before the next ship would leave in two days. Moreover, the ‘dreadfully hot weather’ made it almost impossible to write anything at all. Nevertheless, he emphasized in the letter to his brother ‘how much I love you, and that I don’t let pass an opportunity to ask about your well-being’.

503 Bruijn, Gaastra, and Schöffer (eds.), *Dutch Asiatic Shipping*, 56–78 and 89.
505 However, this does not mean that postal communication always was reliable. See Pearsall, *Atlantic Families*, 36.
506 The temporal distribution of 61 letters sent from Batavia, Bengal, the Cape of Good Hope, and the Isle de France is as follows: Jan: 11, Feb: 4, March: 5, April: 4, May: 2, June: 2, July: 2, Aug: 2, Sep: 7, Oct: 8, Nov: 8, Dec: 6.
508 Gustaf Adolf von Streng to his mother, Majorin von Streng, and brothers. Batavia, 20 March [1803]. TNA HCA 32/1693, No. 84h. Another letter of Streng to his mother, dated Cape of Good Hope, 27 October 1798, is found in TNA HCA 32/617, No. 61/48.
Daybell argued regarding epistolary practices in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the very materiality of the letter generated meaning. The pure act of writing despite the lack of time and in the hot humid climate, which made it difficult to hold the quill and run the hand along the paper, was a meaningful effort, and letter writers like Imhoff and Streng emphasized the work they put into writing and therefore the importance of the relationship.

Sometimes, letter writers planned and wrote in advance and thus adapted their routines to the circumstances. Ferdinand Breymann started writing a letter to his fiancée while still at sea in February and sealed it in July in Madras. J. C. Metzendorf started writing to his parents on board the l'Union around 20 days before he arrived at the Cape of Good Hope. He was the supercargo on the ship and son of a storehouse manager (Lagerer) in the trading business. As such, he had most likely been educated in letter writing. He explained his writing practice:

I begin this letter so early, so that in case there is a ship ready to set sail at the Cape, I would not run the risk of leaving my friends without news from me, and moreover, I would like to, if possible, spend the few days there for my recovery.

Metzendorf’s writing practice showed time management techniques common to many merchants. He faced the uncertainties of communication, the possibility that a ship would be ready to sail at his arrival at the Cape, with careful planning and a rational use of his time. His parents, friends, and brother-in-law in Hamburg were equally eager to secure an uninterrupted chain of communication. When Metzendorf debarked at the Cape, the first letters from Hamburg had already arrived.

Letters took much longer than the sea journey itself to arrive – if they arrived at all. The VOC established an ‘official’ post system to gain some control over the private correspondence of its employees. This included that letters that contained sensitive intelligence or that were sent ‘clandestine’ with VOC employees

510 Daybell, Material Letter.
512 For these and further information on Metzendorf’s life, see Bernhard Philipp Berckemeyer Memoirs, [no date, but it must have been written after 1796]. published by Bernd Sasse, https://berckemeyer.wordpress.com/bernhard-philipp-berckemeyer-bp-i-memoiren/, accessed 21 January 2020.
513 ‘Ich fange deswegen so früh diesen Brief an, damit wenn auf der Cape etwa ein Schiff segel fertig wäre, ich keine Gefahr laufe meinen Freunden ohne Nachricht von mir zu lassen, und überdem mögte ich wenn es möglich wäre, die wenigen Tage welche wir da zubringen, gerne ganz zu meiner Erholung haben.’ J. C. Metzendorf to his parents C. C. Metzendorf in Hamburg. On board the l’Union, 10 June 1778. TNA HCA 30/727, No. 400.
could be censored or even confiscated.\footnote{Moree, ‘\textit{Met vriend die God geleide}’, 58–64.} Moreover, ships were frequently wrecked or captured, and papers could be lost if the intermediary died. The mail system among the Netherlands, London, and the inland territories of the Holy Roman Empire added even more obstacles. Several years could pass until one received the answer to a letter. Two or three years seems to have been the usual duration, but interruptions of five to ten years were not uncommon.\footnote{Regarding communication between Britain and India, K. N. Chaudhuri states that the normal cycle between sending a letter and receiving the reply took at least 16 months. K. N. Chaudhuri, \textit{The Trading World of Asia and the English East India Company, 1660–1760} (Cambridge, 1978), 74.}

All things considered, the idiosyncratic nature of communicating across oceans conditioned the ways in which East Indies travellers and their families in Germany could stay in contact. The constraints of transcontinental communication required letter writers and recipients to adapt to these circumstances and to develop strategies to maintain connectedness in spite of postal uncertainties. Some of these strategies were neither new nor exclusive to transcontinental correspondence. For example, letter writers often asked the recipient to circulate the letter among siblings, friends, and kin, passing along the original, a copy, or extracts; historians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries also have observed this pattern in communications over short and intermediate distances.\footnote{Silke Törpsch, ‘Briefe aus der Landgrafschaft Hessen-Kassel im Jahr 1625: Forschungsperspektiven zur Geschichte des Dreißigjährigen Kriegs’, \textit{Thirty Years War Online} [2017], http://thirty-years-war-online.net/quellen/briefe/einleitung/, accessed 3 October 2020; and Esther-Beate Körber, ‘Der soziale Ort des Briefs im 16. Jahrhundert’, in Horst Wenzel (ed.), \textit{Gespräche – Boten – Briefe. Körperschaften und Schriftgedächtnis im Mittelalter} (Berlin, 1997).}

East Indies travellers and their families could fall back on this known practice. Simon Godfried Budach, for instance, asked his aunt to share the letter, especially the news of the death of his father, to her sister and other relatives because ‘time does not allow (me) to write to everyone’.\footnote{Simon Godfried Budach to his aunt Henrietta Weisse, née Budach, in Frankfurt an der Oder. Semarang, 13 January 1801. TNA HCA 32/1216. See also Wilhelmina Conradi to her brother [Johann Friedrich Conradi]. Lauterbach, 10 December 1778, TNA HCA 30/722. And the letters of Ferdinand Breymann to Eleonore Wehner. NLA HA, Kleine Erwerbungen A 48 No. 2.} Letters were forwarded to other friends, patrons, or the lord or head in whose household the recipient lived and worked.\footnote{For example, Hinrich Lichtenstein to his parents in Helmstedt, Doctor Lichtenstein. Cape of Good Hope, 5 February 1803. TNA HCA 32/1697, No. 229. Similar Daniel Hendrich Schmidt to his brother-in-law and sister. Cape of Good Hope, 25 October 1798. TNA HCA 32/617, No. 61/6l. Also J. C. Metzendorf to his parents C. C. Metzendorf in Hamburg. On board the \textit{l’Union}, 10 June 1778. TNA HCA 30/727, No. 400.}

It was also a common practice to enclose sealed and unsealed letters to other addressees with the plea to forward them, sometimes with the explicit invitation to read them before doing so because they contained different information.\footnote{For the practice that heads of households read the letters of their servants, see Maria Elisabeth Dornheinim to her brother Jan Frederik Christoffel Dornheim. Dresden, 31 May 1780. TNA HCA 30/317.} Many letter writers requested the receiver to report the contents of their letters to other friends and kin, who in turn had received letters on their
The resulting entanglements involving several individuals in the communication network are crystallized in the Dornheim family. In 1780, Maria Elisabeth Dornheimin wrote to her brother Johann Friedrich Dornheim, a printer and publisher on Colombo. She had not had the ‘fortune’ to receive a letter from him in the last season and expected that his letters had been on a ship that had been shipwrecked. However:

My brother the butcher has written to me for the first time and asked about me, and this, my dear brother, I owe to your letter; he did not write that his wife died 2 years ago. However, he assigned to me to recommend him to you and your beloved ones, and I should, in his name, thank you for your letter many times, he would owe you his answer, [but] because his wife died, he had extra work to do and therefore he begs that you won’t resent him.522

This quote is telling in terms not only of the entangled and collective practice of communicating among siblings in the East Indies and German lands, but also of how these practices fostered new relationships beyond a two-sided exchange. Apparently, ‘the butcher’ had not been in contact with his sister Maria in some time. But a letter from Ceylon had prompted him to reach out to her.

All these strategies saved time and money. Although not exclusive to trans-continental communication, these collaborative practices of correspondence became essential in the context of families dispersed across increasing distances. These practices also helped to build relationships among the senders and distributors of letters, as the system relied on trust. It created obligations that bound the sender and the receiver/distributor. In many cases, it seems that one sibling served as the main centre and distributor of information.524 However, this system was vulnerable to conflict between siblings, as Wilhelm Stäudlen came to learn in 1790. Apparently, he usually sent letters and presents from the Cape of Good Hope to his brother Johannes, who was expected to distribute the presents and show the letters to their sister. However, the sister, Anna Maria, grew suspicious of Johannes’s honesty because he ‘never let [her] read the letters’. Therefore, she wrote a personal letter to Wilhelm at the Cape and thanked him for the present of 125 gulden. She explicitly asked him to send his reply directly to her and not

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521 For example, Christoph Adam Carl von Imhoff to Friedrich von Imhoff. [Madras, 3 September 1769] and Madras, 6 April 1770. Printed in Koch (ed.), Imhoff Indienfahrer, 119 and 134–135.
522 ‘Mein Bruder der Fleischer hat mir jezo zum ersten mahl geschrieben und sich nach mir erkundiget, und dieses, mein lieber Bruder habe ich deinen Brief zudanken, er hat mir nicht geschrieben daß seine Frau vor 2 Jahren gestorben ist. mir aber hat er aufgetragen daß ich ihn bey dir und den lieben deingien bestens empfehlen sollte, und ich sollte in seinen Nahmen, dir vor deinen Brief vielmahls danken, die Antwort müste er dir schuldig bleiben, weil seine Frau gestorben so hätte er mehr Arbeit zu verrichten, läst daher bitten es nicht übel zu nehmen.’ Maria Elisabeth Dornheimin to her brother Jan Frederik Christoffel Dornheijm. Dresden, 31 May 1780. TNA HCA 30/317.
523 See also Wilhelmina Conradi to her brother [Johann Friedrich Conradi?]. Lauterbach, 10 December 1778. TNA HCA 30/722.
524 This has also been observed by Amelia Almorza Hidalgo, ‘Sibling Relations in Spanish Emigration to Latin America, 1560–1620’, European Review of History: Revue européenne d’histoire, 17/5 (2010); and Rothschild, Inner Life.
through the hands of others. Wilhelm answered her letter as she wished and confirmed her suspicions: Johannes had indeed withheld presents and information. The absent brother assured his sister that he valued all his siblings equally as they had ‘all lain under the heart of one mother’. However, brother Johannes would lose his ‘love’ due to his duplicity.

One strategy for dealing with insecurities caused by personal animosity was to spread the information among several individuals in one’s correspondence network, as the example of Carl Ludwig Hagemeister shows. Hagemeister had specified in his will that his two children be sent to Germany after his death. To make sure that this wish was honoured, he spread word of the contents of his will, and thereby created a system of checks and balances that extended across oceans. First, of course, he had the witnesses who were present when he drafted the will and who later could testify to his wishes. Then he sent a copy of his will to Gotthilf August Francke in Halle, accompanied by a personal letter with further details, and it appears that he sent letters to his friend (and probably correspondent and agent) Van Hellen in The Hague and his other friend Frauendorf in Berlin. After Hagemeister’s death, this strategy helped to secure his interests, as many people knew his wishes and could and did make sure of their execution.

Letter writers also had to handle uncertainties intrinsically linked to the transmission of letters across oceans. Shipwreck and the naval wars in the second half of the eighteenth century posed major threats to communication. Thousands of letters never arrived their addressees, as strikingly shown in the intercepted letters in the Prize Papers. During the Fourth-Anglo Dutch War of 1780–1784 and new turmoil in the 1790s communication between the Indian Ocean world and Europe was extremely uncertain, at times even impossible. But many of the East Indies travellers and their families were aware of these obstacles and developed strategies to surmount them. Hinrich Lichtenstein explained that sending several copies of one and the same letter on different ships was a ‘precept that everyone followed’, at least those who could afford it, as it increased the chances that at least one letter would actually arrive. The more important the writer considered

525 Petition of Anna Maria Balsen, née Stäudlin. Backnang, 10 November 1790. HStA S, A 213 Bü 3234 (no foliation).
526 Wilhelm Stäudlen to Anna Maria Balsen, née Stäudlin. Cape of Good Hope, 12 May 1790 (copy). HStA S, A 213 Bü 3234 (no foliation).
527 See chap. 2.4.5.
528 Frauendorf later made frequent inquiries about the well-being of the children. See, e.g. Mr Frauendorf to Gotthilf August Francke. Berlin, 19 July 1764. AFSt/Hauptarchiv (H) C 833 : 35.
529 From 1750 to 1794 the VOC lost 30 ships, 11 on the outbound voyage and 19 on the return, to British and French privateers, most during the Anglo-Dutch war of 1780–1784 and again in 1794–1795. Another 64 VOC vessels were shipwrecked during the same period. Bruijn, Gaastra, and Schöffer (eds.), Dutch Asiatic Shipping, 75 and 91.
530 Hinrich Lichtenstein to his parents in Helmstedt. Cape of Good Hope, 5 February 1803. TNA HCA 32/1697, No. 229. See also Johann Friedrich Küster to his brother, sister, and friends, Johann Peter Klein [probably his brother-in-law]. Cape of Good Hope, 28 August 1798. TNA HCA 32/617, No. 61/6mii.
the letter, the more copies he or she produced. Hans Carl Arnim, for example, sent ‘one original and three identical [copies]’ of a letter to Frederick II and hoped that at least one of them would make its way to the royal palace.\footnote{Hans Carl von Arnim. No date (draft). Printed in Arnswaldt and Devrient, \textit{Das Geschlecht von Arnim}, 712.} Prussian consuls also frequently sent several copies on different ships when they made inquiries into the whereabouts or estates of Prussian subjects. A second way to increase the chance of successful delivery was to find reliable agents in the harbour cities in Europe who would take on the transmission of letters. Third, sending several copies of the same letter not only on different ships, but also via different agents in different countries increased the chances that letters arrived. Especially during times of war, letter writers quickly adapted to the new situation and established new channels for communication. For example, in 1798 during the war that interrupted communications between the Dutch overseas settlements and Europe, Johann Carl Reinhard and Johann Friedrich Küster instructed their relations not to send their letters via Amsterdam anymore, but instead via Hamburg, Copenhagen, or England.\footnote{Johann Carl Reinhard to his wife Anna Sophia Victoria Reinhard, née Benzlern. Cape of Good Hope, 15 September 1798. TNA HCA 32/617, No. 61/45a. Johann Friedrich Küster to his brother, sister, and friends, Johann Peter Klein [probably his brother-in-law]. Cape of Good Hope, 28 August 1798. TNA HCA 32/617, No. 61/6mii.} Thus, letter writers chose the most convenient and reliable ways to send their precious messages.

Another practice letter writers used to reduce the uncertainties of transoceanic correspondence was to include short summaries of the content of previous letters, in case these had been lost.\footnote{For this practice, see also Freist, ‘Briefpraktiken’, 397.} Sometimes, this practice might have caused letter writers some pain. For example, Andreas Dehne informed his son about the death of his mother not only once, but in at least in four letters, because he did not know whether any of his previous ones had arrived.\footnote{Andreas Dehne to his son H. G. A. Dehne, Cannonier on Ceylon, and to his daughter-in-law. Zellerfeldt auf dem Harz, 26 February 1780. Sent by Held Woltemade. TNA HCA 30/722.} Including information on ‘fellow countrymen’ (\textit{Landsleute}), or comrades in the subsidiary regiments was yet another and very common way to create a web of information that could compensate for the uncertainties and constraints of correspondence. Hermann Wraatz included a note in his letter that his father should send greetings to ‘Mr and Mrs Maurenbrecher from their son Wilhelm’.\footnote{Hermann Wraatz to his father M. Wraatz. On board the \textit{Printz von Augustenborg}, Isle de France, 23 July 1798. TNA HCA 32/617, No. 61/21a.} Similarly, the parents of J. C. Metzendorf were asked to communicate to a Mr Falck that his son was well and that ‘he likes it here a lot’.\footnote{J. C. Metzendorf to his parents C. C. Metzendorf in Hamburg. On board the \textit{I’Union}, 10 June 1778. TNA HCA 30/727, No. 400.} Conveying news of the deaths of countrymen was also a central part of many correspondences, and families in the German lands often learnt about the death of a brother or uncle through such indirect
means.\textsuperscript{537} The three Jachtmann siblings from Crossen (now Krosno Odrzańskie), for example, had not heard from their brother Johann Christian in 13 years, nor did they know where he lived. This changed in 1798. A woman from a neighbouring village received a letter from her son in Batavia, in which he told her about the death of Jachtmann, and she forwarded this news to the family in Crossen.\textsuperscript{538}

Many letters and petitions give evidence that this practice of chained messages combining letters and oral dissemination worked. Sometimes, oral messages were the only source of information.\textsuperscript{539} Bernhard von Wickede, for example, had not ‘heard nor seen [a letter]’ from home in several years, but ‘by some indirect messages’ he knew that his relatives had written and sent ‘some things’ to him. At the same time, he communicated home through both letters and the verbal transmission of information. In his letter to his father, he wrote that should the father be in Copenhagen when the letter arrived, the letter carrier could tell him more about his circumstances ‘because we have spent several months together here’.\textsuperscript{540} Oral transmission of information could also compensate for the limitations of letters. Letters were never private documents; they could be opened by anyone into whose hands they fell. The oral transmission of information was therefore a more secure and private way to pass information. Letter locking techniques could provide further assurance that a letter had not be opened and resealed without leaving a trace on the paper.\textsuperscript{541} The recipient would therefore know if a confidential letter had been opened during delivery. Ferdinand Breymann added an explanatory postscript to a letter of his explaining that he had opened and resealed

\textsuperscript{537} For example, Ferdinand Breymann to Eleonore Wehner. Madras, 22 February 1789. NLA HA, Kleine Erwerbungen A 48 No. 2, letter No. 22. See also Johann Friedrich Küster to his brother, sister and friends, Johann Peter Klein [probably his brother-in-law]. Cape of Good Hope, 28 August 1798. TNA HCA 32/617, No. 61/mir; Johann Balthasar Troslin to his wife. Surabaya, 1 October 1726 (copy). GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1007, fol. 139r; and B. H. Bogaert to Elisabeth Maria Bogaart, née Möller. Batavia, 12 May 1770. Staatsarchiv Hamburg, 611-19/182_58.

\textsuperscript{538} Petition of the siblings Jachtmann. Crossen, 11 October 1798. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1037, fol. 55r–v. Another example of this kind of chain message is Godfried Wilhelm Wilke to Roeder. Batavia, 20 October 1785 (extract copy). GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1028 (Guyot), fol. 227r.

\textsuperscript{539} Often petitioners explained that they had not corresponded with an absent family member, but that they had heard about him by third parties. For example, petition of Anna Elisabeth Kühn or Keuc, Widow Thielen. Friesack, 25 January 1794. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1026, fol. 49r. See also the petition of Johann Gottlob Funcke, orally presented on 9 September 1792. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1027, fol. 3r; and the petition of Christian Hoolbeck. Stalzenburg, 19 November 1790. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1028, fols. 311r–312r. Another example of this practice is the family of Christian Dunckel. Petition of Maria Sophia Dunckeln, married name Schincken. Berlin, 5 May 1763. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1011, fol. 41v.

\textsuperscript{540} Bernhard Wickede to his father Friedrich Wickede. Isle de France, 3 August 1795. TNA HCA 32/618, No. 63/40. For the Wickede family, see Ernst Heinrich Kneschke, Neues allgemeines Deutsches Adels-Lexikon, vol. 9 (Leipzig, 1870), 561–562.

\textsuperscript{541} I am grateful to David van der Linden (RUG) for sharing his knowledge about letter locking with me during the Groningen–Uppsala–Durham International Summer School in June 2019.
the letter himself ‘because I did not like the original form of my letter’. Nevertheless, the content of letters was always potentially public. This limited what letter writers could write, and sometimes they made this perceived censorship explicit: Bernhard von Wickede, for instance, wrote to his father that he could not write anything ‘detailed about my current situation’ because he feared that his letter ‘might get into foreign hands [fremde Hände]’. His caution was not misplaced; the letter never found its way to his father at all, but was intercepted by British privateers. Other letter writers felt they could not properly verbalize their impressions and experiences. Anticipating a future in which the stories could be told personally, epistolary practices were sometimes limited to hints that would be explained later.

4.3 Practices of bridging distance

In 1758, 23-year-old Thomas Nagel from Brunswick went to Ceylon in the service of the VOC. For at least 22 years he stayed in contact with his family in the glassmaker region around Grünenplan, mainly it seems through his brother C[arl?] Nagel. However, in 1780 the relationship between the brothers was put to the test. In that year Thomas wrote to C. Nagel impugning his good faith. Apparently, many of C. Nagel’s letters had not reached his brother Thomas on Ceylon, and those that did had caused Thomas to question his brother’s honesty, forthrightness, and willingness to support him. Against such deep mistrust, it would not have been surprising had C. Nagel replied in a similar tone, or even terminated the correspondence. However, he replied. On five narrowly lined pages he offered assurances of his continuous fondness and summarized and explained ‘pointwise’ his past actions and decisions concerning the absent brother’s affairs and requests. It seems that the frictions had arisen mainly because of problems with the timing, delivery (or non-delivery), and overlap of their letters. For example, when Thomas complained that his brother had not informed him about their sister Rahel’s marriage in 1771, C. Nagel explained that ‘there was not yet a thought of the wedding’ when he had dispatched his letter to Ceylon in that year. He also justified some financial transactions that involved

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542 Ferdinand Breymann to Eleonore Wehner. Madras, 28 April 1784. NLA HA, Kleine Erwerbungen A 48 No. 2, letter No. 11a.
543 Bernhard von Wickede to his father Friedrich Bernhard von Wickede. Isle de France, 3 August 1798. TNA HCA 32/618, No. 63/40.
544 VOC employment records of Thomas Nagel. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 14465, fol. 16 and inv.no. 14476, fol. 120. Thomas Nagel eventually became head of district (landregent) of the Vanni, a region between the Jaffna peninsula and the Kingdom of Kandy, which Nagel had conquered and brought under direct VOC control in 1784. His activities on Ceylon have thus not gone unnoticed by contemporaries or historians. For his operations in the Vanni, see Alicia Schrikker, Dutch and British Colonial Intervention in Sri Lanka, 1780–1815: Expansion and Reform (Leiden, 2007), 86–89 and 103–108. See also E. H. V., ‘Nagel of the Vanni’, Journal of the Dutch Burger Union, 23/3 (1934).
545 This information and all following quotes are from C. Nagel to Thomas Nagel. Grünenplaner Spiegelhütte, 10 November 1780. Sent by Held Woltemade. TNA HCA 30/317.
allowances and presents from Thomas in which he had interfered, but he con-
sidered this his ‘duty’, as the circumstances had changed since Thomas had di-
rected the money a year before. C. Nagel concluded his letter with the ‘hope’ that
his brother would bestow his ‘brotherly love’ on him and ‘help’ with a matter
that he had detailed in his letter dispatched four weeks earlier (he did not, how-
ever, repeat the plea itself). He then forwarded the recommendation ‘of us all’ to
Thomas and his wife and remained his ‘most heartily beloved brother’s faithful
brother’. In a postscript, he added that he had just received the news that
Thomas’s son had arrived in Holzminden and that he would visit the child in ‘in
a couple of days’.

C. Nagel’s letter gives an impressive glimpse into the relationship between two
brothers who had lived the better parts of their lives separated by a great distance
from each other. Letters of migrants have often been read as ways to create a
sense of belonging and as sources of self-assurance and orientation in the worlds
that they encountered. Staying connected with family and friends ‘at home’
provided an anchor in the ‘past’, which was considered crucial to the migrants’
identity. But staying connected was important in other ways, too. As C. Nagel’s
letter suggests, East Indies migrants often relied on the continuous help and sup-
port of family and kin ‘at home’ in the form of credit, patronage, and support.
Against the background of wishing to return to Europe at some point, the con-
tinuation of kinship ties was likewise important, as these relationships would po-
tentially help them to reintegrate into European social and economic life after an
extended period of absence.

To better understand the workings of family relationships across vast dis-
tances, the analysis draws on scholarship focusing on the resources that fed social
relationships in the early modern period. Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos has argued
that families practised a wide range of reciprocal exchanges that could entail emo-
tions, favours, and material and immaterial goods. Exchanges within the family
could often be deferred and were usually not symmetrical. Although Ben-Amos
demonstrates the operation of these reciprocal exchanges between parents and
their offspring, the historical material suggests that this reciprocity also charac-
terized relationships between siblings. However, while the exchanges within sib-
ling relations were, like those between parents and children, often asymmetrical
and governed by gender, age, place of residence, and order of succession, they
were more likely to be perceived as equal by the participating parties. The con-
ceptual framework of ‘the economy of social relationships’ (‘Ökonomien sozialer
Beziehungen’) proposed by Gabriele Jancke and Daniel Schläppi, though not con-
fined to kinship, likewise stresses the reciprocity and asymmetry of exchange acts
as constitutive for social relations and offers a tool to think through the workings

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Personal Correspondence of British Immigrants to North America in the Nineteenth Century* (New York, 2006).
547 Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, ‘Reciprocal Bonding: Parents and Their Offspring in Early Modern
548 Broomhall and Van Gent, ‘Corresponding Affections’. 140
of family relationships. With reference to Craig Muldrew’s concept of an ‘economy of obligation’, Jancke and Schläppi argue that creating and re-newing obligations is a means of maintaining social relationships over time. The aim of such actions is not so much to settle old obligations, but to create a situation in which ‘one cannot quit and move apart’.  

Acts of material and immaterial exchange are in this view closely entangled and work together. In the following analysis, however, they will be singled out to better show the different resources that fed relationships across great distances. Letters are the main source for this analysis, complemented by petitions and administrative records such as accounts and ships’ pay ledgers. Letter writing was a central act of exchange that bridged the distance between Europe and the Indian Ocean world, and letter writers created ideas of connectedness and social obligations in and through their letters. Other exchanges, such as participating in the family economy, sending allowances and gifts, and praying for each other, went beyond language and letter writing. These practices were, however, closely intertwined with letters and are therefore often tangible on the textual level, but they became productive, at least in part, regardless of the text. Because of these other elements, letters and petitions might not reveal what ‘really’ happened. As Rebecca Earle stressed, ‘letters are certainly not a transparent records [sic] of reality’. One cannot determine whether a promised gift had been attached or ever arrived, if the author actually intended to return home, or if he had become so well off as to be able to maintain the family in Germany. However, for a reading interested in kin relationships across distances, those considerations are beside the point. As artefacts, the letters and other described and performed exchanges are indeed records of reality. They reveal practices that were thinkable or expected and considered appropriate and useful.

4.3.1 Feeling family I: Expectation and desire

Many of the East Indies migrants and their families experienced separation and distance as dangerous to their relationships. They considered migration, whether permanent or temporary, a threat to their intimate bonds. Ferdinand Breymann reminded his fiancée Eleonore ‘Norette’ Wehner – and probably himself, too – that he only made the dangerous journey to India ‘to advance my fortune to the

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551 For the ‘bundles of practices’ related to letters, see also Raapke, “Dieses verfluchte Land”, 34.

end of coming into the possession of my in perpetuity loved Norette’. Nevertheless, he experienced the distance and his absence from her as serious threats to their relationship. ‘Time and absence’, he concluded, were perilous to the bonds of love. Many travellers would have agreed with him. They perceived relationships as fragile and in need of constant assurance, confirmation, and negotiation.

The practices that letter writers and readers deployed to handle the uncertainties of postal communication created extended webs of information in which oral and written communications not only collocated, but concurred. East Indies migrants depended on their relations at home to actively participate in these correspondence webs. This dependency in turn created and renewed obligations that had the potential to strengthen the bonds between those who participated in the communication. Hans Carl von Arnim, for example, asked his brother Bernd Jacob to forward several letters and to recommend him to his patrons. He assured his brother that this service would make him ‘forever with a truly grateful heart, his beloved brother’s faithful and sincere brother’. Furthermore, he emphasized that he did not know ‘who else’ he could ask for this favour. In this way, he both disclosed his dependence and expressed his expectation that brothers should support each other.

Complimentary closures like ‘My most beloved’s faithful husband until death’, ‘remain until death my dear mother’s most humble son’, ‘remain your truthful husband and children’s father’ or ‘in distance not less than before your devotedly sincere brother’ are common in the letters of East Indies travellers and their families and were more than rhetorical topoi. Calling a relationship by its name (husband, mother, brother, and the like) invoked the duties, obligations, and expectations embedded in it. Expressing expectations linked to certain relationships that concerned financial, practical, and emotional support was a central means of staying connected and fostering a sense of belonging.

A letter from Elisabeth Dorothea Reimerin from Königsberg to her absent son Carl Friedrich offers a good starting point to explore these expectations and the work they did in maintaining relationships. In late 1767, Carl Friedrich Reimer had signed on with the VOC at the rank of soldier. Within five years of his arrival on Ceylon, he advanced from soldier to junior surgeon, and in 1777

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553 Ferdinand Breymann to Eleonore Wehner. On board the Polly, 22 March 1782. NLA HA, Kleine Erwerbungen A 48 No. 2, letter No. 2.
554 Ferdinand Breymann to Eleonore Wehner. Fort St. George, 18 January 1784. NLA HA, Kleine Erwerbungen A 48 No. 2, letter No. 11.
556 VOC employment record of Carel Fredrik Rijmer NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 6490, fol. 350. Carl Friedrich Reimer is one of the few actors discussed in this study who has already caught the interest of scholars. This is due to his career in the VOC as a mapmaker. Jeroen Bos, ‘Dead on Arrival’: The Unused Cartographic Legacy of Carl Friedrich Reimer’, in Alexander James Kent et al. (eds.), Mapping Empires: Colonial Cartographies of Land and Sea (Cham, 2019). Reimer is also mentioned in Nagel, ‘Kapsiedler’, 313.
he was promoted to head surveyor (eerste landmeter) in the rank of ensign engineer (vaandrig ingenieur). His parents apparently did not know that their son had gone to the East Indies until they received a letter from him in 1779, more than 10 years after he had left his home town.\textsuperscript{557} In the reply to this letter, Reimer’s mother expressed her expectations and wishes of the absent son. She had heard that a man from Königsberg who was or had been in Malabar had sent ‘considerable bills of exchange’ to his parents and that a woman in the neighbourhood had received 800 ducats for her and her children from her brother in the East Indies.\textsuperscript{558} Elisabeth Reimerin did not explicitly ask her son to send money to her and his father and brothers, although she was very clear about their unfavourable circumstances. Instead, she gave him examples of other men who cared for their parents, siblings, and siblings’ children. Her letter suggests not only that knowledge about allowances, gifts, and the conditions of money transfer from the East Indies to Europe circulated in local contexts, but also that this knowledge fuelled her expectations. The mother emphasized that considering left-behind relations was ‘filial’ and ‘brotherly’. Thereby, she established her expectations on the grounds of familial relationships that comprised financial care and were considered valid despite long-term absence and silence – in this case more than 10 years. These relationships and related practices of caring could be invoked by either ‘hate’ or ‘love’. Reimerin was eager to stress that her demands and wishes derived from the latter: her ‘motherly heart’.

More explicitly, Eleonora Blume, sister of Tobias David Blume, expressed her expectation that the absent brother should consider the sad situation in which the family at home found itself. Not long after Tobias left Europe in the service of the VOC, his father had died. His sister Eleonora described in detail the last hours of the father’s life, his ‘gentle and blessed’ passing away, which made everyone who witnessed it ‘grateful’, and finally the emotional and financial distress that the death caused the family. Her brother would understand their ‘circumstances’, and Eleonora was sure that he would grieve their father ‘as an abiding child in your heart’.\textsuperscript{559}

Eleonora’s letter, which never reached its addressee, is a good example of how letters could create a space for what Claudia Jarzebowski has called ‘family emotions’ in an extension of Barbara Rosenwein’s idea of ‘emotional community’.\textsuperscript{560} Family emotions had the potential to connect family members separated from

\textsuperscript{557} This letter is not extant, but the replies of his parents and brothers are. E. D. Reimerin and E. Ch. Reimer to their son Carl Friedrich Reimer. Königsberg, 13 February 1779, and Elisabeth Dorothea Reimerin to Carl Friedrich Reimer. Königsberg, 12 February [1779]. TNA HCA 30/722. Friedrich Wilhelm Reimer to Carl Friedrich Reimer in Colombo. Mahrungen, 5 January 1779, and Daniel Christoph Reimer to Carl Friedrich Reimer in Colombo. Landsberg, 13 January 1779. TNA HCA 30/336, folders 17 and 21.

\textsuperscript{558} Elisabeth Dorothea Reimerin to Carl Friedrich Reimer. Königsberg, 12 February [1779]. TNA HCA 30/722.

\textsuperscript{559} Eleonora Blume to her brother Tobias David Blume at Colombo. Nienstädt, 10 November 1780. TNA HCA 30/722.

\textsuperscript{560} Jarzebowski, ‘Children Travelling the World’, 219.
each other by sharing a set of (expected) feelings. Eleonora’s dense description of the situation and her explicitly uttered assumption that the absent brother would have a part in their grief was supposed to invoke a feeling of emotional proximity. Against the background of this shared family feeling of grief, and moreover having given the example of another brother who had promised to send money ‘annually’, Eleonora then expressed her expectation that Tobias would also (financially) support his mother. She framed this expectation by assuring him that he was still a part of the family: they constantly prayed for him and wished him home to ‘embrace’ him; moreover, their mother ‘kissed’ him ‘a thousand times in her thoughts’ and there was ‘not a day when [their mother] does not think’ of him. In other words, while Eleonora expected her absent brother Tobias to participate in the shared family’s emotional and financial community, she in turn assured him he was still a part of it despite the physical distance between them. This assurance was further underlined by the large bundle of letters that she sent, including her own letter, a letter from their mother, and a small note from their sister Johanna Christina. Thus, not only the language of the letters, but the bundle itself substituted for physical proximity and reunited, in its very materiality, the family. The two letters of Reimerin and Blume demonstrate how left-behind families intertwined expectations of financial and emotional commitment and how they linked these expectations to certain familial relationships.

Emotional commitment comes to the fore in these letters particularly during moments of conflict and perceived frictions, when the commitment was not reciprocated as expected. Take Christoph Adam Carl von Imhoff, for example, who wrote to his brother Johann Albrecht after not having received a letter from home since his departure from London two years before. His letter was long and effusive, 15 pages full of detailed descriptions of the living conditions and customs in Bengal, promises of future support, and questions about the well-being and circumstances of all his siblings and friends. Most importantly, he made explicit his expectation that his emotional commitment should be mutual:

O God give me good news from you, this is the happiness that I wish, the only thing that can truly make me happy […]. I describe my circumstances to you, and I hope that you are pleased about them. God is my witness how glad I would be to hear only the best of each of you and if you could write [to me]. And why should you not think alike?562

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561 A situation of family grief also created emotional proximity in a letter of Johann Friedrich Meiselbach to his siblings, M. C. Meiselbach, to the care of Mr Chirurgus Ganzert at Schwarzb urg/Rudolstadt. Bengal Bunddeland [probabl. Bundelkhand], 23 September [1803]. TNA HCA 32/1697, No. 235.


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Imhoff invested a wide array of emotions into his correspondence. He emphasized the ‘mutual love’ between the brothers; he indicated his ‘happiness’ about their decisions; he articulated his deep worries when his wife and son, who had travelled from Madras to Calcutta, did not arrive in time; he expressed his delight about potential opportunities to earn money or find new and powerful patrons; he shared his dejection when his prospect of making a fortune vanished, and he voiced his disappointment and rage when he felt excluded and pushed off by the brothers. A strong sense of longing is apparent in many of the East Indies migrants’ letters; they longed for letters and news from home and for signs that they had not been forgotten. This longing had a strong cohesive power, and it prompted the letter writers to not give up efforts to maintain bonds despite what were at times years of silence.563

While expectations were often the source of disappointment and tension between kin, they were also crucial for overcoming conflicts and maintaining close bonds. Especially when no letters arrived, letter writers resumed the epistolary dialogue by imagining what family and friends would, or rather should, be interested in hearing. Johann Friedrich Küster, who bitterly lamented the silence of his siblings, made this expected reciprocity of such emotional engagement explicit:

I write letter after letter and bare my full friendly heart in these letters; but there is no one who replies to me [...]. Yes, my friends, I provide everything from my side, to unveil my benevolent and sincere heart to you; but irrespective of all my struggles, I don’t receive letters from you.564

Despite his disappointment over the sibling’s silence, he continued to foster these relationships. In the course of his letter, he imagined a conversation with them and thereby articulated his expectations. His relations ‘surely’ would be interested in knowing more about the ‘circumstances of [his] current condition’ as this interest would be a ‘postulation of true friendship’, and he considered it his ‘duty’ to inform them about these. He established the dialogue with: ‘The first natural question would be: Where are you and how do you live? Which blows of fate have you had since your departure from us?’ In what followed, he answered these questions in a way that brings to mind contemporary adventure stories.

Küster’s and Imhoff’s letters are ordinary in that they broached the issue of mutual and reciprocal emotional commitment. What sets them apart from many other extant letters is their descriptive details of the local living conditions and

563 See also Jarzebowski, ‘Die Familie Fahnenstück’.
564 ‘Ich schreibe Brief auf Brief und schütte in diesen Briefen mein ganzes freundschaftliches Herz aus; aber da ist Niemand, der mich antwortet […]. Ja, ihr Freunde, ich biethe alles von meiner Seite auf, um mein wohlwollendes und aufrichtiges Herz an euch bekannt zu machen; aber ohngeachtet aller meiner Bemühungen, so empfange ich doch keine Briefe von euch.’ Johann Friedrich Küster to his brother, sister and friends, Johann Peter Klein [probably his brother-in-law]. Cape of Good Hope, 28 August 1798. TNA HCA 32/617, No. 61/6mii.
environment. More regularly, letter writers gave information on their current levels of wealth, prospects of promotion, and physical condition, and they expressed their interest in events at home. In this regard, the letters of East Indies travellers differed from those of their German relations (although there are, of course, exceptions). In letters from home one finds more frequently descriptions of quotidian events occurring in the family, the household, and community. For example, the letter of Johann Valentin Rudolph to his brother on Ceylon contained detailed information on the smallpox ‘which raged this summer and which killed a large number of children’ and on the hot and dry climate that had caused a modest harvest. Andreas Dehne gave a detailed account of the sorrows that his son-in-law and his other son had caused him, how he had sold his house and garden, and how he had eventually moved in with his daughter. Eleonora Blume wrote at length about financial issues and remarked that their mother had had been obliged to let her maidservant (‘Mägden’) go. The brothers of Carl Friedrich Reimer wrote at length about their travels and ‘pilgrimages’, the movements of regiments, and the difficulties of choosing the right woman for marriage.

4.3.2 Feeling family II: Inclusion and exclusion

East Indies migrants used letters first and foremost to inform their loved ones that they were still alive and that they still cared. They crafted narratives that stressed the consistency of relations, their undiminished affection, and their longing for home. Sitting down once a year to pen their letters home, these were the

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565 This the letters of East Indies travellers have in common with the letters of Spanish emigrants in colonial Spanish America. See Earle, ‘Letters and Love’, 28.
566 For example, Conrad Wilhelm Behrens to his mother Charlotta Behrens. Cape of Good Hope, 18 October 1798. TNA HCA 32/618, No. 63/42; and Hermann Wraatz to his father M. Wraatz. On board the Printz von Augustenburg, Isle de France, 23 July 1798. TNA HCA 32/617, No. 61/21a. See also Johann Friedrich von Struve to his wife Hauptmannin von Struve. Colombo, December 1799. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1038, fol. 100a.
568 Joh. Valentin Rudolph to his brother Johann Theodosius Rudolph in Negombo on Ceylon. Wismar, 16 November 1780. TNA HCA 30/722.
570 Eleonora Blume to her brother Tobias David Blume at Colombo. Nienstädt, 10 November 1780. TNA HCA 30/722.
571 Friedrich Wilhelm Reimer to Carl Friedrich Reimer. Mährungen, 5 January 1779; and Daniel Christoph Reimer to Carl Friedrich Reimer. Landsberg, 13 January 1779. TNA HCA 30/336, folders 17 and 21.
parameters that they presumed to be most relevant. Detailed accounts of their domestic circumstances in Batavia, Colombo, or Surabaya that determined their lives for the better part of the year were perhaps thought to compete with their relationships in Germany and were therefore kept back. It could be that the circumstances of living in colonial societies were difficult to convey to those who had stayed at home. For instance, although enslaved people formed an integral part of the societies and households in the settlements of the EIC and VOC, they are almost completely absent in the correspondence of East Indies migrants. Though there is evidence that some letter writers owned enslaved individuals, these members of their households do not become visible in the letters.\footnote{There are exceptions of course. Johann Bogislaus Mauve mentioned his ‘slaves’ in a letter to his brother Christian Mauve. [Fort Beshampore, 1774 (transcribed excerpt and summary)], Private family archive of Gregor Mauve, Petershagen, Nachrichten über die Familie Mauve. Arnold Andreas Giesbert Wiegermann told his parents that his household included ‘20 or more slaves, men and women’. A. A. G. Wiegermann to his father and mother. Batavia, 23 April 1798. TNA HCA 30/762, No. 708F.} For instance, in the late 1770s, Jean Paul Guyot bought a bakery, the enslaved woman Lisena van Balie, and several other enslaved workers for the bakery. However, when he wrote to his siblings in 1780, he mentioned only the bakery, not the people who worked and lived with him.\footnote{See chap. 2.4.1.} Christoph Adam Carl von Imhoff frequently wrote about his ‘servants’ (‘\textit{Bedienstete}’) but never mentioned that he had bought two young enslaved boys.\footnote{This information is only conveyed in Imhoff’s travel journal the ‘\textit{Reiß-Beschriebung}’ but not in the letters to his brothers. In English, the term ‘servant’ was used interchangeably with ‘slave’ and could denote both workers of free and unfree status. Anna Winterbottom, ‘From Hold to Foredeck: Slave Professions in the Maritime World of the East India Company, c.1660–1720’, in Maria Fusaro and Amélia Polónia (eds.), \textit{Maritime History as Global History} (St. John’s, Nfld, 2010), 98.}

The picture of who the imagined family communities included or excluded gets more complicated in the common practice of including salutations to wives, children, siblings, extended kin, and other members of the household. Early modern letter writers commonly embedded both their and the letter’s recipient’s families into an emotional family community.\footnote{Broomhall and Van Gent, ‘Corresponding Affections’, 147.} In this regard, the letters of East Indies migrants and their families do not stand out. Long salutations were frequently directed to ‘all good friends, my sisters, brothers, and cousins’\footnote{Johann Levin Esche to his parents, Joh. George Eschen. Amsterdam, 29 September 1738. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1007, fol. 124v.} or any variation of this; letter writers on both sides of the ocean remembered their wives and children, daughters and sons, to their siblings’ husbands and wives, children and friends, in-laws and cousins. Siblings and parents engaged in the life events of absent family members by expressing their joy about marriages and happy childbirths and articulating their grief about the deaths of children, wives, or in-laws. Among those so greeted and mourned were people they had never met, but who became kin by virtue of marriage. Sometimes, on the side of the left-behind families we find the expressed wish to ‘see’ the new wife. But as this was in most
cases impossible, the new family member was integrated into the family by epistolary practices, or as the mother of Johannes Ruhlmann put it: because her wish to meet her new daughter-in-law would likely be ‘in vain, nevertheless we want to love each other in absence and wish one another many good things’. In two cases, widows in the East Indies evidently corresponded with their in-laws in German lands about settling estates.

Against the background of early modern epistolary practices, the ways in which East Indies migrants and their relations in German lands extended family communities through their letters is at first sight not remarkable. And yet, there is something odd about the letters if read along with other sources and scholarship that demonstrate the significantly different processes of family formation in colonial societies from those in Europe. As discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, it is well established that most European men who came to the Indian Ocean world cohabited with or married local women. Their households often comprised complex familial relationships including legitimate and illegitimate children, adopted children who could be the offspring of strangers or of the head of household, and women of different origins and statuses as wives, as free or enslaved, Christian and non-Christian concubines, or as enslaved and exploited sex partners. However, slave concubinage and other ‘illegitimate’ relationships are invisible in the letters though ‘legitimate’ marriages are mentioned fairly frequently. According to these letters, 14 out of 34 men appear to have been married to women in the East Indies and their relatives conveyed greetings and well wishes to their ‘dear wife’ (‘liebe Frau’), ‘wife and children’ (‘Frau und Kinder’), or ‘darling and son’ (‘Liebste und Sohn’). Given that extramarital relationships were widespread (yet varied in scope depending to place and social class) throughout the European settlements in the Indian Ocean world, this proportion appears rather high. Also, it is striking that no other kin relations of the wives are mentioned in the letters.

In only a handful of these cases could the identity of the wife be determined through church records or wills; their names, relations, and origins remain unmentioned in the extant letters. For instance, Johann Friedrich Dornheim

577 M. [P] Ruhlmännin to her son Johannes Ruhlmann at Colombo. Gädern [probably Gedern in Hesse], 12 September 1780. TNA HCA 30/722.
579 East Indies travellers who were married or engaged in Germany are omitted in this calculation. Quotes are from the letters of Andreas Dehne to his son H. G. A. Dehne, Cannonier on Ceylon, and to his daughter-in-law, Zellerfeldt auf dem Harz, 26 February 1780. Sent by Held Woltemade; C. L. Scheitz to his brother J. A. Scheitz. Steinberg, 23 March 1780 TNA HCA 30/722; and Maria Elisabeth Dornheimin to her brother Jan Frederik Christoffel Dornheijm. Dresden, 31 May 1780. TNA HCA 30/317.
580 C. J. Hawes estimates that between 1757 and 1800 in Bengal 1 in 4 British covenanted civil servants, 1 in 8 civilian residents and 1 in 10 army officers married. Hawes, Poor Relations, 4.
married Elisabeth Dieriks or Dietrichsz ‘van Colombo’, and Johann Theodorsius Rudolph married Gertruida Wolff ‘van Colombo’, widow of the soldier Hendrik Droost; Gustav Adolf von Streng married a woman named Anna Carolina Meppen in Vepery; and Johann Friederich Meiselbach in Bengal married Ann Jones, daughter of Mostyn Jones, merchant. In four cases, other sources suggest that the East Indies traveller had at some point had an extramarital relationship with a local enslaved or free(d) woman. These relationships do not become visible in the letters. Though it must be stressed that not very many letters survive. Carl Friedrich Reimer, for example, was cohabiting with Anna Maria Pasqual, the mother of his three children, when he died in Batavia in 1796. Did he ever mention her or the children in any of his letters home? It is impossible to know.

Questions about the inclusion or exclusion of family members in the epistolary emotional family community thus pose significant methodological challenges. At first, one might read the absence of the names of wives and their kin and the potential concealment of extramarital relationships as further evidence for the gendered and racialized workings of colonial power and governance. Margot Finn observed that Indian conjugal partners of European men were commonly excluded from the familial correspondence networks of elite Anglo-Indian families. Betty Joseph and Durba Ghosh have shown how mechanisms of colonial power and the bias of the church sought to exclude local, non-Christian women from official company accounts. At the same time, their creative readings of the colonial archives reveal that ‘[c]ontrary to common perception, women are everywhere in the colonial archive, albeit in a fragmented and dispersed way’. Joseph demonstrates this point with an analysis of the Bengal marriage and baptism records from the middle of the eighteenth century. While European women

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584 Marriage entry of Johan Frederick Meisselbach and Ann Jones, 8 August 1798. BL IOR/N/1/5, p. 141. Further information on Johann Friedrich Meiselbach’s family history, including the marriages of his six daughters to officers in the Bengal army, can be found in the papers that one of his grand-daughters, E. M. Hudson, attached to her claims for her grandfather’s jagir in 1947. See esp. the Extract from the Statesman, Sunday, 16 August 1931 in National Archives of India, Central India Agency, Progs., Nos. 75-A, 1947.

585 Will of Carl Friedrich Reimer. 1795. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 6851, (1481).

586 Finn, “Frictions” d’empire’, 1200 and 1202.

587 Joseph, East India Company, 3.
were registered with their full names, the names of Indian women were commonly not recorded. Rather their presence as the mother of the baptized child is indicated by the lack of their names and phrases such as ‘the natural son’ or ‘the natural daughter’ of a European man. Unlike church records, the wills of European men name non-Christian women as beneficiaries. However, in many of these wills, their roles as mothers, concubines, or quasi-wives are concealed behind terms such as ‘my slave girl’ or ‘my housekeeper’. For the locales in which the VOC was active, the situation is even more complicated. Local or enslaved women who converted to the Christian faith and married European men took on Christian names. Through the acts of baptism and marriage – the very moments referred to by historians as markers of the inclusiveness of the VOC society – the histories, social affiliations, and subjectivities of indigenous or formerly enslaved women were erased from the written records. To be sure, this was a strategy of inclusion and integration par excellence. However, these renaming practices also made these women ‘invisible’ in official documents and in letters sent ‘home’ to the families and friends of the European migrants. What is more, in the older VOC (and formerly Portuguese) settlements, the communities comprised generations of ‘Creoles’, ‘Eurasians’, and ‘Mestizos’, people who had both ‘European’ and ‘Asian’ ancestors. This complicated ethnic and legal identities and distinctions between ‘European’, ‘Asian’ and ‘local-born’ women.

This leaves us with the question of how to read the available familial correspondence, which, one must not forget, offers only single snapshots into the lives of the writers and recipients. Did men like Johann Theodosius Rudolph tell their families that their wives had been born in the East Indies, possibly as the daughters or granddaughters of indigenous or formerly enslaved women? Were their families in Brandenburg aware of the social and ethnic complexities in the East

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588 Joseph, *East India Company*, 9. This seems to have been different in places where the VOC was active and where the names of Asian mothers were sometimes recorded in baptism records. See, e.g. the baptism entries from Kupang on Timor discussed in Hägerdal, *Lords of the Land*, 256.


591 The terms ‘Creole’, ‘Eurasian’ and ‘Mestizo’ are highly contested in scholarship on the societies under VOC rule and used differently. While Jean Gelman Taylor deploys the terms as markers of ancestry, Ulbe Bosma and Remco Raben ascribe them a class dimension. For Taylor ‘Creole’ denotes a person born in Asia to parents who were born in Europe. The terms Eurasian or Mestizos refer to people who had both European and Asian relatives. Bosma and Raben, on the other hand, argue that ‘Mestizos’ were a social class of lower social status because of their mixed descent. ‘Creoles’ is used for people of higher social status whose relatives might have included Asian and European ancestors. Jean Gelman Taylor in Julian Millie et al., ‘Panel Discussion’, 234–235.
Indies and that by marriage they had become kin with the people of these communities? Did origin and ethnicity matter, or was religious affiliation with Christianity decisive for the integration into the family community? Regarding Johann Friedrich Dornheim, records suggest that his family in Germany – at least after his death – knew that he had been married to ‘a born Ceylonese [woman]’ (‘geborene Ceylonnerin’). Whatever the case, the letters give evidence that the Christian wives of German East Indies migrants were included in the epistolary family communities irrespective of their place of birth and ancestry which may or may not have been known to the families in Germany. Their own kin relations, however, were excluded.

Other questions arise from the fact that many German men in the Indian Ocean world engaged in extramarital sexual relationships with local free, enslaved, and freed women. Did they keep these relationships secret in their letters? Or did these men not write home? Or did the selection of the letters just miss these men by accident? This would be unfortunate but certainly possible. More likely, however, the letter writers concealed the presence of indigenous or enslaved non-Christian women as members of their households, mothers of their children, or conjugal partners, either by not mentioning them at all or by simply calling them their ‘wives’ (‘Frau’). One cannot help but wonder if behind some of the references to the ‘dear daughter-in-law’ of M. Ruhlmännin or the ‘dear wife’ (‘liebe Frau’) of Dehne there was in fact a local woman whose legal status and history was disguised by the idioms of Christian marriage.

4.3.3 Surrogate parenting

Another practice of bridging distance and strengthening familial ties that raises questions about inclusion and exclusion are different forms of surrogate parenting. Records show that left-behind siblings named absent brothers as godfathers to their children and that East Indies travellers chose kin in Germany as godparents for their children born in the East Indies. Johannes Ruhlmann, for example, was the godfather of his sister’s oldest son. Tobias Rönnekamp and his wife Christina Hoffman at the Cape of Good Hope were godparents of his brothers’ children. While it is unknown whether Ruhlmann became his nephew’s godfather before or after he went to the East Indies, Rönnekamp and Hoffman were named godparents in absentia. Rönnekamp noted in a letter to his brother that he wanted to bestow some presents on his godchildren, but that he did not know


593 Men living on Ceylon are slightly overrepresented in the letter sample, which might explain the high proportion of married men. According to Raben and Bosma Christian marriage was widespread in the VOC settlements on Ceylon, while concubinage characterized societies in the ‘Javanese circuit’, that is, e.g. in Semarang and Surabaya. Bosma and Raben, Being ‘Dutch’, 38–45.

594 M. [?] Ruhlmännin to her son Johannes Ruhlmann at Colombo, Gädern [Gedern in Hesse?], 12 September 1780. TNA HCA 30/722.
their names. East Indies travellers also named kin in Germany as godparents, as in the family of Caspar and Wilhelmine Heckmann, who were associated with the Hanoverian auxiliary regiment. While the members of the 14th infantry regiment commonly chose godparents from among the members of the regiment and their wives, the Heckmanns chose a different strategy. Wilhelmine’s sister in Weimar, Charlotte Sophie Spangenberg, was chosen as godmother of their first daughter, born in May 1784. For their second daughter, the parents chose the father’s sister, Ernestina Bodenstein, in Saxony-Meiningen, and a sergeant (Feldwebel) in the regiment.

The role of godparents was a valuable resource throughout the early modern period. Scholarship on spiritual kinship has revealed the multiple strategies of choosing godparents and the roles and functions that godparents played. East Indies migrants and their families fell back on this traditional practice. The few identified cases of transoceanic godparents reveal how some East Indies travellers and their left-behind families sought to cement familial ties between the Indian Ocean world and Germany. Irrespective of whether godparents were embedded in patron-client or horizontal relationships, one of the main aims of the institution was to maintain relationships across geographical and social divides. ‘Ritual kinship always has something potential about it, but most crucially it keeps open a permanent line of communication’, David Sabean has argued. In the context of East Indies migration, this potential was pushed to new lengths. Godparents on the other side of the ocean probably learnt after the fact that they had been named, and more remarkably, parents and priests could never be sure that the appointed godparent was still alive. Nevertheless, this seems to have been a risk that families accepted, as they valued the potential over the certainty of the new bonds.

A second form of surrogate parenting that had the potential to strengthen and cement ties between East Indies travellers and their families was foster parenting. The mobility of one or both parents in the families of East Indies travellers and the perceived danger of the East Indies to the development of ‘European’

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595 Tobias Christian Rönnekamp to Johann Burchard Rönnekamp. Cap of Good Hope, 28 December 1790 (extract), GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1032, fol. 130r–v.
596 Wilhelmina Spangenberg came to India as the wife of sergeant Gravers. After his death she married sergeant Caspar Heckmann in 1783.
600 Sabean, Kinship in Neckarhausen, 239.
children caused situations of shared parenting across oceans.\textsuperscript{601} Christoph Adam Carl von Imhoff was worried that his son Carl would ‘deteriorate’ (‘verderben’) if he stayed longer in India and therefore sent him to England for his education.\textsuperscript{602} Carl Ludwig Hagemeister also worried that his two children born in India were ‘prone to pride and vanity’ (‘Neigung zur Hochmuth und Eitelkeit’) and he therefore wanted them to be socialized and brought up in Germany.\textsuperscript{603} In this regard, German East Indies migrants adopted to the practices of both their middle- and upper-class Dutch and British contemporaries, who likewise sent their progeny to Europe for their upbringings.\textsuperscript{604}

If siblings and other kin acted as surrogate parents, their involvement was part of a web of mutual obligations and reciprocities. Gottlieb Jaedicke stepped in when his brother Christoph suddenly deserted his two sons and went to the East Indies. Together with his siblings he took over the education and fosterage of his two nephews.\textsuperscript{605} The brothers of Sebastian Valentin Scheller, who settled at the Cape of Good Hope, provided for the education of two of their absent brother’s sons in Magdeburg.\textsuperscript{606} In both cases, the brothers who stepped in expected to be financially compensated for their efforts. Johann Valentin Rudolph, on the other hand, offered to parent his nephew and to show him ‘true love and care’ as a sign of gratitude for the good deeds done on his behalf by his absent brother Johann Theodosius. Theodosius had at this point been living on Ceylon for 20 years. Throughout the years, he had stayed in close contact with his brother Valentin, who lived with his family in Wismar in Mecklenburg. In 1780, he considered sending his oldest son to Germany for his education. Valentin assured his brother that the school in Wismar was excellent and would well prepare his son for further education at one of the fine universities in the surrounding area. Most important, however, would be the care and love with which he and his wife would...

\textsuperscript{601} For shared parenting in the early modern period, see Barclay, ‘Love’, 110; Sandra Cavallo, ‘Family Relationships’, in Sandra Cavallo and Silvia Evangelisti (eds.), \textit{A Cultural History of Childhood and the Family}, vol. 3: \textit{The Early Modern Age} (Oxford, 2010), 29–32; and Jarzebowski, ‘Children travelling the World’.


\textsuperscript{603} Carl Ludwig Hagemeister to Gotthilf August Francke. Vepery, 23 September 1761. AFSt/M 3 B 1 : 63, fol. 105v.


\textsuperscript{605} GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 11 Auswärtige Beziehungen, Akten, No. 2374 (Jaedicke). The story behind Christoph Jaedicke’s sudden flight is remarkable. Christoph had an affair with Anna Maria Großin, a married woman. During an absence of Anna Maria’s husband, the secret couple paid the headman’s hand (\textit{Scharfrichter Knecht}) to pretend at court to be the husband of Großin, to admit to his marital incapacity, that is his impotence, and to request the divorce from his wife. At first, the con artists succeeded and Jaedicke and Großin, who was now considered divorced, got the permission to marry. However, their swindle was soon discovered and the \textit{Scharfrichter Knecht} confessed. But the lovers had already fled Gollnow at this point. Christoph later deserted Anna Maria Großin, too, and went to the East Indies. The con was so remarkable even to contemporaries that the lawyer Ernst Ferdinand Klein included the story in his \textit{Annalen der Gesetzgebung und Gelehrsamkeit in den Preussischen Staaten}, vol. 7 (Berlin, 1791), pp. 281–288.

\textsuperscript{606} GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1018, fols. 106r–111r (Scheller).
welcome the brother’s son into their family. ‘Kind people’, Valentin admitted, could be found everywhere, but their kindness would need to be bought and they always would remain ‘strangers’. On the other hand, Valentin argued, if Theodosius entrusted his son to him, he could be confident that his son would find ‘an honest and sincere father’s heart’ and an equally ‘true and affectionate mother’ in him and his wife.607

The way Valentin courted his brother’s favour suggests, first, that Theodosius pondered different options for the education and care of his son. His brother was certainly a potential caregiver, but not the only one. Indeed, we see in many cases that siblings were not necessarily the first choice for surrogate parenting of the offspring of East Indies travellers.608 Julius Imhoff grew up in the household of the wet-nurse Mrs Touchet, probably together with her son.609 George Lycke grew up in the household of his father’s executor Thomas Blanchard, with whose family he remained affectionately connected for the rest of his life.610 Carl Ludwig Hagemeister requested that his two children be brought up in the boarding school (Pedagogium) in Halle under the care of the directors of the Halle Orphanage. He probably had living siblings in Brandenburg, and his late wife had (probably) a sister in Nagapattanam; however, he did not consider them proper caregivers for his children.611 Neither did Thomas Nagel send his son into the care of his brother.612 However, in both Hagemeister’s and Nagel’s case, friends and siblings in Germany kept an eye on the children.

4.3.4 Family matters that bind

Propertied East Indies travellers, especially members of the landed nobility like Hans Carl von Arnim and Christoph Adam Carl von Imhoff, were involved in complex property and credit relationships by virtue of consanguinity and patrimony. In this regard they were similar to the governing Anglo-Indian elites in which ‘individual members of the family [were linked] into an indissoluble unit through extended webs of mutual credit’.613 For the most part, noble brothers could not dispose freely of their estates and assets but needed the consent of their kinsmen, who often lived dispersed across different territories. Managing the Arnim family affairs through writing while physically distant from each other was nothing remarkable. In fact, it was rather routine, and not only in the Arnim

607 Johann Valentin Rudolph to Johann Theodosius Rudolph in Negombo on Ceylon. Wismar, 16 November 1780. TNA HCA 30/722.
608 For a similar finding regarding the organization of learned families during absence, see Jarzebowski, ‘Children Travelling the World’.
611 See chap. 2.4.5.
612 C. Nagel to Thomas Nagel. Grünenplaner Spiegelhütte, 10 November 1780. Sent by Held Woltemade. TNA HCA 30/317.
family. However, the enormous distance between the East Indies and German lands, and consequently the lapse of time caused by communication, added a new dimension to these traditional forms of handling the economy of social relationships. And with the distance, some of the practices of managing family economies changed.

Both Hans Carl von Arnim and Christoph Adam Carl von Imhoff had left their European financial affairs in a disordered state. At least Imhoff had arranged for the sustenance of his son and his mother-in-law, and unlike Arnim he had appointed his older brothers to act as his plenipotentiaries. But both Arnim and Imhoff left behind numerous creditors who were eager to get back their money. This left their older brothers in a difficult situation, as the creditors turned to them when they could not contact the debtors themselves and they threatened to shame the whole family. For instance, one of Arnim’s creditors, Hofmarschall Thiele, wrote to Bernd Jacob and asked him and the other brothers to pay their absent brother’s debt, otherwise he would make known to the public the desertion of Hans von Arnim to the East Indies.\(^{614}\) Bernd Jacob answered Thiele’s threat by arguing that he did not know about his brother’s plan to emigrate to the East Indies. Furthermore, he made clear that he would need the consent of all other brothers and cousins before paying the said debt. They all held titles and bills on the manor Bernsdorf, and were thus themselves creditors of the absent Arnim.\(^{615}\) The case went to court, and the judges appointed a trustee (\textit{curator absentis}), Hans Carl’s brother-in-law Friedrich Erdmann von Arnim auf Temmen, and ordered him to make an account and to manage and use the revenues of Arnim’s estate to pay his creditors.

During the following years, the \textit{curator absentis} hardly acted in line with his appointment and was more occupied with his own affairs as he was facing insolvency.\(^{616}\) Therefore, Hans Carl tried to manage his affairs himself from a distance. However, it seems that many of his letters either never arrived in Europe or did not find their way into the right hands. Eventually, Hans Carl’s brothers Bernd Jacob and Abraham replaced their brother-in-law as trustees. Nevertheless, Hans Carl continued to ask about the state of his affairs.\(^{617}\) He now framed talking about his domestic finances in terms of his trust in his brothers:

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\(^{616}\) Arnswaldt and Devrient, \textit{Das Geschlecht von Arnim}, 700.

Concerning my affairs in Europe, I am absolutely certain that I could never have addressed myself better than to you, and I am completely satisfied with all of the decisions you have made, at the same time I sincerely ask you to be kind and to continue in the same manner.\textsuperscript{618}

In an earlier letter to Bernd Jacob, Hans Carl had asked him to manage his affairs ‘as you think best’.\textsuperscript{619} This was not pure courtesy. After more than five years in the East Indies and numerous letters that had never arrived in Brandenburg, he must have understood that it was almost impossible to be personally involved in the management of his affairs from so far away.

In a very similar manner, Christoph Adam Carl von Imhoff asked his brothers to manage his revenues and affairs at home ‘as if they were yours’ in April 1770.\textsuperscript{620} This marks a point in a process in which Imhoff had withdrawn himself more and more from actively engaging in the day-to-day management of the patrimonial estate and his intimately connected personal affairs, mainly the payment of his debts. This is not to say that he did not care anymore. A couple of months after he had arrived in Madras in December 1769, he wrote at great length about his ‘domestic affairs’ (‘Angelegenheiten von Hauß’) and directed changes to the arrangements made while still in London.\textsuperscript{621} Nevertheless, detailed directions and suggestions became less frequent in his letters from India.

From Arnim’s and Imhoff’s letters it appears that they put the management of their domestic financial affairs (especially those connected to their shares in the fiefs) more and more into the hands of their older brothers. The transfer of management and their successive withdrawal from it was a pragmatic reaction to the difficulties of being actively involved in day-to-day decisions because of the enormous distance. At the same time, this settlement allowed the absent brothers to demonstrate their trust. They relied on their brothers at home to handle their financial affairs. With the hardships that Arnim encountered in India, he intended to return home to Brandenburg as soon as possible, and to this end his debts had to be settled, otherwise he faced imprisonment. Likewise, Imhoff planned to one day return, and he hoped that he would do so clear of debt and as a respectable man.

For Hans Carl von Arnim, besides his financial affairs at home, a second leitmotif arises in his letters, namely his advancement in the East Indies by means of patronage and recommendation. This was a family matter. In building this


\textsuperscript{619} Hans Carl von Arnim to Bernd Jacob von Arnim. Chinsura, 15 January 1771. Printed in Arnswaldt and Devrient, Das Geschlecht von Arnim, 703.

\textsuperscript{620} Christoph Adam Carl von Imhoff to Friedrich Wilhelm von Imhoff. Madras, 6 April 1770. Printed in Koch (ed.), Imhoff Indienfahrer, 134.

\textsuperscript{621} Christoph Adam Carl von Imhoff to Friedrich Wilhelm von Imhoff. Madras, 19 December 1769. GNM, Familien: Imhoff, von, V 32.
patronage network, he extensively involved his mother, both brothers, and numerous other kin and friends in Brandenburg. To some extent these attempts were successful. His mother had an important part in inducing Frederick II to finally pardon Hans Carl after he had left the Prussian lands without royal consent.622 During his stay in India, Hans Carl also frequently asked his brother Bernd Jacob ‘to talk with some people’ and to put in a good word with the Dutch envoy, who in turn might recommend Hans Carl to the Prince’s representative at the VOC.623 However, all the efforts of Bernd Jacob, Abraham, and his mother (and it appears they sent numerous letters and talked to many people), were fruitless. The crucial factor in Hans Carl von Arnim’s failure to rise in the VOC’s hierarchy probably lay somewhere between his lack of local contacts in India and his own personality.624

In his letters Christoph Adam Carl von Imhoff defined all his actions, in particular his East Indies endeavour, as means to serve the collective interest of the Imhoff family and dynasty. His brothers’ patronage contacts at the South German princely courts and their support in practical matters had helped Christoph Adam to be appointed to the EIC in the first place. Christoph Adam never tired of emphasizing that his fortune, if he made one, would eventually benefit the whole family. He expressed, for example, his will to financially ‘help’ his struggling brother Friedrich as soon as he could. Several times he stated that he would help his ‘friends’ if they came to India (however, he discouraged most family members from doing so because of the climate), and he maintained that he would invite his sisters to join him and try their fortune on the marriage market, as so many British women had done (however, his sisters were too old and not ‘pretty’ enough).625 Defending himself against his brother Albrecht’s warning that he should not ‘be blinded too much by money’, Christoph Adam answered that he only wanted a lot of money so that he could give it ‘to those in need’ and help them ‘to live up to their rank’.626 What is most striking, however, is Christoph Adam’s belief that only as a family, as a collective venture of the brothers, could his East Indies endeavour be truly profitable:

626 This was certainly a reference to his and his younger brothers’ former struggles to make a living befitted to their rank. Christoph Adam Carl von Imhoff to Johann Albrecht von Imhoff. Calcutta, 19 October 1771. GNM, Familien: Imhoff, von, V 32.
It really is a great misfortune that one or more of us [brothers] were not sent over [to India] when the Governor [van Imhoff] lived in Batavia. We would have been able to raise our family, and now it is too late for us. Even if I should be lucky and make money, I am too old to make enough. And only one [family member] having something, is not enough either. But if 2, 3 brothers make a fortune, that helps.\textsuperscript{627}

Imhoff could observe the family practices that he depicts in this quote among the Anglo-Indian elites in Madras and Calcutta. For these families employment in the East Indies and patronage along the lines of consanguinity were central means of social reproduction.\textsuperscript{628} It was not unusual that brothers went to India together or one after another, followed by nephews and nieces, who were taken into the households of their kin and benefitted from their social contacts.\textsuperscript{629} Imhoff adapted to this practice and aspired to ‘get at least one of my sons employed in India, and he shall do what I am too old to do’.\textsuperscript{630} Eventually, his aspirations were realized, but in a very different social constellation than he had anticipated and without any noteworthy profit for the Imhoff family. The joint migration of Christoph von Imhoff and Marian Chapuset had implications for gender roles and opened opportunities especially for Marian Chapuset.\textsuperscript{631} Her scopes of agency broadened significantly as she quickly acquired a wealth of her own.\textsuperscript{632} Already shortly after she arrived in India, she started to remit allowances to her mother and her son’s foster mother, a task formerly performed by her husband Christoph Adam.\textsuperscript{633} Back in England as the wife of Warren Hastings and one of the richest and most famous women in the British Empire, Marian secured cadetships in India for her youngest son Julius and one of her nephews, Charles


\textsuperscript{628} Finn, ‘Anglo-Indian Lives’, 55.

\textsuperscript{629} See also Finn, ‘Barlow Bastards’; Marshall, \textit{East Indies Fortunes}, 11–12. Such family practices were not exclusive for European elite employees of the EIC but can also be identified in indigenous scribal families working for the EIC. Raman, ‘Familial World’.


\textsuperscript{631} With a focus on the changing gendered roles of parents in the context of long-distance mobility of learned families, see also Jarzebowski, ‘Children Travelling the World’.

\textsuperscript{632} Christoph Adam Carl von Imhoff. \textit{Reiß-Beschreibung}, Madras 16 September 1769. GNM, Familien: Imhoff, von, 69, p. 16.

\textsuperscript{633} It appears that the remittances still were done by Christoph Adam, but in his letters he clearly stated that Marian had directed the payments. Christoph Adam Carl von Imhoff to Friedrich von Imhoff. Madras, 10 December 1769. Printed in Koch (ed.), \textit{Imhoff Indienfahrer}, 127. Between March 1781 and September 1784, Marian remitted sums between 185 and 652 Pound to Mrs Touchet from India. The account also suggests that she made remittances to her mother and maybe also other relatives in Stuttgart throughout the years of her absence. Account of Mrs Hastings of Calcutta. London, 3 February 1785. Gloucestershire Archives, D4084 Box 54/1, Bundle 1.
Chapuset. For the Imhoff/Chapuset family, India turned out to be the place where not the Imhoff family, but his pretended wife Marian Chapuset and her family in Stuttgart found a way to fortune and fame. Only one of Christoph von Imhoff’s daughters from his second marriage, Amalie, later received small sums from her half-brother Charles Imhoff.

The family economies of Arnim and Imhoff are remarkably well documented. However, they were not that exceptional. Single letters and petitions suggest that East Indies migrants and their families from non-aristocratic groups also relied on each other and were involved in webs of mutual obligations. It is to them that the analysis now turns.

4.3.5 Money and the prospect of wealth

Money was an important resource in the relationship of East Indies migrants and their families. Employment in the East India companies did not come free of cost. The journey to London or Holland, accommodation, and equipage were all costly. Both Arnim and Imhoff secured this ‘start capital’ by means of their patronage relationships. Lower-rank employees of the VOC had the opportunity to sign a transport-letter (transportbrief) and give it to creditors or sell it as a source of cash prior to the voyage, and many exercised this option. However, in some cases the records suggest that families provided the capital needed in the beginning. Shortly before his embarkation, Christian Dunckel received 10 Reichsthaler from his parents. The sister of Hans Joachim Schröder ‘advanced 194 Reichsthaler and 12 Groschen on loan for his journey to India’. Leaving indebted, to patrons, the Company or recruiters (so-called soul-sellers, Zielverkopers or Seelenverkäufer), or kin was thus not uncommon.

At the same time, many men assumed service in the East Indies in order to generate wealth for themselves and their families. While the majority of them never reached this goal, there are a few cases where the transfer of money from the East Indies to German lands can be traced.

So-called month-letters (maandbrieven) allowed VOC employees of all ranks to send up to three months’

634 Charles Chapuset’s East Indies endeavour did not last long and the Company sent him home because of indebtedness and desertion. Grier, Letters of Warren Hastings, 460–461.
635 See the payment over 25 Pounds made on 10 November 1828 to Amelia Imhoff in Book of Sir Charles Imhoff beginning 22 July 1822 to 1832 with Mess. Coutts & Co. Gloucestershire Archives D4084 Box 54/2, Bundle 1.
638 Petition of Johann Christoph [sic] Haeger for his wife. Neu Ruppin, 2 July 1770. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1015, fol. 110r.
639 That is during the lifetime of the East Indies migrants. For the transfer of estates and inheritances, see chap. 6.
wages per year to close family members.\textsuperscript{640} By means of transport-letters higher amounts, between 150 and 300 gulden depending on rank, could be transmitted to anyone, including creditors, but only once per voyage.\textsuperscript{641} However, signing a \textit{maand-} or \textit{transportbrief} was apparently not a very attractive option for those who lived far away from the VOC chambers, because the owner of the letter had to cash the money in person. Among the East Indies travellers in this study, only three men used \textit{maandbrieven}. One of them was Johann Behrend Wittholt, who left his wife and three children in Bettingbüren in Oldenburg when he went to the East Indies as a bricklayer (\textit{metselaar}) in 1748. During the years of his absence and until his death in 1756, his wife Gesche Wittholt authorised a man named Pieter Vroom to annually cash her \textit{maandbrief} in Amsterdam.\textsuperscript{642} While the annual 45 gulden probably did not suffice to maintain Wittholt and her three children, the reliable annual payment was a material bond between her and her absent husband. The other two men who signed \textit{maandbrieven} were the noblemen Hans Carl von Arnim and Jakob Nikolaus von Puttkammer.\textsuperscript{643} Both men made their mothers beneficiaries. In Arnim’s case other sources suggest that he ordered the annual payment to pay off his debts.\textsuperscript{644} While it remains unclear whether Arnim’s mother ever cashed the payments, Puttkammer’s mother did receive her son’s wages. Her second husband, stepfather of Jakob Nikolaus, appeared regularly at the East India House in Middelburg and cashed his wife’s money letter.

For those who had no direct access to the East India houses, other ways of money transfer were more attractive. Sometimes money was sent with friends and acquaintances who travelled between the East Indies and Europe or who had reliable networks of their own. For instance, in 1802, Johann Friedrich Meiselbach remitted by means of bills of exchange a ‘small present’ of ‘800 Rupees or 500 Thaler’ from Bundelkhand via Chinsura and his nephew Christian


642 VOC employment record of Johan Barend Witthout. NL-HaNA, VOC, 11.04.02, inv.no. 6223, fol. 186. It is unknown what kind of relationship Wittholt and Vroom had.

643 VOC employment record of Hans Carol van Arnim. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 6436, fol. 271. VOC employment record of Jacobus Nicolaas van Putkammer. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 13065, fol. 170. Jakob was only 10 years old when his parents sent him to Java into the care of Petrus Albertus van der Parra, who was distant kin of Jakob’s mother, a born van Ketelaar. For Jakob’s family history, see A. van Schweinitz to Erberfeld. Lillo, 16 February 1777 (copy). GStA PK, I. HA GR. Rep. 34, No. 6498 (no foliation); and for the history of the von Puttkammer family, see I. Clericus (ed.), Geschichte des Geschlechts der Herren, Freiherrn und Grafen von Putkamer (Berlin 1878/1880), esp. 305–318.

644 In 1756, Marie Ilse von Arnim zu Götschendorf had paid an obligation of her son Hans Carl of 185 Thaler. Arnswaldt and Devrient, Das Geschlecht von Arnim, 653.
Ludwig Kendler at the Cape of Good Hope to his sister in Rudolstadt.\(^{645}\) To be sure, this was not a ‘small present’. Within less than 10 years, Meiselbach, who had probably gone to India in the service of the VOC in 1790, became a colonel and commandant in the army of Aly Bahadur and Himmat Bahadur and made an ‘enormous fortune’, according to his nephew Kendler.\(^{646}\) Against the background of this fortune, he promised his siblings in Rudolstadt to send 500 Reichsthaler every year.\(^{647}\)

Another way to remit money from the East Indies to Europe was to transfer it through merchants and agents commissioned by East Indies travellers for other businesses. Mostly fairly well-off families used this method. Johann Friedrich von Struve, for example, ordered his agents in Amsterdam, Piter Bank and sons, to pay annual allowances to his wife and son in Berlin.\(^{648}\) According to Mrs Struve, the allowance amounted to 500 Dutch gulden annually and was paid between around 1773 and 1795.\(^{649}\) Johann Carl Reinhard appears to have used his network of agents and merchants in Copenhagen and Amsterdam to send money home. In 1794 he made a payment of 1,050 gulden through a merchant house.\(^{650}\)

Besides wives and children, parents and siblings also benefitted from the financial support of East Indies migrants. Wilhelm Stäudlen, for example, repeatedly sent ‘beneficences’ (\textit{Wohltaten}) to his siblings in Württemberg.\(^{651}\)

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\(^{645}\) Christian Ludwig Kendler to Mr Sänger. Cape of Good Hope, 10 February 1803; Christian Ludwig Kendler to Mademoiselle Meiselbach à Rudolstadt. Cape of Good Hope, 10 February 1803; and Johann Friedrich Meiselbach to M. C. Meiselbach, to the care of Mr Chirurgus Ganzert at Schwarzburg/Rudolstadt, Bengal Bunddeland [Bundelkhand], 23 September [1801 or 1802], TNA HCA 32/1697, Nos. 233, 234 and 235.

\(^{646}\) Christian Ludwig Kendler to Mr Sänger. Cape of Good Hope, 10 February 1803. TNA HCA 32/1697, No. 233. There is a VOC employment record of a man named Johan Friedrich Meiselbach from Rudolstadt who went to Bengal in the rank of a soldier in 1790 but then disappears from the VOC records. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 6807, fol. 208. This is in all probability the same Johann Friedrich Meiselbach who later became colonel in the army of Himmat Bahadur. This information clarifies uncertainties concerning Meiselbach’s origin in the literature, which names Denmark, Holland, and Jena (close to Rudolstadt) as possible places of origin. See Erhard Bischoff, \textit{Die europäischen militärischen Abenteurer in Indien im 18. Jahrhundert: Zwischen dem Niedergang des Mogulreiches und dem Beginn des britischen Kolonialreichs} (Halle, 2012), 163–168. A brother of Johann Friedrich Meiselbach, Carl, also went to the East Indies. There is an employment record of Johan Carl Wilhem Mijsenbagh from Rudolstadt who went to Batavia on the \textit{Oostkapelle} in 1773. However, he died already in 1774 and it is thus unlikely that he is Johann Friedrich’s brother. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 6572, fol. 322.

\(^{647}\) Johann Friedrich Meiselbach to M. C. Meiselbach, to the care of Mr Chirurgus Ganzert at Schwarzburg/Rudolstadt, Bengal Bunddeland [probabl. Bundelkhand], 23 September [1801 or 1802], TNA HCA 32/1697, No. 235.

\(^{648}\) Johann Friedrich von Struve to his wife Hauptmannin van Struve. Colombo, December 1799. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1038, fol. 100a.

\(^{649}\) Petition of Hauptmannin van [sic] Struve. Berlin, 24 October 1797. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1038, fol. 87r.

\(^{650}\) Johann Carl Reinhard to his wife Anna Sophia Victoria Reinhard, née Benzlern. Cape of Good Hope, 15 September 1798. TNA HCA 32/617, No. 61/45a. Whether the money arrived in Thuringia in the turmoil remains unknown.

\(^{651}\) Petition of Anna Maria Balsen, née Stäudlin. Backnang, 10 November 1790. HStA S, A 213 Bü 3234 (no foliation).
Heller also ‘helped’ his brother occasionally with ‘some 100 Thaler’ for his ‘needed and needy subsistence’. Johann Valentin Rudolph apparently received different ‘beneficences’ from his absent brother Johann Theodosius, and was still doing so 20 years after his brother went to Ceylon. It seems that Rudolph used the official channels of the VOC and remitted the money to his family by means of bills of exchange drawn in the name of his mother.

While allowances and pecuniary gifts were an important cohesive element in families, so was the prospect of a fortune. Talk about money, possible income sources, even greater future earnings, and the desire to return home rich permeate the letters of East Indies migrants. Johann Georg Kannengießer, for example, wrote to his relatives from Ceylon that he wanted to earn enough money that he and his friends could eventually live ‘happily’ together in his fatherland. East Indies migrants also frequently wrote that they wanted to send money once they could afford it or when a secure channel for the remittance could be established.

Meanwhile, the mere existence of a relative in the East Indies, close or distant, wealthy or poor, was a resource that could increase the creditworthiness and prestige of kin in German lands. For example, Magdalena Friederique Teuber allegedly had a brother named Christian Friedrich Teuber who went to the Cape of Good Hope as a ship’s surgeon. When Magdalena was sick and in need of help, a woman named Friederique Charlotte Heinrich attended her, and because she was ‘poor’ and could not pay, Magdalena legally signed over to Friederique the fortune that she expected to inherit ‘in the future’ from her brother. In a similar vein, Maria Sabina Labatzen (married name Tescher) tried to ‘buy’ lifelong sustenance for her and her husband from another family in exchange for the

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653 Joh. Valentin Rudolph to his brother Johann Theodosius Rudolph in Negombo on Ceylon. Wismar, 16 November 1780. TNA HCA 30/722.

654 VOC employment record of Johan Theodosius Roedolff. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 13108, fols. 241 and 296.

655 Christoph Adam Carl von Imhoff and Hans Carl von Arnim give strong examples of these rhetoric of money. See also Johann Friedrich Küster to his brother, sister and friends, Johann Peter Klein [probably his brother-in-law]. Cape of Good Hope, 28 August 1798. TNA HCA 32/617, No. 61/6mii.

656 Johann Georg Kannengießer to his friends. [Ceylon], 23 May 1732. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1008, fol. 4v.

657 Examples are C. L. Scheitz to his brother J. A. Scheitz. Steinberg, 23 March 1780. TNA HCA 30/722; Daniel Rausch to Henri. Rausch. Gualparah, 21 November 1780. TNA HCA 30/750; Johann Balthasar Trosihn to his wife. Surabaya, 1 October 1726 (copy). GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1007, fol. 139r; and Johann Wolfgang Imhoff to his wife Maria Regina Senffen. Amsterdam, 17 October 1747 (copy). GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 6155 (no foliation).

expected inheritance from her uncle in the East Indies. While in both cases no actual relative let alone inheritance ever could be located, they document that connections in the East Indies – true, half-true, or fraudulent – were actually deployed as resources. In 1792, the readers of the newspaper Der Anzeiger were warned of a shoemaker in Crimmitzschau, who ‘for 6 to 8 years’ had repeatedly bought leather on credit ‘on the pretext that he expected an inheritance from the East Indies’. In the same newspaper, the story was told of a journeyman tailor who had ‘lured’ a widow into betrothal, promising her the prospect of an immense inheritance from his uncle in Batavia. These cases were probably extremes and therefore caught the attention of the public and authorities. But they also suggest the huge impact that (purported) kin relations in the East Indies could have had on credit relations ‘at home’.

4.3.6 Gifts and tokens of affection

It is not surprising that the letters bear witness to the frequent transfer of material objects between the Indian Ocean world and Europe. Early modern people were well accustomed to gift-exchange routines. German East Indies travellers were aware of the crucial role that gifts played in forging and maintaining bonds. Gifts could traverse space and had thus the potential to unite families and friends across the ocean. However, the distance and the companies’ regulations concerning private and privilege trade influenced the quantity and nature of gifts, not least because the boundaries between things sent as presents and trade goods were fluid. Moreover, sending gifts required networks of trustworthy and reliable agents, individuals who were returning to Europe and agreed to bring along precious things in the narrow space of their sea chests. Ferdinand Breymann

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660 Such ‘pretended inheritances’ will be further examined in chap. 6.4.
661 Der Anzeiger: ein Tagblatt zum Behuf der Justiz, der Polizey und aller bürgerlicher Gewerbe, wie auch zur freyen gegenseitigen Unterhaltung der Leser über gemeinnützige Gegenstände aller Art (hereafter: Der Anzeiger), 69 (21 March 1792), 563.
663 The literature on gift-giving in the early modern period is abundant. A good literature discussion is Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, The Culture of Giving: Informal Support and Gift-Exchange in Early Modern England (Cambridge, 2008), 5–9. See also Gadi Algazi, Valentin Groebner, and Bernhard Jussen (eds.), Negotiating the Gift: Pre-Modern Figurations of Exchange (Göttingen, 2003). For sending things and gifts in the context of cross-Atlantic migration, see Freist, ‘Global Microhistory’.
wanted to send a ring with a strand of his hair to his fiancée, however, he did not ‘dare’ to enclose the ring in his letter because he feared that the letter might be opened in London. Therefore, he waited until one of the officers, someone ‘unlikely to die during the voyage’, returned and would personally take care of the letter and the enclosed ring.

Letters sent with trustworthy and personally known agents were therefore often the preferred medium in which small tokens of affection could be transmitted, and East Indies travellers were eager to find things that could be enclosed. Several letters bear witness that coins were a popular gift. These coins not only circulated between India and Germany but also within the wider kin networks of the recipients in Germany. Other items that could be easily enclosed in letters were pieces of fabric and wings of insects. These objects could get across a sense of what one encountered in the East Indies. Silhouettes on the other hand, likewise easily enclosed in letters, served as a reminder of one’s physical appearance and were enclosed, for example, in the letters of Ferdinand Breymann and Andreas Dehne. Unfortunately, they have not been preserved. They probably resembled those that Carl Ludwig Scheitz sent to his brother J. A. Scheitz in 1780 (Figure 4).

Such pictures not only brought the distant family members to mind. They also created a space of familial affiliation and belonging, as Scheitz remarked in the accompanying comment: ‘I attach 5 silhouettes, which are all very good likenesses, especially the one of our dear mother.’ Early modern portraits were a ‘communication bridge’ that not only represented the person, but could also

665 Ferdinand Breymann to Eleonore Wehner. Madras, 7 September 1790. NLA HA, Kleine Erwerbungen A 48 No. 2, letter No. 27.
668 See also Freist, ‘Briefpraktiken’.
670 Carl Ludwig Scheitz to J. A. Scheitz in Cochin. Steinberg, 23 March 1780. TNA HCA 30/722. These silhouettes are among the most famous artifacts of the Prize Papers and have already caught the attention of historians. For instance, the Prize Paper Project based at the University of Oldenburg uses the picture on its homepage: http://www.prizepapers.de/the-team/, accessed on 26 January 2020. The letter and silhouettes have also been published by Andrea Langendoen, ‘De onderkin van Oma. En vroeg voorbeeld van silhouetkunst’, in Erik van der Doe, Perry Moree, and Dirk J. Tang (eds.), De dominee met het stenen hart en andere overgeze boeven briefgeheimen (Zutphen, 2008), 74–77. Based on this transcript, Michael North, Zwischen Hafen und Horizont: Weltgeschichte der Meere (Munich, 2016), 167–178 published an extract of the letter with reference to the silhouettes.
‘make the absent present’, Philip Zitzlsperger argues. Moreover, portraits had the potential to create and maintain notions of lineage and belonging. Through the comments and contexts of the letters that accompanied the silhouettes, they were integrated into the emotional community of the family. This community was thus not only characterized and maintained by reciprocal emotional commitment, credit, obligations, and gift-giving, but also by the physical resemblance of its members. Although hardly identifiable to modern viewers, the imagination of resemblance served as a glue for relations over distance.

All these gifts and tokens of affection were modest compared with the gifts and commodities that governing Anglo-Indian elites circulated and strategically exchanged within their ‘Company patronage networks’ between India and Britain. However, the small, often free of cost, but nevertheless ‘valuable’, presents of company servants below the lines of governing elites fulfilled similar functions: they were material tokens of emotional commitment across oceans and assurances of belonging. Andreas Dehne reminded his son of the ‘ostrich egg’ which the latter had brought personally to Hanover during a sojourn, and which Dehne kept for his son’s ‘eternal memory’. He asked his son for yet another token of remembrance, preferably an Indian stone that he had heard of, but anything would do that would not cost his son. Wilhelmine Conradi received ‘4 small gold rings’ and ‘3 gold rings with red stones’ from her brother in Colombo.

Figure 4. Silhouettes of the family of Carl Ludwig Scheitz. Reproduced by permission of The National Archives. Source: TNA HCA 30/722.

They were too small and did not fit her fingers. Nevertheless, she valued them highly ‘because they come from you’.674 Anna Maria Balsen, née Stäudlin, was happy about the money and a handkerchief that her brother sent her from the Cape of Good Hope.675

As in the exchange of goods in the networks of Anglo-Indian elites, gift-giving among German East Indies migrants and their families was not confined to creating and maintaining bonds of family memory and affection. In some instances, the integration of gifts into networks of patronage and obligations is made more or less explicit. Extraordinary Councillor of the Dutch East Indies (Extraordinarie Rat von Niederländisch Indien) Andreas von Hohendorf sent some presents including 5,000 Dutch gulden, six pieces of myrrh, and a handkerchief to his mother in Prussia. These gifts were ‘small tokens of [his] filial devotion’. He then asked his mother for a favour: during the ‘Chinese war’ he had lost all his ‘documents and papers’ and the family seal, and he hoped that his mother could provide him with these items again. He added: ‘This favour will obligate me anew.’676 In 1770, Hans Carl von Arnim sent ‘a Moorish, gold embroidered attire’ to his brother Bernd Jacob and ‘small things’ to his mother and sisters. They were all involved in Hans’s attempts to gain letters of recommendation from influential patrons in Brandenburg, Brunswick, and the Netherlands.677 Although it seems that the goods did not find their way to Brandenburg, at least not within one year, similar gifts would not only have served as tokens of gratitude but also as resources within the patronage networks of the Arnim family.

Through their personal relations in the East Indies, people in the German hinterlands came into the possession of and in contact with objects and goods that were curious and new, some of which were even considered luxury goods. One can imagine how Wilhelmine Conradi and Anna Maria Balsen showcased the Indian diamond rings and handkerchiefs in their neighbourhoods, and how the ‘Moorish, gold embroidered attire’, if it ever found its way to Arnim’s brother, would have caught the attention of the Brandenburg aristocracy. Luxury goods from around the globe certainly found their ways to sea-remote communities when East Indies migrants returned, as the story of Johann Caspar Sperling demonstrates. He had served for 20 years in Batavia, lastly as superintendent of the Outer Hospital (binnenregent van het buijtenhospitaal), when he returned to Magdeburg in 1793 with his wife Petronella Muller. The couple capitalized on the VOC’s softened regulations concerning private trade between Asia and Europe and brought along a modest amount of ‘Indian goods’ packed in a chest with tea,

674 Wilhelmina Conradi to her brother [Johann Friedrich Conradi?]. Lauterbach, 10 December 1778, TNA HCA 30/722.
675 Petition of Anna Maria Balsen, née Stäudlin. Backnang, 10 November 1790. HStA S, A 213 Bü 3234 (no foliation).
676 Andreas von Hohendorf to his mother Mrs von Hohendorf, née von der Groeben. Batavia, 10 October 1754 (copy). GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 6211 (no foliation).
including Chinese silk, some pieces of Coromandel chintz and handkerchiefs, Bengal muslin, four or five Japanese silk night gowns, ‘6 to 8 unshod canes’, ‘one small lacquered thing from Japan’, ‘a small Chinese tower made of alabaster’, and ‘two sets of Chinese porcelain tea and coffee tableware’. Beverly Lemire has argued that British sailors became ‘agents of change’ for early modern consumer behaviour. Their travels, trade, and consumption ‘complicated material hierarchies’ as they introduced labouring and artisanal men and women to global commodities. Traversing the oceans of the world, they mediated between communities and brought home new habits, fashions, and tastes. Lemire’s argument raises the question of the impact the exchanges of gifts and goods between East Indies migrants and their families in German lands might have had on the material cultures of locales more distant from sea routes and overseas trading centres. The scale of the gift exchanges, as far as these are graspable from the letters, was very modest compared with the private trade activities of commanders, merchants, and mariners. However, as Lemire argues regarding the different trade volumes of sailors and commanders, ‘the cultural force’ of introducing new groups to global commodities was more significant than the actual volume of trade.

While it is at this point impossible to determine the scale and impact of the material encounters on the communities of the left-behind families, the limitations of material circuits stand out. Some inventories of the effects of better-off East Indies migrants are replete with possessions characteristic of the ‘cultural hybridity’ of consumer practices in the East Indies. These lists often included, besides European goods and books, large quantities of Indian cloths and garments, Chinese silk, gold and diamond rings, and quotidian household goods. However, as the effects of deceased company servants were commonly sold in auction, most of these goods never found their way into the hands of heirs, either in the East or in Europe.

4.3.7 Advice and services

Advice and counsel were also important resources for East Indies travellers and their families. In the letters, this is found especially in parent–child relationships, but also between siblings. Letter writers sometimes explicitly asked for advice, and sometimes gave it without being asked. In the case of parent–child relations, advice frequently concerned moral and religious conduct. The parents of Carl Friedrich Reimer expressed their joy that their son had followed his ‘liking and genius’, which he had ‘sensed since [his] childhood’. Instead of admonishing him for his decision to leave them and staying quiet about it for more than a decade, they offered comfort and the assurance that they wished him ‘all luck, salvation,

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678 List of Indian goods [1793]. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1027, fol. 13r.
and mercy’ for his endeavour. Having thus (re-)established themselves as well-meaning and supportive parents, they added:

Only one constant and most necessary parental admonition we must and do give you here: that you for God’s and your own’s salvation sake hold off from an alteration of religion, bad dissolute conduct of life, and seductively bad company.681

Furthermore, they advised him to refamiliarize himself with the Book of Revelation 2:14–22. Clearly, the stories of Balaam and Jezebel, who enticed the Israelites to worship false gods and commit ‘sexual immorality’, and of the sinners who would be made to ‘suffer intensely’ as a result was meant as a warning for the son. Would the parents recommend him that same biblical reference had he not been in the East Indies, a place heavily charged both with heathenism and sexual transgression?

Besides advice and counsel, families in German lands offered practical support that included sending family records, running errands, dealing with legal matters, and arranging for the return of the East Indies traveller. Family records and papers, including lists of ancestors (Abnenlisten) and the family’s seal, were apparently needed in the East Indies for climbing the promotion ladder and for marriage. Johann Friedrich Küster asked his brothers and friends to send him his baptism certificate and manumission paper (Losbrief). ‘Part of his fortune’ relied on these papers, he explained.682 Thomas Nagel asked his brother to send him the family’s list of ancestors and their father’s seal.683 Anna von Piron did not turn to her kin, though her daughter and sister would have been potential correspondents in Königsberg, but to Kriegs- und Justizrath (Counsellor of War and Justice, title) F. C. Hahn when she needed extracts from the church registers and other certificates.684

East Indies migrants also asked their kin in German lands to run errands for them and they integrated them into their trade networks. For example, Thomas Nagel ordered different glassworks such as ‘chandeliers and gilded and cut things’

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682 Johann Friedrich Küster to his brother, sister and friends, Johann Peter Klein [probably his brother-in-law]. Cape of Good Hope, 28 August 1798. TNA HCA 32/617, No. 61/6 mii. He does not specify what kind of manumission paper he meant. His family probably knew.

683 C. Nagel to Thomas Nagel. Grünenplaner Spiegelhütte, 10 November 1780. Sent by Held Woltemade. TNA HCA 30/317.

684 F. C. Hahn to Anna Dorothea von Piron. Königsberg, 27 July 1778 and 26 May 1783. CBG, BvTP, P395, Nos. 36 and 37.
from his brother. Glassware was among the most popular export goods traded via the private channels of company servants. A cargo list addressed to Thomas Nagel by his Amsterdam agent Gottlob Silo indicates that Nagel was engaged in this private trade on Ceylon. Distributed on the sea chests of a third master (derde meester) and a chief gunner (konstabel), Silo sent German books, which possibly C. Nagel had sent to Amsterdam, silverware ‘after the latest fashion’, wine, and other European luxury goods to Thomas Nagel in Jaffnapatnam (Jaffna). Daniel Hendrik Schmidt sent a package to his sister and brother-in-law in 1798, probably containing presents and goods for trade. He enclosed ‘a short list of some goods’, which he asked his siblings in turn to buy and transmit to him. This was apparently a routine transaction between the siblings, as Schmidt remarked in the same letter that he had received ‘the goods via Mr Troischen’. Johann Bogislaus Mauve asked his brother Christian to send him ‘all battlefield [engravings] of our King in glass and framed, two mirrors framed in gold, a bible, a prayer book, and miscellanies of war [Kriegsschriften]’. Hans Carl von Arnim asked his brother to send him ‘Gellert’s oeuvre and some other fine poesy’. All these were popular goods from Europe that were frequently sold and traded in the East Indies.

Kin relations at home were also vital when East Indies travellers required a trusted agent on the ground in Europe. In 1798, Erhard Christian Lantzius, a merchant in Batavia, had sent letters of exchange and goods on the Graf Bernstoff to Europe. However, the ship was taken prize by British privateers, and his possessions were confiscated. His father, Folkmar Friedrich Lantzius, tried to get back his son’s parcels and the letters of exchange through corresponding with the Prussian consul in London. Eventually, he involved the Prussian department of foreign affairs and asked for help. Christoph Otto von Kampitz, who lived on his estate Rabenstein at the Cape of Good Hope, involved his brother in his lawsuits against the former Governor of the Cape Colony Joachim van Plettenberg. According to Kampitz, during the Anglo-Dutch war Van Plettenberg had ordered the destruction of the road that connected Kampitz’ estate with Cape Town. Kampitz considered this roadway to be his property and claimed

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685 C. Nagel to Thomas Nagel. Grünenplaner Spiegelhütte, 10 November 1780. Sent by Held Woltemade. TNA HCA 30/317.
687 Cargo list for Thomas Nagel. Amsterdam, 1 November 1780; and Gottlob Silo to Thomas Nagel. Amsterdam, 5 November 1780. Sent by Held Woltemade. TNA HCA 30/317.
689 Johann Bogislaus Mauve to his brother Christian Mauve. [Fort Beshampore, 1774 (transcribed excerpt and summary)], Private family archive of Gregor Mauve, Petershagen, Nachrichten über die Familie Mauve.
compensation. To increase the pressure on Van Plettenberg, he not only involved the Duke of Mecklenburg and asked for his intercession at the States General, but he also asked his brother August Ernst for help. August was lieutenant and adjutant in Prussian military service and thus could turn to the Prussian king for help and support. In his petition, August stressed that his absent brother’s interest in getting compensated was as much his interest, as he was his only heir. The Prussian department of foreign affairs consequently ordered the consul in The Hague to investigate the matter and support Kamptz’ brother’s claims.692

East Indies travellers also asked their relatives in Germany for assistance in preparing things for their anticipated return to Europe. Finding appropriate accommodations was often at the centre of their requests. Johann Carl Reinhard wanted to buy an estate somewhere near Kelbra, where he and his family finally could settle together after 10 years of separation. His wife, father, and family friend C. Bischoff were involved in his project and made suggestions from afar.693 Hans Carl von Arnim also hoped to settle once he returned and asked his brother to purchase the ‘Hohen Wald’ or a little farm (Vorwerk) with an apartment. He also pleaded with his brother to make enquiries into whether he could get ‘a small employment as postmaster or forester’.694 Johann Bogislaus Mauve had very distinct ideas of how he wanted to live upon his return and asked his brother Christian in Stettin:

If you please […] furnish the second floor in your house for me, that is our very blessed father’s bedroom, your gun chamber, the small chamber above your bedroom, [build in] new windows of large glass with wooden frames, in the manner that one can slide the lower part up while the upper part remains fixed. Have the old door bricked up, […] the old oven removed and build in a new angular one after the latest fashion.695

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693 See the excerpts of letters in TNA HCA 49/6, Nos. 86, 89, 99.


695 ‘so es Dir angenehm ist […] so lasse mir die zweite Etage in Deinem Hause fertig machen, als unseres wohlseligen Herrn Vaters Schlafzimmer, Deine Gewehrkammer, die kleine Kammer über Deinem Schlafzimmer mit neuen Fenstern von grossen Glase mit hölzernen Rahmen, und dass man das unterste hinausschieben kann, das oberste aber feststeht. Die alte Tür lasse zumauern […], den alten Ofen abbrechen und einen neuen eckigen setzen nach der neuesten Facon.’ For this and the following quotes Johann Bogislaus Mauve to his brother Christian Mauve. [Fort Beshampore, 1774 (transcribed excerpt and summary)], Private family archive of Gregor Mauve, Petershagen, Nachrichten über die Familie Mauve.
One room was to be prepared for his ‘slaves’. He also asked that his brother purchase a garden and ‘four good geldings and a Berlin coach, richly ornamented and lined with close-cropped green velvet’.

4.3.8 Prayers

Letters sent between Germany and the Indian Ocean world are replete with prayers and religious references. Johann Balthasar Trosihn assured his wife in a letter that he had at ‘all times prayed for my wife and poor children that He [God] might provide you and take you under his holy shelter’. Similarly, the parents of Carl Friedrich Reimer wrote that they would always continue to pray for their absent son. Christian Dunckel asked his family to ‘include’ him in their ‘devout prayers’ during his absence.

Prayers represented in letters would have been potent even if not made explicit. Thus, the question arises why letter writers so frequently assured their family members that they prayed for them. Summarizing and describing prayers apparently mattered to letter writers and readers. Telling the beloved wife or absent son or brother that they remained part of one’s prayers was one way of reassuring them of unchanged and continuous emotional bonds. Religious expressions, Susan Broomhall argues, ‘were articulations of faith that aligned, shared, and assuaged’. In faith and in the prayer, families could be united despite the physical distance between them; the account of the prayer demonstrated the persistent intimate bonds.

Some authors included written prayers in their letters and thereby altered the function of the letter. G. P. Brunnemann, for example, wrote to his son in Batavia:

So I ask God that he may give you patience and strength that you may bear your fate in serenity […] and finally I ask God that he will bring you back to us when your destined years have come, happy and healthy, all this might he do for Christ’s sake Amen.

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696 Johann Balthasar Trosihn to his wife. Surabaya, 1 October 1726 (copy). GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1007, fol. 139r.
698 Christian Dunckel to his parents and sister. Amsterdam, 1 December 1741 (copy). GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1011, fol. 42v.
J. L. Austin’s notion of ‘performative utterances’ might help to better understand what is happening in the quoted passage. In his speech act theory, Austin defines ‘performative utterances’ as speech acts that ‘do not “describe” or “report” or constate anything at all’. He furthermore asserts that ‘the uttering of the sentence is, or is a part of, the doing of an action, which again would not normally be described as saying something’.

While Austin did not consider prayers as speech acts, Brian Cummings has applied Austin’s theory to his analysis of prayers and bodily rituals in the Reformation. Cumming proposes that prayer in certain situations can be an ‘exemplary case’ of a performative speech act. As ‘a type of ordering’, the prayers’ ‘illocutionary force is not an inquiry into the nature of things but a desire that something might come about’, he argues.

With this understanding of prayers as performative utterances, Brunnenmann’s prayer, and those of many other letter writers, can be read as something more than a mere representation of a prayer. The concluding ‘Amen’ suggests that Brunnenmann may actually have performed this prayer as he wrote it. The letter thus becomes at once vehicle for the narration of prayer as well as a means to realize it. Thereby, Brunnenmann addresses not only his son, but also God, soliciting him to give his son ‘patience and strength’ and to bring him back ‘happy and healthy’.

Joseph Sterret argues that theological perspectives on (literary) prayers that distinguish between ‘real’, ‘authentic’, and ‘valid’ prayers versus ‘literary’, ‘imagined’, and thus ‘invalid’ prayers fail to provide a theoretical framework for analysing what happens in prayers. Within such a framework, one might be tempted to read the prayers in letters as ‘empty’ topoi because they appear repeatedly in similar forms across different letters. But such a reading misses two important points. First, the prayers were embedded in situations of communication. Sterret understands prayers themselves as ‘a mode of communication’ that appeals to an audience ‘through recognizable gestures and codes of performances’. In the letters of East Indies migrants and their families this means that the recipients of the letters would have recognized the prayers as such because of their form, including the salutation to God and the concluding ‘Amen’. If the letter writers were successful in their intention (if they included prayers intentionally), the recipient would have understood the prayers as assurances of continuous affectionate bonds. Second, understanding prayers as performative acts that actually do something, we can take seriously what letter writers did in their letters: they prayed. And in their prayers, they sought to bridge the distance

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to their children, wives, and brothers by actively recommending them into the care of God.

4.4 Conclusion

At the centre of this chapter are the relationships between East Indies migrants and their families in German lands. Long-distance separation created anxieties about the steadiness of social relationships and posed practical and emotional challenges. Albeit fragmented, the letters of middle- and lower-rank East Indies migrants and their families offer insights into family practices across great distances and reveal a variety of resources that were used to maintain and exploit family networks.

Letter writing was central to bridging distance. However, the circumstances of transoceanic communication added severe obstacles and uncertainties. The epistolary practices that become evident in the letters show attributes of what Silke Törpsch describes as ‘a specifically early modern practice of communication by letter and messenger that cannot be caught up in the dyad of sender-receiver’.

Writing and reading letters between the Indian Ocean world and the German lands was a collective endeavour in which oral and written communication not only collocated but concurred. The ways in which East Indies migrants and their families communicated and created and maintained bonds were, so it seems at first sight, not so different from letter and family practices across shorter distances. Scholarship on epistolary practices and separated families within Europe and in the Atlantic world has yielded insights that are remarkably similar to the observations presented above. Creating visions of physical and emotional proximity through affectionate language, circulating letters and their contents in extended webs of kin and friends, engaging in the family matters of siblings, creating webs of godparents along the lines of kinship, exchanging gifts and presents, and supporting siblings – none of these were new or exceptional in the eighteenth century.

And yet, the ‘normality’ and ‘usualness’ of the correspondence of East Indies travellers is remarkable for at least two reasons. First, the letters and communication practices show that families from the presumably remote regions of the Holy Roman Empire and Prussia were as well equipped with communicative routines as their Spanish and British contemporaries, who had a long and historically acknowledged tradition of staying connected across oceans. Second, against the background of the distinct social compositions of colonial societies and the complex family and household relationships characteristic of the life of European

705 Törpsch, ‘Briefe’.
706 See chap. 1.3, footnote 36. For families within Europe the focus has been on aristocratic and scholarly families. See, e.g. Sophie Ruppel, Verbündete Rivalen. Geschwisterbeziehungen im Hochadel des 17. Jahrhunderts (Cologne, 2006). See also the contributions on family letters in Nolde and Opitz (eds.), Grenzüberschreitende Familienbeziehungen.
men in cities like Batavia, Colombo, Madras, and Calcutta, the silence about these relationships in the letters is striking. The absence of enslaved members of the households and the concealment of the names of wives in the East Indies raises questions concerning mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion that bear further examination.

The normality of the contents of the letters is the more striking if one considers the circumstances that determined the ways in which East Indies migrants and their families could stay connected. These differed considerably from the conditions of communication across shorter distances and in other geographical spaces. The peculiarities of transoceanic correspondence between the Indian Ocean world and Europe created temporal lag-times that exceeded anything within Europe and even the Atlantic world, separating senders and receivers of letters by at least one and half, and usually several years. Johann Carl Reinhard, for example, after five years of silence did not know whether his wife and children were still alive, and Carl Friedrich Reimer, had secretly travelled for more than 10 years before the first news of his whereabouts reached his parents. Nevertheless, all these men and their families continued (or resumed) correspondence as if nothing had happened, reproduced face-to-face interactions, and created illusions of emotional proximity in their letters. They sent their good wishes, emotional support, advice and requests, and sometimes children along with their letters into the void, season after season, exposing themselves to the uncertainties and turmoil that came along with the new possibilities of long-distance mobility. Moreover, correspondence was, even if regular in some ways, always sporadic. The time for sending letters was confined to a few weeks of the year. During these few weeks, the focus was on relationships at home. The better part of the year was characterized by silence and uncertainty, but also attention to quotidian life and other relationships on the ground.

East Indies migration presents itself in the familial correspondence as a family business. East Indies migrants relied on the support of their families at home, and those families hoped for the emotional and financial commitment of the absent travellers. Men in the East Indies turned to their siblings in matters that they could not handle themselves due to the distance. Their families at home, especially siblings, thus made long-distance mobility possible in the first place. They acted as consultants and agents and played key roles in relaying information and intelligence between family members, kin, and patrons. However, this role was not naturally given and constituted by kinship but was constantly created and reassured in and beyond letters. For some tasks, for example the education of children or trade businesses, East Indies travellers considered other contacts and networks more useful.

The exchange of letters, and their expressions of longing and hope, articulation of emotional expectations, and offers of advice and comfort were crucial for perpetuating relationships across distance and through periods of disruption and silence. East Indies migrants were also tied to family by credit and patronage. They and their relations sought to constantly renew and create mutual obligations
by entangling them in all sorts of activities and interests, and nurturing them in both material and immaterial ways. Family emotions and expectations of filial and brotherly love and duty were the basis of these entanglements. Life in the East Indies produced and provided new resources that became part of family relationships. East Indies migrants and their families articulated feelings of loss and grief, and the travellers made promises of future wealth for the family, sent allowances and ‘curious’ gifts, stories and knowledge.

Nevertheless, distance and the unreliability of communications had the potential to weaken ties and to cause tensions and conflicts. Bridging distance and holding onto the bonds of family under these circumstances required work on both sides of the ocean. Sometimes, relationships simply could not be maintained.\footnote{An attempt to grasp some of these broken ties is made in chap. 6.}
5 New Family Formations

5.1 Introduction

Most German East Indies migrants came to the Indian Ocean world with the intention of staying only a few years and then returning to Europe – hopefully rich in money and experience. However, many of them stayed and lived for several years, even decades, in the East Indies and made themselves a home. They socialized and got in contact with individuals and groups from all over the Indian Ocean world and beyond, and they established households, created families, and built new kinship relations.

In older historiography, the picture of the relationships that German East Indies travellers formed in the Indian Ocean world is roughly sketched and illustrates, for the most part uncritically, the accounts given in published travelogues. German authors of travel accounts usually presented themselves as servient outsiders, recording but never themselves engaging in, ‘licentious’ and ‘promiscuous’ sexual relationships with Asian women, whom they often depicted as ‘local whores’ and ‘slaves’.

The reality looked very different. The expansion of the East India trading companies caused characteristic changes to the demographic structure in places like Batavia and Calcutta. Because the vast majority of Europeans who migrated to the Indian Ocean world were male and Christian, distinctive patterns of family formation and complex domestic arrangements emerged, with sexual and conjugal relationships commonly crossing the lines of religion, ethnicity, and status. The family practices of German East Indies migrants were at once tied to Europe, to the particulars and circumstances of colonial societies, and to indigenous norms and practices through the people that composed these families. This chapter locates the family practices and formations of the German migrants within all

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710 This pattern did not only apply to relationships between Europeans and Asians. Relationships between people of different ethnic origins were common in trade and port cities across the Indian Ocean. Bosma and Raben, *Being Dutch*, esp. 21–22. See also Nordin Hussin, *Trade and Society in the Straits of Malacca: Dutch Melaka and English Penang, 1780–1830* (Copenhagen, 2007), esp. chaps. 9 and 10.
three of these contexts using an analytical frame that brings together EIC and VOC histories and historiography.

The purpose of this chapter is twofold. First, through the lens of wills, I survey the range of possible family formations and domestic arrangements of German East Indies migrants in the Indian Ocean world in an effort to complicate the prevalent picture in German historiography. Second, building on the rich literature on the composition of colonial societies, colonial families, and colonial governance of sexuality and marriage, the analysis pays particular attention to what Durba Ghosh has called ‘familial dynamics of interracial sexual contact’ and the ways that intimate relationships of different kinds were perceived, managed, and hierarchized. The aim here is to use the wills of German East Indies migrants to learn more about how men tried to order their intimate lives and if, how, and when categories of difference (class, race, legitimacy, religion etc) structured power relations within the colonial family.

Because family life in EIC and VOC settlements are usually studied in isolation from each other, the first part of this chapter brings together this scholarship and charts their trends, distinctions, and commonalities. The second part of the chapter surveys the range of family formation and how testators sought to order their intimate relationships. The analysis focuses first on the positions that enslaved people held within the families under scrutiny, before moving to different forms of conjugal arrangements, and eventually looking at children. The next part delves into the ways German East Indies migrants maintained or recreated bonds with their families in German lands through making their wills. Here questions of inclusion and exclusion discussed in the previous chapter come to the fore again. The chapter ends with a methodological discussion of how wills can be used as historical sources for writing the histories of colonial families.

5.2 Sexuality and marriage in the Dutch and British East Indies

Throughout the early modern world, sexuality and marriages that crossed lines of status, ethnicity, religion, kinship, or age occupied and worried authorities. Scholarship on early modern colonial societies has established that concubinage and cohabitation with both free indigenous and unfree (often non-local) women

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was widespread and characteristic in many colonial and slave societies.\textsuperscript{713} In European colonial contexts, liaisons between European men and local and other non-European women confronted the authorities with particular challenges. Interracial and trans-religious contacts, as much as they were part of every colonial encounter, were also always problematic.\textsuperscript{714} This chapter builds on the belief that the intersections, negotiations, and frictions between governance and the experience of family life can be observed and examined in the moment of will-making. Before delving into the ways how German East Indies migrants formed and ordered families in the East Indies, some remarks on the legal regulations and social conditions that framed these families are necessary.

From the very beginning of EIC and VOC activities, the authorities identified sex and family life as domains in need of management. The companies’ policies and regulations to govern sexuality and marriage differed between regions and times, as did their enforcement. The literature on the regulation of marriages and extramarital sexual relationships in the Dutch and British East Indies offers important insights into such regulations, especially regarding the VOC in the seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{715} Changes over time and shifts in policies are more difficult to grasp and will require systematic research.\textsuperscript{716} However, some trends can be laid out here.

Christian religious actors were particularly concerned about interfaith and polygamous sexual relationships that unsettled the norms of monogamous marriage and ran the risk of losing children to the ‘wrong’ faith (Roman Catholicism or Islam) or worse, no faith at all.\textsuperscript{717} Officials of the companies were engaged in keeping the boundaries between different members of society clear in order to administer their settlements effectively and stabilize their control over the people living and working within the borders of their dominions.\textsuperscript{718}


\textsuperscript{716} Sophie Rose at Leiden University is currently working on a PhD thesis that will help fill this research gap. Her project is titled ‘Regulating Relations: Controlling Sex and Marriage. How Did Dutch Colonial Institutions Control Sexual Behavior and Intimate Relationships and How Did They Shape Relationship Across Cultural Divides?’ https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/research/research-projects/humanities/regulating-relations-controlling-sex-and-marriage, accessed 18 August 2020.

\textsuperscript{717} Merry Wiesner-Hanks, \textit{Christianity and Sexuality in the Early Modern World: Regulating Desire, Reforming Practice} (London, 1999), 179–212. See also Hawes, \textit{Poor Relations}, 3.

\textsuperscript{718} Bosma and Raben, \textit{Being Dutch}, 21. This form of governance can also be found in other multi-ethnic port cities. For example, Chinese authorities in Canton strongly restricted relationships
EIC issued regulations concerning their employees’ marriages and sex lives, sometimes encouraging, and sometimes forbidding unions between their male European servants and non-European women. The EIC promoted marriages between their soldiers and local women, mainly from the Portuguese Roman Catholic communities, hoping this would improve their conduct and morality. The VOC also very early on encouraged marriages with indigenous women, mainly for the lower ranks. In Batavia, the Company even purchased enslaved women from abroad to this end in the first decades of its settlements.

Both the Dutch Reformed Church and VOC officials kept a firm eye on these marriages and issued several regulations. As only free Christian women were allowed to marry, men who wanted to enter a lawful conjugal union with an enslaved woman had first to manumit her. The future brides also had to be taught in the Christian faith and baptized; later knowledge of the Dutch language became a requirement. To encourage men to marry, the Company would pay their full salary in Asia instead of on their return to the Netherlands and it granted legal ‘European’ status to their wives and children; a status, however, that did not imply social equality with Europeans. Neither the wives nor the children were allowed to travel to Europe, and a man who married in the East Indies or had children there forfeited his right to repatriate.

Historians have cited this restriction as one of the main factors that impeded legal marriages and stimulated extramarital cohabitation, as European men did not want to commit themselves to live the rest of their lives in the East Indies. From 1632, employees furthermore needed the permission of the Governor-General and Council to marry a local woman. At the same time, extramarital sex and concubinage were banned by the church council in the Dutch East Indies, although enforcement of these policies seems to have varied considerably in different settlements and times. During the eighteenth century, malaria epidemics in Batavia, the fourth Anglo-Dutch war (1780–1784), and the turmoil of the 1790s’ European wars caused transformations in the social composition of the Dutch settlements that became visible in changes in sexual practices and marriage patterns and the Company’s loosened restrictions towards illegitimate children and concubinage.


719 Hawes, Poor Relations, 2–4.
720 Taylor, Social World, 16.
722 Bosma and Raben, Being ‘Dutch’, 43.
723 Hamer, ‘Marriage’, 622.
Different company policies, local variations in government and customs, and the ethnic and religious composition of societies had various effects on marriage and sexual practices, households, and family formations in the Indian Ocean world. In trading ports across Southeast Asia, historians have observed a pattern of ‘temporary marriages’ that provided foreign merchants, including the newcomers from Portugal and later the Dutch and English, with local kinship ties through sexual and economic relationships with local women. In Ayutthaya, a vibrant port city, early VOC employees participated in this long-time tradition and cohabited with local Mon and Siamese women, who were sometimes important intermediaries between the trading interests of the VOC and the local courts. This pattern of concubinage continued throughout the eighteenth century, producing children who could become intermediaries and potential conjugal partners for European men once they grew up. At the Cape of Good Hope, a place characterized by the presence of large numbers of transient European men, few European women, and great numbers of enslaved people, families were commonly unstable. At the same time, there was a tendency in the Cape’s colonial elites and middle classes to distance themselves from transracial sexual relationships. In Surat, a trading centre on the northeast coast of the Indian subcontinent, a large Armenian community was established, and employees of the VOC intermarried preferably with the women of this Christian group.

In other places, like Amboin, Colombo, Cochin, and Madras, the Portuguese presence had contributed to the creation of mestizo societies with Christian communities of mixed European and Asian ancestry, among them the descendants of enslaved and manumitted women who had converted to Roman Catholicism. Women of these Portuguese communities married and/or bore children to the first generations of arriving VOC and EIC employees. Subsequent male newcomers from Europe married or cohabited with the offspring of these unions, producing sons and daughters with Dutch or English names. Mestizo women often played important roles in their communities as they provided their male partners with networks and family ties along which middle-class company patronage was organized. Over several generations of interethnic intimate relationships and strategic marriage alliances, the Portuguese and indigenous maternal ancestry of the Dutch and English communities became less and less


727 Groenewald, ‘A Mother Makes No Bastard’.

728 Malherbe, ‘Illegitimacy’.

visible. In the ‘Javanese circuits’ like Semarang, Surabaya, and Yogyakarta, concubinage and sexual relations between Company servants and enslaved, debt-bonded (pandelingen), and free Javanese women were frequent and rarely controlled by either the church or the Company.

In Batavia, the largest VOC settlement and administrative centre, the situation presented itself differently. Here, the governing male elites married women born in Europe or the daughters or widows of other high-ranking Company officials who were several generations removed from maternal Asian (slave) ancestry. In contrast to Jean Gelman Taylor who has argued that marriages between European elite men with Mestizo women were central for the establishment of company authority in Batavia, Ulbe Bosma and Remco Raben suggest ‘that the upper classes of Batavia tended to marry as “white” as possible’ or remained unmarried. Middle-class Company employees, on the other hand, intermarried with the Mestizo daughters of their peers and higher-ranking officials to secure their positions and advance their careers. Low-ranking employees, including soldiers and sergeants, surgeons and artisans, as well as freeburghers, chose to marry formerly enslaved women or their daughters or other local women.

Regarding family formations in the territories of the EIC and in particular in the company’s centre of power, Calcutta, Durba Ghosh has argued that British upper- and middle-class men, unlike their Dutch counterparts, did not marry Eurasian women as a means to enhance wealth and rise in the Company’s hierarchy. Comparing the British with other colonial regimes, she proposes that ‘[u]nlke other colonies […] colonial families in British India were often not “legitimate”, in the sense that the parental conjugal unit were frequently unmarried and some men kept several women in a harem-like arrangement’. Furthermore, Ghosh effectively dismisses the long-standing ‘vision of imperial multiculturalism’ before 1800, characterized by the ‘creolization, conjugality, and cooperation between men and women of different cultural backgrounds [which] created the image of a golden age in which racial hierarchies and boundaries were unimportant’.

In scholarship on the societies under VOC rule, the image of Dutch cultural cosmopolitism and liberalism towards ethnically mixed alliances in the

734 Ghosh, Sex and the Family, 27 and 3.
735 Ghosh, Sex and the Family, 24 and 1.
seventeenth and eighteenth centuries has until now been less contested. At the bottom of this vision are the frequent intermarriages and sexual relationships between European men and Asian women, the granting of ‘European’ status to the children and Asian wives of European Company employees, and the fact that the VOC judicial system distinguished between company employees (including their Asian wives) and non-company people rather than between European and Asian people. Eric Jones, for example, proposes that ‘early modern Dutch Asia looked very much like the place the post-World War II Netherlands imagined itself to be: a cosmopolitan island of racially tolerant prosperity’.736 Bosma and Raben suggest that the ‘colonial rhetoric’ of racial attitudes (in the early modern sense of the word) had little consequences for the everyday lives of the people living in the VOC’s settlements who mixed, mingled, intermarried, and defied attempts at categorization.737

The empirical material and Anglo-Saxon historiographical debates on the mechanisms of colonial governance call for a re-evaluation of this picture and the demarcation line it draws between the social worlds of the EIC and VOC. The following analysis tests such a re-examination by locating families living under the jurisdictions of the EIC and VOC within the same analytical frame. Furthermore, following feminist and postcolonial historians, the analysis pays careful attention to the erasure of native women’s names and understand these changes as meaningful and constitutive in the context of colonial governance and family formation.738

5.3 Colonial families

5.3.1 Enslaved individuals within the family

In 1775, the blacksmith Henrick Hintzelman made his last will in the EIC settlement Fort Marlborough in Bencoolen on Sumatra. To his three children, Maria, Sarah, and Margarett, he bequeathed the remainder of his estate including money from the sale of two enslaved individuals named January and Packew. He then manumitted ‘my slave girl named Coyoh’, who was in all probability the mother of his three daughters, and gifted her ‘a gold comb, pending hair pins and rings, four silver tea spoons and one table spoon [and] her wearing apparel’. To a ‘slave boy’ named Mojoo, whom he also manumitted, he bequeathed ‘all my working tools on condition [Mojoo] should follow the trade after my form and not scandal

me’. Hintzelman’s will allows us to delve into some of the ways families were formed and lived in the settlements of the trading companies. At the same time, it makes visible the limitations of the relationships central to these families and the ambivalence created by sexual encounters between free European men and enslaved women.

Henrick Hintzelman arrived on Sumatra in 1763; from where remains unknown. For more than 10 years he worked as a blacksmith in the EIC’s service. Throughout the eighteenth century, the British settlement on Sumatra, Bencoolen with Fort Marlborough, was on the periphery of the Company’s area of influence. During his service as a blacksmith in the Company, Hintzelman repeatedly petitioned the Governor and Council at Fort Marlborough for an increase in salary. In 1768, his argument was that his current salary was not ‘sufficient to support me, and my family’. At this point, his family consisted of his daughter Maria and the child’s mother, who remains unnamed in the petition and Company records. In 1770, Hintzelman, now father of two daughters, petitioned again. His salary of 15 dollars was not enough because he had to purchase his tools, and ‘having a girl and two small children to maintain, hopes our honours will advance his salary that he may live happily and be no further trouble.’ ‘Family’ in Hintzelman’s perception was not defined by a marital relationship, but through his obligation to care for his ‘girl and two small children’, the members of his family.

Hintzelman’s request was unsuccessful, and the council resolved that he was free to leave for Europe if he was ‘not satisfied with what the Company now allows him’. He apparently considered this option briefly and requested a passage on the Harcourt as a charter party passenger in January 1771. However, he never boarded the Harcourt, and instead stayed on Sumatra with his family, which grew by yet another daughter sometime after 1770. He provided for his growing household and appeared frequently at auctions of the effects of deceased Europeans, where he bought various household goods. By 1775 his household comprised at least eight individuals: his three children (Maria, Sarah, and Margarett), his ‘girl’ Coyoh, who was an enslaved woman, the enslaved boy Mojoo, and two other enslaved individuals named January and Packew.

740 Petition of Henrick Hintzelman. Fort Marlborough, 6 October 1771. BL IOR/B/87, p. 282. Also in BL IOR/G/35/78, pp. 299–301.
741 Wilson, ‘Rethinking the Colonial State’, 1301.
742 Hintzelman referred to his petition dating 1768 in a petition that he submitted two years later. Petition of Henrick Hintzelman. Fort Marlborough, 6 October 1770. BL IOR/G/35/78, p. 300.
743 A list of inhabitants for January 1769 only mentions Hintzelman’s daughter Maria Lucia. BL IOR/G/35/14, p. 379.
744 Petition of Henrick Hintzelman. Fort Marlborough, 6 October 1770. BL IOR/G/35/78, p. 300.
745 Resolution Fort Marlborough. 6 October 1770. BL IOR/G/35/78, p. 301.
746 Petition of Henry Hintzelman, Christopher Kolwe et al., Fort Marlborough, 26 January 1771. BL IOR/G/35/78, p. 455.
747 See various auction sales accounts in BL IOR/G/35/152.
In his will, drafted on his deathbed in 1775, Hintzelman attempted to order this complex household after his death. He appointed his ‘true and beloved friends’, Captain John Rosing and M. Robert Maitford to act as executors. Following traditional inheritance patterns, he bequeathed the better part of his estate in equal shares to his three daughters. Part of the effects were the two enslaved individuals, January and Packew, whom Hintzelman ordered to be sold at public auction along with all his (Hintzelman’s) clothes and chattel. This was a rather unusual thing to do in a will. It is remarkable that Hintzelman named, and thereby ascribed subjectivity to January and Packew, while at the same time locating them among clothes and chattel. Their position ‘at the intersection between the family and the market’ could not have been more clearly articulated.

While it frequently happened that ‘slaves’ were sold at probate auctions, it was unusual that testators made explicit that particular individuals should be sold. It was far more common to either manumit and gift small sums and items to them or to bequeath them to friends and kin. Sometimes, enslaved labourers were emancipated, but under the condition that they stay in the service of a friend or kin. For example, in Batavia Jacob Jeremias Horguelin ordered that his emancipated ‘slave’ März from Timor should stay for the rest of his life in the service of the testator’s godson. In this regard, there seems to have been no difference between testators in the Dutch and British settlements.

Other testators made it explicit that their enslaved servants belonged to the estate. Tobias Heller, for instance, a captain in the VOC who drafted his will in Semarang in 1759, specified that ‘all his goods, movable and immovable, silver and gold coined and uncoined, bonds and credits, the many male and female slaves, especially the following mentioned male and female slaves as Lega van Sinbawa, Klaninde van Bale, Onton van Mies [or Nias?] and Cesar van d’Cust’ should be part of the estate that his minor son Johann Jacob Leonard inherited.

The position of these four individuals in the household of Heller was apparently ambiguous. He singled them out by name from the ‘many male and female slaves’ whom he possessed. Margot Finn has suggested that the ‘wording of individual wills reflects the variegated landscape of personhood that shaped Anglo-Indian conceptions of domestic slavery’. According to this reading, Heller in some way considered Lega, Klaninde, Onton, and Cesar as particularly valuable...
members of his household. The formulaic summary of the parts of the estate, a wording that we find in almost every Dutch will that named a universal heir, would have included them in any case. But there was something about them and their relationship to the testator that made him highlight their existence and emphasize that they should stay with his son. Heller had come to the East Indies as a soldier more than 20 years before. Maybe, and here we can only speculate, Lega, Klaninde, Onton, and Cesar had been part of Heller’s household for a long time and he felt particularly attached and obliged to them since manumitting them could have left them without support and shelter. The VOC tried to limit the growing number of unsupported emancipated individuals by decreeing that slaves could be freed by will only on the condition that they be able to support themselves for at least six years after manumission. As it was usually the testator who had to provide the means to this end, Heller also might have wanted to avoid diminishing the amount his son would inherit.

Another possible explanation for why Heller singled out these four enslaved individuals concerns his minor son, Johann, and the relationship that he might have had to them. Could it have been that they were his playmates and therefore that Heller wanted to make sure that they stayed with him? Purchasing enslaved children as playmates for one’s own children was not unusual. Jan Brandes, for example, owned an enslaved girl named Bietja whom he portrayed playing with his little son in and around his house in Batavia. Christoph Adam Carl von Imhoff also bought a young enslaved boy, and Claudia Jarzebowski has suggested that he possibly intended him as a playmate for his five-year-old son. Whatever the reason Heller singled out Lega, Klaninde, Onton, and Cesar in his will, their explicit naming points to their position in his household and to a hierarchy among the enslaved members of his household. When Heller’s son Johann drafted his own will 14 years later in Batavia, he manumitted Ontong van Nias and Klarinda van Balij and gifted 50 Rixdalers to each of them. Although the names are spelled differently to the names in his father’s will, it is likely that these are the same people he had inherited from his father, and who had apparently followed him from Semarang to Batavia.

The shifting positions and hierarchies of enslaved members in the households of German East Indies migrants brings us back to the will of Henrick Hintzelman. While he ordered that January and Packew were to be sold at public auction, two other enslaved individuals appear in his will in very different positions. One of them is his ‘slave boy Mojoo’. Apparently, he had worked with/for

756 VOC employment record of Tobijas Heller. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 6031, fol. 236.
757 Bosma and Raben, Being ‘Dutch’, 50; Taylor, Social World, 71. See also Wamelen, Family Life, 123.
758 Taylor, ‘Gender in Batavia’, 422. For the portraits, see Max de Bruijn and Remco Raben (eds.), The World of Jan Brandes, 1743–1808: Drawings of a Dutch Traveller in Batavia, Ceylon and Southern Africa (Amsterdam, 2004), 153 and 156. Bietja was only a couple of months older than Brandes’s son Jantje. She was the daughter of the enslaved woman Sara whom Brandes had bought together with her daughter and probably husband. De Bruijn and Raben (eds.), World of Jan Brandes, 166.
759 Jarzebowski, Kindheit, 278.
760 Will of Johan Jacob Leonardus Heller. 1773. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 6847, (95).
Hintzelman as a blacksmith. Hintzelman manumitted him and bequeathed to him ‘all my working tools on condition he should follow the trade after my form and not scandal me’.

This bequest points to the ambiguous concepts and practices of kinship, domestic service, apprenticeship, and slavery in the colonial context. Gifts to household servants were nothing unusual, either in colonial families or in families in Europe. Sometimes, these gifts could include provisions for education or dowries. Hintzelman’s bequest to Mojoo, however, went beyond common gifts to household servants in that he named Mojoo his successor in trade. In this form it appears rather as a modification of European practices of kinship and apprenticeship. In the absence of a male relative who could follow his trade, as would have been common in European artisanal households, Hintzelman incorporated an enslaved labourer into his household. Mojoo had apparently shown his worth as a worker and assistant. At the same time, the bequest resembles practices of incorporation and kin-making in Muslim households. Making a male bonded individual or slave-born child of the household heir to one’s estate, title, or office after having adopted him was practiced in ruling households on the Indian subcontinent and elsewhere. In lieu of a male heir by consanguinity, Hintzelman made his former enslaved worker Mojoo kin by appointing him successor to his trade. Hintzelman’s inheritance practice indicates that, even if he might not have been aware of this indigenous practice, it was a functional and reasonable thing to do. Although this practice is evident in only this one case, it shows that enslaved women were not the only ones who could exert agency and seek to advance their situation.

The form and content of Hintzelman’s bequest to Mojoo is unique in the sampled wills of German East Indies migrants. However, it teaches us to think of slavery not as something outside the family and household and antithetical to

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763 For example, the merchant John George Schultz gifted 100 Pounds to his ‘servant’ the minor boy John Christopher Friday for his education and later for his own use. Will of John George Schultz. 1786. BL IOR/L/AG/34/29/5, pp. 85–91. A second version of his will is in TNA PROB 11/1138/24. Margot Finn quotes a case in which an enslaved woman received a dowry from her English mistress’s will, a practice that was also commonplace in contemporary Indian households. Finn, ‘Slaves out of Context’, 188. This was also a practice among the higher nobility in German lands. See Sebastian Kühn, ‘Die Macht der Diener. Hausdienschaft in hofadligen Haushalten’ (Preußen und Sachsen, 16–18. Jahrhundert), Mitteilungen der Residenzen-Kommission der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Neue Folge: Stadt und Hof 6 (2017), 163.
kinship, but instead as an integral and constituent part of it. This rethinking of slavery and family breaks with European notions of slaves as ‘inferior outsiders’. Studies of the history of women, the family and slavery in South and Southeast Asia offer a lens through which the often complex domestic arrangements can be seen and analysed. They stress the fluidity that characterized practices and concepts of slavery, kinship, and family in many societies in the Indian Ocean world prior to and during the presence of European traders and merchants. In many indigenous societies, slavery and family were part of the same realm of social relationships, governed by clearly defined rights and obligations. Regional differences aside, myriad identities, dependency and kinship relations were available beyond the European binary conceptions of free/unfree, married/unmarried, legitimate/illegitimate, et cetera.

The European colonists who came to the Indian Ocean world since the sixteenth century carried with them ideas of slavery confined ‘to a relatively brutal type associated with captive “outsiders”’; however, as Anthony Reid argued, they did not merely impose these ideas on the societies they encountered, but instead ‘[took] over and interact[ed] with an existing Asian system of slavery’. Yet their taking over and interaction must not be confused with adoption of the system and its fine grained hierarchies and rules. Studies of legal practices in Ceylon show, for example, the tensions between Dutch conceptions of slavery as derived from Justinian law and the much more complex local indigenous concepts of freedom and unfreedom and the role that caste played in labour extraction. Also stressing the differences between English and Mughal systems of slavery, Anna Winterbottom argued that the ‘structure of slavery in the English factories probably had a closer affinity with the Dutch factories […] than to either [of the] indigenous forms of Indian Ocean or Atlantic slavery’. Nevertheless, locating

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770 Madeline C. Zilfi, Women and Slavery in the Late Ottoman Empire: The Design of Difference (New York, 2010) is very helpful for thinking through some of the diverse ways slavery could be organized.


773 Winterbottom, ‘From Hold to Foredeck’, 15. Matthias van Rossum, Kleurrijke tragiek, esp. 13–16, questions the notion that the European slavery systems of the Atlantic and Indian Ocean were significantly different from each other.
the slaving practices of European men in company settlements also within the context of indigenous practices of slavery opens up new perspectives and analytical opportunities.\textsuperscript{774}

From the perspective of indigenous forms of slavery, fissures and ambiguities are present in the semantics of Hintzelman’s will. While indigenous practices of incorporating slaves into the family obscured the former slave’s status by applying kinship idioms, Hintzelman still identified Mojoo as ‘my slave boy’.\textsuperscript{775} ‘To be sure, converting slaves into kin never dissolved hierarchy because kinship itself is always based on authority and power, claims, privileges, and deference.’\textsuperscript{776} Despite emancipating Mojoo and naming him successor to his trade, Hintzelman positioned him as a bonded individual who was to be supervised after the testator’s death. In case Mojoo did ‘not follow the trade after [Hintzelman’s form]’ or ‘scandalised’ him, the executors were asked to take away all his tools, dispose of them, and share the proceeds among Hintzelman’s three daughters.

Another enslaved person in Hintzelman’s family was the ‘slave girl named Coyoh’. Hintzelman emancipated her, like Mojoo, and gifted valuable objects to her, such as a gold comb, hairpins, rings, and silver spoons. These objects and the naming of Coyoh as ‘my slave girl’ indicate that she was probably Hintzelman’s slave-concubine and most likely the mother of his three daughters.\textsuperscript{777} However, it is noteworthy that he did not explicitly mark Coyoh as the mother of his children but instead located her in a different social relationship and identified her as a ‘slave’ in his will. Nor did he provide her with an ongoing source of income, which would have been common in England for a surviving spouse, for example in form of a trust or a life right in part of the late husband’s estate.\textsuperscript{778} By naming her as his ‘slave’, instead of his ‘girl’ as in his earlier petitions to the Company, he detached Coyoh from the family unit. By contrast, the European names of his three daughters, Maria, Sarah, and Margarett, signified that the girls belonged to a Christian-European, even more specifically a German-speaking, community and show how he constructed his family and lineage. He furthermore asked the executors of his will to take care that the three children would be ‘brought up in the Christian’ religion.\textsuperscript{779} As the mother was, in Hintzelman’s view, not eligible for this task, and other kin were not available, he

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{774} Informative examples of this approach are Chakraborty, ‘Household Workers’; and Lyons, ‘Cities at Sea’.
\item \textsuperscript{775} Chatterjee, \textit{Gender, Slavery and Law}, 17.
\item \textsuperscript{777} For the euphemisms used for enslaved conjugal and sex partners, see Ghosh, ‘Decoding the Nameless’. For the model of ‘slave-concubinage’, see Indrani Chatterjee, ‘Colouring Subalternity: Slaves, Concubines and Social Orphans in Early Colonial India’, in Gautam Bhadra, Gyan Prakash, and Susie Tharu (eds.), \textit{Subaltern Studies}, vol. 10: \textit{Writings on South Asian History and Society} (New Delhi, 1999).
\item \textsuperscript{778} Erickson, ‘Marital Economy’, 12.
\item \textsuperscript{779} Will of Henrick Hintzelman. 1775. BL IOR/G/35/152, pp. 380–382.
\end{itemize}
transferred his paternal obligation of caring and educating his children to his friends.\footnote{In Muslim families slave-mothers were not responsible for the education of children.}

Hintzelman, like many other European men who were fathers of mixed-race children, disguised his children’s heritage and sidestepped the rights and honours that their mother should ordinarily expect. This was quite different from local Islamic practice. In Muslim households, an enslaved woman who gave birth to her master’s child could claim certain rights and privileges.\footnote{Chatterjee, ‘Slavery and the Household in Bengal’, 107; Ghosh, ‘Decoding the Nameless’, 302; La Puente, ‘Free Fathers’, 36–37; Zilfi, Women and Slavery, 109–112. The privileges that enslaved mothers could expect varied across the Indian Ocean world, and also depended on the mother’s status and caste. For example, in Jaffna, on Ceylon caste was the decisive factor in the gifts and privileges an enslaved mother was entitled to. Schrikker and Ekama, ‘Through the Lens of Slavery’, 190.} Motherhood in this area and especially on Nias, probably Coyoh’s place of origin, was central to a free woman’s social position and her children were testament to her fleshly existence.\footnote{Andaya, Flaming Womb, 207–208.} Hintzelman’s bequest to Coyoh may indicate that he knew that slave-concubine mothers were supposed to be manumitted at their owners’ death and provided with means to subsist. At the same time, by not publicly acknowledging her motherhood, Hintzelman deprived Coyoh of her rights and honours.

What is more, Hintzelman’s material bequests to Coyoh were made on the condition that should she engage in any new relationship, it must be with a European man. To this end, he ordered his executors to take the jewellery and everything else from her ‘if she should alter her station and live with a Malayman, Oran Neas, etc., Europeans excepted’.\footnote{Will of Henrick Hintzelman. 1775. BL IOR/G/35/152, pp. 380–382. ‘Oran Neas’ could be the phonological spelling of Orang Nias which means a man/person from Nias. I am grateful to Stefan Eklöf Amirell for his help in reading this source. For similar conditions tied to the residence of manumitted slaves, see Chatterjee, ‘Colouring Subalternity’, 82.} It is important to note that Hintzelman did not mind so much if his ‘girl’ lived with another man; he explicitly exempted European men from the condition. What he apparently feared was that she might ‘go native’ (again) and take his children and estate in the same direction. Although emancipated, Coyoh was thus not ‘free’. She was still bound by racial and cultural conditions determined by Hintzelman’s will and overseen by his executors.

By transferring his assumed right to control this woman and her property to other men, the male executors of his will, Hintzelman perpetuated a gender hierarchy that was prominent in England, other parts of Europe, and the American colonies during the 18th century.\footnote{Narrett, Inheritance, 70.} Yet, the hierarchy sustained and transferred after Hintzelman’s death was also highly racialised, as Coyoh’s bequest was determined by the ethnicity of the man she chose to live with. Moreover, Hintzelman’s will requested white men to exercise power over a non-European, and now free, woman. Hintzelman’s ordering of family fits in this sense into a ‘global gendered order’, which has been described as ‘British men ruling over numerous territories of women, British and native, as well as ever larger groups...
of native men’. The nationalistic privileging of British men in this statement is complicated by the wills of Hintzelman and other German testators, who built barriers between their estates and the women they had cohabited with. British men did indeed assume the right in British colonies to rule over indigenous women, but other European men in those and other colonies did so, too.

Another example from Sumatra corroborates this observation. In December 1775, shortly before he died, Wilhelm Brandt drafted his last will and testament. Brandt was one of the German Protestant settlers who had come to the island in 1770. While the settlement project turned out to be an economic and personal disaster for most of the newly arrived individuals and families, Brandt at least managed to survive a couple of years and to establish a household. By his will, he freed ‘my slave girl Belinda’ and gifted all his household furniture, his clothes, and everything else from his house to her, including two enslaved individuals, Peggy and Malotty, but excepting ten hogs. He bequeathed her 300 dollars, which was to be put in the Company’s treasury by Robert Hay, Brandt’s appointed trustee. Brandt asked Hay to pay Belinda the monthly interest of the sum, and to buy her ‘a house and ground or anything she may stand in need of’. If Belinda were to die without a will (not without heirs!), Brandt willed the remaining money to Hay and his heirs. Like Hintzelman, Brandt worked out hierarchies between enslaved members of the household in his will. The formerly enslaved woman, Belinda, who in all probability was his slave-concubine, became by his will a slave owner in her own right, a mechanism also found in other wills. At the same time, Brandt built a barrier between her and her monetary assets, which were put in trust under Robert Hay’s control. Furthermore, Brandt put Hay in a position to decide what was necessary and appropriate for Belinda’s subsistence. Belinda’s gendered and racialised subordinate status was therefore not dissolved but transferred to another man, even though she was now formally free.

Such mechanisms, however, were not exclusive to former slave-concubinage relationships and not always racialized. Also legally married men built barriers between their widows and estates. The wife of ‘Baron’ Thomas Reichel, for example, was not named heir, but was to receive a yearly allowance of 400 Pounds, paid by Reichel’s executors. Reichel stressed that she should be satisfied with what she got. His siblings received individual bequests and the remainder of his

785 Ghosh, Sex and the Family, 25.
786 See chap. 2.5.1.
787 Will of William Brandt. 1775. BL IOR/G/35/152, p. 395.
788 Robert Hay was member of the Council at Fort Marlborough and governor in 1776.
789 Christian Samuel Gusovius gifted two slaves to the ‘free Christian woman’ Juliana Tutus van Batavia. However, as will be discussed below, the classification ‘free Christian woman’ was ambiguous. In this case it could mean that Juliana had been born a slave and then manumitted or adopted by a European man or that she had been the daughter of a formerly enslaved woman and a free man. Will of Christian Samuel Gusovius. 1751. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 6849, (780).
estate went to charity.\textsuperscript{790} John Dederick Paxman, inhabitant and constable of the Supreme Court in Calcutta, gifted to his wife Maria for and during the term of her natural life, the annual and monthly nett rents and profits arising from my lower roomed house and premises in Calcutta, to be held for her entire use and behoof, and for that purpose let out by the month or year by my executor […] upon the most advantageous terms.\textsuperscript{791}

After her death, the estate was to be divided between his siblings in Germany. These examples indicate that it was not primarily ethnicity or legal status that kept women from control over their property. Both formally married and unmarried, and free and unfree companions were denied access to and control over men’s estates. This pattern of distributing and guiding property was not exclusive to the colonial context in Asia, but fairly common also for upwardly mobile middle- and upper-class households in England and the American colonies in the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{792} The wills of Hintzelman and Brandt, ordinary men, demonstrate that this gendered and class-based pattern could be transformed in the colonial contexts and applied to other social classes and new types of relationships between free and unfree individuals that had no direct equivalent in European societies.\textsuperscript{793}

5.3.2 Conjugal arrangements

The Brandt and Hintzelman wills suggest that they had lived with enslaved women in ways that resembled marital unions. They acknowledged their responsibilities towards the dependants in their households, which from a European legal point of view they were not obliged to honour. And they were not exceptional. Many German East Indies migrants made bequests to women with whom they had no formally sanctioned conjugal relationship, but to whom they felt obligated. However, these bequests also point to the difficulties of reading wills as sources for the histories of these women and their relationships with the testators. The burgher Johannes Wiederkeer, for example, made a considerable bequest to the ‘free Christian woman’ Juliana van Maccassar before he died in Batavia in 1738. He gifted her a small hut or house including the grounds and ‘a

\textsuperscript{791} Will of John Dederick Paxman. 1785. BL IOR/L/AG/34/29/6, p. 13.
\textsuperscript{793} This finding is somewhat different to what Durba Ghosh observed in Bengal. There, lower- /middle-class men who cohabited with native women built fewer barriers between their estates and the women. Ghosh, \textit{Sex and the Family}, 112.
slave named Titus van Benjade together with his wife Martha von Ternaten’.794 Christian Samuel Gusovius, who lived for 17 years in Batavia, made a bequest to the ‘free Christian woman Juliana Tutus van Batavia’ consisting of the two ‘slaves’, Fortuijn van de Cust and Cananga, as well as a chest of various items and 200 Rixdalers.795 The burgher and merchant Johann Heinrich Postell in Batavia gifted 50 Rixdalers each to the ‘free wom[e]n’ (vrije vrouw[en]) Magdalena van Bengal and Aurora van Maccasser.796

The frequent descriptive ‘free Christian woman’ could hide a variety of women and life histories that today can hardly be traced in the archives. One testator, Johann Heinrich Lucas, spelled out in his will that his universal heir, the ‘now free Christian woman’ Aletta Rosina Lucas had been his former ‘serf’ whom he had manumitted and baptized.797 However, he is exceptional in the sampled wills in that he makes visible her transformation and incorporation into the Lucas family.

The testators under VOC jurisdiction seem to have applied the Company’s social and legal categories for classifying the inhabitants of their settlements. Because Dutch wills had to be drafted by notaries and authorized scribes, reading these identifiers is even more difficult, as it is never clear whether the testators themselves used these terms or whether the notaries asked for clarification of the beneficiaries’ status.798 ‘Free Christian woman’ could refer to a woman who had been manumitted from slavery by the testator or any other person. The term could also refer to the daughter or granddaughter of a formerly enslaved, but then manumitted and baptized woman. Whether the term could also include women with no connection to slavery remains unclear.799

The women who become visible in the above cited bequests might have been extramarital sexual or conjugal partners of the testators. The wills suggest that they were the main social points of reference of the testators in the East Indies (though many of these testators named principal heirs in Germany, see Chapter 5.3). However, it would be misleading to automatically assume that all of these women were sexual partners, conjugal companions, or exploited enslaved or freed women. There were other roles available for these women, too, and even conjugal or sexual relationships may well have been more complex and

795 Will of Christian Samuel Gusovius. 1751. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02. inv.no. 6849, (780).
797 Will of Johann Hendrik Lucas. 1762. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 6855 (2875). A report from the Prussian consul to a local court in Brandenburg later mentioned later that Lucas was married to his former ‘slave’. However, Lucas’s will does not confirm this. Report of Johann Ludwig Gregory. Amsterdam, 31 July 1794. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1027, fol. 170r.
798 See, for example, the codicil of Christian Willhelm Meyn where the status of his adopted son was added post facto. CBG, BvTP, M748, scan: FAPA065314.
799 Jean Gelman Taylor emphasizes that in the 17th century, Asian Christian women could have come to Batavia as enslaved or captured individuals, as free settlers or as wives of European men. Taylor, Social World, 49.
multidimensional. As Titas Chakraborty has revealed, many of the ‘Portuguese’ women in Calcutta were ‘independent women proprietors’ who ran their own businesses, worked as moneylenders and served the trading companies and their employees in various capacities.\textsuperscript{800} In the scholarship on Batavia, formerly enslaved women and native Christian women become visible mainly in the context of the Church’s poor relief, but there are indications that they were active in slave trading, as vegetable, fruit, and rice farmers, and as market-gardeners and landowners.\textsuperscript{801} Barbara Andaya has pointed out that European newcomers in Southeast Asia often profited from the knowledge and networks of ‘wealthy female patrons’.\textsuperscript{802} In other words, the ‘benevolent’ gifts ‘free Christian women’ received from the testators may have been repayments of debts or payments for goods, services, and labour.

What is clear from these wills, however, is that most testators deliberately chose not to define their relationships to these women, in contrast to their clarity about other kin relations, daughters of fellow Europeans, godchildren, or officially married wives. The names of these women, however, who were perhaps native or displaced from other regions in the Indian Ocean world (in any case not considered European), were not erased in the wills and thus remain in colonial archives. Their roles, and therefore their positions in colonial society, were apparently deliberately left open and undefined. The methodological consequence of these observations is that we, too, must remain open to these women’s possible roles and relationships and consider all these possibilities when reading the wills in which they are named.

Some testators, however, made it more or less explicit that they had cohabited with a named woman or that the woman had born his child or children. Peter Matthew Schorn, an indigo planter in the Bengal presidency, ordered in his will that Anna Rosura, the mother of his six children, should be maintained after his death in 1812.\textsuperscript{803} Fredrick Pope, one of the German Protestant settlers on Sumatra, gifted 50 dollars to the mother of his child, who remained, however, unnamed.\textsuperscript{804} While these bequests were explicit about the relationships, other testators paraphrased and obliterated what most likely had been a sexual or conjugal relationship. In Calcutta, the merchant Otto Fredrick Lampe gifted 1,000 Rupees to ‘Nancy, my friend’.\textsuperscript{805} Johann Balthasar Trosihn gave the ‘Saraansche woman’ Dirri 20 Rixdalers, the ‘slave’ Janni, and some clothes as a sign of his gratitude for ‘her long enjoyed services’.\textsuperscript{806} Philip Seiffert in Madras explained that he gifted

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\textsuperscript{800} Chakraborty, ‘Household Workers’, 74.
\textsuperscript{802} Andaya, \textit{Flaming Womb}, 123.
\textsuperscript{803} Will of Peter Matthew Schorn. 1812. BL IOR/L/AG/34/29/24, pp. 459–461.
\textsuperscript{804} Will of Fredrick Pope. 1776. BL IOR/G/35/152.
\textsuperscript{805} Will of Otto Fredrick Lampe. 1784. BL IOR/L/AG/34/29/5, p. 63. ‘Friend’ was frequently used as a euphemism for concubine. Ghosh, \textit{Sex and the Family}, 110.
\textsuperscript{806} Will of Johan Balthasar Droschin. 1761. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 6860, (3667).
500 Pagodas to ‘my woman Presitta Schwab […] for her good behaviour and fedelity [sic].’ In Malacca (Melaka), Johann Levin Esche gave clothes, linen, and furniture to the ‘free woman’ Isa van Bantem ‘for his remembrance’.

The practice of making bequests to women with whom the testator had possibly cohabited may point to the influence of indigenous conceptions of slave-concubinage and temporary marriages. Gift-giving was a crucial part in these relationships. Part of the concept of temporary marriage, which has been described by Barbara Watson Andaya as a constitutive part of the commercial economies in pre-colonial Southeast Asia, was that sexual intimacy was an act of reciprocal exchange – the woman could expect the man to give her and her family gifts for the sexual intercourse. Andaya argues that in the course of the early modern period and with the establishment of the European trading companies, the concept of temporary marriage and the constitutive ‘gift-for-sex exchange’ was widely misunderstood by Europeans as simple prostitution. The restraints and mechanisms of control through contracts and kin who traditionally governed the relationships between men and their temporary wives, but also between masters and servants, were hampered by the increased importation of enslaved women from overseas as slave-wives and often simply ‘ignored with impunity’. Along with this ‘cultural misreading’ of an indigenous custom and the structural changes in slavery, a ‘type of woman’ that became common was ‘a low ranking outsider, often a slave or former slave, who provided domestic and sexual services to a foreigner without the respect normally accorded to married women’. In a similar vein, Indrani Chatterjee has argued that the adoption of the practice of ‘slave-concubinage’ by British colonial officials undermined the position of these women, who were traditionally entitled to certain rights as family members. British men extracted the sexual, reproductive, and domestic labour of these women while ignoring the traditional reciprocity of rights.

The transformation that Andaya and Chatterjee describe is not to be contested. However, the wills analysed in this chapter were haunted by conflicting attitudes and emotion. Andaya and Chatterjee portray European men as driven by sexual desire and the wish to engage in ‘uncomplicated’ relationships that did not tie them to the East Indies and at the same time provided them with essential domestic services. Many German men in the East Indies were surely attracted by the possibilities offered by concubinage, particularly slave-concubinage. However, the transformation and eventual disintegration of the institution of temporary marriage may not have been a straightforward process. First, although not evident in the historical records, one cannot dismiss the possibility that women like Coyoh, Juliana van Makassar, or the unnamed mother of Fredrick Pope’s child actively insisted on their rights. Second, it is probably useful to pay some

807 Will of Philip Seiffert. 1771. BL IOR/P/328/63, p. 65.
808 Will of Jan Levin Esche. 1752. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 6857, (3212).
810 Chatterjee, ‘Colouring Subalternity’.
attention to male gender norms. Men were never just ‘men’; they sought to be respectable men in their communities, and to this end they were under some pressure to uphold norms of masculinity by being ‘good patriarchs’ who cared for their dependants, as Durba Ghosh has argued.811

Bequests to women who had (possibly) been their sex or conjugal partners suggest that the testators acknowledged such obligations and customs despite the lack of a formal marriage contract. However, the bequests also make abundantly clear that extramarital conjugal partners were in a much more vulnerable position than their legally married female contemporaries. They had no opportunity to make legal claims if the men failed to recognize them in their wills. Because of the large-scale displacement of enslaved people across the Indian Ocean world, many of these women also lacked the kin relations who would traditionally have advocated for the rights and obligations that should have accompanied their temporary marriages or debt bondage.

Widows in the Dutch East Indies usually got back their marriage portion and half of the goods acquired and jointly owned during marriage.812 Widows to whom English intestate inheritance laws applied received one third of their husband’s estate if there were children and half of the estate if there were no children. However, unlike their Dutch counterparts, they (and their children) could be disinherited in a will.813 In many Southeast Asian societies the marriage of a daughter increased her own family’s economic welfare through practices of marriage gifts.814 Muslim widows had a right to one quarter of her husband’s estate if there were no children, and one eighth if there were children.815 None of this applied to the extramarital conjugal companions made visible in the wills. Even if they had lived with the testator like a spouse in all respects and contributed their labour to the accumulation of wealth and the household economy, they were not

811 Ghosh, Sex and the Family, esp. chap. 3: ‘Good patriarchs, uncommon families’.
814 Andaya, Flaming Womb, 111–112.
protected by law and they had no rights to the jointly acquired family fortune, neither did their own families benefit from the union. They were dependant on the benevolence of the testator. This benevolence was a conscious choice that he could make. If he failed to draft a will, or chose to not acknowledge his female companion, these women got nothing, not even manumission if they were enslaved.

In England and the territories of the EIC it was very common among ordinary men of the lower and lower-middle classes to appoint their wives heirs and often also either sole or joint executrices.816 William Bartels, a merchant in Bombay and Calcutta, named his ‘dear and loving wife Jane’ residual heir to his estate.817 The mariner or ship captain Gustav Adolph Streng named his second wife, Emilia Catharina Elizabeth, together with his two children universal heir and appointed her sole executrix of his estate.818 Anna Sabina Jacobi, Widow Seeberg, was joint executrix of her late husband’s estate, silversmith Fredrick Jacobi.819 Low-ranking European men who cohabited with native women in Bengal copied this pattern and often appointed their long-time female companion their universal heir and executrix.820 Some wills from Batavia show that this was also a practice in VOC territories. Johann Valentin Deuter, a sergeant in Batavia, named ‘the free Christian woman’ Angenita Leverman ‘living in the house of the testator’ his universal heir and executrix.821 Daniel Gottlieb Hold, also resident in Batavia but at the time of his death a free burgher, named the ‘free Christian woman’ Adriana Magdalena Lausche his universal heir and executrix.822 Tobias David Blume named his fiancée Christina Elizabeth Feimig, widow of Willem Berg, his universal heir and executrix.823 Sometimes, a conjugal partner was named universal heir, but not executrix. Gottlieb Hensel made the ‘free Christian woman’ Christina Calmink (Kalming) his universal heir under the condition that she would pay the legitimate portion (geregte portie) to his mother in Königsberg. Perhaps to ensure that this would happen, he named Carsten Ryst executor.824

816 Erickson, Women and Property, 156–157.
817 Will of William Bartels. 178[8]. BL IOR/L/AG/34/29/6, p. 35. Although Bartels had named executors in his will (Samuel Pattison and Philip Reilly), administration was granted to his widow Jane and her new husband Thomas Nicholls.
819 Account of the estate of Frederick Jacobi. Filed 1809. BL IOR/L/AG/34/27/39, p. 121.
820 This pattern could not be found in the sample of wills of this study, but has been pointed out by Ghosh, Sex and the Family, 112 and 129–130.
821 Will of Johann Valentin Deuter. 1758. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 6852, (1687).
822 The will itself is not extant, only the inventory (1793), and the account of the estate (1803), which gives a summary of the 1788 will. TNA HCA 32/1693, Nos. 87bb and 87ce. In 1793 Hold adopted the daughter of a Javanese couple, Jeboes and Senong, but the child does not appear in the probate records. Act of adoption of Charlotta Elisabeth Hold, daughter of the couple Jeboes and Senong, by Daniel Godlieb Hold. CBG, BvTP, H938, scan FAPA042638.
823 Will of Tobias David Blume. 1804. CBG, BvTP, B506, scan: FAPA005585.
824 Will of Gottlieb Hensel. 1765. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 6850, (1159). A German translation of the will is in GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1014, fols. 59r–60v.
While these examples suggest that testamentary arrangements could to some degree make up for the lack of a marital contract in terms of the transfer of property at death of the man, the unmarried companions of European men still found themselves in a detrimental position compared to their legally married contemporaries. Under Dutch law, spouses could make a mutual will – a practice that was frequent in Batavia and other VOC settlements, too. For example, in 1791 the spouses Christoph Dietrich Castan and Susanna Berardi Reimert appointed the longest living partner universal heir and executor/executrix in Batavia.\(^{825}\) Around the same time in Colombo, Johann Friedrich Dornheim and his wife Martha Elisabeth Dietrichsz drafted their joint will and named the longest living partner principal heir.\(^{826}\) Johann Philip Rieck and Johanna Catharina Zinck made their mutual will in 1761 in Batavia and also appointed the longest living spouse universal heir and executor/executrix.\(^{827}\) For unmarried conjugal companions of European men in the Dutch settlements, making a mutual will was not an option.

Sometimes, the boundaries between legally married and unmarried conjugal companions could be fluid, as the example of Peter Schorn and Anna Rosura demonstrates. Peter Matthew Schorn from ‘Germany’ was an indigo planter in Munchipore, near Commercolly (Kumarkhali) in Bengal.\(^{828}\) During his stay in the EIC presidency from about 1792 to 1812, he fathered six children with Anna Rosura. Her lusophone name suggests that she was a member of the Portuguese Christian community in Bengal. In 1812, when Peter drafted his will shortly before his ‘departure for the Isle of France for the benefit of my health’, he stipulated that provisions were to be made for Anna, ‘the mother of my children’.\(^{829}\) He then named five of his six children heirs to his residual estate in equal parts and appointed his son-in-law Edward Brown and two other ‘friends’ as joint executors. Further extant records concerning the Schorn family suggest that Peter and Anna’s original extramarital relationship gradually evolved into a recognized formal marital relationship over time. When their first daughter, Ida Marian, was baptized in 1796, the priest recorded her as the ‘natural daughter of Peter Matthias Sahorn’.\(^{830}\) Five years later, when the next three daughters Helena Catharina (*1798), Margaret Elisabeth (*1799), and Isabella (*1801) were christened, the Reverend again wrote down only the father’s name, however, this time

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\(^{825}\) Will of Christoph Dietrich Castan and Susanna Berardi Reimert. 1791 (translation). GStA PK, I, HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1039, fols. 39r–41r.
\(^{826}\) Will of Johan Fredrik Christoph Dornheim (in the VOC wills index misspelled as Dornbach) and Martha Elisabeth Dietrichsz. 1790. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 6868, (5204).
\(^{827}\) Will of Johann Philip Rich [sic] and Johanna Catharina Zinck. 1761. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 6858, (3434).
\(^{828}\) List of Europeans Residing in Bengal, No. 11. BL IOR/O/5/26. Different spellings of his name include Peter Mathias Schorn, P M Schorn, Shorn and Sehorn.
\(^{829}\) For this and all following quotes, see Will of Peter Matthew Schorn. 1812. BL IOR/L/AG/34/29/24, pp. 459–461.
\(^{830}\) Baptism of Ida Mary Ann Sahorn, 3 January 1796. BL IOR/N/1/4, p. 199.
without the explicit ‘natural’.\textsuperscript{831} When Peter and Anna’s son, John Conrad, was baptized two years after his father’s death, Anna appears for the first time as Peter’s wife in the records.\textsuperscript{832} In 1842, when she died at the age of 60 years, she was buried as the ‘Wife of M P Schorn, Merchant Collingha’.\textsuperscript{833}

The family formation of Peter and Anna Schorn brings to mind the history of Christoph Adam Carl von Imhoff and Marian Chapuset.\textsuperscript{834} Officially never married, they established a family that was recognized as marital through their lived practice. Their two sons, Carl and Julius, were born out of wedlock, but in practice this never mattered, as the parents lived publicly as a married couple. The same seems to be true for the Schorn children, who through their marriages created a web of three merchant families in Bengal. However, there is one significant difference between the Imhoff and Schorn families, namely the position of the ‘wife’ and her kin. Marian’s mother was an active and crucial member of her daughter’s family from the beginning. She cared for her grandson Carl during the parent’s absence, received annual allowances, and was an integral part of Imhoff’s family correspondence. In contrast, Anna Rosura appears to have been without parents or other kin relations who could have filled in and offered support. This becomes especially evident in Peter Schorn’s will. In the event that he should die insolvent, he recommended his minor children ‘to the mercy of God’ and ‘to the protection [and] favour of Messrs Palmer & Co than whom I have no other friend in this quarter of the globe’.\textsuperscript{835} His son John Conrad did not make any reference to his mother’s kin in his will either.\textsuperscript{836} Whether Anna Rosura had no (living) relations in Bengal or her kin were considered inappropriate caregivers and participants in the family economy remains unknown. The example of the Schorn family indicates that, while the boundaries between married and unmarried conjugal relationships could be fluid and negotiable, the ways in which the woman’s kin became part of the extended family might have differed depending on her social status. This needs further examination, however, based on a broader body of sources.\textsuperscript{837}

\textsuperscript{831} Baptism of Helena Catharina, Margaret Elizabeth, and Isabella, 4 January 1802. BL IOR/N/1/6, p. 103. In the Cape colony siblings were sometimes baptized together, too. See Malherbe, ‘Illegitimacy’, 1162.

\textsuperscript{832} Baptism of John Arnold [sic] Schorn, 22 March 1814. BL IOR/N/1/9, p. 181. The ‘little Girl’ Finny that Schorn mentions in his will disappears from the records without a trace.

\textsuperscript{833} Burial of Anna Rosara Schorn, 30 April 1842. BL IOR/N/1/63, p. 208.

\textsuperscript{834} See chap. 3.2.3.

\textsuperscript{835} Will of Peter Matthew Schorn. 1812. BL IOR/L/AG/34/29/24, p. 461.

\textsuperscript{836} Will and codicils of John Conrad Schorn. 1875. BL IOR/L/AG/34/29/120, pp. 47–59.

\textsuperscript{837} Here, further decentring our perspective might also lead to new insights. According to Berke-mer, ‘Brotherhood’, 318, in South Asian kinship systems in-laws were not considered kin, but re- mained ‘foreigners’ in the eyes of the group they married into.
5.3.3 Children

An important consideration in examining how fathers made provisions for their children is the number of children of extramarital relationships with free and unfree women who were abandoned by their fathers, in the wills if not in their lives, and who thus do not become visible in the records. The wills show fathers who intended to care for their children whether they were ‘natural’ or ‘legitimate’, born by wives, long-time conjugal companions, or enslaved household workers. Wills provided a central means to provide for members of the family who were not legally considered kin and parts of the family and thus excluded from legal rights to inheritance. Illegitimate children who were not acknowledged by their father had no access to his estate under Dutch or English inheritance and family law. Wills allowed fathers to compensate for the disadvantage of illegitimate birth, but they also provided an instrument with which to draw lines between children and build hierarchies. In the Dutch East Indies, the option of adoption added to the complex parental relationships that men sought to order in their wills.

In nuclear families the status of children seems not to have affected the transfer of property by will. As outlined above, Henrik Hintzelman named as residual heirs his three daughters, most probably the offspring of his unsanctioned union with the enslaved woman Coyoh. Jean Paul Guyot named his adopted son Johann Gottfried, born by an enslaved woman in his household, his universal heir. Peter Matthew Schorn also named five of his six children born out of wedlock as heirs to his residual estate. The oldest daughter, Ida Mariana, who was already married when her father drafted his will, was excluded from her father’s estate probably because she had already received a dowry. Hintzelman, Guyot, and Schorn all made bequests to the mothers (or caregivers) of their children, while willing the estates to the children themselves. Although irregular because of the lack of a formal marriage contract, the ways these men ordered their families by means of their wills paralleled in many ways English inheritance practices, with children receiving the better part of the estate and the mother being provided for in her lifetime.

The will of Carl Friedrich Reimer shows significant similarities to the ways married couples with children in the Netherlands and Dutch East Indies ordered

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838 Taylor, Social World, 8.
839 Roman-Dutch law knew different types of illegitimacy and distinguished between ‘speelkinderen’ and ‘overwonnen bastaarden’. Speelkinderen were born to unmarried parents who could have legally married. Unlike in English law, where illegitimate children were considered ‘nobody’s children’ (filii nullius), Roman-Dutch law followed the principle that ‘a mother makes no bastard’. Thus, illegitimate children had a legal relationship with their mother and could inherit from her (and vice versa). The second category, overwonnen bastaarden were born to adulterous or incestuous unions. They could not inherit from either mother or father. Groenewald, “‘A Mother Makes No Bastard,’” 61–62.
840 See chap. 2.4.1.
841 Her name is misspelled in the will as Ida Rariana. Other variants of her name include Ida Mary Ann (baptism record), Ida Mariana (marriage), and Ida Marian (will of her brother John Conrad).
the transfer of property at death. Carl Friedrich, however, was not legally married. He had climbed the career ladder of the VOC within his 28 years of service and made it from soldier in 1767 to lieutenant colonel and director of fortifications. When he drafted his will in Batavia in 1795, he made ‘the free Christian woman’ and mother of his three adopted children, Anna Maria Pasqual, his universal heir. He also made three individual bequests to his adopted children. Six-year-old Carolina, five-year-old Frederica, and two-year-old Willem were all to receive 500 Rixdalers. Should Anna Maria give birth to another child, whom Carl Friedrich would subsequently adopt, this child, too, should receive 500 Rixdalers. Anna Maria was named executrix and guardian of the children jointly with two men.

Carl Friedrich Reimer’s will and the family that becomes visible in it needs some explanation. When Carl Friedrich drafted his will, adoption was not allowed in Prussia (where Carl Friedrich was born) or in Dutch and English laws. However, it was traditionally widely practised with different purposes and functions, and with varying legal, age, and gender implications in different societies and groups across the Indian Ocean world. In the settlements of the VOC, adoption had been in use since the early seventeenth century and came to play a central role in family formation well into the nineteenth century, as the case of Carl Friedrich’s family also demonstrates. Originally, the practice of adoption in the VOC settlements was linked to matters of illegitimacy and baptism. This distinguishes it from common understandings of adoption as making a stranger into kin. What is more, adopted children in the East Indies could very well be related by blood to their adoptive parents, as was the case for Carl Friedrich Reimer. Adoptive children thus could also be related by blood to other children in the family who had a different birth status.

Illegitimate children, of whom there were many in the VOC settlements, caused a problem for the Dutch Reformed Church: Children born out of wedlock to Christian parents, or at least to a Christian mother were not at issue. Children born to European Christian fathers and non-Christian mothers, on the other hand, posed a problem, as the church believed that these children would be brought up by their ‘heathen mother’ and thus not receive the ‘good, i.e. Christian, education’ necessary for receiving the sacrament of baptism. However, ‘[a]doption provided a solution’, as the adoptive parent(s) promised by deed of

842 For Dutch inheritance practices, see Schmidt, ‘Generous Provisions’.
843 Will of Carl Friedrich Reimer. 1795. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 6851, (1481).
846 McKnight, ‘Shifting Focus’, 297.
adoption to provide the adoptee with a proper Christian education.\textsuperscript{848} For the fathers of illegitimate children, the instrument of adoption offered other advantages that went beyond its religious implications. By means of adoption, fathers like Carl Friedrich Reimer, who adopted their own biological children, could provide these children with some legitimate status by giving them their names and making them known with two parents in the baptism registers.\textsuperscript{849} However, adopted children did not enjoy the same legal status as legitimate (\textit{wet-tige}) children.\textsuperscript{850} Unlike the act of legitimation, adoption did not change the legal status of the child and it did not necessarily create a legal relationship between an adopted child and its adoptive parents regarding succession and inheritance law. A resolution issued in 1767 stipulated that adoptive children held inheritance rights from both their biological and adoptive parents, but the biological parents (usually the mother) had to state explicitly whether they renounced their right of inheritance in the case of the child’s death.\textsuperscript{851} Although directed to the adoption of children by non-Christian parents, this resolution seems to have applied to Christian adoptive parents too. In practice, however, the legal position of the adopted child as heir to its adoptive parents was insecure and ambivalent. As Carla van Wamelen writes,

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\text{[t]he adopted child was not entitled to a legal portion, but [only] to what the adoptive parent wished to bequeath to him. Formally, succession was no more than an option, because the adoptive parent could exclude the stipulation laid down in the resolution.}\textsuperscript{852}
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The question of whether adoption entailed ‘a right of succession \textit{ab intestato} to the estate of the adoptive parents’ seems to have remained unresolved throughout the eighteenth century as litigations in succession and inheritance matters in the nineteenth century suggest.\textsuperscript{853}

When Carl Friedrich Reimer adopted his first child, Carolina, he stated in the adoption deed that he adopted her as ‘his own child’, which might have entailed her right to a part of her father’s estate despite the fact that she was illegitimate.\textsuperscript{854} However, by making a will and following traditional Dutch patterns of the transfer of property at the death of one spouse, Carl Friedrich ensured that his children would be provided for in any case. His will also shows great trust in his long-time conjugal companion, Anna Maria, to provide for the children’s

\textsuperscript{848} Sirks, ‘Saving Souls’, 366.

\textsuperscript{849} Sirks, ‘Saving Souls’, 369.

\textsuperscript{850} Niemeijer, ‘Slavery’, 177; Wamelen, \textit{Family Life}, 503–505.

\textsuperscript{851} Wamelen, \textit{Family Life}, 491–495.

\textsuperscript{852} ‘Het adoptiefkind had geen recht op een legitieme portie maar op wat de adoptant hem wenste na te laten. Formeel was zijn erfopvolging trouwens niet meer dan een optie, want de adoptant kon de in de resolutie neergelegde regeling uitsluiten.’ Wamelen, \textit{Family Life}, 503. I am grateful to Susanna Erlandsson who helped me with this translation.

\textsuperscript{853} Sirks, ‘Saving Souls’, 372.

\textsuperscript{854} Act of adoption by Carel Fredrik Reimer of Anna Carolina, daughter of Anna Maria Pasqual. CBG, BvTP, R637, scan FAPA080971.
education and upbringing and her ability to continue the administration of the estate, albeit supported by two men. Overall, the will gives evidence of a highly flexible way of family formation. The practice of adoption, inspired by local indigenous forms of kin-making and diverted from its intended function enabling children’s incorporation into the Christian community, served as a means to legitimize and structure family bonds. Moreover, the practice of will-making compensated for the lack of a legal marital contract that otherwise would have governed the family members’ property and inheritance rights.

While Carl Friedrich Reimer and Peter Matthew Schorn were explicit about the status of their children and the relationships that had produced these children, other testators glossed over and obliterated the status of their offspring. One of these testators is Johann Friedrich Lycke or Luecke, who was an assistant surgeon in the service of the EIC in Calcutta. At the end of 1789, Lycke traveled from Calcutta to Calcapore (Murshidabad), a Dutch factory north of Calcutta, to recover his health. He brought along his minor son George. Sensing that he would not recover, he drafted his will while ‘very sick and weak in body’. In this will, he gifted to his ‘beloved son George Luecke the amount of seven thousand Sicca Rupees and further all my effects, property and worldly subsistence to be administered by the hereunder mentioned executors for the benefit and education of my said son’. He remained silent on who the mother of little George was. According to Durba Ghosh, the absence of a mother’s name often means she was an enslaved or native woman, which might well have been the case for George. After Johann Friedrich died, a servant brought George to Calcutta to put him in the care of Reverends Blanchard and Gerlach, the executors of the will.

The will of Tobias Heller poses similar difficulties in reconstructing his family relations. Like Lycke, he named his son in his will, but not his son’s mother. However, records relating to the family of Carl Ludwig Hagemeister alert us to be wary of assuming enslaved or free(d) native mothers when testators did not name the mother of their child(ren) in their will. Carl Ludwig Hagemeister, like Heller and Lycke, mentioned only his children Lubert and Johanne in his will and made no reference to their mother. Only in the postscript to a letter to his executors in Germany did he clarify: ‘In case I shall die in India or on sea, my children would not even know the name of their mother, or who their godparents were’. Therefore, he wrote down the details of his marriage to Maria Adriana.

856 Will of John Fredrick Lycke. 1789. BL IOR/L/AG/34/29/6, p. 44.
857 Ghosh, ‘Decoding the Nameless’.
858 Account of the estate of John Fried./Fredrick Lycke (Luecke). Filed 1790. BL IOR/L/AG/34/27/12.
859 Will of Tobias Heller. 1759. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 6868, (5231).
860 Will of Charles Louis Hagemeister. 1761 (copy). AFSt/M 3 B 1 : 62. Also in BL IOR/P/328/61, pp. 81–83. The inventory and account of the estate are to be found in the same volume on pp. 120–127 and 186–187.
861 Carl Ludwig Hagemeister to Gotthilf August Francke. Madras, 23 September 1761. AFSt/M 3 B 1 : 63, fol. 107r.
née Warner, the names of her parents and the names of Lubert’s and Johanne’s godparents. These cases, once more, point to the difficulties in reading the archives of the East India companies for the histories of the women who were drawn into, and had a share in, the East Indies migrants’ endeavours as their domestic labourers, business partners, caregivers, sex partners, mothers of their children, and conjugal companions.

Complex nuclear-like families with legitimate, natural, and adopted children from more than one mother, employed various inheritance strategies. The fathers in these families had commonly lived in the East Indies for several decades, during which they cohabited successively, or at times simultaneously, with different women. Their family formations changed with the births and adoptions of children, the deaths of children and their mothers, and occasionally with separations or desertions. In some cases, a pattern emerges in which a man fathered one or several extramarital children with one or several women before he eventually married formally. Take, for example, junior merchant Erhard Christian Lantzius. He adopted two newborn children as his ‘own fleshly child[ren]’ (‘als zijn eigen vleeschelijk kind’) from the ‘free non-Christian woman’ Saria van Batavia in 1795 and 1796. One of the children received the name Wilhelm Fredrik, which was the reversed name of Erhard’s father in Germany. In 1802, he adopted yet another baby, this time from Ang Itnio, ‘a Chinese woman’. Presumably, all these children were his biological children. At some point, Erhard Christian seems to have married Rosina Elisabeth and the couple had a son, George Christiaan.

Some testators made no distinction between their ‘natural’, adopted, and legitimate children. In Europe, however, such inheritance practices would have been exceptional, as legitimate and legitimized children were usually appointed heirs and gained control over the paternal estate, while natural children received bequests. In 1761, the former captain (oud Captain) and second auctioneer (ven-dumeester) Christian Wilhelm Meyn drafted his last will and testament in Batavia. After 32 years in the East Indies he sought to order a family that had changed significantly through the years. To his stepson, Herman Simon Vincent, ‘in

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862 See also Borchardt, ‘Growing up’.
863 In the Dutch gentry the reverse pattern is observable: Widowers often cohabited with concubines and fathered illegitimate children. These children and concubines were then compensated in the wills of the fathers. Cavallo and Warner, ‘Introduction’, 5.
864 Act of adoption by Eerhard Christiaan Lantzius of Wilhelm Fredrik, son of Saria van Batavia, and act of adoption of Margaretha, daughter of Saria van Batavia. CBG, BvTP, L642, scan: FAPA057779, and L654, scan: FABA057908.
866 Georg Friedrich was one month old when he was adopted by Lantzius. CBG, BvTP, L572, scan: FAPA057395.
868 Two copies of the will are extant. A German translation is to be found in GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1009, fols. 172r–175r. A Dutch copy is in CBG, BvTP, M748, scan: FAPA065314.
Amsterdam or wherever he may be in Europe’, he bequeathed 7,000 Rixdalers ‘for his education’. Another bequest was for the ‘free local woman’ (vrije inlandse vrouw) Dialima van Makassar, who received a house (pedak) and the money that was in the possession of the testator but belonged to her, probably a loan. Finally, Christian named his ‘adopted son’, Friedrich Wilhelm Meyn, and his ‘natural son’ (‘natuurlijke zoon’), Wilhelm Christian Meyn, universal heirs to his estate in equal shares. In case one of them should die before reaching the age of 25, half of his portion should go to the living son and the other half should be evenly distributed between the testator’s siblings and nephew in Prussia. Without this contingency clause rerouting the bequest if one of the legatees died, the bequest would have been divided following intestate law, which had meant that the whole sum had gone to Wilhelm’s siblings as his children were considered illegitimate. In a 1763 codicil, he emancipated the enslaved woman Sonting and gifted her 200 Rixdalers and a chest of her clothes. Furthermore, he gifted the shares of a bond to his three sons; only later were the words ‘my adopted son’ added between the lines of the notary document.

Further documents add to the picture of Christian Wilhelm Meyn’s family. In 1744, his wife Johanna Keijsens had adopted a five-day-old child named Paulus von Batavia, the son of the ‘free woman’ Rasmi van Ternaten. Who was the father of Paulus? Was this the same child that Christian Meyn later named as his adopted son Fredrich Wilhelm? Who was the mother of his ‘natural son’ Wilhelm Christian, and why did he not adopt him too? What relationship did he have with Dialima van Maccasser? Was she the mother of Wilhelm Christian? After the death of his first wife, Johanna, Christian Meyn married a second time in 1760. Hendrina Gertruijda van Rijneveld brought her son Herman Simon Vincent into the family. However, she died half a year after the marriage in 1761. Despite their short marriage, Christian made financial provisions for the education of his stepson. It is unknown whether he ever met Herman, as the latter was in Europe when he drafted his will. At the same time, the bequests he made to his three sons differed along the lines of blood relationship. He privileged allegiance with blood kin over legitimacy. While the stepson received individual bequests, the adopted son Friedrich Wilhelm and the natural son Wilhelm Christian inherited equal shares. Their names also indicated how their father imagined his lineage and that he did not distinguish between his sons based on their legal status. A natural child would not usually receive his father’s name, but Christian Meyn defied this legal restriction and formed and represented his family as he wanted it to be in his will.

869 Codicil of Christiaan Willem Meijn. 1763. CBG, BvTP, M748, scan: FAPA065314.
870 Act of adoption of Johanna Keijsers, married to Christiaan Willem Meij, of Paulus van Batavia, son of Rasmi van Ternaten. CBG, BvTP, M977, scan: FAPA066555.
871 Further records concerning Wilhelm Christian and Friedrich Wilhelm allow us to reconstruct fragments of their lives too. CBG, BvTP, K632, scan: FAPA052196; M529, scan FAPA063049; and M669, scan: FAPA065030.
872 Wamelen, Family Life, 400.
Other testators differentiated in providing material compensation and education to their biological children depending on their relationship with the mothers. Such inheritance strategies resembled those of European families, where men who had both legitimate and illegitimate children provided for them according to their mother’s socioeconomic status. Bernhard Hard, for instance, a free inhabitant in Calcutta, had spent not less than 25 years in Bengal when he drafted his will in 1798. He acknowledged five children from at least three different mothers in his will. First, he established several trusts for the maintenance of his minor son John and his minor adopted daughter Sarah, secured by land and houses. His two natural sons, Benjamin and Jeremiah, were to be maintained from a sum of 2,000 Rupees which was to be put in public funds. While he stated that the bequest for his son John was to be used for his education, he did not make particular provisions for the education of Benjamin and Jeremiah. To his ‘girl’, Ester, he gifted 500 Sicca Rupees. In case she were pregnant, a trust of 1,000 Sicca Rupees should be established for her child. According to the inventory filed by Hard’s executors, Ester was also the mother of Jeremiah and Benjamin. To his wife Anna, ‘who some time ago left me and has ever since co-habited with another man’, he bequeathed 5 Sicca Rupees. Finally, he appointed his daughter Mary Stacchini and his son John heirs to the remainder of his estate. It remains unknown who the mother of Mary Stacchini was. Mary was already married in 1798, thus she cannot have been the legitimate child of Bernhard and Anna, who married only in 1790.

A second question raised by this will concerns the adopted daughter. Unlike the settlements of the VOC, EIC settlements did not commonly practise adoption, although Company officials surely carefully observed the common practice of adoption in Hindu households and those of the Nazims of Murshidabad. Adoption was not, however, an institution acknowledged by the English law that applied in the EIC’s presidencies in India. Bernhard Hard’s will points to the legal pluralism and flexibility of the practice of law in colonial contexts.

874 Will of Bernard Hard. 1798. BL IOR/L/AG/34/29/11, p. 2.
875 Other spellings of his name include Barnard, Barnhard, Bernard, Bernhart, Hart and Hardt.
876 Account of the estate of the late Bernard Hard. 1799. BL IOR/L/AG/34/27/22, p. 220. In this document Ester is spelled Estra.
877 Anna Roberton was born in 1772, the daughter of James Roberton and a woman named Lucey. BL IOR/N/1/3, p. 28. For the marriage record of Bernard Hard and Anna Roberton, see BL IOR/N/1/4, p. 101.
Whether Hard had adopted Sarah in the neighbouring VOC settlement Chinsura, or if he embraced this indigenous practice extra-legally for his own purposes remains unknown. The account that his executors presented to the Supreme Court a year after his death suggest that the presence of an ‘adopted’ child did not disturb anyone.

Despite making provisions for all his children, Hard considered his children Mary and John, who appear in his will as his legitimate children, his principal heirs. Thereby, he created a hierarchy among his children, who had probably all grown up together in the same household. His legitimate children became his heirs and thus continued the paternal line; the adopted daughter was provided for in the short term in the same manner as her brother John, but excluded from her father’s estate; and the two natural sons were maintained but entirely detached from the paternal estate and access to education. The hierarchy among these children was not absolute, but gradual, depending both on the concepts of legitimacy and illegitimacy and the status and probably race of the mothers.

We find a similar pattern of gradual sibling hierarchy based on legitimacy, mother’s relationship with the father, and presumably race in polygamous families. When a wife and a (slave-)concubine lived in the same household, a wife with a keen eye on her children’s rights was probably the main reason natural and adopted children in these families were materially compensated, but usually not appointed heirs. Polygamous relationships were nothing exceptional in the Indian Ocean world or among the wealthier elites in Europe. The extraordinary councillor (raad extraordinaire) and former commander of Malabar, Christian Ludwig Senff, created such a polygamous family. He was married to Johanna Carolina Wichmans and made a joint will with her in 1771 in Batavia. As was common in joint Dutch wills, Christian and Johanna named the longest living spouse universal heir. Their daughter Magdalena Juliana was already married and received a bequest of 10,000 Rixdalers. Christian also gifted 3,000 Rixdalers to his adopted son Lodewijk Cornelis, who was five years old. He ordered that the child stay in the house with the heir and be brought up there. He also bequeathed 2,000 Rixdalers, ‘all jewels, gold and silver in her possession from the testator’ to the ‘free Christian woman’ Jamila van Nias, whose Christian name was Johanna Lourens. Christian ordered that she too should be allowed to stay in the house of the heir. However, she was also explicitly free to go wherever she wanted. The gift to Jamila clearly marks her as Christian’s concubine and it is possible that she also was the mother of his adopted son Lodewijk. Compared with the

881 Will of Christiaan Lodewijk Senff and Johanna Cornelia Wichmans. 1771. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 6847, (46).
882 In Stendal, the tombstone of Christian Ludwig Senff’s mother, Anna Gerttrut Senff (†1770), carries the inscription that she had 55 grandchilder. It would be interesting to know if both Juliana Magdalena and Lodewijk Cornelis were considered to be among them. See Frank Moldenhauer, ‘Anna Gerttrut Senff’ (2019), in Datenbank Historischer Gräbermäler der Altmark, Altmarkischer Verein für vaterländische Geschichte zu Salzwedel, http://www.altmark-geschichte.de/platten_db/db_show_script.php?id=1653&name=, accessed 13 November 2020.
polygamous relationships of elite men in Europe, it is remarkable that Senff’s wife and concubine apparently lived in the same house. And yet, whoever the mother of Lodewijk was, Christian detached her from the child who was to be educated and socialized as a member of his father’s social group. What is more, he expected that his wife would take over (or continue) to care for the son of her husband. However, it seems that his wish was not followed. Johanna Cornelia remarried shortly after her husband died in 1772. Lodewijk was registered in the books of the Weeskamer as resident ‘with Sauerland’.

The will of Julius Imhoff suggests that the presence of a legal wife might explain why testators differentiated between children born in polygamous family arrangements. Julius was not married but fathered three children with two native women in Bengal. Whether or not these relationships were simultaneous remains unknown. In his will, Julius provided for his three natural sons John, William, and Charles equally and stressed that the interests of their inheritances should be used for their education and maintenance. However, arrangements for their mothers reveal the difference in their status: Bibby Polly, mother of John, received a gift of 8 Rupees per month. Bibby Jeenut, mother of William and Charles, was provided the interest on a sum of 1,000 Rupees, and it seems Julius had made other arrangements for her, too. Despite his attempts to provide for his sons equally, they were nevertheless treated differently after their father’s death based on their outer appearance. Julius’s executor in India and his family in England, that is Marian and Warren Hastings, discussed what to do with the boys and how to arrange their education. Eventually, it was decided that only the oldest son, William (later called Fitzjulius), should be sent to England for his education. John, on the other hand, was considered to be too dark, and was therefore kept in India and educated at a Mughal school in Calcutta.

The examples of the adopted Lodewijk Senff and the natural sons William and John Imhoff are an important reminder that the provisions fathers made in their wills were sometimes no more than wishes. What the children actually received and whether their upbringing and maintenance were arranged according to the will is another story.

885 Will of Julius Imhoff. [1799]. BL IOR/L/AG/34/29/11. There is another copy of the will in BL Add MS 29232, fols. 278–280, with some passages that have been omitted in the copy in IOR/L/AG/34/29/11, e.g. a bequest to Julius’s ‘servant’ George. Julius did not mention the names of the mothers of his children in his will, however his executors wrote their names down in the accounting made of his estate. Account of the estate of Julius Imhoff. 1801. BL IOR/L/AG/34/27/24, fol. 22. In Hindi and Urdu bibi referred to a wife or lady, while in the colonial context it was used for the female companions of Englishmen. Ghosh, Sex and the Family, 33.
886 Charles died in an accident in 1802.
5.4 Reconciling relationships

Around a third of the testators acknowledged relations both in the German lands and the East Indies in their wills. Wills created a space in which relationships in the past and the present could be integrated. Frequently, German East Indies migrants named their parents, siblings, nephews, and nieces their heirs. Fathers who had left children in German lands when they went to the East Indies confirmed in their wills that these children should be heirs. Occasionally, but not very often, testators favoured siblings over their own illegitimate offspring. More frequently, it seems, kin in Germany were privileged over conjugal (but unmarried) companions. Inheritance and bequests by will allowed testators to settle old responsibilities, debts, and possibly promises made to their families before they left Europe. Wills also created and made visible connections among generations and kin across oceans who would likely never meet.

Several testators mentioned in the section above who named their children in the East Indies as universal or principal heirs also gifted sums to their parents and siblings in the German lands. Take, for example, Christian Wilhelm Meyn, who made arrangements for a complex family consisting of his natural son, one adopted son, a stepson, and the free Christian woman, Dialima. To his brother and sister and to his half-siblings, all living in Tilsit in Prussia, Meyn gifted sums between 1,000 and 4,000 Rixdalers. To his nephew in Tilsit he assigned the annual interest of a share in the *Amfioensociëteit*. In the event that one of his universal heirs, his natural son Willem Christian or his adopted son Fredrick Willem, should die during their minority, half of his share was assigned to the testator's siblings in Prussia. Godfried Sperling, who named his adopted daughter Susanna Maria universal heir, made individual bequests to his aunt, siblings, and half-siblings in Magdeburg, Petersburg, and Batavia. Godfried Sperling, who named his adopted daughter Susanna Maria universal heir, made individual bequests to his aunt, siblings, and half-siblings in Magdeburg, Petersburg, and Batavia. Johann Friedrick Lycke gifted 3,000 Sicca Rupees to his sister or her heirs. In the case that his minor son and heir should die before he came of age, the remainder of his estate was also to go to his sister.

The will of Johann Lycke deserves some further attention. Johann had not seen nor written to his sister in more than 15 years. He had left his home town Egeln in the Dutchy of Magdeburg in 1768, because he feared being recruited...
for the army (‘aus Furcht vor dem Soldaten-stande’). According to the municipal judge of Egeln, his desertion resulted in his father being kept in ‘a long and sad arrest’. Between 1768 and 1773, Lycke sojourned in Berlin, Danzig (now Gdańsk), Hamburg, and Copenhagen, and during this time, he sent letters to his father. In the collective memory of the inhabitants of Egeln, Lycke’s departure had caused his father so much ‘sorrow and pain’ that he eventually died. Lycke sent a last letter sometime after 1773 from Amsterdam, in which he informed his sister Maria Kühne that he was about to leave for the East Indies ‘to make a fortune’. After this letter, Maria Kühne did not hear news about her brother’s whereabouts ‘or if he was alive or dead’ for more than 15 years. In India, Lycke served in the EIC as a surgeon, and, we recall, fathered a son named George. When he drafted his will ‘very sick and weak in body’, he remembered his sister in Egeln. She and his son were the only persons named in his will. They were the main social reference points for Lycke shortly before he died. Maybe he felt sorry about having severed ties with his sister in Europe and now wanted to make good. Maybe he sought to turn the pain he had caused his family in Egeln into a benefit. Disposing of his estate by will allowed Lycke to create an economic and emotional space that integrated his relationships both past and present, proximate and distant. However, Lycke did not go so far as to recommend his son to the care of his sister and thereby create a new relationship, a practice common in wealthier Anglo-Indian families that we also find among some of the German East Indies families. The task of caring for his son Lycke instead transferred to his executors, the Reverends Thomas Blanchard and John William Gerlach. George grew up in the care of the Blanchard family in Calcutta and probably in London too. The few extant records do not suggest that Lycke’s sister Maria

892 Minutes of the municipal court of Egeln. 15 December 1790. AfSt/M 1 C 31b : 58. In August 1790, when the estate of Johann’s father in Egeln was divided among the heirs, it was noted that Johann had deserted from military service and thus his share in the maternal and paternal estates was paid to the royal veteran fund (Invalidenkasse) according to the law concerning deserted subjects. Agreement concerning inheritance (Erbvergleich) of the heirs of Johann Andreas Christoph Lücke. 14 and 18 August 1790. Landesarchiv Sachsen-Anhalt, Db 7, I No. 3, fols. 509r–518r. Another case in which the share in an inheritance was claimed by the Invalidenkasse because of desertion is the inheritance of Johann Daniel Imhoff. His father, Johann Wolfgang Imhoff, had appointed him and his two other sons together with his wife Maria Regina Senffen heirs in equal shares. However, Johann Daniel had deserted from military service and therefore the Invalidenkasse claimed the inheritance. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1015, fols. 1r–9r (Imhoff).
894 Certificate of the municipal court of Egeln for Maria Elisabeth Kühne. 15 December 1790. AfSt/M 1 C 31b : 61.
896 Minutes of the municipal court of Egeln. 15 December 1790. AfSt/M 1 C 31b : 58.
897 Will of John Fredrick Lycke. 1789. BL IOR/L/AG/34/29/6, p. 44.
898 See chap. 4.3.3.
899 The Blanchard family seems to have been George Lycke’s main point of reference throughout his life. His will contained several bequests to members of the Blanchard family. Will of George Lycke. 1835. BL IOR/L/AG/34/29/56, pp. 254–256.
ever reached out to her nephew, though she certainly knew of him. She did, however, ask for a copy of her brother’s will which she wanted to keep for herself and her children as a ‘love token’ (‘Liebes-Unterpfand’).

Testators who died without acknowledged children often named their parents or siblings universal heirs. Often, these men had probably cohabited with a female companion in the East Indies. Christian Samuel Gusovius and Johann Wiederkeer both made bequests to ‘free Christian women’. But when it came to their estate, they made their parents (and in the event of their deaths, their siblings) in German lands universal heirs. While Wiederkeer had spent only 10 years in the East Indies, Gusovius had been absent from his family in Königsberg probably for half of his life when he drafted his will in 1751. Long absence, however, did not dissolve the bonds between Gusovius and his parents and siblings. Johann Heinrich Postell had spent even more time (36 years) in the East Indies. He had probably married, but his wife must have died before he did. When he drafted his last will and testament, he gifted small sums to two free women, Magdalena von Bengalen and Aurora von Maccasser. However, he also made his two brothers in Danzig his universal heirs. If the women in these wills had actually been the testators’ conjugal partners, the arrangements show that they were clearly disadvantaged by the lack of a marital contract which would have given them the right to half of the estate. In other words, families in German lands likely benefited financially from the fact that many families in the East Indies were not based on legally recognized marital unions.

As shown above, in complex nuclear-like families with a combination of natural, legitimate, and adopted children, testators used wills to defeat inheritance laws that would have excluded their illegitimate or adopted offspring from inheriting. Occasionally, but not often, testators split their estate between their siblings and their adopted children. Heinrich August Roessel from Berlin even chose other heirs over his adopted child born in the East. He had come to Batavia in 1751 as a sailor but rose to merchant and member of the Court of Justice (lid in den raad van justitie) during his 34 years of service. When he drafted his will in 1783, his first action was to emancipate the two enslaved women Saronie van Balij and Clarinda van Boegis. To Saronie he gifted 400 Rixdalers and to Clarinda 400 August Christian Penn to Johann Friedrich Nebe. Egeln, 16 December 1790. AFSt/M I C 31b:62.

901 Will of Johannes Wiederkeer. 1738 (translation). GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1005, fols. 60r–62r; Will of Christian Samuel Gusovius. 1751. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02. inv.no. 6849, (780).
902 Court documents concerning the lawsuit by Jan Hendrik Postel, married to Amelia Cornelis, Widow Sanders. CBG, BvTP, P813, scan: FAPA074223.
904 For example, Will of Johann Georg Andres. 1803. HStA S, A 33 Bü 10 (no foliation); and Will of Franz Georg Philip Braunwaldt. 1761. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 6893, (9635). Braunwaldt added the condition that, should his siblings not collect their inheritance within two years, the whole estate should go to his adopted daughter. This is what eventually happened.
905 VOC employment record of Hendrik August Ressel. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 14215, fol. 122. Also spelled Rossel.
150 Rixdalers. Further bequests were made to the Lutheran church in Batavia (200 Rixdalers), *juffrouw* Elisabeth van Waard (50 Rixdalers), and ‘the free born girl’ Noressa van Batavia, who lived in the testator’s house (300 Rixdalers).\(^{906}\) The major bequest went to his adopted daughter Hendrietta Augusta. Roessel gifted her 15,000 Rixdalers, the ‘slave’ Laut van Balij and his wife Saida, and two other enslaved individuals, Malaly van Boegis and Minerva van Maccasser. However, Roessel declared that he had neither parents nor legitimate (wettige) descendants and therefore named his brother and three sisters or their children his universal heirs.\(^{907}\)

Roessel’s will, and especially his statement that he had no legitimate descendants, and therefore named collateral kin as principal heirs, again raises questions about the status of adopted children in the Dutch East Indies. Another case might shed more light on Roessel’s decision. Christoph Gottfried Jäger, a surgeon in the service of the VOC in Makassar who died in 1784, also left behind an adopted daughter he had fathered with one of his enslaved household servants.\(^{908}\) Unlike Roessel, Jäger died intestate and his siblings in Pomerania claimed his whole estate.\(^{909}\) A deed of adoption has yet to be located. Therefore, it remains unknown whether Roessel adopted the child as his own and thus gave it inheritance rights or if he had ‘expressly restricted [adoption] to the purpose of giving the child a good [Christian] education’.\(^{910}\) In this latter case, his siblings would indeed have been the legal heirs as they claimed. In Amsterdam, however, the situation was assessed differently. The Prussian Consul Chomel, who had been ordered to manage the disbursement of the estate to the (hopeful) heirs, reported to Berlin that ‘at the East India house’, he was told that ‘an adopted child enjoyed the same rights as a legitimate child and therefore the heirs have nothing to expect’.\(^{911}\) The case was eventually brought to the meeting of the Gentlemen Seventeen for a decision. They ruled that the remainder of Jäger’s wages in Amsterdam should be awarded to the siblings, while the adopted daughter was considered heir of Jäger’s estate in the East Indies. Thus a pragmatic solution was found for a situation that had no equivalent in Roman-Dutch law but that had been created through legal pluralism and new practices of kin-making in the overseas settlement.

The Jäger case suggests that adoption in the Dutch East Indies created uncertainties regarding inheritance and succession and was likely to be contested. Against this background, we might want to rethink Roessel’s will, rather than simply assuming that he privileged his siblings over his possibly mixed-race

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\(^{906}\) It seems that Elisabeth van Waard became the ward of Henrietta Augusta and fostered her. Henrietta married in 1791. Journal of Wards of the Orphan Chamber Batavia 1755–1799. CBG, Weeskamer Batavia 1629–1847, Editie: 155, scan: WKBA000330, (no foliation), picture 5.

\(^{907}\) Will of Heinrich August Rossel. 1783. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 6888, (8825).

\(^{908}\) See Bruijn, *Ship’s Surgeons*, 211.

\(^{909}\) GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1031, fols. 40r–89r (Jäger).

\(^{910}\) Sirks, ‘Saving Souls’, 371. See also the discussion on adoption in chap. 5.3.3.

\(^{911}\) Report of Pierre Chomel. Amsterdam, 5 February 1787. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1031. fol. 44r.
daughter. The bequest he made to Hennrietta was considerable. It exceeded the value of the remainder of the estate, and a little more than 2,000 gulden were eventually paid to the heirs. Making a bequest rather than appointing his daughter universal heir might have been a way to create a financially secure arrangement for her that was less likely to be contested. Another reading shifts the focus to the ways in which testators acknowledged, maintained, and transcended relationships through their wills. While the sum that the heirs in Germany received was proportionally small compared with the bequest left to the daughter, Roessel nevertheless expressed, renewed, and ensured his attachment to his siblings through his will, despite the distance and time that separated them from each other. The will allowed Roessel to meet his obligations and to negotiate emotional attachments with both his daughter and his family in Brandenburg. In this regard, his will resembles inheritance practices in the American colonies. When illegitimate children were present, testators made substantial bequests to other kin, too, while fathers of legitimate children would pass property down only to members of their nuclear families and their linear descendants.

Hans Joachim Schröder made an arrangement in his will similar to that of Roessel. Originally from Lübeck, Schröder had settled at the Cape of Good Hope in 1736. In 1763, more than 27 years after he left Germany, he drafted his will. Schröder had not been married at the Cape but he fathered two children with the late ‘free black woman’ Mietje van Bali. In his will, Henrick Jacob Schreuder and Pietronella Maria Schreuder, whose names suggest he recognized them as his children, were each to receive a legacy of 1,000 gulden. As his legal heirs, however, Schröder appointed the children of his sister Maria, living in Altona near Hamburg – whose names he could not recall. In the event of their premature death, Schröder explicitly requested that Henrick Jacob and Pietronella Maria receive the remainder of his estate. Despite having his own children, Schröder privileged the children of his sister as his legal heirs. The extant sources suggest that Schröder had not been in contact with his sister for some time. Aside from not even knowing his sister’s children’s names, he stated that his sister was living in Altona, when in fact she lived in Neu Ruppin in Brandenburg. Finally, when his sister Maria petitioned the Prussian king for help in her inheritance matter, she did not mention any correspondence or communication with her brother – something siblings were usually keen to emphasize to support their legal claims. One reading of Schröder’s will suggests he had past obligations to his sister that he hoped to clear through his estate. From a petition that his sister Maria sent to the Prussian king in 1770, we learn that she had lent money to her

912 GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1023, fols. 10r–14r (Roessel).
914 Also spelled Hans Jochem Schreuder.
915 Will of Hans Jochem Schreuder. 1763. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 6872, (5769).
916 This was what eventually happened.
917 Petition of Johann Christop Haeger for his wife. Neu Ruppin, 2 July 1770. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1015, fol. 110r. For this strategy in petitions, see chap. 6.3.3.
brother for his journey in 1736. She considered this a temporary loan and calculated that with 5 per cent interest he now owed her 535 Reichsthaler and 12 Groschen. Maybe Schröder remembered this loan in his will. Naming his daughter Pietronella Maria may be a small hint that he had never lost affection for his sister Maria. East Indies migrants frequently gave their children the names of their siblings and other kin, creating family connections across generations and oceans.\footnote{918}{Godfried Sperling, e.g. named his adopted daughter Susanne Maria after his father’s sister Susanna Maria Sperling. Tobias Heller gave his son the name of his brother Johann. For the practice of naming as means to create ties, see Michael Mitterauer, *Abnen und Heilige. Namengebung in der europäischen Geschichte* (Munich, 1993).}

As in the case of Roessel, it is tempting to see the type of arrangement that Schröder made for his children as indicative of a trend to prioritize legitimate kin over illegitimate and mixed-race children. However, being named legal heir was not always advantageous in financial terms because all bequests and debts had to be paid first. The estate of Roessel shows this clearly. In Schröder’s case we do not know what his financial affairs looked like after his death. Nevertheless, the arrangement he made in his will allowed him to reconcile his past and present life and relationships. He compensated his children financially and thereby met his paternal obligation, while at the same time acknowledging and honouring the relationships that had made his East Indies endeavour possible in the first place.

Fathers who had left behind children and wives in Germany frequently made a last will and testament confirming their children’s hereditary title. Johann Wolfgang Imhoff named his wife and children universal heirs more than 20 years after he had left them in Berlin.\footnote{919}{Will of Johann Wolfgang Imhoff. 1769. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, 6868, (5084). For their history, see chaps. 3.3.1 and 6.3.2.} Johann Balthasar Trosihn also acknowledged his two daughters and his late daughter’s children as legal heirs to his estate.\footnote{920}{Will of Johan Balthasar Droschin. 1763. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, 6860, (3667).} Joachim Friedrich Krüger, who had a daughter in Hamburg, named her his universal heir.\footnote{921}{Will of Joachim Friedrich Krüger. 1784 (extract). GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep 34, No. 1026, fols. 135v–136r.} These testators mainly confirmed the way in which their estates would have been distributed had they died intestate. The estate of Gustav Andreas Jaerisch, for instance, was paid to his widow and minor daughter in Germany after he died intestate in 1760, 12 years after he had left them.\footnote{922}{VOC employment record of Gustavus Andreas Geris. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 6224, fol. 254.} However, as Friedrich von Struve, a captain on Ceylon, explained to his son he had left in Berlin, East Indies migrants were well advised to safeguard their wishes in a will. If there was no testament, the curator ad litis or the governors of the Orphan Chamber took over the administration of estates ‘and then good night inheritance’. In this case the heirs would need to wait years if they were to receive anything at all in the end. Therefore, it was much better to make a will ‘and to appoint two friends and honest people as executors’.\footnote{923}{Johann Friedrich von Struve to his son. no date (extract). GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1038, fol. 106r–v.} Certain paternal
obligations could be fulfilled at a distance, and providing that one’s progeny received their just share of the paternal estate was one of them. Cases from German archives show that the Orphan Chambers in cases of intestate deaths tried to locate heirs, but this usually took more time than having an estate administered by an executor acting in the best interests of the testator. Much depended on the personal interests of those charged with locating and informing the heirs. Leaving a will and thereby ordering of one’s own afterlife was apparently compelling to many fathers.

Wills, or in rare cases records produced during probate, make visible connections of people who became related through marriage across oceans that are difficult to grasp through other sources. In 1761, the senior merchant Johann Philip Rieck and his wife Johanna Catharina Zinck drafted a joint will in Batavia. They named each other universal heirs and ordered that the longest living spouse should pay the legitimate portion to the deceased’s parents. As Johann Philip died first, this meant that Johanna Catharina was to pay part of the estate to his father in Halberstadt.924 In a letter that she consequently sent to her father-in-law written in broken German she expressed her condolences over the death of his son, but mostly she lamented her poverty. Not in ‘a thousand years’ could she pay the debts and the only good thing about her situation was that she was ‘alone and without children’.925 She expressed her wish to receive letters, preferably written in Dutch. She did not mention the will. Perhaps she hoped information of its provisions would not reach Halberstadt. They did, however, and the legatees felt betrayed by her rather than sympathetic.926

The siblings and heirs of Matthias Steiger in Württemberg encountered a situation different to that of the Rieck heirs. Matthias was married to Johanna Christina Smith, daughter of the burgher Christiaan Smith and Anna Christian van den Berg. Together, the spouses made a mutual will in 1783 and named the longest living spouse universal heir. If the marriage should remain childless, the parents of the first deceased should receive a bequest. Collateral kin were not mentioned. Nevertheless, after Matthias died, Johanna Christina, together with her father who was also an executor, reached out to his siblings in Württemberg and offered them a present of 1,000 gulden.927 The happiness in Württemberg about this unexpected gift was great. And it increased when the siblings learnt that Johanna Christina and her new husband Joachim Herman Stumphius even agreed that the siblings could divide the capital Matthias had left in Württemberg. Stumphius, who corresponded with the Steiger family, wrote that ‘nothing

924 Will of Johann Philip Rich and Johanna Catharina Zinck. 1761. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 6858, (3434).
927 Johanna Christina Smith to the siblings of Matthias Steiger. Batavia, 3 November 1783 (copy). HStA S, A 213 Bü 3377 (no foliation).
pleases us more’ than to show ‘our love and goodwill’ to the kin in Germany they had won through his wife’s first marriage.\footnote{Joachim Hermann Strumphijus to his ‘dear in-laws and siblings’. Batavia, 8 October 1788. HStA S, A 213 Bü 3377 (no foliation).} Apparently, Johanna Christina Smith and her new husband considered extended kin relations in Germany, people they had never met and in all probability never would meet, so valuable that they decided to invest in these relationships by renouncing their rights and instead making gifts. In a similar vein, Margaretha Ann Burger or Burges, widow of Joachim Spiegel, reached out to her sister-in-law in Brandenburg.\footnote{Joachim had first been married to 16-year-old Anna Smith van Chinsura in 1777. Permission to marry for Joachim Spiegel and Anna Smith. Hooghly, 24 July, 25 July, and 10 August 1777. NL-HaNA, Nederlandse bezittingen in India: Digitale Duplicaten van Archieven aanwezig in de Tamil Nadu Archives te Chennai, nummer toegang 1.11.06.11, inv.no. 1744, pp. 77–78 [scan 38–39].} Joachim had willed his three sisters individual bequests of 1,000 Rupees each and Margaretha accompanied the news of this bequest with her wish to one day ‘visit’ her sister-in-law and family after the continuing wars in Europe were over.\footnote{Margaretha Anna Spiegeln, née Burger, to her sister-in-law. Chinsura, 26 March 1795 (copy). GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1032, fol. 5r–v. Margaret cannot have written the letter herself. In other records she signed only with a mark. See letter of attorney of Weduwe Gerard Pauw & Zoon and Heer Pieter Moerel in Amsterdam, granted by Margareth Ann Burges, Johan Carel Lodewig Blume, and Constantijn Diederik Bouman. Hooghly, 6 June 1794. NL-HaNA Nederlandse bezittingen in India: Digitale Duplicaten, 1.11.06.11, inv.no. 1673, No.44 [scan 124–127].}

These three cases document how new kin relations were forged between the East Indies and German lands. They are known today only through serendipity: frictions in the course of payments or, as in the case of Rieck, mistrust that made these letters find their way into the archives. The three cases have in common that they all are located in the context of legal marriages that connected the relatives of the spouses to each other across the ocean. They leave open the question of whether similar connections would have been possible between the unmarried long-time conjugal companions of East Indies migrants and their families in Germany. Margot Finn has suggested that this is what distinguished the legal wives from the native companions of Anglo-Indians. Native women who were not legally married to British men were excluded from the correspondence networks between India and England.\footnote{Finn, “‘Frictions’ d’empire”, 1200.} In case of the German East Indies migrants, correspondence is scarce. What is clear from the available material, however, is that conjugal, but unmarried, companions did not become acknowledged kin of the relatives of the men they cohabited with.

5.5 Looking homeward

Around 10 per cent of the wills (8 out of more than 70) acknowledged no personal relationships other than European comrades and kin in Germany. In these cases, the testators had usually spent only one to five years in the East Indies. One of the cases occurred in the context of the Protestant settlement on Sumatra.
and it points to the flexibility of married life. Sanders and Mary Pankuke had come together to Sumatra and tried to make a living there, first as farmers and then as bakers.\footnote{See chap. 2.5.1.} Mary was pregnant, but something must have happened to the baby. Shortly after, she petitioned for permission to return to Europe because she ‘has laboured under a bad state of health, and her present disposition of body is such that she has no prospect of getting better while she continues in this climate’.\footnote{Petition of Mary Pankuke. Fort Marlborough, 26 January 1771. BL IOR/G/35/78, p. 454. See also Fort Marlborough General Letter. 8 March 1771. BL IOR/G/35/44, p. 241.} Her husband, however, stayed on Sumatra. Two years later, in March 1773, he was ‘weak in body’ and drafted his will. He named his wife Mary, now in Europe, his universal heir, and in event she had have died, his siblings in Hesse-Kassel.\footnote{Will of Sanders Pankuke. 1773. BL IOR/G/35/16 (no foliation).} The bonds between the spouses had not weakened over the crossing of oceans. In 1775 the remainder of Sander’s estate, 60 Pounds, was sent to his wife by means of bills of exchange.\footnote{Postscript. List of bills of exchange. 17 December 1774. BL IOR/G/35/16 (no foliation).} What had begun as a family venture in 1770, ended as a family venture.

Several other cases in which only comrades or kin in Germany were acknowledged in wills are related to the Hanoverian auxiliary regiments. The lives of many of these men circled around life in garrison, where they lived and spent most of their time.\footnote{Petzold, Alltag, 145–164.} Lieutenant George Karl de Roques had come to the Coromandel Coast in the service of the 14th Infantry Regiment in 1782. The officers of the auxiliary regiments had been recruited from existing Hanoverian regiments, which had implications for the social cohesion of the group.\footnote{Tzoref-Ashkenazi, ‘German Auxiliary Troops’, 32; and Tzoref-Ashkenazi, German Soldiers.} This strong sense of belonging becomes particularly evident in the will of de Roques. Being weak in body, he decided to draft his will in August 1786 in Arcot.\footnote{For this and the following quotes, see Will of Georg Karl de Roques. 1786. NLA HA, Cal. Br. 15, No. 3426. Another will that only acknowledged German kin was produced by Friedrich Wilhelm Madelung. He named his nephew universal heir. Will of Friedrich Wilhelm Madelung. 1782. NLA HA, Cal. Br. 15, No. 2561.} To his latest knowledge, his parents were still alive, and he named them universal heirs of his estate.\footnote{For George Carl de Roques’s biography, see Christof-Füchsle, ‘Two Hanoverian Lieutenants’, esp. 202–203.} However, he also ordered that his three siblings should inherit the remainder of his estate in case his parents had died. From the major part of the estate, de Roques carved out several individual and highly emotional bequests: besides expressing his ‘most affectionate thanks’ to Captain Hornsted for his loyal friendship and integrity, de Roque gave Hornsted, whom he also appointed executor, his silver spoons and all of his books as a mark of gratitude. Another individual bequest was for de Roques’s comrade and long-term friend Lieutenant von Weyhe. Asking von Weyhe not to forget him, de Roque bequeathed him his silver pocket watch, six silver teaspoons, engraved with his name, and other personal belongings. The rest of de Roques’s material possessions were to be sold.
at auction according to custom. However, his hunting watch should be sent to his ‘loved ones’ in Celle, Hanover. Finally, he ordered that he be buried ‘as close as possible’ to his ‘dear friend’ Captain von Wersebe, or in case he should die in Madras, ‘as close as possible’ to his ‘invaluable bosom friend Lieutenant Carl Breymann’. Having probably spent most of the previous five years in India in the garrison and with his comrades, de Roques’s main points of social reference were his parents in Celle and his comrades. He reaffirmed and maintained these relationships for after his death through mementos. Moreover, the will reveals the wish of a transcontinental traveller for physical proximity to his peers even in death.

However, being an officer did not necessarily mean to being socially isolated in the camps and garrisons, as the probate records of Benjamin Friedrich Ratzell, colonel in the service of the EIC show. Ratzell was in good health, but considering ‘the danger of [his] station’, he drafted his will on 20 August 1773 in a camp outside Tanjore.⁹⁴⁰ His estate went entirely to his siblings and their children in Württemberg.⁹⁴¹ He gave 1,000 gulden respectively to his brother’s son Jacob Fredrick and his ‘dear sister’ Eberhardina Laysa. The remainder of the estate was to be equally divided between his sister and her children. However, her eldest son, Jacob Louser, should get a double share. Additionally, the executors were requested to ‘see my relations in Germany justice done [sic]’. The will opened a space for Ratzell to organize his emotional and familial attachments in Germany – attachments that he hierarchized through the different amounts of the bequests. On first sight, Ratzell’s will is thus not significantly different from that of de Roques. In both wills, the testators rewarded their parents, siblings, or siblings’ children with significant amounts, thereby locating themselves within their blood kin group.

However, further probate records connected to the estate of Ratzell complicate the picture significantly; there were severe discrepancies between the will and the probate account that the executors, Reverend Schwartz and George Nodler, later filed. In the account, the executors listed a legacy to a child of 300 Pagodas, 3.3 Pagodas cash paid to a ‘housekeeper’, 10 Pagodas to ‘Serjeant Heel for maintaining the deceased’s child for four months’, and legacies of 10 and 70 Pagodas to his translator (Dubash) and an individual described as ‘Trooper’.⁹⁴²

These discrepancies need an explanation. Three alternatives seem plausible: First, it is possible that there was a codicil or nuncupative will, which was perhaps filed late. Second, the executors might have decided deliberately and independently of Ratzell’s wishes to dispose of part of his estate to deserving and dependent members of Ratzell’s family. Third, it is possible that the ‘housekeeper’ and the servants claimed rights to be considered. These two last

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⁹⁴⁰ The British siege of Tanjore started the same day.
⁹⁴¹ For this and all following quotes, see Will of Benjamin Frederick Ra(ä)tzell. 1773. BL IOR/P/328/63, pp. 42–43.
⁹⁴² Account of the estate of Benjamin Fredrick Ratzell. Filed 1775. BL IOR/P/328/64, pp. 118–119. A ‘Trooper’ was an ordinary soldier.
explanations are particularly plausible, because it seems that the courts commonly accepted wills with formal shortcomings. Therefore, it is likely that they also approved of deficient or divergent accounts. This might have been even more the case when the executors made ‘mistakes’ in favour of orphans or half-orphans who thereby would not become a financial burden on the Company.

5.6 Other stories

Wills, this chapter has shown, are a great source for examining a range of family formations and the multiple ways in which colonial ideologies and policies reverberated and were challenged in everyday life. However, they also leave open many questions, and more often than not they raise new ones. For example, based on wills alone, it is impossible to say anything about the everyday lives of the families described and managed in them. What languages did the people in these families speak, what did they eat, what were their hopes and fears? An even more striking limitation of wills as sources concerns the question of the positions and subjectivity of the women they make visible. Wills cry out that it is men who speak here and who seek to manage their households. Even in mutual wills, the husbands often have the privilege of making more detailed individual provisions, including for their concubines and out-of-wedlock children.

Other sources offer glimpses into the lives and experiences of the members of the families, especially of enslaved women, that are often diametrically opposed to the visions presented in wills. Jan Brandes, a contemporary of the men discussed in this thesis, described in detailed the tensions that arose between him and his enslaved domestic servants and their attempts to run away or hurt him in his diary. He responded with punishment, chaining the women at home, while sending the men temporarily into the employment of the VOC. He also beat the enslaved woman Roosje, probably his concubine, so badly that she bled from her head and had to see a doctor. However, in his drawings, Brandes depicted none of this, but instead literally painted a ‘rosier view’ of domestic harmony – as did most other testators in their wills. Elizabeth Kolsky has revealed acts of murderous violence by Europeans not only against each other, but more often against their native servants and European, Indian, and mixed-race women. One of the many disturbing cases that she unearthed concerns one Andrew Masberg who brutally murdered Hannah Myers and her two-year-old child in 1812. Myers was an Indian woman who had moved in with Masberg only to be frequently abused and beaten. After she had moved out, Masberg one day encountered her and the

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943 Max de Bruijn, ‘Journey to Batavia, 1778–1785’, in Max de Bruijn and Remco Raben (eds.), The World of Jan Brandes, 1743–1808: Drawing of a Dutch Traveller in Batavia, Ceylon and Southern Africa (Amsterdam, 2004), 38–40, quote at 40. For one of these paintings, see the sketch of Roosje, Jantje, and Brandes on the cover of this thesis. Hans Hägerdal has found other examples of violent treatment of enslaved people by using the daily registers (dagregisters) of Fort Concordia on Timor. Hägerdal, ‘Slaves of Timor’, esp. 29–33.
child on the bazaar. He ‘threw [her] and the […] child sleeping in her arms to the ground, slit her throat, and stabbed her on both sides of her body’.\textsuperscript{944} Analysing the records of the Court of Aldermen (\textit{Schepenbank}) of Batavia, Eric Jones draws a dark picture of the lives of enslaved women (and some men) in late eighteenth-century Batavia and argues that the application of Roman-Dutch law produced a new female underclass in the Dutch colonies.\textsuperscript{945}

In her review of Eric Jones’s \textit{Wives, Slaves, and Concubines}, Barbara Watson Andaya raises the issue of source bias. As Jones based his work entirely on the court records of the \textit{Schepenbank}, a criminal court, Andaya emphasizes that ‘we have to question the extent to which this grim picture of cruelty and exploitation reflects the lives of “ordinary” Asian women’. While acknowledging the importance of court records as sources for the history of women, Andaya reminds us that these sources ‘reveal virtually nothing of the happiness and warm relationships which, then as now, remain central to human existence’.\textsuperscript{946} The wills analysed in this chapter confront us with the reverse challenge: they almost exclusively make visible the (alleged) ‘happiness and warm relationships’ between male testators and the privileged women in their households.

Another avenue for fruitful future research that has the potential to decentre the European male narratives of domestic harmony presented in the wills is proposed in the thoughtful studies of Titas Chakraborty, Alicia Schrikker, and Kate Ekama. Schrikker and Ekama have revealed the relationships in which enslaved individuals on Ceylon engaged, how they made use of different institutions in far-flung places to better their situations, and how they imagined their place in the wider Indian Ocean world.\textsuperscript{947} Applying an innovative approach that brings together the archives of the EIC and VOC in Bengal, Chakraborty emphasizes the importance of investigating and locating ‘the agency of [enslaved and free non-indigenous] women in their efforts at self-creation, autonomous of the control of their European masters/employers’. She shows that these women, who have been either absent in historiography because of their ambiguous identities or who have been analysed solely in relation to European men, ‘innovated different forms of affective ties, which developed an alternative form of family life, separate from households with male company servants at their centre’.\textsuperscript{948} These works also raise an important warning flag to not overestimate the household cohesion indicated in wills. People who become visible in wills, female and enslaved domestic workers and ‘free Christian women’, formed other meaningful relationships beyond the ones to their ‘benevolent’ testators. However, these relationships only become visible in the records, when, for example, married

\textsuperscript{944} Kolsky, \textit{Colonial Justice}, 63–64.
\textsuperscript{945} Jones, \textit{Wives}.
\textsuperscript{947} Schrikker and Ekama, ‘Through the Lens of Slavery’.
\textsuperscript{948} Chakraborty, ‘Household Workers’, 73 and 88.
enslaved couples were gifted to friends or enslaved women were listed with their children in inventories.

The question of native women’s agency in colonial contexts is complicated and contested. Betty Joseph argues that it is not enough to make women visible in their different roles and argues, ‘We must show why the domain of women’s agency has been excluded from mainstream accounts and demonstrate, at the same time, how women are put together as subjects and objects of various discourses for the ruses and deployments of colonial power’. Durba Ghosh has suggested a notion of agency that ‘addresses the ways in which native women were drawn into maintaining and reproducing colonial regimes that were effective at maintaining race, gender, and class hierarchies’. Other historians have emphasized ‘the centrality of bodies – raced, sexed, classed, and ethnicized bodies – as sites through which imperial and colonial power was imagined and exercised’.

On rare occasions, the language of the carefully drafted wills cracks open and suggests the contested realities and experiences hidden behind benevolent gifts. One such moment is the condition of the bequest to Coyoh in the will of Henrick Hintzelman. As a reminder, he stated that the executors should take everything from her ‘if she should alter her station and live with a Malayman, Oran Neas, etc., Europeans excepted’. Hintzelman’s conditioning of the gift is the only time that Coyoh appears as a historical subject in the colonial archives; a subject who was able and likely to make decisions and to ‘alter her station’. On first sight, such a reading might seem insignificant or far-fetched. However, given the way that the presence and voices of free and enslaved indigenous women as conjugal companions are systemically obscured in the sources, the fleeting glimpse of Coyoh as an acting individual cannot be passed over. The wording suggests that Coyoh had some relation with Nias. Indeed, many female slaves on Sumatra came from Nias. Perhaps Coyoh had uttered a wish to return to her native country or at least to the people who spoke her language. Enslaved household workers were able and eager to form friendships, family and business relationships with free and enslaved people outside of the households they served in, as Titas Chakraborty has demonstrated for Bengal. These relationships and the cultural knowledge they produced often lay at the base of slave resistance and threatened both individual slave owners and Company interests. Whatever reason Hintzelman had to include this condition, something in Coyoh’s behaviour must

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949 For a valuable discussion of this issue, see Ghosh, Sex and the Family, 20–25.
950 Joseph, East India Company, 4.
951 Ghosh, Sex and the Family, 16.
954 List of slaves in Fort Marlborough and its subordinates. 1768. BL IOR/G/35/14, pp. 344–351.
have triggered his anxiety. Coyoh and all the other women visible in the wills of German East Indies migrants were historical subjects in the context of the constitution and consolidation of colonial authority and a new global and cross-cultural gendered social order. This domain requires more research.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter presents a more complex history of the lives of Germans in the Indian Ocean world than most German historiography suggests. The wills of East Indies travellers make visible a vast range of family formations and domestic arrangements. Some of these families can be described as nuclear, constituted by ‘co-residence and a certain limited set of blood relations’. In the case of East Indies migrants, the conjugal unit might or might not be based on a legally sanctioned marriage, and it could also build on the exploitation of the sexual, reproductive, and domestic labour of enslaved women. Another family form prominent in wills is what Philippa Maddern termed ‘nuclear-like family households’. In these formations, a married couple lived together with children who were not necessarily related by blood, but who were incorporated into the family as step-children or foster-children. In the colonial context, Maddern’s definition must be broadened in two respects. First, the conjugal unit, again, could, but might not necessarily, be a formally married couple. Second, the boundaries between legitimate, natural, and other ‘incorporated’ children were much more fluid. The practice of adoption added to the complexities and the range of possible parent–child relationships and provided a flexible instrument to react to and handle the realities of colonial sexual cultures. A third configuration that becomes visible in wills are polygamous families. These families included more than one conjugal or sexual relationship and could involve a wife and one or more concubines or several concubines without the presence of a wife.

Many wills show that sexual relationships and long-term extra-marital cohabitation with enslaved and free(d) women were common among German East Indies migrants. However, reading these wills and the roles of women that become visible in them is difficult. Mechanisms of naming obliterated the women’s histories, and testators were not always explicit about their roles and relationships. In many cases the lines between slavery and sexuality and between kinship and slavery were messy and complicated. Binary categories such as slave/non-slave or kin/slave are problematic when looking at colonial family practices. Gifts and bequests to concubines and enslaved mothers reflect continuities of traditional indigenous attitudes towards slavery and concubinage and the mutual responsibilities that came along with these relationships. However, the wills also

placed enslaved and conjugal companions at the margins of families, and some even deprived enslaved mothers of their traditional honours and rights by not acknowledging them as mothers.

The position of concubines was always insecure, because there was no formal marriage contract to protect them. In the Dutch East Indies, where a wife had a right to half of the marital property at her husband’s death, the precarious situation of the concubine becomes particularly evident. The fact that men in the EIC and VOC territories built barriers between their estates and the women they lived with, suggests that there were severe limitations to the ‘liberalism’ towards mixed-race relationships that some scholarship on the VOC has praised.958 What is more, some wills suggest that the kin of East Indies migrants in German lands might have significantly benefited from the sexual cultures in the companies’ settlements. Extra-marital cohabitation and the domestic services of enslaved men and women were economical; they did not usually drain a man’s estate in the way that marriage to a European woman would have.959 By not entering marital relationships, but profiting from the extraction of labour through slavery, men accumulated wealth that in many cases flowed back to ‘legitimate’ kin in Europe. In all cases, where men had cohabited with a woman but not sanctioned this union by legal marriage, kin in Europe were theoretically entitled to the whole of his estate.

However, in practice, because these intimate relationships lacked the legitimacy that would have entitled either women or their children to material compensation and inheritance, the legal cultures in the EIC and VOC settlements allowed men to compensate by making wills. Fathers of children of different legal statuses used this instrument to make provisions for those children who had no access by law to the paternal estate. How they did so varied and shows some remarkable flexibility. While some fathers treated their children by different mothers equally, others made distinctions that reflected considerations of legitimacy or race. In the moment of will-making testators made choices between caring and not caring. Thus, like letters, wills can be understood and read as both emotional practices and expressions of emotion.960 The inheritance practices of German East Indies migrants were influenced by their wish to care for and order their complex families in the East Indies and Europe. Sometimes, the daily lived realities and resulting obligations conflicted with responsibilities, attachments, and possibly feelings of guilt that the migrants had towards their kin in Germany.

958 A good discussion of the debates concerning questions of race and class in the Dutch East Indies is Protschky, ‘Race, Class, and Gender’.
959 Similarly, Durba Ghosh has stressed that extra-marital cohabitation in India also kept open the possibility of marrying ‘respectably’ once back in Britain and thus gaining the wealth that the woman would bring to the marriage. Ghosh, Sex and the Family, 29. Helmut Lahrkamp has also suggested that families and siblings in Germany profited from the marriage restrictions in the East Indies. Lahrkamp, ‘Ostindienfahrer’, 168.
960 For this argument regarding letters, see Jarzebowski, ‘Children travelling the World’; and Broomhall and Van Gent, ‘Corresponding Affections’.
Overall, the flexibility of the various family formations and domestic arrangements of German men who settled in the Indian Ocean world is remarkable. Analysing the complex family formations of British men in early eighteenth-century Kingston, Madras, and Calcutta that resembled in composition and range those discussed in this chapter, Clare Lyons has argued that '[s]uch innovation in personal life could hardly be imagined outside the eighteenth-century colonial context and was certainly not attainable for clerks, and artisans or men of their ilk in Britain'.\(^961\) Her comparative approach is very illuminating, but she perhaps overstates her case. As historians of the early modern non-colonial European family have demonstrated, there were various and diverse family formations in non-colonial societies too, illegitimacy rose in the eighteenth century, and extramarital and pre-marital sex were not extraordinary;\(^962\) the question therefore arises how ‘innovative’ colonial families really were and in which ways. To be sure, slavery added whole new dimensions of violence, inequality, and subordination into the realm of family. However, many features of the wills appear rather as extensions of early modern family and kinship practices both from Europe and Asia than something entirely new. Extension in this regard does not only refer to new geographical spaces, but also to new social groups. Class seems to play a crucial role in the observable practices; however, it is also a complicated category in a context where mobility affected not only physical positions in the world, but also social positions. Would men like Hintzelman, Brandt, or Wiederkeer have had the means in Germany to maintain households and staffs of ‘servants’ as large as they had in the East Indies? Did the practice of concubinage, rather characteristic for the upper classes in Europe, spill over to men of lower social status in the East Indies? Could bequests to enslaved household workers be compared to gifts made to domestic servants in European households, and where exactly were the lines of demarcation between them? The picture would become even more nuanced if the pre-colonial family and kinship practices of societies across the Indian Ocean world were integrated more thoroughly into the analysis. Future research that operates in a comparative framework seems most promising to examine family practices in a global context, as this would reveal more nuanced continuities and extensions, distinctions and innovations.

At this point, the analysis settles for the observation that in the second half of the eighteenth century, German East Indies migrants employed a great variety of family practices and memorialized complicated colonial and transnational family

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\(^{961}\) Lyons, 'Cities at Sea', 436.

ties. Observing practices similar to those described in this chapter in the French Atlantic world, Jennifer Palmer emphasized that ‘colonial practices pushed the boundaries of French households at the very moment when historians have posited that they were contracting and shifting to less complicated nuclear families based on mutual affection’.\textsuperscript{963} The same ‘nuclear’ shift has been identified by scholars of German history.\textsuperscript{964} However, as the empirical material discussed in this chapter suggests, the colonial and global component of these transformations may complicate the picture.

\textsuperscript{963} Palmer, \textit{Intimate Bonds}, 14.

\textsuperscript{964} Medick, ‘Zwischen Mythos und Realität’, esp. 53–54.
6 Reverberations in Brandenburg-Prussia

6.1 Introduction

The realities of East Indies migration often did not accord with the expectations of those who had stayed in German lands. Death and estrangement loomed large. Brothers, sons, and husbands did not return after promising to be gone only four or five years; news, gifts, and allowances failed to appear; connections and relationships were terminated – some deliberately and some due to difficult transoceanic communications, war, or death. Many of those who stayed at home hungered for news from overseas relatives. They were curious, and they suffered from long silences, terminated ties, and the uncertainty about whether a family member was alive or dead.

For still others, silences resulting from long-distance migration and sporadic communication were considered neither problematic nor even remarkable. Relationships between migrants and their kin in German lands often lay dormant for years or even decades. Kinship ties became very meaningful, however, in the events of death and the transfer of property. This was nothing new. People drifted apart within the German lands, too, and short and intermediate absences had long left gaps in kinship. Travels to the East Indies added new dimensions to this phenomenon, however, because the notion of immense fortunes easily made and passed on to kin in German lands sparked the imaginations and fuelled the hopes of those who stayed behind.

Curiosity, anxiety, hope, and expectation induced hundreds, probably thousands of people remaining in the German-speaking territories to take action: many took pains to collect information, to revive communications, or to get what they believed was their just share of the East Indies bounty gained by a kinsman. The last resort, when all other attempts bore no fruit, was to petition the king for help. Based on these petitions and collateral archival records, and with a particular focus on the territories of Brandenburg-Prussia, this chapter examines the reverberations of East Indies migration for left-behind families and distant relatives of East Indies migrants, for officeholders and various other agents, and for governmental institutions.
6.2 Petitioning in Brandenburg-Prussia

In 1763, Maria Sophia Dunckeln, married name Schincken, submitted a petition concerning her absent brother to the Brandenburg-Prussian department of foreign affairs (Kabinettsministerium). It was a text-book example of a petition, drafted by a legally trained scribe on stamped paper, filling in form and content the requirements of eighteenth-century bureaucracy, and containing only the most significant information needed to pursue an investigation in Amsterdam. Following the curial style of courtesy and devotion, Maria directed her plea directly to the king. She wrote that her brother Christian Dunckel had gone to the Netherlands after he finished his apprenticeship in Brandenburg. In Amsterdam, he signed on with the VOC as a soldier, embarked on the ship Haus Margrete commanded by Captain Reinert Brugmann, and sailed to ‘India’ in December 1741. She explained further that the family had not heard from Christian since his departure; however, by way of friends they had learnt about his promotion and employment in the court of ‘the Sultan or King of Materang under the Government of Samerang near Java’. She had since learned through an advertisement in a newspaper of the brother’s sudden death and of the respectable estate that he supposedly left behind, and she enclosed the advertisement as evidence. She then stated that she had tried to gather further information through merchants, but could not obtain any ‘trustworthy intelligence’ in the matter. However, she felt strongly that the ‘true circumstances of this matter’ needed to be cleared up, since if her brother had died intestate, she would be his sole heir. Her ‘most humble’ request was therefore that the king:

issue an order to von der Hellen as [Your Majesty’s] chargé d’affaires in The Hague to inquire of the Directory of the East India Compagnie 1.) Whether and to what extent is the issue well-founded? 2.) Whether I, as sole heir of the intestate, may hope for an inheritance?

As in all other principalities of the Holy Roman Empire, everyone in Brandenburg-Prussia was allowed to petition the king, either indirectly through local,
provincial, and central authorities, or directly to the royal court.\textsuperscript{968} Indeed, petitions concerning East Indies travellers came from almost all social groups. Noble women and men of various ranks, merchants, priests, surgeons, bailiffs, goldsmiths, millers, tailors, shoemakers, brewers, sergeants and soldiers, innkeepers and peasants all used their traditional right to ask authorities and the king himself for grace, mercy, and assistance. Both men and women, single, married, widowed, and divorced petitioned. Custodians and trustees petitioned for minor children. However, while everyone was allowed to petition, the petitions had to be drafted by legally trained clerks and authorized scribes.\textsuperscript{969} Those who could not afford to pay a professional scribe or buy the stamped paper also required by law, could submit their requests, orally or in written form, free of charge to their local authority, who would then forward it to the next higher authority and so forth until the request reached the body competent to handle the issue.

In the period covered by this thesis the responsibilities and competences among local, provincial, and central authorities were not clearly defined; many matters of inheritances, legacies, and inquiries into the life or death of an absent kinsmen were most likely resolved before they reached the central authorities. Individuals who wanted to find out about missing relatives, or inheritances from abroad, or untangle probate processes that stretched across continents had access to a variety of coexisting, overlapping, and competing officeholders, forums, and actors. Petitions similar to Maria Dunckeln’s, therefore, are spread across a variety of archival repositories in Germany today. Nevertheless, between 1709 and 1815, at least 175 cases relating to East Indies migration came to the attention of the central administration of Brandenburg-Prussia. Almost all of these cases were handled by the \textit{Kabinettsministerium}.\textsuperscript{970} The vast majority of them, more than 170, concerned the Dutch East Indies.

Brandenburg-Prussia was the only country in the Holy Roman Empire besides Austria in which a department of foreign affairs formed a separate government body in the eighteenth century. This department, known since 1733 as the \textit{Kabinettsministerium}, had been formalized in 1728 by Frederik Wilhelm I.\textsuperscript{971} While officially responsible for Prussia’s foreign affairs, the \textit{Kabinettsministerium’s} main

\textsuperscript{968} Frederik Wilhelm I had restricted the right to directly petition the king; however his successor Frederik II, however, eased these restrictions and again allowed his subjects to petition him directly. Polley, ‘Das nachfriederizianische Preußen’, 351. For petitioning in early modern German-speaking Europe more broadly, see Andreas Würgler, ‘Voices from Among the “Silent Masses”: Humble Petitions and Social Conflicts in Early Modern Central Europe’, \textit{International Review of Social History}, 46 (2001).

\textsuperscript{969} This so-called \textit{Anwaltzwang} was abolished in 1798. Polley, ‘Das nachfriederizianische Preußen’, 358.

\textsuperscript{970} A few individual cases seem to have been handled solely by the Department of Justice.

tasks were of a rather technical and administrative nature and included dealing
with matters having to do with Prussians abroad or their relatives.972

As the case of Maria Dunckeln shows, the Kabinettsministerium acted primarily
as a mediator after other attempts to gather information or pursue inheritance
claims had been unsuccessful.973 The mediator role was especially valuable in mat-
ters involving the VOC and its servants; the Company itself ‘never gets involved
in foreign correspondence concerning inheritance matters’, as the Prussian con-
sul explained in 1760 to a petitioner who complained that she never received
answers from Amsterdam.974 Written correspondence was central to trade, colo-
nial expansion, and the administration of the East India companies. However,
when it came to making inquiries about the whereabouts of the companies’ serv-
ants and the collection of legacies and wages, personal contacts on the ground in
London and the Netherlands, people who could go the East India house and
have the books opened, were indispensable.

The Kabinettsministerium mainly relied on Prussian envoys and consuls for this
task.975 Because Maria Dunckeln had submitted a credible account and provided
all the necessary information to pursue an investigation, the Kabinettsministerium
ordered Philip Anton Erberfeld in Amsterdam to make inquiries into the true
nature of the alleged death and estate of Christian Dunckel. Erberfeld was a mer-
chant who acted as the Prussian commercial agent and so-called Resident in Am-
sterdam.976 In this capacity, he also covered consular activities before the first
official Prussian consulate was established in Amsterdam in 1781.977 By early
1800, the Amsterdam consulate was known to be particularly occupied with ‘pur-
suing claims, inheritances, and other reclamation matters and requests for infor-
mation of our subjects not only in Amsterdam itself, but especially in the East
and West Indies’.978

972 See, e.g. the draft concerning the constitution of the Kabinettsministerium. 1793. GStA PK, I. HA
GR, Rep. 9 Allgemeine Verwaltung, J 3a Fasz. 11a–b. See also the Cabinet order, 1798, in GStA
PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 9, J 3a Fasz. 17.
973 See also Kohnke, ‘Kabinettsministerium’, 59.
974 Report of Philip Anton Erberfeld. Amsterdam, 12 July 1760. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34,
No. 1011, fol. 156r–v. See also First Senate of the Kammergericht. Berlin, 8 September 1779. GStA
PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1018, fol. 19v. Further examples are found in the cases pertaining to
the estates of Friedrich Dawerkow, Johann Bogislaus Mauve, and Johann Christian Wernicke.
GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34 No. 1020, fols. 107r–110r (Dawerkow); No. 1021, fols. 155r–159r
(Mauve); and No. 1038, fols. 177r–187 (Wernicke).
975 The history of Brandenburg-Prussian consulates in the 18th century is still to be written accord-
ing to Jörg Ulbert, ‘Les services consulaires prussiens au XVIIIe siècle’, in Jörg Ulbert and Gérard
Le Bouëdec (eds.), La fonction consulaire à l'époque moderne: L'affirmation d'une institution économique et
politique (1500–1800) (Rennes, 2006).
976 Also spelled Eberfeld. Straubel, Biographisches Handbuch, vol. 1, 249. See also GStA PK, I. HA
GR, Rep. 9, Z J Fasz. 4.
977 Although Erberfeld and some other Prussian Residents in the Netherlands did not yet hold the
official title of consul, I will refer to them as consuls.
978 Kabinettsministerium to Friedrich Wilhelm III. Berlin, 7 October 1804. GStA PK, I. HA GR,
Rep. 9, Z J Fasz. 13 (no foliation). See also Reglement für alle Königlich Preußische General-Consuls, Con-
suls, Agenten und Vice-Consuls in fremden Handlungsräten und Seehäfen, Berlin, 18 September 1796.
Maria Dunckeln’s petition suggests that whoever had drafted it was familiar with the workings of the *Kabinetsministerium* and the proceedings and organization of the VOC in the Netherlands. The narrative of the petition is clear, coherent, and substantiated by a copy of Christian Dunckel’s farewell letter and the newspaper advertisement. The petition contained the information required to identify Christian Dunckel in the Company’s books in Amsterdam: the year of his departure, the chamber at which he had signed on, and the names of the ship and its captain. Without this basic information, it was almost impossible to find out anything in Amsterdam, as many petitioners came to learn.

The letter from Christian that his sister included with her petition suggests an emotionally fraught departure, but nothing of this found its way into the petition. The narrative of Christian’s migration is stripped of its context and implications for the family as well as of any ambiguous feelings caused by the separation. Similar omissions and aggregations characterize other petitions, too, which were submitted with letters as evidence.979 In short, family letters suggest that a lot more happened in the background than found its way into the petitions. Clearly, professional scribes took ‘corrective’ action and adapted the petitioners’ stories and letters to the conventions of the petition and the requirements of Brandenburg-Prussian administration.

The stories that eventually found their way into the petitions could contain inaccuracies, mistakes, misunderstandings, or even wilful misrepresentations. However, petitioners’ self descriptions and accounts of their prior attempts to solve their problem are probably roughly accurate because petitioners always had to expect to be questioned.980 These things could be easily checked by the authorities. However, it was and is by no means easy to ascertain whether the tales of a kinsman’s life and death in the East Indies were true, embroidered, or wholly invented.

In a little under 90 cases, collateral documents support the history the East Indies traveller reported in the petition, or at least some of its cornerstones. The petitions can also be matched to other records such as entries in VOC pay ledgers, reports from consuls, certificates of death, wills, and letters. These records prove, if not the legitimacy of the claims of the petitioners, at least the existence of the East Indies migrant in question. Conversely, it also means that in around

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980 Rehse, *Supplikations- und Gnadenpraxis*, 67. Examples in which petitioners were subsequently questioned on the details and circumstances of their requests are GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1007, fols. 117r–134v (Esche); No. 1016, fols. 1r–21 (Hendrich); No. 1017, fols. 101r–105r (Wöhrenhoff); No. 1023, fols. 44r–69 (Ziehe); No. 1031, fols. 1r–20v (Zinnert); No. 1037, fols. 53r–96r (Jachtmann); No. 6211 (Hohendorf); and XX. HA EM, 52 j 1, No. 65 (Piron).
half of the cases identified in the records of Brandenburg-Prussia, the very existence of the East Indies traveller is uncertain or doubtful. 981

6.3 The wants and needs of those who stayed

6.3.1 Troublesome uncertainties

Staying in contact and bridging the distance between German lands and the Indian Ocean world was possible, although difficult, as shown in Chapter 4. It was hard to stay in regular touch with family members who went to the East Indies. However, the sources also demonstrate the patience, endurance, and flexibility with which East Indies migrants and their families in Germany coped with these challenges.

At some point, however, many families left behind could no longer tolerate the long periods of silence and uncertainty. For some, this point came fairly quickly, and two years without news was considered unbearable. Others waited longer – five, twelve, fifteen years, even decades – before deciding it was time to request help from the king and his ministers to learn the whereabouts and life or death of a relation in the East Indies.

Hauptmannin (wife of a Captain) von Struve was one of those who petitioned the Kabinetsministerium after only two years without news. On 24 October 1797, she submitted her request for help in locating her husband, Johann Friedrich, who had left for the East Indies 24 years previously. Apparently, communication had worked well during this time and she had regularly received an annual allowance from him of 500 gulden. Her petition suggests that she created mental ties with the world in which her husband lived and continually gathered news and information on the events unfolding in the Indian Ocean world. She probably would not have agreed with the author of a short note in the Politisches Journal, who wrote in 1787 that ‘there is nothing of political interest to report from the East Indies and all other countries and regions of the world’. 982 While news from the East Indies was scarce in German magazines and periodicals, especially in the 1790s, Struve obviously found ways to gather morsels of news. 983 What she heard or read in 1796 and 1797 must have been disquieting: less than a year after her husband had taken a post at Fort Chilaw on Ceylon, ‘the English conquered Ceylon’ and after that there was no more news. 984

981 Note that not all of the 175 cases identified in the Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz are part of the present study’s sample of families.
982 Politisches Journal (1787), 111, quoted in Tzoref-Ashkenazi, German Soldiers, 57.
983 Tzoref-Ashkenazi, German Soldiers, 58–59.
984 Petition of Hauptmannin van Struve. Berlin, 24 October 1797. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1038, fol. 87r.
The invasion of the Dutch factories and settlements on Ceylon by the British in 1795 and 1796 intruded itself into the lives of *Hauptmannin* von Struve and other stay-at-home families in Brandenburg-Prussia.\(^{985}\) The events unfolding on Ceylon were directly related to Napoleon’s invasion of the Dutch Republic and the ensuing alliance between France and the young Batavian Republic in 1795. The British, fearing that Dutch possessions in the Indian Ocean would become strongholds for the French, consequently conquered a series of Dutch forts and factories, starting with Ceylon.\(^{986}\) Thus, within only a few years, the political landscape changed dramatically in the Indian Ocean world. For *Hauptmannin* von Struve, the turmoil and realignments in a far-flung region had concrete and tangible consequences:

> For two years I have not received any news from [my husband]; also, the annual subsistence allowance of 500 Dutch gulden has failed to appear since that time; and because I have no assets but live solely on the annual allowance, I don’t know how I shall continue to live if I don’t get help from my husband soon. Moreover, I have got into the deepest misery by the terrible uncertainty about his life or death.\(^{987}\)

*Hauptmannin* von Struve was confident that the *Kabinettsministerium* could help her out. ‘In my opinion’, she explained, ‘there have to be lists of those who stayed or died at the said conquest’. Therefore, she asked that the envoy in London make inquiries ‘at the administration, if my husband […] has died or been taken prisoner at the said conquest, or where he otherwise might be’.\(^{988}\)

*Hauptmannin* von Struve’s petition is remarkable in many respects. Not only does it document how a married couple could live separate, but connected, lives for more than two decades, but it also indicates how those who stayed home were involved in and affected by events that unfolded in faraway regions of the world. The petition is also one of the few to describe and express emotions associated with absence and uncertainty. Petitions in Brandenburg-Prussia were usually devoid of expressions of emotions. Struve’s petition and her invocation of the ‘deepest misery’ caused by her not knowing breaks the usual pattern. To be sure, this was a form of rhetoric, aimed to arouse the empathy of the king, but

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985 Further examples are GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1034, fols. 130r–144r (Koegell); and I. HA GR, Rep. 11, Akten, No. 2374 (no foliation) (Jaedicke).


988 Petition of *Hauptmannin* van Struve. Berlin, 24 October 1797. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1038, fol. 87v.
it also suggests the great impact periods of silence and uncertainty had on those who had stayed behind.

The petition of the Trosihn sisters offers a somewhat different picture of the uncertainty associated with migration to the East Indies. On the narrative level, they forewent any reference to their own experiences of their father’s absence. Nevertheless, the impact of that absence is quite apparent. In 1756, they petitioned the king for help in tracing their father Johan Balthasar Trosihn, who had left his wife and daughters in 1717 and gone to Java. For several years, at least until 1726, his wife and daughters had received letters in which he assured them of his continuing love and his wish to once again return home and provide for them. The years between 1726 and 1750 remain somewhat obscure. According to his daughter Margaretha, Johann wrote several letters during this time in which he told his family that he had earned a ‘very sizeable fortune’. However, she added, these letters had been lost, but ‘credible reports of many who returned from the East Indies and who knew and had talked to him’ on Java attested to his fortune. Then news from the East Indies dried up. Johann’s daughters (it is unclear when his wife died) therefore found another way to gather information about their father: Twice they contacted the East India chamber in Hoorn and asked for extracts from the pay ledgers. In this way they learnt that their father had still been alive in 1750 and 1751 and serving at Surabaya. Though the information was two to three years out of date, it was the only information available.

In 1756, still with no direct news from Java, the daughters changed their strategy. Instead of communicating through merchants with the chamber in Hoorn, they now turned directly to Frederick II for help. In their petition, they explained that they ‘believed’ that their father had died ‘because he hasn’t written to us in many years and it is known from experience that Europeans very seldom reach a great age in the East Indies’. To prove their claims, they enclosed a copy of one of their father’s letters, the two certificates from Hoorn, and a copy of their father’s baptism record from Aschersleben. Since ‘without the supreme support of Your Royal Majesty it would be an impossible thing for us to gather true richtige news about [their] inheritance’, they ‘humbly requested’ that the two consuls in Amsterdam, Barth and Erberfeld, be ordered to investigate in situ ‘if and when Johann Balthasar Trosihn has died, and […] in such case to insist on the return and payment of his estate as well as residual salary’ and to give a full report on all the steps taken.

989 See chap. 1.1.
991 Supplement B to the petition of Margaretha Magdalene Trosiehn (married name Kölsch) et al. Berlin, 24 January 1756. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1007, fol. 141r.
Their request bore fruit; Frederick II himself ordered his ministers to make inquiries in Amsterdam.993 Little more than a month later, Erberfeld reported that according to the books at the chamber in Hoorn, Trosihn had been alive and living in Semarang until January 1753. However, because of ‘bad conduct’ his salary had been suspended.994 Maybe it was this information that triggered one of his grandsons, Johann Christoph Siebert, to set out for Java, too.995 The will that Johann Balthasar Trosihn made in 1761 and in which he confirmed his daughters and grandchildren as his legal heirs suggests that he, like his daughters, still cared about their family ties 44 years after he had left them.

The petition of the Trosihn sisters reveals some of the ways left-behind families navigated times of separation and uncertainty. For decades, the sisters had actively sought contact with their father, and they expected him to do the same. When correspondence came to a stop, they were eager to gather information about him. Their petition shows that they had the resources to do so: They tracked down returning travellers, they invested in correspondence, and they probably paid the merchants and clerks for the extracts from the pay ledgers. They knew where to find a scribe to draft them an exemplary petition, and they had the means to pay 4 Groschen for the stamped paper (and likely also a fee for the scribe). The petition itself reveals knowledge about which information was necessary in Holland for tracing a VOC employee and which Prussian representatives could gather reliable information.996

The Trosihn sisters cited their potential inheritance as their principal reason for involving the authorities. In a similar vein, Anna Elisabeth Kühn, Widow Thielen, petitioned the king in 1794. Her request concerned her brother Gottfried, who had been absent for 48 years in the East Indies. Initially, the former baker’s apprentice had written letters. When these stopped, Anna learnt from a returning baker ‘who had lived for some years on the island of Java […] and was acquainted with [Gottfried]’ that he was still alive and unmarried, had no children, and wanted to return. However, he never did, and Anna did not receive any further news. Like the Trosihn sisters, Anna Kühn argued that her brother was possibly dead because of his age (he would have been 76 in 1794), and she feared forfeiting her just inheritance. However, ‘because of lack of money’ she was not able to pay ‘the very high costs of gathering information and collecting the

993 Cabinet order of Frederick II. Berlin, 27 January 1756. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1007, fol. 136r.
995 VOC employment record of Johan Christoff Siebert. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 6359, fol. 122.
996 This latter knowledge was accessible in address calendars (Adressekalender). The calendar for the year 1755 listed both Barth and Erberfeldt as Prussian Residenten in Amsterdam. See Adresse-Calender, Der Königl. Preuß. Haupt- und Residenz-Städte Berlin, und der daselbst befindlichen hohen und niederen Collegien, Instantien und Expeditionen (Berlin, 1755), 173–174.
necessary news [as to] whether my brother has already died and in whose hands his estate is’.  

The fear of forfeiting a just inheritance, which potential heirs commonly depicted to be ‘considerable’ (ansehnlich), pervades petitions concerning missing East Indies migrants. This is understandable, given that the king also had an interest in drawing money into the country and easing the hardship of his subjects. Some petitioners even stressed that their inheritance would benefit them as an individual family, but also ‘His Majesty’s country’. This sophisticated strategy aimed to exploit the government’s fiscal and economic interests.

Given the ubiquity of references to inheritances, petitions without such references stand out. The petition of Justine Cabos, née Siercken, submitted in 1803 is a good example. The Cabos were a Walloon family from Rotterdam. They had lived in Berlin at least from 1792, when Etienne, Justine’s husband, was appointed dentist to Frederick Wilhelm II. In her petition, likely written by herself in French, Justine recounted how their son François had signed on in the service of the VOC in 1789 and left for the East Indies on the *Hoornweg* on 18 October of that same year. However, ‘[t]he war which arose shortly after has deprived us since that time of news of a dear son whose fate worries us deeply’. Although they had tried ‘all the imaginable steps’, including involving the ‘envoys of England, the Batavian Republic, and the Maritime Trade Company’, the only information the parents had received was that their son had been transferred from the *Hoornweg* to the *Straelen* in 1790. Now, after 13 years of uncertainty, Justine Cabos begged the king to intervene with the department of foreign affairs to get them news of their son, ‘if not of his existence and place of residence, then at least of his death’. She closed her petition by describing herself as ‘a tender mother who still puts all her hopes on the recovery of her son’. Read in context, this expression of hope was more than a mere phrase that aimed at winning the empathy of the king: Cabos’s petition itself was an expression of this hope, as was her 13-year effort to gather information on her son. It was not only hope that prompted her, however, but also her wish to know whether he was dead or alive.

Not everyone had the resources to make their own inquiries before they involved the *Kabinetsministerium*. Postal costs and the fees for scribes and commissioners were probably the largest costs, and one needed social contacts and correspondents in the Netherlands. Johann Daniel Berlich, a 70-year-old shoemaker

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998 For this argument, see, e.g. the petition of the Kratel heirs. Berlin, 11 October 1754. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1006, fol. 7r.
999 The family appears in the church records of the Walloon church in Rotterdam in the 1780s. Stadsarchief Rotterdam, 1-02 Doopregisters, Trouwregisters, Begraafregisters Rotterdam (DTB), Waalse Gereformeerde Gemeente, inv.no. 126.
1000 ‘La Guerre survenue peu après, nous a privés depuis ce temps de nouvelles d’un fils cheri dont le sort nous inquiète singulièrement’ Petition of [Justine] Cabos, née Siercken. Charlottenburg, 25 November 1803. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1035, fol. 20r–v also for the following quotes.
from Berlin, did not have the means to correspond with and commission a merchant to have the books opened in Amsterdam. However, he too, was eager to know if his son was ‘still alive or dead’. Johann Daniel Jr., also a shoemaker and Berlich’s oldest son, had left Berlin in 1775 at the age of 28 years and gone to Ceylon. Eight years later, in 1783, Berlich still had not received any news from or about him. As poverty did not allow him to make any inquiries himself, he submitted his petition, marked pauper, and hoped that the king would help him get the much sought-after information.\footnote{Petition of Johann Daniel Berlich. Berlin, 22 August 1783. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1020, fol. 165r.}

Interestingly, petitions concerning missing individuals that did not refer to a potential inheritance, like the ones of Cabos and Berlich, share the feature of appearing to have been written by scribes who were not particularly familiar with the proceedings of the Kabinettsministerium, let alone the administrative workings of the East India companies. This becomes particularly evident if we contrast these petitions with the one submitted by the Trosihn sisters. The latter’s petition contained detailed information, including the names of the consuls (Residenten) in Amsterdam and how they should proceed to gather information at the East India house. Justine Cabos referred in her petition to the department of foreign affairs, which suggests that she had some understanding of how the desired information could be obtained. Johann Berlich simply wrote that he wished that the king would ‘issue an order that I receive news from my son, if he is still alive or dead’.\footnote{Petition of Johann Daniel Berlich. Berlin, 22 August 1783. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1020, fol. 165r.} The request of Catharina Dorothea Schliedern, who asked the king ‘to seek out my brother’ (meinen Bruder aufzusuchen), was similarly vague.\footnote{Petition of Catharina Dorothea Schliedern, married name Meßerschmiedin. Berlin, 11 February 1791, GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1027, fol. 186v.}

The petition of Margaretha Sovia Lowisa Wernicken, Widow Geschmann, will serve as a last, but remarkable example. Her petition, submitted on 30 December 1800, sticks out because it is one of the few that was obviously not written by a trained scribe.\footnote{After 1798 everyone was allowed to draft a petition, not only authorized and trained scribes. Polley, ‘Das nachfriederizianische Preußen’, 358.} Perhaps Margaretha Wernicken drafted the letter herself. The spelling is phonetic, and the syntax suggests oral speech. First she explains that her brother Johann Christian had gone to ‘Ostindigen’ with the ‘KermisShep’ in 1768, and after writing once from Batavia, had been ‘prohibited’ from writing. She goes on:
Because I now have to no avail waited for so many years, also have written to the East India house in Amsterdam but not received an answer, therefore I beg Your Majesty on my knees to show me mercy in my last days and help me, helpless one, to get to know if my brother is alive or dead, or if he still is abroad or within this country.\textsuperscript{1005}

The petitions of Wernicken, Berlich, Schlieden, and Cabos all add to the picture of how those who were left behind coped with periods of silence and the uncertainties that came along with the migration of a family member. The wish to know for certain about the fate of an absent husband, son, brother, or father prompted those who had stayed behind to act, to invest resources, and to involve the state in their intimate family relationships. From a modern perspective, the differences in the lengths of time they waited and persevered and the information they provided are remarkable. People in the eighteenth century were certainly better prepared to cope with extended periods of uncertainty than perhaps most modern people are today; however, their tolerance did have its limits, too. Their petitions suggest an interesting nexus between distance (both in temporal and spatial terms), uncertainty, and hope. The peculiarities and imperfect nature of information and communication across vast distances opened a space for hope. This hope prompted left-behind families to continue to invest in the relationship. As long as there was no ‘true’ news confirmed by multiple sources, they could endure the separation and hope that, eventually, a son, brother, or father would return – or at least ease the family’s hardship with his alleged ‘considerable’ wealth.

Without question, the king and his ministers had an interest in supporting the inheritance claims of Prussian subjects abroad. Experienced scribes therefore might have emphasized such claims and the material interests of the petitioners as this was a promising strategy to win over the Kabinettministerium. However, the cases of those petitioners who did not make any material claims are evidence that the ministers also considered the wish to know and get certainty as a legitimate reason to involve a government authority.

In all the cited cases except that of Catharina Schliedern, the ministers issued orders to the consul in Amsterdam to make inquiries into the matter. The parents of François Cabos were probably deeply disappointed. They learned nothing new since no news or books had arrived from Batavia since 1790 because of the ‘unfortunate war’.\textsuperscript{1006} In the case of Johann Berlich’s son, Consul Chomel could only

\textsuperscript{1005} ‘Da ich Nun so Viel Jahr vergäblich gehoft auch schon Mal an hosindische [sic] haus in Amsterdam geschriben aber kein antwordt Er halten So flähe ich Ew Majistät fusfällist an mir in Meinen lästen tagen mir Ihr hohe gnade an gedaien lassen mich hülflose zu helffen in Erfahrunk zu kommen ob Mein bruder lähbet oder todt ist oder aus oder in dem Lande Noch ist’. Petition of Margaretha Sovia Lowisa Wernicken, Widow Geschmann. Berlin, 30 December 1800. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1038, fol. 179r. The VOC did indeed at times prohibit its seamen from writing home because of the fear that sensitive intelligence could fall into the wrong hands. Manon van der Heijden, \textit{Women and Crime in Early Modern Holland} (Leiden, 2016), 121.

\textsuperscript{1006} Report of Johann Friedrich Gregory. Amsterdam, 23 March 1804. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1035, fols. 23r–24r.
report that he was still alive in 1781, two years before his father petitioned the
king for help in August 1783. As it turned out three months later, in November
1783, Johann died in Colombo. Margaretha Wernicke learnt that her brother
had died in hospital in Batavia 30 years earlier in 1770, shortly after he left Eu-

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All these requests were solved in Amsterdam within a couple of weeks or
months. However, the petition of Hauptmannin von Struve made some impact,
involved many more people than just the Prussian consul, and took several years
to be resolved. Hauptmannin von Struve, who had set the process in motion did
not live to see any of this. She died less than a year after she submitted her peti-
tion. Nevertheless, the process that she had initiated is worth a closer look. In
1797, the Kabinettsministerium issued an order to Louis Balan, secretary to the en-
voy in London, to investigate what had happened to Struve. However, more
than a year later no news had arrived. Therefore, in January 1799, the son of the
Hauptmannin petitioned the ministers again, informed them of his mother’s death,
and renewed her petition to have inquiries made into his father’s life or death.
Seven months later, the first news from London arrived. Balan had found a trav-
eller who had just returned from Colombo and who confirmed that Captain
Struve had been alive and healthy and was a prisoner of war of the English when
he had left Ceylon five months previously. A year later, Balan’s attempts to
gather information through the government in London finally produced reliable
results. He had contacted Lord Grenville, secretary of the foreign ministry, who
in turn involved Mr Huskisson, Esq., Undersecretary for War and member of
Parliament, who corresponded with Fredrick North, the first British Governor
of Ceylon. North then called on Struve in Colombo and informed him that his
wife, via the Court of Berlin ‘desired’ information about whether he was alive or
death. North also allowed Struve to write a letter to his wife, which he transmitted
with his own mail ‘overland’ to Europe. Struve’s letter reached the Kabinettsminis-
terium in October 1800, three years after his wife had submitted her petition. As
she had died two years earlier, the letter remained unopened and was filed and
archived together with the other documents.

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1007 VOC employment record of Johan Daniel Berlich. NL-HaNA, VOC 1.04.02, inv.no. 6616,
fol. 211.
1008 Report of Johann Ludwig Gregory. Amsterdam, 6 March 1801. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34,
No. 1038, fol. 182r.
1009 Kabinettsministerium to Balan. Berlin, 1 November 1797. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No.
1038, fol. 89r.
1010 Petition of [Gottlieb Wilhelm August?] Struve. Berlin, 4 January 1799. GStA PK, I. HA GR,
Rep. 34, No. 1038, fol. 90r.
6.3.2 Claiming compensation

Located somewhere between missing person and inheritance cases, were petitions that pertained to compensation and debt. The cases discussed in the following section are all closely related to practices of bridging distance and organizing family life as outlined in previous chapters. Many of the main actors are also familiar: Maria Regina Senffen brought bigamy charges against her absent husband Johann Wolfgang Imhoff. Rahel Dorothea von Piron, left behind by her parents and siblings because of her bad health, petitioned the government to be compensated for her upbringing and to ensure her share in her patrimony. The siblings Schneller and Jaedicke tried to be compensated for the money they had contributed toward the education of their absent brothers’ children.

Maria Regina Senffen’s experience of being married to an East Indies traveller was very different from that of Hauptmannin von Struve. Despite her husband’s assurance that he went to the East Indies ‘because of love’ and his promise to provide for his family in the future, Senffen did not hear from him again after he left Amsterdam.\footnote{See chap. 3.3.1} For four years, she yearned for news from him and she probably hoped that the promised subsidies would eventually arrive. She appears to have kept her ears open among the newcomers and returnees to Berlin and finally identified a returning East Indies traveller, the surgeon Major Hobeck, who could provide some credible news on her husband. However, what she learnt from him was probably not the news she had hoped for. Hobeck reported (and attested in written form) that Senffen’s husband Johann Wolfgang had changed his name to Rudolph Christoff von Imhoff in Batavia and pretended to be a cousin of the famous Governor-General Gustav Wilhelm Baron van Imhoff. Moreover, he stated that this Imhoff had married the daughter of a rich merchant and thereby advanced in rank and status to senior merchant and administrator. Hobeck was positive that this was the same Imhoff who had been employed by Wegelin in Berlin and served as a clerk of provisions (\textit{Proviant-Schreiber}) prior to his departure to the East Indies. This latter information had been communicated to Hobeck by another surgeon, who had arrived in Batavia from Berlin and stated that he had known Imhoff.\footnote{Petition of Maria Regina Charlotta Senffen (married name Imhoff). Berlin, 2 November 1757. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 6155 (no foliation).}

Following this news, Maria Regina Senffen made some enquiries. She found out that according to the ‘Patavian laws’ bigamous husbands were not only ‘harshly and severely punished’ but also forced to pay half of their assets to their first wife and children for their ‘satisfaction and maintenance’. She also found out that she would need to go to court in Holland to bring charges against her husband. However, because she was ‘poor’ and had three minor children, this was no option.\footnote{Petition of Maria Regina Charlotta Senffen (married name Imhoff). Berlin, 2 November 1757. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 6155 (no foliation).} Instead, she employed a licensed advocate who drafted her
petition. The document described a husband who had failed to perform the reciprocal duties of marriage. It was framed in terms of what legal scholars called *desertio malitiosa*, thereby preparing the ground for a divorce.\(^\text{1015}\) However, Senffen did not yet ask for a divorce. Instead, she requested the king to ‘properly examine’ the matter in Holland and to confiscate half of her husband’s property for her and her children’s maintenance as compensation for her husband’s unfaithfulness and the marriage breakdown he had caused.

The *Kabinettsministerium* supported Senffen’s claim and ordered the Prussian representative Van Hellen in The Hague to ‘emphatically’ support her request.\(^\text{1016}\) Two months later Van Hellen’s report arrived in Berlin. He had found out that the news of Imhoff’s new marriage was a mistake. There was indeed a cousin of the famous Baron van Imhoff who had made a rich marriage in Batavia. However, this was certainly not the husband of the petitioner. Her husband, Johann Wolfgang, had had gone to Ceylon as a soldier, where he still earned 9 gulden a month.\(^\text{1017}\) This information could easily be obtained in Amsterdam and did not require correspondence with Batavia. As the allegations against Imhoff quickly turned out to be a case of mistaken identity, Maria Regina Senffen’s request for compensation was pursued no further.

What lay behind the rumour of Imhoff’s bigamous second marriage? Johann Wolfgang Imhoff and Major Hobeck cannot have met each other in the East Indies because they were posted in different stations.\(^\text{1018}\) Hobeck’s testimony was based on his own observations from Batavia (where Johann Wolfgang Imhoff never resided), rumour or hearsay, and the statement of another countryman who had expected to find Johann Wolfgang Imhoff in Batavia because he had been recommended to him. It would not be unthinkable that Maria Regina Senffen had talked to this countryman prior to his departure from Berlin. Hobeck’s testimony and the tale of Johann Wolfgang Imhoff’s transformation in Batavia is interesting but not only because it demonstrates the faultiness of communication channels and their vulnerability to misunderstanding. His statement and its consequences also raise the question of which stories from the East Indies were plausible and believable and which were not.

A closer look at the (purported) transformation of Imhoff in Batavia raises three issues that were central too how people in German lands imagined life in the East Indies. First, the tale of Imhoff’s new life in Batavia is a typical example of the idea that the East Indies allowed for extraordinary social transformation and advancement. In the Eighteen century, people like Maria Regina Senffen and

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\(^{1018}\) This is confirmed by their VOC employment records. See VOC employment record of Carel Hendrik Hobeek from Berlijn. NL-HaNA, VOC 1.04.02, inv.no. 6127, fol. 27.
the Kabinettminister could easily believe that a man like Imhoff could rise from soldier to senior merchant and administrator in less than five years. Moreover, there were individual cases that confirmed and renewed the ‘imaginative contexts’ that were the basis of such beliefs. Even within Europe mobility ‘enabled men, and occasionally women, to rebuild new lives, sometimes with new names, in a new place’, as Katie Barclay has argued with regard to marriage breakdowns in early modern Scotland. This possibility grew in people’s minds the further the transient went from his family and community. Thus, left-behind families could imagine a better future for their faraway relative as easily as they could become suspicious, as in Senffen’s case.

Second, in Hobeck’s tale and other petitions, the social and economic transformations were linked less to entrepreneurship or advancement within one of the companies than one might expect. Instead, the transformations were depicted and imagined as the results of marriage. This remarkable link between social and financial advancement and marriage recurs throughout petitions. Like the belief that the East Indies was the place for rapid social advancement, the idea that marriage often lay at the ground of this advancement was not entirely made of thin air. However, while upward-mobile marriages in the Dutch East Indies were in practice confined to the middle and elite orders, in Germany people apparently believed that even a locksmith or soldier could advance in rank and status through a rich marriage in the East Indies. The third element in Hobeck’s account was the accusation of bigamy, and this part also was not entirely unreasonable. While Imhoff turned out not to be guilty of the crime, bigamy was indeed both a lived reality and a concern in societies and social groups characterized by large numbers of transient and highly mobile people such as soldiers, sailors, and others in the trading hubs of the East India companies.

Rahel Dorothea von Piron’s postulation about her absent parents also eventually turned out to be the result of the mixing of true(ish) and thinkable events.

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1019 For the term ‘imaginative contexts’, see Finn, Character, 2–3. Definitely there were such cases. Consider Christian Dunckel, who within 20 years made it from a young merchant’s apprentice to major and eventually captain and local commander (resident) at the court of the Yogyakarta Sultanate. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1011, fols. 40r–53r (Dunckel). Johannes Thedens might serve as another example. Originally from Friedrichstadt, he went to the East Indies as a soldier in 1697. Forty-four years later he was appointed governor of Batavia. Bloys van Treslong Prins, Die Deutschen in Niederländisch-Indien. Vortrag gehalten in der Ortsgruppe Batavia am 30. Sept. 1935 (Tokyo, 1937), 7.

1020 Barclay, ‘Mobile Emotions’, 75.


1022 Groenewald, “‘A Mother Makes No Bastard’”, 77. For bigamy among other mobile groups, see Barclay, ‘Mobile Emotions’, 72.
As shown in Chapter 3.2.3, she had been left behind in Königsberg when her parents and siblings left in 1769 for Batavia to collect an inheritance alleged to be as large as 100,000 gulden. After her father Felix died during the sea journey, her mother Anna was rumoured to have had come into possession of said inheritance. In Königsberg it was said that she lived a happy life with her children and called herself ‘Queen Regent’ (Regentin) of Semarang.\textsuperscript{1023} In her petition, Rahel Dorothea explicitly contrasted her mother’s and siblings’ ‘excellent circumstances’ (‘beste Umstände’) with her own sad situation:

\begin{quote}
I must live here in the most beggarly constitution, which is even harder and more painful for me, because I still have the same right as my siblings to said fortune, which I, only because of my former unfortunate sickly condition, cannot enjoy.\textsuperscript{1024}
\end{quote}

Rahel Dorothea stressed that she hardly made a living with needlework and ‘conditionieren’.\textsuperscript{1025} Her emphasis on her economic vulnerability and poverty in her petition is unsurprising. However, the way she frames this vulnerability is suggestive of her experience of being left behind by her parents: The migration of her parents had made eight-year-old Rahel Dorothea downwardly mobile. She left the noble family estate and moved into the household of her maternal aunt, Anna Regina Behrendtin. This move came, most likely, along with a transition from the countryside to urban Königsberg, which increased her social and economic vulnerability.\textsuperscript{1026} Dislocated from the people who knew her and separated from her parents, she even began to be rumoured to be illegitimate.\textsuperscript{1027} Thus, not only had she been physically left behind by her parents, but she had also been marginalized socially, economically, and emotionally. All this was ‘even more hard and painful’ as her siblings, with whom Rahel Dorothea shared ‘the same right’, lived a ‘happy life’.

\textsuperscript{1023} Prussian Government to \textit{Kabinetsministerium}, Königsberg, 19 April 1784. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1023, fol. 103v.
\textsuperscript{1025} Copy of the deposition of Anna Dorothea von Piron. Königsberg, 11 August 1783, GStA PK, XX HA EM, 52 j 1, No. 65, fol. 5r–v.
\textsuperscript{1026} Katie Barclay has shown that it is fruitful to think of sociability and space as interlinked categories that shaped peoples’ emotional lives. Barclay, ‘Mobile Emotions’; Katie Barclay, ‘Marginal Households and Their Emotions: The “Kept Mistress” in Enlightenment Edinburgh’, in Susan Broomhall (ed.), \textit{Spaces for Feeling: Emotions and Sociabilities in Britain 1650–1850} (London, 2015). On children in unstable households and the consequences of their transition between households, see Maddern, ‘Between Households’.
\textsuperscript{1027} A deposition of Rahel Dorothea von Piron and inspection of the files through the magistrate of Königsberg disproved this rumour. 11 August 1783. GStA PK, XX. HA EM, 52 j 1, No. 65, fol. 5r.
As Linda A. Pollock has argued, negative emotions, especially anger, were ‘a forceful invitation to renegotiate unsatisfactory aspects of relationships’.\footnote{Pollock, ‘Anger’, 567.} Rahel Dorothea von Piron had indeed made ‘several attempts’ to send letters to her mother Anna.\footnote{Petition of Rahel Dorothea von Piron. Königsberg, 30 May 1783. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1023, fol. 105v–107r. (fol. 106 is omitted).} However, this way of renegotiating and maintaining the relationship had failed and she never received an answer to her letters. Rahel Dorothea did not blame her mother for the failure, but supposed that she had never received the letters. Notably, her mother had corresponded with individuals in Königsberg in 1777 and it must have been in one of these letters that she conveyed the news of her husband’s death and established the picture of her happy and fortunate life as ‘Queen Regent’ of Semarang.\footnote{Prussian Government to Kabinettsministerium. Königsberg 19 April 1784. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1023, fol. 103v.} Two replies to these letters from a certain Mr F. C. Hahn did survive as part of Anna von Piron’s estate in Batavia. In these two letters, the absence of any reference to the daughter Rahel Dorothea in Königsberg is notable.\footnote{F. C. Hahn to Anna Dorothea von Piron. Königsberg, 27 July 1778 and 26 May 1783. CBG, BvTP, P395, Nos. 36 and 37, scan: FAPA072561.} As Hahn apparently tried to win Anna von Piron’s favour, it is hard to believe that he would have forgotten to include news of her daughter had Anna von Piron ever asked about her. To be sure, the written record is highly fragmentary and there might be other reasons why Hahn did not mention Rahel Dorothea, or why Anna von Piron did not inquire about her daughter in her letters to him.

However, in the context of Rahel Dorothea’s petition, Hahn’s letters reinforce the reading of her request as a reaction to the experience not only of having been left behind, but also forgotten and unjustly treated in comparison with her siblings. Against this background, Rahel Dorothea’s plea to issue orders to the envoy in The Hague to safeguard and redeem her share in the patrimony, as well as to be reimbursed by her mother for the expenses of her upbringing, aimed to compensate her for the injustice she suffered and the deficiencies in her parents’ duty towards her. The Prussian government, which supported her request, considered her depiction of the differences between her circumstances and those of her siblings, both economic and emotional, as inequitable and inappropriate and acknowledged that she was a ‘deserted and unhappy person’ in need of help.\footnote{Prussian Government to Kabinettsministerium. Königsberg, 19 April 1784. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1023, fol. 103r.}

In 1784, the Kabinettsministerium ordered Consul Pierre Chomel to investigate the matter in Holland. In 1787, after several homebound ships carrying letters and books had been shipwrecked, news finally arrived from Batavia. The investigations in Semarang and Batavia initiated by Chomel through his correspondents revealed that
the unfortunate Dorothea has nothing to hope for and that her father was not what he claimed to be in Europe, that the mother has never been in good circumstances, and that the children [...] all had to be placed in the orphanage in Batavia.1033

Rahel Dorothea von Piron’s attempts to regain her position within her family through her share in the inheritance and to be compensated for having been left behind thus did not bear fruit in the way she had hoped or expected.

The petition of Gottlieb Jaedicke, a clothier in Gollnow (now Goleniów), offers insight into another strategy used by children and siblings left behind to seek compensation. Gottlieb’s brother Christoph had left his two sons in the care of his siblings when he hastily left town in 1773. Twice, in 1787 and 1793, Gottlieb had merchants from Stettin make enquiries at the East India house about the ‘life or death’ of his brother. In the answers, ‘[t]he word: alive was underlined with red ink’. Gottlieb believed that his brother had quickly advanced in rank on the island of Ceylon ‘because he qualifies for more than a common soldier’. On the other hand, Christoph’s two sons in Gollnow found themselves ‘in the saddest situation’ and ‘bitter poverty’. They had been left with few resources and their situation got even worse ‘in these expensive years, in which all trade and traffic in our region has stagnated’.1034

Gottlieb thus reasoned that their father could help them with his fortune. One would expect him to petition to make his absent brother pay and remit money to his sons. However, Gottlieb chose a different strategy: He asked the king to bring his brother back to Pomerania, hoping that his presence would not only lift his two sons out of hardship and starvation, but also compensate his siblings for their expenses in maintaining his children. His line of argument suggests his interest in and insight into the international political developments of the 1790s:

The island Ceylon will be surrendered to England following the peace preliminaries in London, and presumably the Batavia government will impose the condition that those Europeans who are inclined to return to Europe will be allowed to embark with their property.1035

Gottlieb Jaedicke tried to take advantage of the very same event that had intruded itself devastatingly into the life of Hauptmann von Struve. He asked the king to

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notify Christoph Jaedicke on Ceylon, that ‘his three brothers and sole sister, but especially his two sons, were all still alive and would welcome him home with open arms’ and that the king also would issue ‘complete amnesty for all deserting subjects’. Gottlieb was positive that this royal proclamation would make his brother want to return home. However, his request exceeded what the Kabinettsministerium considered appropriate. An order was issued to Balan in London to ‘privately’ make enquiries into the life or death of Christoph Jaedicke. Were the brother still alive, the petitioner had ‘to prompt his brother himself to return to his fatherland’.1036

The last case that will discussed here was aimed to collect a debt. The background of the petition of the brothers Scheller, traders and merchants (Kauf- und Handelsleute) in Magdeburg, was not that different from that of Gottlieb Jaedicke. The Scheller brothers had fostered and educated two sons of their brother Sebastian Valentin for 16 years. In 1740, Sebastian had migrated to the Cape of Good Hope, where he settled after having married ‘rich’.1037 In 1764, he sent his two sons to his brothers in Magdeburg to be educated. Yet unlike Christoph Jaedicke, he annually transmitted money for their maintenance. However, after 1774 the annual payments stopped arriving. In the following years, the brothers used their own assets for the education of the two boys ‘without being the least worried that we might lose our advances in the future’. In total, they claimed to have advanced more than 5,500 Reichsthaler towards the boys’ care.

However, ‘some time ago’, they had received the ‘most sad news’ that their brother had lost his capital to his creditors in the ‘ongoing naval war between England and the houses of Bourbon’. For his brothers in Magdeburg, their presumably safe investment in their nephews’ maintenance turned out to be endangered. The prospect of retrieving their money became even more remote when they heard a report that their brother had died. Immediately, they commissioned a merchant at the Cape to liquidate their claims on their brother’s estate. The ‘loss of this money would cause our downfall’, wrote the brothers, underlining the urgency of their claims. However, ‘because of the distance’, they encountered many difficulties, and therefore involved the Kabinettsministerium. Consul Erberfeld in Amsterdam was ordered to support their matter in Holland and at the Cape, and he dutifully reported that he had been recommended to Secretary Tobias Christian Rönnekamp at the Cape, who he in turn commissioned to look into the interests of the Scheller brothers.1038 Whether the brothers ever recouped

1037 For this and the following quotes Petition of the brothers Scheller. Magdeburg, 12 October 1780. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1018, fol. 108r.
their advances is unknown. They were told not to rely solely on Erberfeld’s attempts, but to pursue their matter ‘through [their] own correspondence’.

The cases discussed here show how relations of East Indies migrants imagined the East Indies as a place where social and economic transformation was easily possible. The cases are also evidence of how those who stayed home gained insight into international entanglements and even sought to plan their strategies accordingly. Moreover, the lives of those stayed and those who left often remained entangled in expectations or obligations, even if communication came to a dead end.

6.3.3 Recovering inheritances

Matters of inheritance clearly stand out in the petitions associated with East Indies migration. The records illuminate a spectrum of different moments of conflict in the course of realizing inheritances and collecting legacies from deceased individuals in the East Indies. Problems and disputes occurred on different levels and at various moments of the probate process. Many of the petitions addressed conflicts that were not unusual and that did not differ from any other probate process. Next-of-kin had to be located and rules of succession had to be resolved by local courts before further steps could be taken. Often, petitioners turned to the king for help in getting reliable information on the death of a kinsmen and the value of his estate. Most of these issues could be resolved in the Netherlands and thus did not necessarily involve time-consuming correspondence with the East Indies. Mobility in the context of the East India companies, however, added new dimensions to many of these problems. Time and asymmetry of information often led to conflicts because they raised mistrust in the would-be heirs. The costs of pursuing inheritances also increased with distance, and social connections and knowledge of local customs in the Netherlands and East Indies were crucial if one wanted to recover property. The VOC made high demands on heirs to properly legitimate their identity and claims which itself became a source of complaints as it significantly increased the costs of recovering an inheritance.

Some petitions illumine conflicts intrinsically linked to the East Indies. For one thing, as we have seen, ideas of the East Indies were loaded with expectations. Those who had left and those who stayed shared the expectation that the East Indies were a place where ordinary people made immense fortunes. However, expectation and reality drifted apart, as did the migrants and their families in German lands. While those who stayed in Germany continued to expect the migration of their kinsmen would eventually benefit them, East Indies travellers formed new emotional and even legal ties in the East Indies. These new ties had the potential to conflict with the interests of the migrants’ kin in German lands. At the heart of the conflicts voiced in petitions was the question of what it meant

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1039 Kabinettsministerium to siblings Scheller. Berlin, 15 November 1780. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1018, fol. 111r.
to be kin – some argued that it was lineage, which could be proved with genealogical trees and baptism records. Others stressed emotional and economic ties as the glue that bound individuals together across oceans.

Moreover, with distance and uncertainty the complexities of probate processes increased. It took time and was a complicated process to liquidate assets in the East Indies, to collect and pay debts, and to value estates that, in the case of wealthier migrants, were often spread across different countries and entangled with complicated trust funds and obligations. Information got lost when executors died or moved on to another factory and when ships got captured or shipwrecked. The inability to personally oversee the executors and a lack of insight into local circumstances and customs frequently aroused anxiety and mistrust in heirs in German lands.

Stay-at-home kin could learn about the death of a relative and a potential inheritance in the East Indies through many different channels. The best scenario for kin was when the deceased had died with a will and appointed executors. These executors, in ideal circumstances, then informed the heirs and legatees in Germany.\textsuperscript{1040} It usually took a long time to settle estates in the East Indies and it was difficult to transmit assets to Europe. Because of these ‘frictions of empire’, the executors’ steady and reliable correspondence with the heirs in Germany (or any other part of the world) during this process was crucial.\textsuperscript{1041} In their letters they could compensate for the distance between the heirs and their inheritances and create a space for trust. What happened when the executors failed to do so can be seen in the case of the estate of Johann Bogislaus Mauve. Mauve had died in Bengal in the service of the EIC in 1782. In his will he had named the families of his two brothers in Stettin his residual heirs.\textsuperscript{1042} His brothers and one of his nephews had already tried for some years to obtain information about their sibling, and they came eventually into the possession of a copy of his will.\textsuperscript{1043} However, as the executors did not contact them, they became suspicious. They believed that they were owed an inheritance of hundreds of thousands of gulden and feared that the executors had betrayed them. Johann Bogislaus had himself fuelled these expectations, telling his brothers in his letters about his riches

\textsuperscript{1040} Examples include Jeremias van Riemsdyk to Johann Friedrich Meyn, Johann Jacob Patzeher, and Regina Meyn. 10 January 1763 (translation). GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1009, fol. 176r (Meyn); Truter and Bernhardi to Daniel Weiss. Cape of Good Hope, 4 May 1784 (copy). GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1026, fol. 135r (Krüger); J. G. L. Blume and B. G. D. Baumann to Anna Dorothea Spiegel (married name Wolff), Annelda Spiegel, and Anna Margaretha Spiegel. Hooghly, 7 March 1794 (copy). GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1032, fol. 4r–v (Spiegel); Louretz Bartels to Peter Henrich Rönnenkamp. Cape of Good Hope, [17?] July 1793. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1032, fols. 131r–132v (Rönnenkamp); and Jan Coningh and Lucas Pan to the mother of Johann Andreas von Hohendorf. Enkhuizen, 5 September 1761. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 6211 (no foliation) (Hohendorf).

\textsuperscript{1041} Finn, ‘‘Frictions’’ d’empire’.

\textsuperscript{1042} Will of John Mauve. 1781. BL IOR/L/AG/34/29/4, [No. 9].

\textsuperscript{1043} See the files in GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1021, fols. 155r–159r; and Rep. 11, Akten, No. 2365, fols. 218r–232r.
invested in houses and gardens, ‘silver, furniture, slaves, and horses’.\textsuperscript{1044} A letter from his executors might have lowered their expectations. The probate accounts show that Johann Bogislaus’ effects had been sold at auction for a total of 8,758 Sicca Rupees, and the better part of this money was used to pay his debts and other costs as well as legacies made in the will.\textsuperscript{1045} However, as no news from Bengal arrived, his heirs turned to the Kabinettsministerium and asked the king to set in motion an investigation in London as to whether ‘the will has the legal form’ and to call on the East India Company to freeze the estate in Bengal, sell the real estate and effects according to custom, and transmit the money to London. The Kabinettsministerium ordered the Prussian consul in London to make the inquiries; however, the outcome remains unknown.

In other cases that concerned conflicts with executors in the East Indies, the Prussian consuls reported that the heirs had to appoint someone on the ground in the East Indies who could represent and defend their interests and hold the executors accountable.\textsuperscript{1046} Probably, the distance and high costs of such litigations in a faraway region would dissuade heirs from doing so.\textsuperscript{1047} In only one case is there evidence that the husband of an heir travelled to the East Indies to recover an inheritance.\textsuperscript{1048}

More often than not there was neither a will nor any executors to act in the best interests of the deceased and those of his heirs. In these cases, the administrators of the estate had to first identify and locate the next of kin, often a lengthy process. In the jurisdiction of the VOC, the Board of Governors of the Orphan Chamber (Het College van Weesmeesters, Weeskamer) took care of the East Indian estates of deceased employees who had died intestate or had named no other executor in their will. It forwarded the news of the death, often with delay, to the respective Orphan Chambers in the Netherlands. From there, the news was published and forwarded to the dead employee’s place of origin. The example of Heinrich August Roessel illustrates this process. In his will, drafted in 1783, he appointed the governors of the Orphan Chamber in Batavia to administer his


\textsuperscript{1045} Account of the estate of John Mauve. 1783. BL IOR/L/AG/34/27/4, [No. 24]. Further examples that involved conflicts with executors are GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1008, fols. 44r–51r (Voss); No. 1029, fols. 89r–112r (Haugwitz); and No. 1039, fols. 59r–108v (Wiegermann).

\textsuperscript{1046} See, e.g. the cases pertaining to the estates of Jean Etienne la Fargue and Tobias Christian Rönnekamp. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1008, fols. 193r–204r (La Fargue); and No. 1032, fols. 127r–146r (Rönnekamp).

\textsuperscript{1047} As argued in regard to the American colonies by Narrett, Inheritance, 55.

\textsuperscript{1048} GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 11, Akten, No. 2365, fols. 156r–232r (Gloeeden). This case came to the knowledge of the Kabinettsministerium because the ship Held Woltemade on which Carl Wilhelm von Gloeden went to the East Indies, was seized close to the Cape of Good Hope. Gloeden tried to recover his ‘merchant goods’ with the help of the Prussian king. In his petition, he stated that he went to the East Indies to recover his wife’s inheritance. He did not reveal the additional information that he went out in the service of the VOC with the rank of a sergeant. VOC employment record of Carel Wilhelm van Gloeden. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 6696, fol. 83. See also a declaration of Carl Wilhelm von Gloeden, 9 November 1780, about a chest that he brought along on the Held Woltemade to Ceylon on behalf of Gottlob Silo. TNA HCA 30/317.
estate in the East Indies. In 1785, after he died, the governors of the Orphan Chamber communicated his death to the Orphan Chamber in Rotterdam, from whence the news was forwarded to the Berlin Magistrate, who summoned the heirs.\textsuperscript{1049} In a similar manner, the Orphan Chamber in Amsterdam communicated the case of succession to the heirs of Michael Renne in Königsberg. Here, it appears, the Orphan Chamber used a local merchant house in Königsberg to convey the message to the potential heirs. At the same time, the news was published by the local magistrate in the Königsberger Intelligenzblätter.\textsuperscript{1050}

Citations or public notices in newspapers could be conveyed either by individuals or by municipal authorities. Magistrates often convened next of kin by means of a public \textit{Edictalcitation} when their residence was unknown or when it was uncertain whether the heir was dead or alive. Merchants, advocates, and other individuals also used the newspapers to inform potential heirs and to offer their services to collect legacies.\textsuperscript{1051} The merchant and trader (\textit{Handelsmann}) Jacob Zollinger from Erfurt, for instance, offered his services to collect wages and legacies from the East India house. He travelled every year to Amsterdam ‘where he has the East India books opened to learn which fellow countrymen are living or have died in the East Indies’.\textsuperscript{1052} Priests also played a vital role in locating heirs and communicating news of inheritances to them. They usually knew the people living in their parishes, had access to church records, and could spread the word from the pulpit.\textsuperscript{1053}

Unsurprisingly, the transmission of information involved many people; different communication channels worked parallel to each other and conveyed news with differing degrees of efficiency. This system was highly vulnerable to misunderstandings, exaggerations, and misrepresentations. The value of an alleged inheritance increased with every transmission of the information, leaving some petitioners to believe that they awaited a fortune of several tonnes of gold.\textsuperscript{1054} Some

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\item[1049] GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1023, fols. 10r–14r (Roessel).
\item[1050] GStA PK, XX. HA EM, 52 i 1, No. 46 (Renne); GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1005, fols. 101r–115r (Renne); and No. 1010, fols. 141r–157r (Renne).
\item[1051] See, e.g. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1015, fols. 10r–19r (Müller); No. 1011, fols. 40r–53v (Dunckel). See also the case of the heirs of Gerhard Kröse. NLA OL, Best. 75 -4 No. 10. Announcements of inheritances from the East Indies can also be found in, e.g. \textit{Gnädigst privilegirtes Leipziger Intelligenz-Blatt in Freg- und Anzeigen, vor Stads- und Land-Wirthe, zum Besten des Nahrungsstandes}, 3 (18 January 1766), 20; and 33 (2 August 1766), 298; \textit{Der Anzeiger}, 70 (22 March 1792), 570; and 73 (26 September 1792), 556; and \textit{Kaiserlich privilegirter Reichs-Anzeiger}, 162 (17 July 1799), 1869.
\item[1052] Minutes of the deposition of Christian Wilhelm Esche. Erfurt, 8 August 1755 (copy). GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1007, fol. 130r.
\item[1053] See, e.g. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1027, fols. 22r–31r (Becker); and No. 6123 (Dürcksen).
\item[1054] See, e.g. the case of the alleged inheritance of Heinrich Paulsen by his ‘kinsman’ Commandeur Blom in Batavia, which was believed to amount to 6–7 tonnes of gold. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 6501 (no foliation) (Blom). Friederique Wilhelmine von Loewenfels, née Hageman, believed that her brother-in-law Johann Casper Neuhaus had left an estate worth half a million ducats in the East Indies. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1030, fol. 85r–v. Sophia Amalia von Purgoldt, née von Wildten, claimed to be entitled to an inheritance of one million gulden from a ship captain named Purgoldt. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34. No. 1031, fol. 145r–v. George Carl Hohnholdt, a
\end{footnotes}
petitioners, but remarkably few, displayed an indistinct idea of geography. The miller Amandus Kühl placed Batavia in Surinam, while others believed that it was ‘in Virginien’. Burgher and miller Johann Siegmund Zinnert stated that his cousin had died ‘on the island of Bengal’. Commissioner of the Excise (Aciuse-Commis) Jean Essaye Cavallier explained in his petition that his brother had died on ‘the island of Suratte which belongs to the General Government of Batavia’. The magistrate of Havelberg acted on the presumption that Tuticorin (Thoothukudi) was a city on the coast of Madura while the Kabinettsministerium believed it was on the island Ceylon. However, vague or confused ideas of the Indian Ocean world’s geography were no major obstacle to pursuing inheritance matters. More important than knowing that Bengal was on the mainland and that Tuticorin was neither on Madura or Ceylon but a city on the Coromandel Coast was providing information about which company (EIC or VOC) the person in question had served and when and on which ship he had signed on for service. This was the information needed to make inquiries and to collect wages and legacies.

Residual wages were often the only estate that VOC employees left behind. These wages had to be collected by the heirs in person at the appropriate tailor, believed that his brother Johann Jacob Hohnholdt had advanced from tailor to ship captain and owner of a sugar plantation in Batavia and that he had left behind an estate worth more than 400,000 Thaler. Petition of George Carl Hohnholdt. Zeitz, 6 July 1780. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 41 Beziehungen zu Kursachsen, No. 2238 (no foliation). See also his other petitions in GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, Nos. 1023, fols. 167r–169v; 1027, fols. 32r–39r; and 1029, fols. 12r–18r. Another case is the inheritance supposedly left behind by Christoph Wels, which his alleged heirs believed amounted to 3 tonnes of gold. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1017, fols. 63r–70r (Wels).


1056 Petition of Johann Siegmund Zinnert. Potsdam, 6 December 1798. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1031, fol. 2r.

1057 Petition of Jean Essaye Cavallier. Charlottenburg, 24 March 1774. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1012, fol. 2r.

1058 Claims of the siblings Pohle to the estate of their late brother Carl Friedrich Pohle in Tuticorin. GStA PK, III. HA Ministerium der auswärtigen Angelegenheiten (MdA), III No. 13883. The Pohle inheritance is one of the few cases in which investigations concerning family relations in the East Indies can be traced in the sources. The surgeon Carl Friedrich Pohle had died in Tuticorin. In Europe it was uncertain if he had left behind heirs in India or not. An investigation brought to light that he had married and fathered children. However, both his wife and three children died before him, and therefore his brothers in Brandenburg were his heirs. See the records in BL IOR/F/4/222/4827.

1059 See, e.g. a case from Württemberg, in which uncertainty was expressed as to whether Madras belonged to the English, the Dutch, or the Danish and therefore in which town investigations should be made. Records concerning the alleged estate of Johann Georg Stephani, HStA S, A 206 Bü 3596.

1060 Sometimes they also left a distributive share of an inheritance from kin in German lands who died during their absence. See, e.g. the case of court forager (Hoffourier) Dehlinger who asked the authorities to distribute his late brother’s patrimony and marriage, administered in Schorndorf, to him and the other heirs. Petition of court forager Dehlinger. Schorndorf, 15. January 1792.
chamber in the Netherlands. The common practice was for heirs to legitimize themselves at their local magistrate to obtain proof of their identity. These documents together with a letter assigning power of attorney were then sent to a proxy on the ground in the Netherlands to collect the money. To this end, heirs in German lands often relied on the services of merchants and local burgbers as well as the Prussian consuls. They either corresponded directly with their proxies or involved a third party, also usually a merchant, in their home town. For some heirs, this procedure was routine, as they had already received payments during the lifetime of the deceased. One example where money was transmitted all the way from Bengal to Brandenburg, is the Spiegel legacy. The executors of Joachim Spiegel’s will notified his sisters in Brandenburg of the legacies left to them by their late brother. They stated that they would remit the money (3,000 Sicca Rupees) through letters of exchange drawn on a merchant house in Amsterdam and dispatched on the next ships to Europe. The sisters had only to send their powers of attorney to someone in Amsterdam to collect the money. ‘You have earlier received letters and money from your dear late brother through the house of Mejuffrouw Panw et Zoon in Amsterdam, so that you are familiar with this procedure’, the executors added.

Impatience, distrust of the appointed agents, and unfamiliarity with procedures were often why inheritance matters came to the attention of the central authorities. Some heirs involved the Kabinettsministerium parallel to their private correspondences with their proxies in Amsterdam because they were sceptical whether these agents would act in their best interests. For example, the Jedick siblings complained that in two months they had heard nothing from Chargé d’affaires Renfner, to whom they had sent all the necessary documents to collect their legacy. Renfner, reprimanded by the Kabinettsministerium, reported a
month later that he had finally resolved the petitioners’ problem happily and attached the letter of exchange for over 318 gulden. At the same time, he used his report to defend himself against the petitioners’ allegations:

If these people had an idea of the infinite difficulties involved in dealing with the Dutch East Indian Company in matters of inheritance, if they had known that I had to exchange more than 40 letters in their affairs, they might have refrained from bringing complaints against me.1065

Renfner’s complaint mirrored the difficulties that heirs and their proxies faced in Amsterdam and other Company chamber towns. Payments could only be made when the books had arrived from Batavia, which especially in times of war could be delayed by one to two years, sometimes even longer.1066 The VOC also had very rigorous standards for the format of the documents required and the information they had to contain. Consul Barth explained that the company was ‘very cautious’ when it came to legitimating identities ‘because of the uncountable people who go to India’.1067 The Company’s high standards for legitimation were indeed justified. In some cases, the Residenten and consuls in Amsterdam made inquiries on behalf of self-proclaimed heirs and reported back to Berlin without noticing that the petitioners were not related to the East India migrant in question.1068

Many petitioners turned to the Kabinettsministerium and asked for help in verifying the amount of an expected inheritance and collecting it from the East India house. However, the investigations made by the Prussian representatives often brought to light that there was nothing to inherit. Take, for example, Johann Gottlob Funcke. He had heard from a fellow countryman that his brother had died ‘without heirs’ and with a ‘considerable fortune’ at the Cape of Good Hope, but as he was currently in the field, he could not pursue the matter himself and thus asked for help to recover the property. Consul Gregory enquired about the

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1066 The loss of ships and books caused delays in the cases of Piron, Tornow, Rennebaum, Koegell, and Jachtmann. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1023, fols. 102r–122r (Piron); No. 1031, fols. 163r–182r (Tornow); No. 1034, fols. 53r–63r and 130r–144r (Rennebaum, Koegell), and No. 1037, fols. 53r–96r (Jachtmann).
1068 See, e.g. the case of Mrs Neumann in, who tried to recover the inheritance of one Jacob Schubert. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1030, fols. 69r–82r (Schubert). See also the case of the claims of Siegmund Zinnert in which Consul Gregory reported on an individual who was certainly not the person described by the petitioner. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1031, fols. 1r–20v (Zinnert).
matter in Amsterdam and reported that the debts of the deceased surmounted his modest estate of 234 gulden. He concluded that Funcke’s ‘family has never had anything to inherit’.\textsuperscript{1069} Anna Elisabeth Kühn, Widow Thielen, also believed that she was entitled to a ‘considerable fortune’ from her brother in the East Indies.\textsuperscript{1070} However, as in many other cases, it turned out that the person in question had died ‘poor, and without leaving anything behind’.\textsuperscript{1071}

In other cases, the costs of collecting and transmitting an inheritance to Brandenburg exceeded its value.\textsuperscript{1072} This happened to Anna Regina Meyern, Widow Röring, whose brother’s estate consisted of little more than 11 gulden. ‘This small inheritance will hopefully prevent the petitioner from further futile steps’, the Kabinettministerium concluded in its resolution.\textsuperscript{1073} Johann Christian Friedrich Wernicke left behind an estate of about 58 gulden. But even in this case the cost of collecting the money would have been higher than the estate itself.\textsuperscript{1074} The inquiry of Cantor Hensch into the estates of his two brothers at the Cape of Good Hope made Consul Erberfeld lose his temper. He reported to Berlin that these two men had left behind 8 Stüber, ‘which is nothing’, and that he was ‘astonished’ that ‘those [petitioners] dare to bother your Majesty’ without knowing whether there was a sum worth claiming.\textsuperscript{1075}

Sometimes kin in Germany were passed over in the succession because of closer kin in the East Indies. Erdmann Lübsch believed that, as the nephew of Johann Nicolas Rauch, he was the next of kin and thus entitled to Rauch’s ‘considerable fortune […] not only of 8 tonnes of gold but also furniture’.\textsuperscript{1076} However, Erberfeld reported from Amsterdam that Rauch’s widow and child in

\textsuperscript{1069} Report of Johann Ludwig Gregory. Amsterdam, 6 September 1793. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1027, fol. 7r.
\textsuperscript{1070} Anna Elisabeth Kühn or Keue, Widow Thielen. Friesack, 25 January 1794. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1026, fol. 49r.
\textsuperscript{1071} Report of Johann Ludwig Gregory. Amsterdam, 25 February 1794. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1026, fol. 53r. The sources are contradictory here. Gregory reported that Godfried Kuhn went to the East Indies on the Haarlem in 1746 and that he died on 10 March 1749. According to the Haarlem’s pay ledger, she set sail first in 1749. Among the crew was one Godfried Keuningh from Königsberg who died on 10 March 1749, the same date that Gregory reported to Berlin. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 6236, fol. 206. Further examples where heirs received the news that their relative had died without leaving anything behind are to be found in GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1015, fols. 30r–31r (Rohrbeck); and No. 1023, fols. 144r–150r (Plüschkow). For the career of Hans Albrecht Plüschkow on Timor, see Hägerdal, Lords of the Land, esp. 381–391.
\textsuperscript{1072} This sort of problem was not confined to the East Indies, but distance certainly increased the expenses. Cecile Hoolberg observes that the costs to transfer the estates of Germans in Venice often exceeded their value, too. Cecile Hoolberg, ‘Den Tod vor Augen: Testamente deutscher Handwerker in Venedig’, in Markwart Herzog and Cecile Hollberg (eds.), Seelenheil und irdischer Besitz. Testamente als Quellen für den Umgang mit den ’letzten Dingen’ (Konstanz, 2007), 87.
\textsuperscript{1073} Kabinettministerium to Anna Regina Meyern, Widow Röring. Berlin, 6 February 1794. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1026, fol. 41r (Meyer).
\textsuperscript{1074} Report of Johann Ludwig Gregory. Amsterdam, 6 March 1801. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1038, fol. 187r.
\textsuperscript{1075} Report of Philip Anton Erberfeld. Amsterdam, 29 April 1755. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1007, fol. 204r.
\textsuperscript{1076} Petition of F. W. de Forexce. Frankfurt, 12 April 1765. Lit. A Promemoria. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1010, fol. 71r–v (Rauch).
Amboina had received the inheritance, which was in any case ‘insignificant’. Martin Jacob Jäger learned from Consul Chomel that his deceased brother had adopted a daughter in Makassar who was entitled to the estate. Likewise, Johann Christoph Heller, who believed that his brother had left behind ‘some thousands of Reichsthaler’ at the East India house, found out that he had forfeited his inheritance to a son in the East Indies. Yet other families found themselves omitted in wills that alienated property from the old lineage in favour of new relations in the East Indies. Receiving the news that there was no, or only an insignificant, estate easily caused heirs to mistrust the source. As we have seen, in Germany people believed that the East Indies were the place to make a great fortune. Being passed over in a will or usurped by legal succession also brought presumed heirs raise questions of allegiance and kinship.

It is noteworthy that petitioners who found themselves replaced in favour of adopted children only rarely questioned the status of these children as heirs, which is remarkable given that adoption was prohibited in German lands. Overall, petitioners showed a high tolerance of different local customs, including the high level of testamentary freedom, and they adapted their claims to the circumstances. Martin Jacob Jäger, who learnt that he had been passed over in succession in favour of his brother’s adopted daughter, did not question the legitimacy of this succession rule. A generation later, when the matter again came to the attention of the authorities, the petitioner, this time the husband of one of Jäger’s kin, requested a certificate of the adoption. He did not question the existence of adoption with its implications for succession, but sought proof that the adoption had been formalized legally.

Nevertheless, some disappointed kinsmen continued to pursue their interests. Different strategies emerge in the arguments with which they sought to establish themselves as the legitimate, if not sole, heirs. Take, for example the quarrel over the estate of Friedrich Ludwig Gesche. It came to the attention of the

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1078 Report of Pierre Chomel. Amsterdam, 5 February 1787. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1031, fol. 44r.
1079 GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1015, fols. 132r–136r (Heller). Tobias Heller declared in his will that his siblings in Germany were entitled to his estate only if his son died before them. Will of Tobias Heller. 1759. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 6868, (5231).
1080 See, e.g. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1005, fols. 76r–100r and 146r–152r (Leich); No. 1011, fols. 40r–53r (Dunckel); No. 1023, fols. 159r–163r (Deuter); No. 1034, fols. 17r–26r (Biedermann); No. 6126 (Ganze); and Rep. 11, Akten, No. 2368 (Eggert). Nevertheless, the heirs of Philipp Arnoldt Ganze eventually received a share of his estate. See the VOC employment record of Filip Arnoud Gaenke. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 5938, fol. 205.
1081 Hans Peter Braunwaldt contested his brother’s will, in which the testator split the estate between his siblings and adopted daughter, not because of the status of the daughter, but because of the condition that the heirs had only two years to collect their inheritance. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1014, fols. 38r–54r.
Kabinetsministerium in 1759, when burgher and goldsmith Johann Albrecht Heitmann petitioned the king on behalf of his wife, Gesche’s maternal aunt. Heitmann had, ‘after many efforts’, received a certificate from the VOC that stated that Gesche had died with a will and that his appointed beneficiary had already collected 775 gulden in residual wages. However, Heitmann believed that this could not have been the whole estate. He had heard from ‘a good friend’, that Gesche’s estate was ‘estimated [to be] at least 40,000 gulden’. Also, he did not believe that Gesche would have omitted him and his wife in his will. On the contrary, he was certain that Gesche, with whom he had regularly corresponded during the first years of his absence, had made his will in favour of him and his wife. After all, they were his ‘only and next of kin’. ‘Besides close kinship, I have done much good for [Gesche], which he also acknowledged in his last letters’, Heitmann added.1083

Johann Albrecht Heitmann presented two interwoven arguments, the first based on lineage and the second on the emotional and practical closeness of their relationship. The lineage argument pervades almost all petitions, and petitioners often submitted further proof of their kinship ties in form of copies from church registers or even family trees.1084 The second argument, targeting the content of the relationship, emphasized the support Gesche had received from his kin in Germany. This argument was based on the assumption that ‘doing good’ for Gesche had created a solid relationship that should endure separation and periods of silence and that should be meaningful in the event of the transfer of property.

Like Heitmann, other petitioners relied not only on the lineage argument, but also on the nature and content of their relationship to the deceased. Some gave examples of their continuous bonds with the East Indies traveller and his interest in his family’s affairs in Germany. Johann Christoph Leich argued, for example, that his brother had for 10 years of his absence frequently ‘inquired and demanded to know’ if his brothers in Germany were still alive. Johann posited that the reason his brother in Semarang had passed over his siblings and instead appointed ‘three strange, unnamed minor children’ as his universal heirs, was that he had been falsely informed that his siblings in Germany were dead.1085 The nephews of Johann Valentin Deuter believed that they were entitled to at least part of their uncle’s estate despite the fact that the will did not name them, because of ‘the love of the testator for his fatherland and his poor and needy

1083 Petition of Joh. Albrecht Heitmann. Berlin, 18 April 1759. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1011, fols. 173r–176r. The case was again brought to the attention of the Kabinetsministerium in 1772, when Gesche’s aunt, Anna Katharina Mattig, married name Heitmann, also petitioned for help in the matter. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1013, fols. 153r–187r (Gesche).
1084 See, e.g. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1031, fols. 153r–162r (Purgoldt).
1085 Petition of Johann Christoph Leiche. Potsdam, 2 April 1744. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1005, fol. 89v. Another case in which the petitioner emphasized the East Indies traveller’s continuous interest in his siblings has to do with the estate of Johann Friedrich Dornheim. See Petition of George Christoph Balduan. Dresden, 28 November 1817. SächsStA-D, 10026 Geheimes Kabinett, Loc. 2549/53 (no foliation).
friends’. The heirs of Christian Willhelm Meyn likewise invoked the ‘tender love’ of the testator ‘for his left-behind relatives [Blutsfreunde] in Prussia’ to support their claims.

Another strategy to establish oneself as a legitimate heir was to stress the original intent of the East Indies migrant. Burgher and tailor Christian Friedrich Hörnick, for example, emphasized that his brother Johann Michael had assured him in a letter that he and the other siblings would be heirs to his estate. Johann Nicolas Rauch allegedly had sent letters to his relatives in which he informed them that ‘he not only would remain unmarried, but also that his relations should not let his considerable fortune, which he was to leave behind, come into the hands of strangers’. Johann Valentin Deuter had written to his nephew ‘that he wished that his family in the Dutchy of Halberstadt should receive 1/3 of his fortune: This should benefit the whole family’. A group of hopeful people who claimed to be the closest kin of Samuel Christian Kriel, municipal surgeon (stadtsdoctor) in Batavia, argued that Kriel had requested family trees and information on his living kin in Brandenburg. According to his alleged relatives, this was a true sign that he intended to consider them in his will and appoint them beneficiaries. Closely related to this strategy was the recurrent argument that the East Indies traveller had died shortly before embarking or even during the sea voyage to return home. In this line of argument the assumption was that the East Indies were no place for permanent settlement, but only transient station in a larger family strategy.

In one last example, the petitioner combined all these strategies to make his claim. In March 1766, the reformed preacher Carl Friedrich Rieck submitted his
petition to the *Kabinettsministerium*. He asked the king to verify the news of his brother Johann Philip’s death on Makassar.\footnote{Petition of Carl Friedrich Rieck. Neuholland, 29 March 1766. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1010, fol. 15r.} The investigation in Amsterdam brought to light that Johann Philip had made a mutual will with his wife Johanna Catharina Zinck on 27 January 1764. According to the copy of the will in Amsterdam, ‘the deceased did not mention his friends or family, and thus excluded them’ from his inheritance.\footnote{Report of Philip Anton Erberfeld. Amsterdam, 2 May 1766. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1010, fol. 18r.} The petitioner, Carl Friedrich, questioned the authenticity of this will and accused his brother’s widow, who was also executrix of the will, of fraud. He argued that he had received a letter from her which caused his mistrust. Moreover, he invoked several other arguments: Johann Philip had continuously, and even shortly before his death, expressed his ‘vital love’ for his family in Germany. He had frequently sent letters, and he also had supported his elderly father with an annual allowance of 50 ducats. Against this background of his late brother’s continuous love and care, the petitioner reasoned that it was ‘morally impossible’ that he would have passed over his family in Germany in his will.\footnote{Petition of Carl Friedrich Rieck. Neuholland, 24 June 1766. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1010, fol. 20r–v.} Erberfeld was ordered to freeze the estate, especially the 1,512 gulden wage arrears, until the matter was solved. However, in August 1766, reliable news from Batavia finally arrived in Amsterdam: the estate of Johann Philip Rick had turned out to be ‘totally wretched, and [he had] much more debts than assets’. Two other creditors had therefore also frozen the wages in Amsterdam. Erberfeld concluded that the ‘deceased’ had made ‘promises’ to his family in Germany that did not reflect reality.\footnote{Report of Philip Anton Erberfeld. Amsterdam, 22 August 1766. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1010, fol. 24r–v.}

Disappointed and frustrated heirs imagined, understood, and argued that kinship relationships were created and maintained through emotional investments, promises, and the practice of remaining a part of the other’s world through showing interest. This argument built on the notion that migration to the East Indies would and should eventually benefit the travellers’ families in German lands. Petitioners who found themselves passed over or ignored in wills framed their narratives in ways that made them appear as the migrants’ main points of social reference and thus the sole and legitimate heirs of their East Indies fortunes. However, this imagination of kinship and the assumption of the East Indies as a place of impermanency often turned out to be one-sided. The realities of life in the East Indies were much more complex than kin in Germany could and would want to imagine.

Frustrated hopes, the feeling of being unjustly treated and deprived of one’s ‘just share’, whether by the deceased himself, by the company who denied access to the books, or by the executors, could, at least in theory, lead to litigation.
However, while there is evidence in German archives that heirs asked for support and assistance in seeking adjudication in the Netherlands, the question of whether and how they pursued legal action awaits further investigation. It can be stated at this point, however, that if they did litigate, their suits were likely settled privately or at a lower court, as Kate Ekama found that no inheritance litigations involving foreigners were brought to the High Court in the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{1097} Aske Laursen Brock and Misha Ewen have demonstrated how female kin and heirs of EIC employees made property claims and challenged the Company at various courts in London. However, they also note that ‘[p]etitioning and challenging the EIC at East India House was no small feat and taking the company to court was an even more monumental task.’\textsuperscript{1098} The cases from Brandenburg-Prussia suggest that Prussian representatives played an important role as intermediaries in negotiating and defending the interests of foreigners towards the companies and their employees. They went to the meetings of the Gentlemen Seventeen and submitted petitions to the Court of Directors. Many conflicts thus were solved extra-judicially.

How complicated such conflicts could be when large estates were at stake is illustrated by the remarkably well-documented Hagemeister inheritance. This case also sheds light on the global entanglements of East Indies estates, and how events in distant places affected heirs in German lands. The actors are already familiar from Chapter 2: Carl Ludwig Hagemeister had bequeathed his estate in India to his daughter and son, Lubert and Johanne Dorothea.\textsuperscript{1099} By his will he ordered that the money was to be transferred to Germany together with his two children. For the management of his estate, Hagemeister appointed the Missionary Reverend Fabricius and the merchant Calland in Madras. In Germany he appointed the directors of the Orphan House in Halle to act both as administrators of the estate and guardians of the children. After quarrels over the guardianship of the children were resolved, the next hurdle that the involved parties faced was to figure out how to transfer the estate with as little loss as possible. Eventually, it was decided to transfer the money in several stages by assigning the mission funds from Halle to the Hagemeister estate in India and paying those sums to the children’s guardian in Berlin by means of bills of exchange. This system of transfer worked for some years and benefitted everyone involved. However, in 1778, the payments from India came to a stop.\textsuperscript{1100}

The reason was soon detected. The executor, Fabricius, had mismanaged the funds in his possession. To understand what happened, a short excursion into

\textsuperscript{1097} Ekama, ‘Courting Conflict’, 155. In the early years of the 19th century, the heirs of Johann Heinrich Wiegermann went to court in the Netherlands because of a conflict with the executors. Consul Gregory supported them. The outcome of the case is unknown. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1039, fols. 59r–108v (Wiegermann).

\textsuperscript{1098} Brock and Ewen, ‘Women’s Public Lives’, 15.

\textsuperscript{1099} See chap. 2.4.5.

\textsuperscript{1100} Johann Siegfried Wilhelm Mayer to Johann Ludwig Schulze. Berlin, 19 March 1787. AFSt/M 3 B 2 : 80, fol. 1.
the political landscape in the Carnatic in the 1760s and 1770s is necessary. Muhammad Ali Khan Wallajah, nawab of the Carnatic from 1749 to 1795 (also referred to as the Nawab of Arcot), needed credit to establish and consolidate a dynastic state in the Carnatic. To this end he borrowed money from both the Company and inhabitants of Madras. The EIC supported him in his endeavour – only a strong state could ensure that the Company’s trading activities in the region would remain secure. Indeed, before 1767, investments in nawab’s bonds were promising and returned interest at rates between 20 and 30 per cent per annum.\footnote{Jim Phillips, ‘A Successor to the Moguls: The Nawab of the Carnatic and the East India Company, 1763-1785’, \textit{International History Review}, 7/3 (1985), 366–376.} Hagemeister’s executors invested 4,000 Pagodas into one of these nawab’s bonds. Fabricius argued that he was confident that this investment would not cause any risk for the heirs, ‘unless there happened (God forbid) a revolution in this country’.\footnote{Johann Philipp Fabricius to Johann Christian Brese. Madras, 31 October 1767. AFSt/M 3 B 1 : 89, fol. 145v.}

By 1772, Fabricius had liquidated and transmitted more than half of Hagemeister’s Indian estate to Germany, leaving the remaining 1,540 Pagodas in bond to the nawab. However, Fabricius apparently made several destructive speculations and ran up personal debts. At the same time, the financial situation of Muhammad Ali Khan changed drastically. After 1776, his creditors began to realize that he would not repay his debts.\footnote{Phillips, ‘Successor’, 367.} What made the situation even worse for the Hagemeister heirs was that their bond was now in the hands of one of Fabricius’s creditors. The only chance of receiving the outstanding sum from the Indian estate was to call Fabricius’s estate to account. However, Fabricius himself was in ‘pecuniary difficulties’ and became more and more indebted through the mismanagement of funds – both those belonging to the mission and those of private individuals for whom he acted.\footnote{Henry Davison Love (ed.), \textit{Vestiges of Old Madras 1640 –1800}, Traced from the East India Company’s Records Preserved at Fort St. George and the India Office, and from Other Sources, vol. 3 (London, 1913), 431. The war in India, Fabricius’s (mis)management of inheritance funds, and the death of executors also caused complications in settling the estate of Benjamin Ratzell, which also involved the missionaries and the directors of the Orphan House in Halle. This case requires further research. See the letters of Johann Philipp Fabricius to Gottlieb Christoph Bohnenberger. Madras, 11 October 1779; Gottlieb Anastasius Freylinghausen to Gottlieb Christoph Bohnenberger. Halle, 4 June 1782; and Johann Balthasar Köhlhoff et al. to [Gottlieb Christoph Bohnenberger]. Tarangambadi [1783]. AFSt/M 3 B 2 : 35, 18, and 5.} The only assets he had left in the late 1780s were two bonds – one from the nawab’s son-in-law and one from a nawab’s poligar.\footnote{A poligar was a subordinate feudal chief.}

After almost 10 years of unsuccessful correspondence between Berlin, Halle, and Madras, Johanne Dorothea Hagemeister and her guardian eventually turned to the \textit{Kabinettministerium} for help. In her petition, Hagemeister asked the king to approach the government in London on her behalf and to request it to exert influence over the nawab:

> 1102 Johann Philipp Fabricius to Johann Christian Brese. Madras, 31 October 1767. AFSt/M 3 B 1 : 89, fol. 145v.
> 1104 Henry Davison Love (ed.), \textit{Vestiges of Old Madras 1640 –1800}, Traced from the East India Company’s Records Preserved at Fort St. George and the India Office, and from Other Sources, vol. 3 (London, 1913), 431. The war in India, Fabricius’s (mis)management of inheritance funds, and the death of executors also caused complications in settling the estate of Benjamin Ratzell, which also involved the missionaries and the directors of the Orphan House in Halle. This case requires further research. See the letters of Johann Philipp Fabricius to Gottlieb Christoph Bohnenberger. Madras, 11 October 1779; Gottlieb Anastasius Freylinghausen to Gottlieb Christoph Bohnenberger. Halle, 4 June 1782; and Johann Balthasar Köhlhoff et al. to [Gottlieb Christoph Bohnenberger]. Tarangambadi [1783]. AFSt/M 3 B 2 : 35, 18, and 5.
> 1105 A poligar was a subordinate feudal chief.
1) to pay the debt of his late son-in-law [...] to Reverend Fabricius in Vepery at Madras, as previously promised [...], 2) [...] to order the nabob not to hinder Poligar Pomaroha to pay his debts, particularly the ones due to Fabricius, so that the latter can pay off his and especially my claim including interests.\textsuperscript{1106}

The \textit{Kabinettsministerium} consequently ordered the Prussian envoy Alvesleben in London to bring forward Hagemeister’s claims. In November 1790, a year after Hagemeister’s petition, the Court of Directors resolved to transmit a copy of Alvesleben’s memorial ‘requesting the Court’s interference for the recovery of a debt’ to the government of Fort St. George.\textsuperscript{1107} When the bundle of letters and orders arrived in Madras in early summer 1791, Reverend Gericke was immediately asked to report on the state of Fabricius’s affairs. However, he could only report that between 1780 and his death in January 1791 Fabricius had ‘subsisted on charity’. Gericke further explained that ‘all our trouble in recovering what was lost to the mission and others has been fruitless’.\textsuperscript{1108} Thus, the money owed to Johanne Dorothea Hagemeister was lost.

6.4 Shades of truths and fraudulent inheritances

Around half of the cases concerning East Indies migrants in the records of the Brandenburg-Prussian administration relate to uncertain, questionable, or even outright fraudulent claims to inheritances. In these cases, petitioners could not provide any evidence for their claims, or they did not provide the necessary information needed in the Netherlands to trace a person in the pay ledgers, or the person in question despite this information could not be found in the books. These petitioners usually received the resolution from the \textit{Kabinettsministerium}, sometimes after the consul had investigated the matter on the ground, that their petition would not proceed and that they had been misled by ‘imagination’ and ‘false news’. Indeed, the imperfect nature of communication and knowledge and the phenomenon of what Benjamin Breen describes as ‘misinformation multiplying and transforming as it passed along emerging long-distance knowledge networks’ produced a thick web of true and imagined ‘East Indies inheritances’ (\textit{Ostindische Erbschaften}) that is not readily untangled.\textsuperscript{1109}

The case of Dorothea Catharina Weyern from Colberg (now Kolobrzeg) is a good example of the fluid lines between truth and ‘imagination’ characteristic of matters related to East Indies lives and inheritances. In 1785, she submitted a petition containing a lengthy tale about her absent son Johann Georg and how

\textsuperscript{1106} Petition of Johanne Dorothea Haenicken, divorced Bresen, née Hagemeister. Ludwigsaue im Ruppinischen, 12 November 1789, GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1024, fols. 25r–26r.
\textsuperscript{1107} Minutes of the Court of Directors. 3 November 1790. BL IOR/B/112, p. 584.
\textsuperscript{1108} Reverend Gericke to the Council at Fort St. George, 24 June 1791, Public Consultations vol. 170, cited by Davison Love (ed.): Vestiges, 431–432.
‘greedy people’ had tried to defraud her of her just inheritance. Dorothea Weyern described how she had learnt about her son’s death and the inheritance and how she had gathered further information on the matter for several years. The result of her ‘many questions’ and her ‘going from one to another’ was a life story that read like this: Her son Johann Georg Weyer was born in Colberg, where he learnt the profession of a ship carpenter. After his apprenticeship he went to sea. At some point he came to Amsterdam whence he embarked for the East Indies. In the East Indies, Johann fell into a fortunate situation when a merchant, whose name his mother could not find out, employed him as his accountant. Shortly before this merchant died, he named Johann, who was at this point on a business trip back in Holland, universal heir to his estate. During his short stay in Amsterdam, Johann married a woman named Leonora Sophia Taacken, the widow of a ship’s carpenter. Two months after the marriage, Johann embarked on the ship Grünenthal to the East Indies again, leaving his pregnant wife behind. When he died four weeks later in the East Indies, he left behind an estate of 60,000 Reichsthaler, of which he bequeathed 40,000 to his wife and 20,000 to his parents in Colberg. Dorothea Weyern could not provide any evidence for her story. Both a letter from her daughter-in-law and her son’s death certificate had apparently been lost.

The Kabinetskministerium decided that Weyern had not sufficiently substantiated her claims and that she had been ‘lured and misled by imagination or false news’. The decision to dismiss Weyern’s request without further investigation seems peculiar against the background of the very detailed and verifiable information she had provided. To be sure, though, many parts of her story were hardly plausible. Her son could not possibly have died in the East Indies four weeks after he had been in Amsterdam. However, with some perseverance, Consul Chomel in Amsterdam could have verified many of her other claims. Johann Georg Weyer did indeed go to the East Indies. He also returned to Amsterdam in 1775, as his mother had stated, not as a merchant’s agent, but after his contracted time of service had ended. Chomel could also have identified the marriage record of Jan George Weijer and Sophia Tak and the baptism record of their child. And finally, he could have verified that Johann Georg died intestate in the hospital in Batavia in October 1776 without leaving any goods or money behind.

1112 Further research into the Kabinetskministerium’s operations in non-political matters is necessary to better understand how it assessed whether claims of petitioners were credible and plausible.
1113 VOC employment record of Johan Jurgen Weijer/Wejer from Calbergh. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 6561, fol. 37, and inv.no. 6624, fol. 39. Marriage and baptism records relating to Jan George Weijer and Sophia Tak can be found in the online searchable indexes of the Gemeente Amsterdam Stadsarchief at https://archief.amsterdam/indexen/persons.
Dorothea Weyern’s struggle to find out more about her son and his inheritance is a remarkable example of how real individuals and real events were transformed as information passed through communication networks. The story of Jakob Matthies or Cobes Thies offers another striking example. For more than 100 years, between about 1709 and 1806, this enigmatic figure occupied authorities in Brandenburg-Prussia.\footnote{GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, Nos. 6461, 6464, 6465, 6466, 6467, and 6468.} Apparently based on a historical person, numerous life stories of this Jakob Matthies circulated. Some petitioners said he was the son of a man named Hans Matthias, a turner apprentice from Halberstadt. This Hans Matthias had allegedly gone to the East Indies in the late seventeenth century, where he became Council of India and married an Indian princess. The couple returned to Amsterdam, where the princess was baptized. Their son, Jacobus Matthias died in 1703, leaving several tonnes of gold.\footnote{Petition of Ewald Simon Klahr, Henrich Hoff, and Peter Eychel. Berlin, 7 December 1766. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 6464, fols. 1r–4r.} Other petitioners believed that Jacob Matthies came originally from Holstein or Jütland and that he was a ship captain who returned from Batavia shortly before he died in Amsterdam in 1703. The accounts about his wealth varied from 10 to 80 tonnes of gold.\footnote{See the other petitions in GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 6464.} Numerous individuals from the territories of Brandenburg-Prussia believed that they were Matthies’s legitimate heirs and tried to recover the inheritance. One alleged heir sold her presumed title of inheritance for 90,000 Reichsthaler, which led to several years of litigation at the Berliner Kammergericht.\footnote{GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 6464.} Another petitioner was so convinced that he had a right to this inheritance that he petitioned the king incessantly for help throughout the 1760s. Eventually, he was told that should he continue to petition he would face ‘imprisonment on water and bread’.\footnote{Justizdepartement to Andreas Matthes. Berlin, 18 July 1771. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 6466 (no foliation).}

Obviously, the prospect of inheriting a fortune from a long-lost brother or a distant relative, whom one had possibly never even met, was compelling. High mobility and fluid households in the eighteenth century left gaps in kinship networks that invited explanation. Explaining such gaps with migration to the East (and sometimes West) Indies allowed families to hope that the absence might eventually benefit the family left at home. These stories were very much in the air those days. Distance added yet another dimension to the picture, as information could easily be transformed as it passed along the communication networks among the East Indies, the Netherlands, and the territories of Brandenburg-Prussia. The bureaucratic nature of the VOC also often confronted and frustrated heirs, especially foreigners, with inscrutable procedures for recovering property.

All these factors combined to form fertile soil for questionable and even fraudulent activities. Ferdinand Heinrich Metzingk from Magdeburg or Berlin
played on these opportunities in various ways. He acted as an agent and took mandates from Brandenburg-Prussian subjects to recover their inheritances in Amsterdam. Apparently, he was also involved in a scam involving the estate of Jakob Matthies and represented some of the alleged heirs. In 1770, he submitted a proposal to the Kabinettministerium to establish a ‘Royal Prussian Control Board’ in Amsterdam or The Hague to collect all the information on Brandenburg-Prussian subjects in the service of the VOC necessary to recover their inheritances. This would make it easier and cheaper for the heirs to claim their property without the usual difficulties and costs connected with these matters. Eventually, this board would save Prussian families and subjects from economic ruin and bring their fortunes into the royal territories. Unsurprisingly, Metzingk suggested he be appointed head of the board with the rank and salary of a Geheimer Rat (privy councillor), and his four sons should be named secretaries with the ‘usual salary’. His plan was rejected by the Kabinettministerium because it was ‘imprudent and impractical’.

By the end of the eighteenth century a new crime had emerged that has haunted long-distance migration and globalization ever since: the pretence of ‘false inheritances’ (falsche Erbschaften). In August 1782, the Prussian envoy Thulemeier brought to the attention of the Kabinettministerium the activities of the Halle-born Chevalier in Amsterdam. By telling of a ‘chimera of inheritances’, Chevalier convinced Prussian subjects to ‘their great disadvantage’ to pay him advances on expected inheritances. Among other cases, he was involved in the above-mentioned Jacob Matthies’ inheritance scam and made one Lieutenant Beyerlein travel to Amsterdam, where he fell into debt and was imprisoned. Two merchants from Magdeburg also left ‘their establishment and families’ and went to Holland on Chevalier’s advice, which exposed them to ‘ruin’. After several complaints, the Prussian envoy Thulemeier was ordered to make Chevalier understand that he had to stop betraying Prussian subjects. Thulemeier remarked in his report that royal subjects should not be allowed to travel to Amsterdam for ‘Indian inheritance matters’ and instead should ask him or Consul Chomel to investigate the matter: ‘the presence of the interested parties [in Holland] is often not necessary to this end’. Subsequently, the Kabinettministerium issued a

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1119 Advertisement of the royal Prussian Kammergericht, 15 February 1771, in Reichs Post-Reuter, 34 (27 February 1771) (no foliation).
1121 Kabinettministerium to Ferdinand Heinrich Metzingk. Berlin, 18 May 1770. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1015, fol. 103r. In 1772, a year later, Metzingk proposed building a house in Amsterdam where foreigners could stay so that they would not fall into the hands of the ‘soul sellers’. Gelder, Abenteuer, 36 n. 60.
‘warning’ in several Intelligenzblätter that royal subjects should not engage with the fraud Chevalier.

In 1794, another ‘merchant’ who betrayed Prussian subjects and pretended to know of inheritances came to the attention of the Kabinettsministerium. Johann Heinrich Trehmer or Traehmer. He repeatedly published lists of (allegedly) deceased VOC servants and asked the heirs to contact him in order to obtain further information about a possible inheritance. In 1794, Consul Gregory in Amsterdam was ordered to inquire into the nature of these inheritances and report whether royal subjects should get involved with Trehmer. This order is astonishing, given that Gregory had reported little more than half a year earlier in a different case that Trehmer had betrayed a group of hopeful heirs. And this was not even the first time Trehmer had come to the attention of the Kabinettsministerium. In 1783, Consul Chomel had questioned him over a petition that he had submitted to the Kabinettsministerium on behalf of a group of heirs of the alleged East Indies traveller Johann Friedrich Paldamus or Anton Gyrial Pandamus. The picture Chomel drew of Trehmer was unflattering: ‘the man struggles to express himself, and he says little of importance with very many words’. Chomel warned Trehmer against ‘going to expense’ in this very uncertain Pandamus or Paldamus case, and he told him ‘about different incidents, which [he] unfortunately [had] seen of people who ruined themselves entirely because of imagined inheritances from the East Indies’.

Reading the consul’s report, one cannot help but wonder if it was Chomel who set Trehmer on the idea of making a business out of people’s hopes for an East Indies inheritance. In the following years, Trehmer increasingly appeared publicly as an ‘Assuradeur [insurer] in matters of inheritance’. In connection with these advertisements, petitions were submitted in 1798 and 1804 to the Kabinettsministerium concerning the alleged East Indies traveller Christian Friedrich Keil. The first petitioner was a man named Amandus Kühl from Henkenhagen in Pomerania (now Ustronie Morskie). He had heard the rumour that a man named Christian Friedrich Kiel had died rich in the East Indies. The petitioner believed that this man was his brother, Christian Friedrich Kühl, who had been ‘absent for some 30 years’ without anyone knowing where he had gone. The difference in the last name had to be an ‘Error Pennae’.

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1124 See, e.g. Der Anzeiger, 118 (17 May 1792), 963; Der Anzeiger, 64 (15 September 1791), 488. Additional advertisements can likely be found in the Vößische Zeitung.
1128 Probably Assurateur, an insurer or bailer in trading towns. Der Anzeiger, 64 (15 September 1791), 488.
1129 Petition of Amandus Kühl. Henckenhagen, 28 February 1798. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1031, fols. 94r–95v. Trehmer published this inheritance case also in Der Anzeiger, 91 and 92 (16 and 17 April 1792), 740.
was a forester from the Neumark. His brother Christian Friedrich Kiel, which according to the petitioner was the low-German version of Keil, had been missing for many years. Both petitioners were informed that without further details of the year and the name of the ship, investigations on the matter in Amsterdam would be fruitless, and that Trehmer was a notorious man of bad reputation.

Pay ledgers show a VOC servant named Christian Friedrich Kiel from ‘Silzhauw in pruijse’ who signed on in 1778 and died after he repatriated to Hoorn in 1785. One cannot help but wonder whether Silzhauw was a misspelling of Gülzow (now Golczewo), a village 4 kilometres away from Henkenhagen where one of the petitioners, Amandus Kühl, resided. Could his claim to the inheritance have been justified after all? Research into other cases in which petitioners could not provide the necessary evidence and in which the Kabinettsministerium concluded that the claims were likely based on imagination or false news also showed that the East Indies travellers in question sometimes were historical individuals.

The lines between real and imagined inheritances were often messy, but so were the lines between frauds and individuals with an honest interest in recovering inheritances, as the case of the (alleged) inheritance of Christian Ziehe demonstrates. In 1782, the shoemaker’s wife Maria Elisabeth Fischern from Jüterborg petitioned the Kabinettsministerium for help in an inheritance matter. ‘Since a young age, she had heard that her cousin Christian Ziehe […] went from Amsterdam to the East Indies with the so-called Easterships in 1722’. When ‘many credible persons from Jüterborg and surroundings’ assured her that they had read in the newspapers that the heirs of a certain ‘deceased Dutch ship captain Christian Ziehe’ were summoned to legitimize themselves in Amsterdam, she believed that she was the next of kin to this Ziehe. In 1774 and 1775, she therefore travelled to Amsterdam. She had convinced a group of people with the name Ziehe in Berlin that they too had a right in the inheritance and they consequently paid her in advance for her trip to Amsterdam to recover the inheritance on their behalf. At her arrival in Amsterdam she made the acquaintance of the lodging house keeper (Volkshalter) Mr Kraakmann and his wife, who welcomed her ‘benevolently’ and provided her with free board and lodging. They quickly became Fischer’s main source of information in Amsterdam and provided her with more contacts in the city, such as their friend Knurr or Knöhr, allegedly a servant at the East India house, and ‘a certain Portuguese Jew named Marcus’.

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1130 Petition of Förster Kiel. Forsthaus Ziegenberg bey Noerenberg, 15 April 1804. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1035, fol. 3r–v.
1131 VOC employment record of Christiaan Fredrik Kiel. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 14272, fol. 44.
1132 See, e.g. the cases of Kratel, Wels, and Krieghoff. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1006, fols. 1r–77r, and No. 1027, fols. 145r–165r (Kratel); No. 1014, fols. 73r–78v, and No. 1017, fols. 63r–70r (Wels); and No. 1021, fols. 175r–177v (Krieghoff).
1133 Deposition of Maria Elisabeth Fischern, née Marcussin. Berlin, 5 April 1782. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1023, fol. 49v.
All these individuals provided Fischern with pieces of information on the inheritance of Christian Ziehe and fuelled her expectations. Finally, Mr Kraakmann offered some money to Fischern in exchange for all her documents as well as for a letter of attorney which would authorize him to withdraw the money. Fischern understood that this would cost her the main part of her inheritance, which she believed amounted to ‘8 tonnes of gold’. Deciding that Kraakmann’s offer was detrimental to her interests, she declined and went back to Brandenburg. But she was still convinced of the existence of her inheritance and determined to locate it. In 1777, she travelled again to Amsterdam. This time she turned to a man named Van Hoff, ‘who supervised the cordage’. He promised to make inquiries, and Fischern left Amsterdam after having provided him with copies of her ‘

\textit{Documentis legitimationis}'. She never heard from him again. In 1787 she turned – lo and behold! – to Johann Heinrich Trehmer, who petitioned on her behalf to the \textit{Kabinetsministerium} and asked for assistance. However, his petition was dismissed. Other petitions from the group of hopeful heirs who had paid Fischern in 1775 and from Fischern herself to the \textit{Kabinetsministerium} were likewise rejected.\footnote{GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1038, fols. 139r–142r (Ziehe).}

In total, at least six petitions were submitted in the inheritance matter of Christian Ziehe over 25 years. In its numerous resolutions, the \textit{Kabinetsministerium} accused various parties of fraud. The group of petitioners who had provided Fischern with their documents and paid for her journey to Amsterdam were told that they had ‘acted very stupidly’ in commissioning a ‘shoemaker’s wife from Saxony’ who betrayed them.\footnote{Kabinetsministerium to the alleged Ziehe heirs. Berlin, 12 August 1776. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1017, fol. 122r–v. Maria Elisabeth Fischern is not exceptional. There are other cases in which women were involved in questionable activities surrounding pretended inheritances. See, e.g. the case of the Widow Sophie Dorothea Greise, née Schick, in Hildesheim who convinced several hopeful heirs to pay her advances for collecting an alleged East Indies inheritance in Amsterdam. NLA HA, Hann. 27 Hildesheim No. 432.}

Maria Elisabeth Fischern was told that she ‘either has been misled by herself or by other people to waste efforts and [incur] high expenses based on an entirely unfounded hope’.\footnote{Report of Pierre Chomel. Amsterdam, 17 June 1783. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1023, fol. 63r.} The Kraackmanns and others in their circle apparently capitalized on inexperienced foreigners who came to Amsterdam to recover inheritances. And Johann Heinrich Trehmer was warned by Chomel not to continue getting involved in such matters based only on ‘imagination, deceit, and fraud’.\footnote{Kabinetsministerium to Pierre Chomel. Berlin, 17 March 1787. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1023, fol. 68r.}

Fraudulent activities surrounding ‘false East Indies inheritances’ were not confined to the territories of Brandenburg-Prussia nor to the eighteenth century. Similar cases to those involving Trehmer and Chevalier in Brandenburg-Prussia in the late eighteenth century were widespread throughout the nineteenth century as well. One prominent case was the alleged inheritance of 36 million ducats from a so-called Captain Johann Christoph Morgenstern. He had purportedly died in
in the East Indies in 1763; however, the event of his death and inheritance was only made public in various newspapers around 1800. The notorious fraud Willenweber or Willweber was identified as the source of this scam, which motivated hundreds of people to try their luck and claim the inheritance. Their petitions, complaints, and litigations occupied the Prussian ministers of foreign affairs as well as numerous local and central courts and government departments in Saxony for over one hundred years between 1818 to 1936.\footnote{GStA PK, III. HA MdA, III No. 13945. SächsStA-D, 11018 Ministerium der Justiz, No. 0954; SächsStA-D, 11052 Amtsgericht Freiberg, No. 2949; SächsStA-D, 11045 Amtsgericht Dresden, No. 252; SächsStA-D, 11023 Appellationsgericht Dresden, No. 1460; Sächsisches Staatsarchiv, Staatsarchiv Chemnitz, 30102 Amtsgericht Augustusburg, No. 337. The records from Saxony have been identified in the online searchable catalogue of the Sächsisches Staatsarchiv through their titles, but I have not consulted the originals.}

Invented and fraudulent stories of inheritances from distant kin in far-flung places like the East or West Indies are characterized by remarkable longevity. As late as in 2013, a group of alleged descendants of Johann Walter Reinhard, an enigmatic eighteenth-century mercenary whose origin in French or German-speaking Europe is controversial and who became an ‘Indian prince’, tried to recover his estate from the English Government.\footnote{‘Proclamation. Paying out Reinhard’s heritage’. https://www.reinharderben.de/english/, accessed 12 July 2020. For the history of the historical figure Johann Walter Reinhard, Reinhardt or Reiner(t), also called Sombre, Sumru or Sommer(s), see Bischoff, \textit{Die europäischen militärischen Abenteurer}, 72–111. See also Mann, ‘Indien’, 262–267.} The phenomenon of the scam behind these stories is equally prevalent. While the East Indies no longer provide the source of putative fortunes and newspapers are not the forum in which (purported) inheritances are made public, modern frauds use the internet and mass emails to spread false news of the purported estates of international businessmen or emigrants asking the alleged heirs for payments in advance of helping them to claim their share. The phenomenon is so ubiquitous that the European Consumer Centre Germany warns customers for these ‘pretended inheritances’.\footnote{Europäisches Verbraucherzentrum Deutschland, ‘Vermeintliche Erbschaft’, https://www.evz.de/einkaufen-internet/vorsicht-falle/vermeintliche-erbschaft.html, accessed 29 May 2020.}

The second half of the eighteenth century, however, seems to have been the perfect moment to invent the crime of pretended inheritances. As Mary Lindemann argued, the ‘increased fluidity of social relations and the ongoing rearrangement of social groupings’ during this time ‘greatly facilitated deceit’.\footnote{Mary Lindemann, \textit{The Merchant Republics: Amsterdam, Antwerp, and Hamburg, 1648–1790} (New York, 2014), 206.} Not only did many families experience high rates of mobility that left gaps in kinship networks, but the East Indies provided the perfect setting for imagined social and economic transformations. By the second half of the eighteenth century, the migration of thousands of people to the East Indies, the stories that reverberated about their prospects, and the wages paid out to left-behind families had laid the groundwork for people in the German lands to imagine that they (perhaps like a
neighbour or friend) had a distant relative in the East Indies from whom they also could benefit. The new dimensions of distance, the many different moments of transmitting information, and the ‘imperfect and contested nature of early modern communication’ created new opportunities for heirs and frauds alike to capitalize on these hopes.\(^{1143}\)

6.5 The multiplier effects of East Indies migration

The cases discussed in this chapter show how people in Brandenburg-Prussia were connected to people and events in the East Indies through kin relations, inheritances, hopes, and expectations. Emma Rothschild has coined the notion of the ‘multiple or multiplier effects of empire’ to describe how the ‘exterior world of the Indies extended into the interior of the British empire’.\(^{1144}\) These multiple or multiplier effects of empire also offer a lens which illuminates the reverberations of East Indies migration in Brandenburg-Prussia – an early modern state seldom viewed in the context of empire and colonialism in the eighteenth century.

The multiplier effects of East Indies migration in Brandenburg-Prussia were multifaceted. Considering first the economic ramifications, it seems that wages and inheritances eventually collected from the East India houses did not live up to most people’s high expectations. Nevertheless, even rather modest sums had the potential to make an economic impact on the lives of the heirs and their communities. For example, the Widow Lignitz received 347 gulden from her late brother Friedrich Dawerkow in Batavia.\(^{1145}\) The heirs of Matthias Conrad Gottschalk, a carpenter, collected 133 gulden from the East India house.\(^{1146}\) The wife of a bricklayer foreman, and her brother, a gunner, received 381 gulden from their brother Johann Heinrich Jedicke who had died in Batavia.\(^{1147}\) Others were luckier. Among them were the left-behind wives and children of some East Indies migrants. The widow and daughter of Gustav Andreas Jaerisch, who had gone to Ceylon as a soldier and stayed there for 12 years, received 1,386 gulden.\(^{1148}\) The daughters of Lorenz Klaas collected an inheritance of 5,600 gulden.\(^{1149}\) Anna Maria Senffen and her three sons received 2,334 gulden from

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\(^{1143}\) Breen, ‘No Man is an Island’, 391.


\(^{1145}\) Report of Pierre Chomel. Amsterdam, 3 December 1782. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1020, fol. 110r.

\(^{1146}\) Report of Thulemeier. The Hague, 15 October 1771. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1015, fol. 76r. The money was first collected in 1773. See VOC employment record of Matthias Coenraad Jutschalk. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 12944, fol. 159.

\(^{1147}\) Report of Renfner. The Hague, 18 December 1789. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1024, fol. 18r.

\(^{1148}\) VOC employment record of Gustavus Andreas Geris. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 6224, fol. 254.

\(^{1149}\) GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep 34, No. 1026, fols. 122r–131r (Klaas).
Johann Wolfgang Imhoff. The money thus flowing into German lands was the outcome not only of the wages paid by the companies, but also sometimes the result of private trade activities in the East Indies, including the sale of enslaved people.

In England and Scotland, empire-related economic flows into the countries have left their mark in the rich material culture of country houses and estates. In Brandenburg-Prussia and other German territories, tracing the effects of the money acquired in the East Indies requires further research. At this point one can only speculate that there was possibly a range of ways in which the money was used. For some heirs it may have eased hardships and saved them from starvation. Others maybe used it to invest in businesses or the education of their children. One must not forget that East Indies inheritances were liquid assets, unlike other inheritances that were often bound in real property and goods.

More easily detectable than the economic effects of East Indies inheritances are their reverberations on the people involved. Quarrels over inheritances were a source of income and employment for local courts, clerks, scribes, priests, and agents and merchants near and far. Not only did they profit from the fees they collected, they also heard the stories of petitioners and claimants and they read the letters and wills of East Indies travellers. This is what Rothschild would describe as the ‘more extensive multiplier effects of information and expectation’.

Such stories spread easily and reached many more people than the kin of East Indies migrants. Ideas about life and careers in the East Indies multiplied when hopeful heirs travelled through Brandenburg, trying to gather more information and to submit their petitions at the Berlin court. Although the petitions simplified the life histories of East Indies travellers considerably, some of the realities of life in the East Indies still found their way to the ears and minds of people in Berlin, Angermünde, Königsberg, or Egeln. For instance, copies of wills and inventories contained information on the enslaved individuals in households. The heirs of Johannes Wiederkeer could, for example, read in his translated will that he gifted his ‘slave named Titus van Benjade and his wife Martha van Ternaten’ to the ‘free woman’ Juliana van Makassar and that all other slaves should be sold. The mother of Gottlieb Hensel learned from her son’s will that he had...
been employed as ‘overseer of the slaves’ (‘aufseher der Slawe [sic]’). Widow Hold in Silesia inherited her legitimate share from her son Daniel Godlieb. The inventory sent to Europe included the names and sale value of 16 ‘serfs’, among them ‘two children named Tampolong and Pisspot’. The mother of Philipp Arnoldt Ganze was sure that her son’s estate consisted of ‘gold and silver, jewels, male and female slaves’. Other heirs learnt that their kinsmen had adopted children or fathered offspring ‘out of wedlock with a free black [woman]’. Stories of slavery and interethnic unions thus reverberated in Brandenburg-Prussia and elsewhere. They did not only ‘remain in the realm of the unreal or in the part of the world encountered in literature’, as Antje Flüchter has suggested, but also became part of family histories in German lands.

These findings challenge the received view of Germany as a ‘colonial late-comer’ whose colonial project lasted only from the 1880s to the end of the First World War. Colonialism, slavery, and interethnic and interfaith unions were a part of, and connected to, the Holy Roman Empire, not only indirectly through travel narratives and consumption, but also in people’s daily lived experience. German states became involved in these connections long before Germany became an imperial power in the 1880s. This finding marks a critical intervention also into Susanne Zantop’s widely accepted proposition that there was an ‘imaginary German colonial history on paper’ before the official onset of German imperialism in the 1880s. Drawing on the analysis of a variety of literary texts, Zantop argues that ‘[i]maginary colonialism anticipated actual imperialism, words, actions’. The family histories unearthed in Relations of Absence suggest a different chronology, especially when read along with the same literary genres used by Zantop: stories, novels, and plays. The East Indies feature in numerous late eighteenth-century literary representations. In theatrical plays and novels, tales of East Indian inheritances and returning Ostindienfahrer served either to save a family from impoverishment or to facilitate a romantic marriage between two young lovers against all the odds. For example, the family of the East Indies traveller

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1155 Will of Gottlieb Hensel. 1765 (translation). GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1014, fols. 59r–60v. In the Dutch original, Hensel’s occupation is noted down as ‘modder mandoor’ which means overseer of the cleaning of the canals from sand or mud. Will of Godlieb Hensel. 1765. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.no. 6850 (1159). I thank Matthias van Rossum for helping me with this translation.
1156 The inventory of the estate of Daniel Godlieb Hold, 1793, never reached Silesia because the ship it was sent on was captured. However, probate records were usually sent in several copies on different ships so a copy may have arrived. TNA HCA 32/1693, No. 87cc. A Tampolong was a small pot used as spitting-pot or to collect the molasses under a sugar-pot. Jonathan Rigg, A Dictionary of the Sunda Language of Java (Batavia, 1862). 478.
1157 Petition of Margaretha Ilsabe Delkeskamps, Widow Ganten. Bielefeld, 29 April 1745. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 6126 (no foliation).
1158 Petition of Johann Christoph Heger and his wife Maria Elisabe, née Baumann. Berlin, 15 October 1766. GStA PK, I. HA GR, Rep. 34, No. 1016, fol. 113r.
1160 Conrad, German Colonialism, 1.
1161 Zantop, Colonial Fantasies, 3 and 9.
1162 Her focus is on texts that feature Latin America.
Robert waited longingly for his return: ‘Every morning I look at the weather vane, and [wonder] if he will return with an opulent cargo, and turn our poverty into prosperity’, his father exclaims in Kotzebue’s *Die Indianer in England* (1790). In another example from Bretzner’s *Die Erbschaft aus Ostindien* (1797), the village schoolmaster Rabe receives a gift of 100 Thalers annually from his stepbrother in the East Indies. However, the vision of an even better life compels him to ‘sell’ his daughter Röschen to an old but wealthy legal scholar against her will. Shortly before the wedding takes place, an inheritance consisting of several tonnes of gold from Rabe’s stepbrother arrives in the small village. The betrothal between Röschen and the old rich man is then dissolved, and with the new fortune, Röschen can marry her beau, a poor peasant boy.

The histories of Germans and their families in the East Indies discussed in this study are remarkably similar to these literary representations. They undermine the notion that such literary tales were the product only of a ‘colonialist imagination and mentality that beg to translate thought into action’. Instead, the literary texts now appear as reactions and adaptions to real experiences that German-speaking families had in the new global contexts of the eighteenth century. The analysis of family formations in the East Indies has shown that colonialism was nothing abstract and that the family lives of German-speaking emigrants of all walks of life were no different to those of their British or Dutch contemporaries. Moreover, they were not ‘critical observers of colonial politics’, Neither did they show ‘critical attitudes towards the more violent aspects of European intrusion’, and they did not have more tolerant attitudes towards indigenous people than other Europeans. However, in the nineteenth century, this historical reality did not fit well with the construction of a ‘sense of exclusivity and moral superiority’ that lay at the base of the German ‘nationalist-colonialist ideology’. Therefore, this collective colonial past had to be ‘forgotten’ to make room for imagining a future imperial German nation.

Beyond these multiplier effects of knowledge and ideas, which are admittedly difficult to grasp, further reverberations of empire can be observed in the realm of administration and state building. Julie Hardwick, Durba Ghosh and others have convincingly argued that petitioning in general and the use of courts in particular in matters concerning intimate relationships and family life created

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1164 Christoph Friedrich Bretzner, *Die Erbschaft aus Ostindien* (1797).
1165 Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*, 3.
1166 Tzoref-Ashkenazi, ‘Hanoverians’, 223.
‘openings for the expansion of the state’. Scholarship on early modern state building has emphasized the active role that petitioners played in pushing authorities and eventually the state ‘into the position of a mediator with sufficient authority and legitimacy to decide a conflict’. Through their requests, petitioners created a forum in which responsibilities and liabilities between the king and his subjects were defined and negotiated. The petitioners at the centre of this chapter trusted in the king and his representatives to solve their conflicts in the context of early modern border-crossing and long-distance mobility. They invited the state to intervene in their family matters overseas and thereby drove an important expansion of states’ interests. Traditionally, the king had felt responsible for those of his subjects within the borders of his realm and trading abroad. Although he did help these subjects with their conflicts in foreign states, what changed in the beginning of the nineteenth century was the state’s growing interests in its deceased subjects abroad.

The requests and problems of the petitioners necessitated new relationships among governmental authorities, diplomatic representatives, and transnational actors. These relationships did not always stretch over long distances, as many of the conflicts could be solved in Amsterdam or London, but more complicated cases, such as the Hagemeister and Struve conflicts, involved numerous actors in several countries and across vast distances. To be sure, these transnational or intergovernmental relationships were not entirely new, but scholarship on these relationships usually focuses on their broader political, diplomatic, and commercial implications. The phenomenon of family interests arising in the context of global mobility necessitating the establishment or activation of such relationships certainly adds another dimension to the picture. The same is true for the history of diplomatic and consulate services. The increasing number of consulates in the late eighteenth and especially nineteenth centuries, for instance, is commonly explained by commercial and political interests as well as the migration movements to the Americas. In the context of migration to the East Indies, it is striking that several central European states established consulates across the Indian

Ocean world in the middle of the nineteenth century. Are commercial and political interests sufficient to explain these evolving networks, or did family interests facilitate and require this system of state representatives across the globe to a degree that has hitherto been neglected?

From the perspective of early modern state building, the petitions furthermore raise questions of the changing nature of the relationship between the king and his subjects. In the eighteenth century, it did not matter to the Kabinettministerium whether or not the deceased was a former Prussian subject. What mattered was whether the petitioner was a royal subject and thus entitled to assistance and support. The ministers acted reactively when royal subjects asked for assistance. A change in this procedure is foreshadowed first in the second half of the 1830s, when the ministry of foreign affairs began proactively to collect information on deceased royal and other German subjects ‘on Dutch ships or in Dutch [colonial] possessions’ and their estates.

This change in routine was preceded by decades of reports on the difficulties and uncertainties surrounding the return of inheritances from the Netherlands and abroad, which were considered to be greatly disadvantageous to families and individuals in Prussia. Also, judicial and institutional changes in the administration of unclaimed estates in the Netherlands seem to have played a part in changing administrative routines in this regard in Prussia. In 1841, the publicist Karl Heinzen, who had himself served a couple of years in the Dutch Army in Batavia, polemically and with clear nationalistic inflection, promoted a proposal to the Bundesversammlung: the German states should declare the inheritances of German subjects in the Dutch East Indies ‘a matter of state’ (Staatssache) and

1173 The three Hansa Towns Lübeck, Hamburg, and Bremen established consulates in coastal China and India in the 1830s and 1860s, which is explained with reference to trade interests and loosening trade restrictions in Fiebig, ‘Consular Service’, 251. Austria opened consulates in Madras (1807), Calcutta (1847), and Colombo (1850) as discussed in Agstner, ‘Services consulaires’, 187. Between 1841 and 1846 Swedish-Norwegian consulates were established in Cape Town, Batavia, and Calcutta as shown by Leos Müller, The Swedish-Norwegian Consular Services in the 19th Century (1814–1905), 269. Mecklenburg-Schwerin had consulates in Batavia and Singapore from 1856 as shown in Matthias Manke, ‘Das Konsulatswesen des Großherzogtums Mecklenburg-Schwerin im 19. Jahrhundert’, 408. For the Prussian and other German consulates in China, see Bert Becker, ‘The Merchant-Consuls of German States in China, Hong Kong and Macao (1787–1872). All these essays can be found in Jörg Ulbert and Lukian Prijac (eds.), Consuls et services consulaires au XIXe siècle. Consulship in the 19th Century. Die Welt der Konsulate im 19. Jahrhundert (Hamburg, 2010).

1174 Ministry of foreign affairs to envoy Graf von Maltzan in The Hague. Berlin, 24 September 1834. GStA PK, III. HA MdA, III No. 8384 (no foliation). The folder contains both published lists of unsettled probate matters in the Netherlands and handwritten lists of Prussian and other German subjects who had served on Dutch ships or in Dutch colonies.

1175 Pro Memoria of Legationsrath von Salviati, General notes about inheritances in the East and West Indies. 1818. GStA PK, III. HA MdA, III No. 8384 (no foliation). An almost identical but shorter account was submitted by the Württemberg envoy August Freiherr von Wächter to the Württemberg ministry of foreign affairs in 1817. HStA S, E 50/15 Bü 122.

establish a ‘German’ commission in the Netherlands responsible only for the management of these inheritances.1177

Further research is necessary to contextualize these first empirical observations. However, changes in administrative routines, in the relationship between the state and its deceased subjects abroad and their families, and the appropriation of East Indies inheritances in the national interest become apparent in the first half of the nineteenth century. The multiplier effects of empire as experienced, lived, and handled since the seventeenth century clearly extended not only into the interiors of colonial and colonized states, but also into the lives of people and countries politically remote from early modern European overseas expansion.

6.6 Conclusion

East Indies migration reverberated in different ways in the lives of those who stayed behind. Some hungered for news of an absent father, husband, or son and worried about his well-being. Others waited to be compensated for services they had rendered the East Indies migrant and that had made his endeavour possible in the first place. Many hoped to benefit from migrant relatives, close or distant, who they expected should share their fortunes despite being oceans away. Regardless of their particular interests and wishes, stay-at-home families of East Indies migrants did not suffer in silence, but took active measures to change their situations and to profit from relatives’ East Indies migration.

Where their actions caused paper trails, the records document the consequences of East Indies migration on those who stayed at home and the ways in which they tried to cope with uncertainty and separation. Absence and periods of silence were also significant – at least on the side of those who stayed in German lands. Many took pains to gather information and to revive communications with an East Indies traveller. They read newspapers; they talked to friends, merchants, sailors, and agents near and far; they travelled from their homes in villages or smaller towns to larger cities with better communication networks, like Berlin or even Amsterdam. They took on debt to continue the correspondence and they paid commissioners to conduct inquiries. Some of them fell into the traps of frauds who realized that ‘hope’, the prospect of reviving contact or receiving an inheritance, opened a whole new field for profit.

The records also document remarkable interactions between the East Indies and German lands, especially if one considers that only disrupted connections left a mark in the archives. The absence of a kinsmen attached people in Brandenburg-Prussia to a world far away, a world that they had never seen and that

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1177 Karl Heinzen, Reise eines teutschen Romantikers nach Batavia, (1841; 2nd edn, Mannheim, 1845), 154. These suggestions did not vary much from the proposal that Ferdinand Heinrich Metzingk submitted to the Kabinettsministerium in 1770. See chap. 6.4, footnote 1120.
was loaded with curiosity, hopes, fears, and expectations. Some showed what Pamela Sharpe has called ‘an international outlook’. They were well informed about events unfolding in the Indian Ocean world, knew how to navigate the East India companies’ administrations, and developed routines for cross-oceanic correspondence. Many others were ignorant of international contexts and first had to learn by trial and error that matters concerning the East Indies, such as probate processes and gathering reliable information, took longer and were more complicated than collecting an inheritance from the neighbouring village.

The multiplier effects of empire extended into the lives of the families of East Indies migrants, their communities, and beyond. Conflicts over inheritances brought to the fore questions of what it meant to be kin. East Indies migration and its consequences were the source of income and employment for numerous actors such as local courts, priests, clerks, and merchants; for others it meant ruin when they were taken in by fraudsters willing to capitalize on their hopes. The realities of life in the East Indies, the presence of enslaved people, out-of-wedlock children, and mixed-race extra-marital unions, had economic, social, and personal effects through inheritances and stories. Governmental authorities that became involved in the East Indies endeavours of their subjects had to develop new routines, establish transnational relationships, and negotiate responsibilities and liabilities to cope with these new challenges. Stay-at-home families who put their interests and worries associated with the East Indies on paper and petitioned the king for help created a nexus of family interests, global entanglements, and state building. Thus, like those who had left and thereby created new global realities, the families of East Indies travellers who stayed home could also become agents of global entanglements.

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Conclusion: Relations of Absence

In the second half of the eighteenth century thousands of men and a few women and children from all walks of life travelled and migrated from the Holy Roman Empire and Prussia to the Indian Ocean world. Their involvement in overseas colonial empires was intricately linked to family both in practice and in public perception. This thesis therefore has argued for reframing the history of Germans in the East Indies as a global family history.

The five analytical chapters have explored how families and family practices became global, and how new global realities affected the families who lived in and through them. These chapters built upon different genres of archival sources that not only allowed us to connect the histories of families in German lands and the East Indies, but also invite us to shift the focus back and forth between the various people involved in and affected by East Indies migration. It has been crucial to this analysis to bring together people, regions, sources, and historiographies commonly studied in isolation from each other. Chapter 2, ‘Connected Lives’, introduced the contexts, sources, some of the actors, and the themes of the study. Here a microhistorical and life history approach enabled new insights and correctives to established narratives and stereotypes about German East Indies travellers. Starting in Chapter 3, ‘Preparing to Leave and Staying Behind’, the analysis followed the process of migration chronologically, beginning with the impact migrating husbands and fathers had on their families in Germany. Chapter 4, ‘Family in Absentia’, centred on letters between siblings and between parents and their adult children, showing how families bridged distances and organized absence in an attempt to hold the family together. Chapter 5, ‘New Family Formations’, focused on the families of East Indies travellers in the Indian Ocean world. Wills and notary records were used to explore family relations and domestic arrangements often not visible in other sources used in histories of German East Indies travellers and European imperial expansion. A key theme here was the politics and practices of inclusion in, and exclusion from, not only family and kinship groups, but also the colonial archives that record them. Chapter 6, ‘Reverberations in Brandenburg-Prussia’, shifted the focus back to the German lands and family members who stayed behind. Drawing on petitions, the analysis expanded its focus from the effect of East Indies migration on families to the growing involvement of German governmental authorities and other actors in matters to do with East India travel.

Three themes help to more clearly define the nexus of family and empire. The first theme encompasses the economic opportunities the global trading
companies offered families in the Holy Roman Empire and Prussia. Chapter 2 demonstrated that many men signed on with one of the companies hoping to earn enough to support existing family and kin or to establish a new family of their own. Sometimes the East Indies became part of a more comprehensive economic strategy in which several members of the same family went together or one generation followed the previous one. Throughout Chapters 2, 4, and 6, relatives in German lands turn up seeking to capitalize on a relative’s migration. These could be siblings or parents pressuring the absentee to prove his continuous affection for the family by sending presents, or family members who sought a share in the East Indies venture of a kinsman after his death. Stay-at-home relations with high aspirations imagined the East Indies as a place of tremendous fortunes and they worked to be the Ostindienfahrer’s main social reference point. However, as Chapters 5 and 6 demonstrated, migration had the potential to realign and redirect both migrants’ and stay-at-home families’ interests. For some migrants, new family relations in the East Indies became their sole point of social reference. In this regard, family complicated empire, as fortunes gained in the colonies did not always flow back ‘home’, as expected and anticipated by families and company officials in Europe, but remained in the East Indies with new families and a new set of heirs. Other East Indies migrants tried to consolidate and reconcile their original intentions with their new lives. The fact that the new families of emigrants in the East Indies were frequently ‘illegitimate’ and built on the exploitation of enslaved women often ended up benefitting their left-behind kin relations in German lands.

The second theme is the way families facilitated empire: Mobility often depended on stable households and intimate relations that supported the East Indies travellers and provided various resources. These ties included both kin in German lands and wives, partners, and free and enslaved domestic servants in the East Indies. In letters to and from ‘home’, such as those discussed in Chapter 4, East Indies migration often appears as a family affair, even a joint project. These letters not only reflect people’s aspirations and experiences, but also emphasize their efforts to strengthen social ties across distances. Emigrants relied on the assistance and credit of their siblings and parents, who expected financial and emotional rewards in return. Mutual commitment to this family enterprise was, however, always fragile and could be easily disrupted by the difficulties of transcontinental communication, by estrangement, and by diverging interests. To handle these uncertainties, East Indies travellers and their families sought to create indissoluble webs of emotional commitment, obligation, and interests that they nurtured with material and immaterial resources. Family emotions and expectations of filial and brotherly love and duty lay at the base of these entanglements. Life in the East Indies produced and provided new resources which could build up and enhance family relationships, such as the prospect of wealth or presents and shared emotions such as longing and grief. Families also facilitated empire much more broadly. The aspirations of families in German lands, their hopes for better lives, and sometimes the start-up funds they gave to family members
helped fill the companies’ ships with sailors, their garrisons with soldiers, and
their factories with civil servants, merchants, and craftsmen. Large numbers of
workers who were willing and able to travel and take the risks of transoceanic
mobility were key to the emerging empires, and behind many or most of these
men lay family support and connections.

The third theme highlights some of the less predictable ways that migration
affected family life. East Indies migration disrupted families in German lands,
and long-term separations affected how family ties were organized, lived, and
imagined across distances. New dimensions of distance and risk created anxieties
about the nature and stability of relationships, often managed through expressing
and naturalizing emotional expectations: mothers expected (or claimed to expect)
their sons to show filial duty and send presents despite long years of silence; a
sister expected her brother to share in the family grief across the distance of an
ocean and a two-year break in communications; several Ostindienfahrer expected
that their stay-at-home relations would be interested in their ventures, while their
relations in German lands expected a share in the emigrants’ fortunes.

When married men left their families behind, separation challenged and trans-
formed traditional gender roles and hierarchies within the family, as shown in
Chapter 3. Men who left their wives and children for long periods did not con-
form to standard understandings of early modern masculinity and fatherhood.
Their absence undermined the gendered social order, leaving behind wives as
heads of households and principal breadwinners for years, even decades. Re-
sponding to this anticipated threat, these men constructed visions of a loving and
caring father and husband who could fulfill his duties and obligations despite dis-
tance or, pushing the idea even further, through separating himself from his fam-
ily. At least in letters and the imagination of the absent men, this vision perpetu-
ated the gendered social order throughout his absence. However, from the wives’
perspective, these arrangements were always precarious; it required much emo-
tional work to uphold this vision and keep from feeling the family had been de-
serted. Some wives could not accept being left behind and filed for divorce or
compensation. Migrating together, however, could prevent such family damage
in some exceptional cases. For those families who travelled together, the East
Indies had other implications for gender roles, relationships between husbands
and wives, and the scope of women’s agency.

Empire also complicated family, as shown in particular in Chapter 5. Colonial
governance and the social conditions in colonial settlements added obstacles to
family formation and introduced new and powerfully exploitative forms of de-
pendency and inequality into the realm of familial relationships. They incorpo-
rated different statuses and ethnicities to a degree that would have been impos-
sible in Europe, but that had become common in trading posts across the Indian
Ocean world long before the second half of the eighteenth century. Overall, a
remarkable variety of family formations becomes manifest. Legal restrictions and
personal choice both framed these families. Families that evolved around a long-
term unmarried couple or from slave-concubinage existed side by side with
polygamous families, legally approved families, and families with no apparent mother. Marriage and parenthood could co-occur, but more often they seem to have been distinct social fields. The link between sexuality/marriage and household economy, closely entwined in European Christian notions of the family and embraced in the ideal and practice of the working couple, was redefined and disturbed in many colonial families. Mothers could be wives or conjugal partners, but they could also be the property of the father. Many families included children born of different mothers with different statuses living in the same household and growing up together. In the Dutch East Indies, the practice of adoption added layers of complexity and uncertainty to the possible legal relationships between children and their parents or caregivers. Some fathers do not seem to have distinguished between their children based on whether they were legitimate, ‘natural’, or adopted, while others created hierarchies among their own offspring based on the mothers’ race, status and role within the household. Based on wills alone, it is difficult to determine which categories of difference determined these hierarchies. Ethnicity seems to have played a role, but in the colonial context it often overlapped with other factors, such as legitimacy, the presence of a wife, and religious affiliation.

Men’s attempts to form and order their intimate ties in the East Indies were flexible. They drew on, adopted, and at times misconceived different indigenous practices of kin-making such as adoption and slavery. They also used legal and religious instruments, such as wills and adoption deeds, to create, define, and manage their intimate ties and complex households. These practices were often either uncommon (adoption and slavery) or quite unusual (will-making), in their own homelands, but German East Indies migrants embraced them because they were useful and functional in a new social environment. These instruments allowed men to create new more flexible kinship ties; and they permitted unmarried men and fathers to claim the roles, rights, and responsibilities over their intimate relationships that they would have had had these been ‘legal’. However, they also allowed them to create and inscribe differences, to include, exclude, and remove relations from official records – turning them into ‘relations of absence’.

This thesis has focused on the effects of empire on the families of German East Indies migrants. Such an account, however, must not disregard the equally important economic and social consequences of empire for indigenous families in the Indian Ocean world. The colonial families of German migrants often relied on slave labour, both domestic and reproductive. Slavery in turn disrupted families in the Indian Ocean world and beyond by dislocating individuals from their

1179 It must be noted, however, that our knowledge about different forms and practices of slavery and dependencies within the Holy Roman Empire is still in its fledgling stages. The first publications from the ERC research project ‘The Holy Roman Empire of German Nation and its Slaves’, 2015–2021, led by Rebekka von Mallinckrodt at the University of Bremen, show that slavery did indeed exist in the Holy Roman Empire. See, e.g. Rebekka von Mallinckrodt, ‘Sklaverei und Recht im Alten Reich’, in Peter Burschel and Sünne Juterezenka (eds.), Das Meer. Maritime Welten in der Frühen Neuzeit (Cologne, forthcoming); and Mallinckrodt, ‘There are no Slaves in Prussia?’. 
kin relations and, in places like the Cape of Good Hope, dispossessing them of the right to form legal familial ties on their own. The glimpse into the life of Coyoh, whose wish to return to her native people echoes through the will of her enslaver, Henrick Hintzelman, is suggestive of these centrifugal forces. These effects demand further examination and require research into other archives that may reveal the connected, though not necessarily dependent, histories of the people in the Indian Ocean world who encountered the travellers and emigrants from Europe and beyond.

This study’s conclusions about the nexus of family and empire contribute to three fields of scholarship: early modern European empires, German history, and global history. First, with respect to the scholarship on early modern European empires, historians have recognized the crucial roles that family and kinship played in colonial expansion and empire-building. Relations of Absence complements this view by adding new historical actors to the British, Dutch, Spanish, and French elite families that until now have been the main protagonists in this field. Thereby, this study challenges and confounds some of the nationalist, elitist, and empire-centric trends common to the literature on family, empire, and global trading companies. Moreover, the focus on families from outside the Dutch and British metropoles adds to scholarship that has demonstrated that those empires were never solely British or Dutch enterprises. People and families from all over Europe capitalized on the East India companies and used them to pursue their own personal and family interests. Family and kin were vital to their experience of empire in general and the East Indies in particular – much more important than whether the company was Dutch or British. This shift of focus from the companies’ commercial, political, and institutional histories, crucial as these are, towards the social and family histories they facilitated and framed also increases our understanding of the East India companies. The involvement of German families, furthermore, challenges the metropole–colony binary that often structures analyses of colonialism. The analytical frame applied in this study challenges binary notions of colonialism at the same time that it makes visible the ways that colonialism defied and transcended national boundaries.

Second, this study contributes to and challenges the German historiography, by establishing that regions of the Holy Roman Empire and Prussia, not directly involved politically or ideologically with the British and Dutch empires, were in fact profoundly affected by them through the activities of migrants and their families. This finding has important implications for German history. Eschewing traditional understandings that remove German history from global history until the second half of the nineteenth century, this thesis shows that eighteenth-century Germans, men and women, lived global lives, were agents of global entanglements, and experienced globalization and its effects in their daily lives.

1180 Under Dutch jurisdiction at the Cape, enslaved individuals were not allowed to marry. Groenewald, “A Mother Makes no Bastard”, 72. According to Reid, ‘Introduction’, 26, marriages between enslaved individuals were allowed in Southeast Asia.
Empire’s imprint on early modern German societies and history was also much broader than previously assumed. The ‘multiplier effects of empire’ reverberated in German lands through economic opportunities for different actors; through hopes, anxieties, and fears; through stories and knowledge; through broken and newly forged kinship ties; and through new family and governmental practices. Events in the Indian Ocean world such as the transformations of the Mughal empire, the British invasion of Ceylon, or the insolvency of the Nawab of Arcot inserted themselves into the lives of people in Berlin, Stendal, Königsberg, and elsewhere. Inter-ethnic unions and mixed-race children became part of German families and their histories, although their presence or their histories were often obscured. Fortunes gained through exploiting and trading in enslaved people improved the lives of families in German lands, while new legal practices and forms of kin-making such as adoption challenged their interests but were commonly accepted in a society traditionally used to legal pluralism. The Brandenburg-Prussian state became involved in empire because of its subjects’ family matters. Administration slowly adapted to the situation and created new routines to handle new problems.

The diverse transoceanic entanglements of Germans and their families made visible in this thesis point towards the recent historiographical concept of German ‘global’ or ‘entangled’ history. The empirical material forces the historian to ask what this ‘German’ global history is or is meant to be. The view of German global history as a mere ‘add-on’, aimed to show that German lands shared an early modern global history with their Western European neighbours, clearly misses the opportunity to look for new questions and answers in new analytical frameworks. Early modern German global history should rather be understood as an invitation to bring the sources stored in German archives into dialogue with non-German repositories and with historiographies such as New Imperial History that are not typically considered relevant to early modern ‘German history’. Following the actors and their relationships dissolves conventional geographical units of analysis and points instead to the often connected histories of peoples. These in turn urge us rethink some traditional categories within the German historiography, such as ‘family’ and ‘kinship’.

The third major contribution of this thesis is to challenge the broad field of global history, to place family history in a global context and to firmly anchor families in global history. Analysing early modern families from the Holy Roman Empire and Prussia within a global analytical framework increases our understanding of the history of the family at the same time that it undermines received chronologies. Scholarship on ‘European’ families has established the wide variety of family formations in the early modern period. Lately, historians have widened the perspective to include families, mainly elite and learned, who lived geographically dispersed lives within and beyond the borders of Europe. New global opportunities, uncertainties, and risks required new ways of managing family life.

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through periods of extended separation. As Claudia Jarzebowski has shown, these global family histories do not merely add superficially to the traditional history of the family, but also call for a re-evaluation of the emergence of bourgeois society and notions and practices of the bourgeois family in particular.1182 This thesis supports her argument and extends it to colonial families of German East Indies migrants. These families were both diverse and complex, with some defying accepted categories of colonial governance and others apparently helping to consolidate racial categories and difference. German East Indies migrants’ colonial families extended notions and practices of family. They included relationships based on violence and destructive subordination, high mobility, and often not only the transience of intimate relationships, but also cultural hybridity. As Jennifer Palmer has argued regarding the French Atlantic, complicated colonial families existed at the same time as European ideals of the family narrowed, shifted towards racially and socially homogenous notions of kinship, and emphasized affection, domesticity, and stability.1183 Relations of Absence has shown that the same juxtaposition can be observed when looking at German East Indies migrants and their families, and thus it situates these complex and simultaneous family histories also in regions and social groups only recently connected to colonialism and the ‘early modern “global” moment’.1184 The thesis has established that families in German lands did experience the effects of empire, colonialism, and globalization, and that there were interconnections between them and colonial families in the Indian Ocean world. Future studies will need to examine more closely the interdependencies between these lived family experiences and shifting ideologies and notions of the family.

Such studies must, at the same time, resist being caught up in old dichotomies in which the colonies and colonial families appear as ‘laboratories’ for Europe. Colonial families first and foremost were embedded in and had an impact on the societies where they lived and from which they drew human resources. Scholarship on the transformation of the roles and positions of women in the Indian Ocean world indicates some of the changes wrought by colonial sexual practices and new family structures. Situating these transformations and different family formations within a global comparative frame attentive to the question of when, where, and how markers of difference (gender, race, class, origin, religion, status, education, social networks) structured family relationships seems a promising means to this end.

Locating families in global history also complicates global historical narratives. The microhistorical perspective on families from the Holy Roman Empire and Prussia who lived in times of fundamental global transformation and the focus on unpublished archival records from different national repositories offer an essential corrective to the overrepresentation of male actors and the emphasis on

1182 Jarzebowski, Kindheit, 290.
1183 Palmer, Intimate Bonds, 14.
mobility, connection, flow, and circulation in traditional scholarship. This study makes visible various actors often neglected by historians studying the early modern global world: men of the lower social orders who travelled the world, but not as the explorers, botanists/naturalists, merchants, diplomats, or missionaries who usually receive scholarly attention as brokers or go-betweens. The many men who stayed behind and assisted their migrant relatives, expecting news, presents, or a share in the rumoured fortunes of migration also played a part. The actor- and family-centred approach shows not only these men, but also the women who took on many more diverse roles and positions than are usually ascribed to them in narratives of globalization and early modern European colonial expansion. In German lands, women managed their families alone while their husbands were away; they accompanied their husbands or travelled on their own over vast distances; they become visible as sisters and mothers who provided start-up funds and support to the travellers and involved local and central authorities in their global entanglements. In the East Indies, women were wives, conjugal partners, mothers and caregivers, enslaved domestic and sex workers, friends, patrons, and business partners who helped and provided resources to the East Indies migrants. These women often lived highly mobile lives themselves, both geographically and socially. Revealing these hitherto understudied social and connected histories is important because it challenges long-standing narratives that conceptualize the spheres of globalism and mobility as male and of localism and constancy as female.

Foregrounding the social and connected histories of families who became involved in the gendered processes of empire also has methodological implications for our understandings of globalization and the connections that are assumed to form the global. The movement of people, a phenomenon often foregrounded in global history along with circulations of capital, goods, and knowledge, does not necessarily create connections on its own. Relations of Absence encourages us to closely scrutinize how connections are created, what mobility does, and where the limitations of entanglement lie. The history of emotions offers important tools to better understand these connections and disconnections. Starting with family histories, moments of both mobility and stasis emerge as factors in forging new global connections through the relations of people who left and those who stayed behind. These connections moved along the commercial lines of the East India trading companies, but they constituted more than global trade relations. Individual people tied together far-flung locales and became involved in the events and lives of faraway family members; but this did not necessarily mean that they, especially those who stayed in German lands, also developed a global worldview. Families tried to maintain their bonds, they provided services and sent advice, gifts, and children across the ocean, all of which created and added to the multifaceted global interconnections of the eighteenth century. Peoples’ aspirations for better lives, their wishes to keep their families together despite

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1185 Schaffer, et al. (eds.), The Brokered World.
physical separation, their hopes of participating in and benefiting from the mobility of one family member, their longing for home, their hopes of being remembered, their curiosity about the lives of their relatives abroad, their desire to form new family ties, to care for dependants, and to be good heads of their families; these are the interwoven threads that create the fabric of global entanglement.

This thesis also shows that these connections and entanglements were highly fragile and uneven. The East India companies facilitated mobility and connections across oceans, and they prepared the ground for new colonial family structures; however, this mobility also threatened other relationships, truncated old familial ties, and destroyed families – both in German lands and in the Indian Ocean world. The process of globalization as driven by the trading companies was therefore a process not only of accumulating ever more relations and connections, but also of severing established ties. What is more, the channels along which the new relations ran were tenuous and uneven. Not everyone had the same access to them, and not everyone became connected with something or someone else through them. In Europe, the companies employed only men, and their rank, social networks, and cash resources determined whether they could bring along their wives, children, and other relatives to the East Indies. Some exceptions, like the involvement of Hanoverian troops in the wars fought in the Indian Ocean world or the EIC’s desire to increase profits on Sumatra, also opened up opportunities for women of the lower social orders. However, these were rather exceptional opportunities in the eighteenth century. In the East Indies, it was not so much rank that determined access to the route between Asia and Europe, but status and ethnicity. The limitations on connectedness also become visible in the ways German East Indies migrants formed new families and kinship ties. Migrants could choose not to care for members of their households, to exclude people from the family economy and kin group. Their new families in the East Indies did not necessarily become connected with their families in German lands through kinship ties; strategies of family formation, considerations of race, religion, and legitimacy, and rules of colonial governance kept some of their intimate relationships outside the realm of kinship. Moreover, migrants could decide against answering letters or returning ‘home’. In the end, the peculiarities of transoceanic communication – and, not least, the impact of war – could impede any attempt to stay connected with family and friends in German lands.

An early modern German global history must be attentive to these obstacles to entanglement, the unpredictability of the channels through which connections were forged, and the power geometries that determined interconnectedness. Working in the archives in Germany and beyond, historians will detect more and more entangled, connected, and shared early modern histories that point beyond the borders of Europe. However, the euphoria over these histories must not cause us to lose sight of the ruptures, broken ties, and absences of relations where relations could have been.

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1186 Massey, *Space, Place and Gender*, 149.
8 Zusammenfassung


1187 Der Begriff empire wird in dieser Studie als ein analytischer Sammelbegriff genutzt, der verschiedene globale Prozesse, wie transkulturelle Begegnungen, Kolonialismus und Fernhandel miteinschließt.
temporär oder permanent niederließen. Gleichzeitig hatten die in deutschen Län-
dern zurückgebliebenen Familien und Verwandten großes Interesse am Leben
oder Tod der Ausgewanderten und viele hegten die Hoffnung, dass die Migration
eines Familienmitglieds letztlich dem materiellen Wohl der gesamten Familie
dienlich sein würde.

Diese familiären Kontexte und Beziehungen sind bisher besonders in der
deutschsprachigen Forschung zu Ostindienfahrern wie auch zur europäischen
Expansion unberücksichtigt geblieben. Traditionelle Studien zu Ostindienfah-
ern bauen weitgehend auf oft publizierten Reisebeschreibungen auf und stellen
einzelne, ausschließlich männliche Ostindienfahrer und deren Karrieren oder Er-
fahrungen und Beschreibungen des Fremden ins Zentrum ihrer Untersuchung.
Arbeiten zur frühneuzeitlichen europäischen Expansion und Globalisierung, in
denen in der Regel auch den Ostindienkompanien besondere Aufmerksamkeit
gewidmet wird, betonen fast ausschließlich die Aktivitäten von Männern, die
durch ihre Reisen und Handelsbeziehungen oder ihren Forscher- oder Missions-
drang neue globale Verbindungen und Realitäten schufen. Beide Forschungsfel-
der vernachlässigen die geschlechterspezifischen Implikationen dieser Mobilität
und der Verbindungen, die durch sie geschaffen wurden. Die vorliegende Arbeit
schlägt eine Neuorientierung dieser Narrative vor. Ausgehend von der empiri-
schen Beobachtung in bislang weitgehend unerforschten archivalischen Quellen-
beständen, dass Familie und Ostindien erfahrung im 18. Jahrhundert auf das
Engste miteinander verknüpft waren, plädiert diese Studie für eine Rekonzeptu-
alisierung der Geschichte deutscher Ostindienfahrer als globale Familienges-
chichte.

Die Fragen, wie Familien und Familienpraktiken im 18. Jahrhundert 'global'
wurden und wie sich neue globale Realitäten auf Familien auswirkten und gleich-
zeitig durch sie geschaffen und geformt wurden, leiten die Analyse. Damit rückt
die Studie zum einen Familie in eine globale Perspektive, die neue Erkenntnisse
auch für die europäische Geschichte der Familie verspricht. Der mikrologische
Blick auf Familien in globaler Perspektive eröffnet zum anderen die Möglichkeit,
globalhistorische Narrative zu überprüfen, zu verkomplizieren und zu korrigie-
ren, indem er andere Akteurinnen und Akteure sichtbar macht und dazu einlädt,
die von der Globalgeschichte oft zelebrierten Verbindungen und Verknüpfungen
von Handel, Politik, Wissen und Menschen kritisch auf ihre Substanz hin zu un-
tersuchen.

Untersucht werden die Fragen anhand eines Samples von 180 Familien mit
insgesamt 202 Ostindienfahrern (176 Männer, 14 Frauen, und 12 Kinder), die in
der ein oder anderen Weise eine Verbindung zu einem der deutschsprachigen
Territorien des Heiligen Römischen Reiches oder Preußen hatten. Zentral für die
Methodik der Untersuchung ist die Idee, Menschen verschiedener sozialer und
gefäßischer Herkunft, unterschiedliche Regionen sowie Quellen und Historio-
graphien, die gemeinhin voneinander getrennt untersucht werden, in ein analyti-
sches Feld zu bringen. Eine breite archivale Quellengrundlage, die Bestände
aus Deutschland, den Niederlanden und England zusammenführt, ermöglicht es
die Geschichten von Familien in deutschen Ländern sowie in Süd- und Süd-

Methodisch-konzeptionell reiht sich die Studie in eine Reihe jüngerer Arbeiten ein, die den Mehrwert mikrohistorischer und biographischer Methoden für globalgeschichtliche Fragestellungen aufgezeigt haben. Darüber hinaus greift die Untersuchung Forschungstraditionen der New Imperial History wie auch Postcolonial Studies auf, die Metropolen und Kolonien in Beziehung zueinander setzen und untersuchen; die Studie erweitert diesen Ansatz jedoch auf die deutschen Länder in der Frühen Neuzeit, die traditionell nicht mit empire oder Kolonialismus in Verbindung gebracht werden. Damit trägt die Studie gleichzeitig zu gegenwärtigen historiographischen Strömungen bei, die fürden Empires zu de-nationalisieren und zu de-zentrieren, indem Akteurinnen und Akteure von den geographischen und sozialen 'Rändern' der Empires in die Analyse einbezogen werden.

Die Studie ist in insgesamt sieben Kapitel unterteilt, einschließlich Einleitung (Kapitel 1) und Schlusskapitel (Kapitel 7). Kapitel 2, 'Connected Lives' dient als einführendes Kapitel in die Kontexte und stellt einige der Akteurinnen und Akteure, Quellen und Themen der Studie vor. Das erste Unterkapitel zeigt auf, weshalb die Ostindischen Handelskompanien Menschen aus dem Heiligen Römischen Reich und Preußen Möglichkeiten boten, in die Welt zu reisen, und welche

trotz und während der Abwesenheit des Mannes aufrechtzuerhalten. Der Perspektivwechsel zu den zurückgelassenen Ehefrauen zeigt jedoch, wie brüchig diese Vision war: Einige von ihnen akzeptierten die neue Situation nicht und verklagten ihre Männer auf böswilliges Verlassen und forderten die Scheidung.

Kapitel 4, ‚Family in Absentia‘, widmet sich der Frage, wie die Ostindienfahrer und ihre in deutschen Ländern zurückgelassenen Familien Abwesenheit handhabten und mit den Unsicherheiten transozeanischer Kommunikation umgingen. Die Briefe, die der Analyse zu Grunde liegen, lenken den Fokus besonders auf die Beziehungen zwischen Geschwistern und zwischen Eltern und ihren erwachsenen Kindern. Sie erlauben fragmentarische Einblicke in Familienpraktiken mit denen Distanz überbrückt wurde, und sie zeigen, dass Ostindienfahrer und ihre Familien hierzu auf eine Vielzahl unterschiedlicher Ressourcen zurückgriffen. Diese waren zum Teil bekannte Routinen, wie die Kombination mündlicher und schriftlicher Kommunikation, die Herstellung emotionaler Nähe in Briefen durch die Formulierung geteilter Gefühle und emotionaler Erwartungen, Patenschaften und geteilte Elternschaften für Kinder, finanzielle Unterstützungsleistungen, der Austausch von Geschenken, Ratgeben und Netzwerkwerkpflege sowie Beten. Diese Praktiken waren flexibel genug, um an die neuen Umstände angepasst zu werden, und sie hatten das Potential, Distanzen zu überbrücken.


Verschiedene Formen der Familienbildung werden in Testamenten sichtbar. Familien konnten ausgehend von einem Paar geformt werden, das auf rechtliche Weise verheiratet war, außerehelich zusammenlebte oder schlicht Kinder zeigte.
In ersterem Fall konnte es sich bei der Ehefrau um eine freie oder ehemals versklavte Frau handeln. Im zweiten Fall konnte die Frau frei oder versklavt sein. Daneben gab es polygame Familien sowie Familien, in denen keine Mutter identifiziert werden konnte. Ehe, Sex und Elternschaft konnten in kolonialen Familien deckungsgleich sein, häufiger schienen dies jedoch getrennte Bereiche zu sein. Die Verbindung von Sexualität/Ehe und Ökonomie des Hauses, im Ideal der christlichen Familie eng miteinander verflochten und ausgedrückt in der Praxis des Arbeitspaares, wurde im kolonialen Zusammenhang auf die Probe gestellt und umdefiniert. Mütter konnten Ehefrauen oder außereheliche Partnerschaften sein, sie konnten aber auch das Eigentum des Hausvaters sein. Grundsätzlich waren Frauen, deren Beziehungen zu den Ostindienfahrern nicht rechtlich durch eine anerkannte Ehe abgesichert waren, in einer prekären Situation. Auch wenn die Testatoren Vorkehrungen zu ihrer Versorgung trafen oder ihnen Legate hinterließen, die oft Erbpraktiken auch zwischen verheirateten Paaren widerspiegelten, so waren sie anders als verheiratete Frauen rechtlich deutlich schlechter gestellt und konnten keinen Anspruch auf das – gemeinsam erwirtschaftete – Vermögen geltend machen. Die Tatsache, dass koloniale Familien oft auf Unehelichkeit beruhten, erhöhte darüber hinaus potentiell die wirtschaftlichen Möglichkeiten der Verwandten in Deutschland, da sie den Nachlass im Fall, dass der Ostindienfahrer ohne Testament verstarb, nicht mit einer Ehefrau teilen mussten.


In einigen Fällen zeugen die Testamente davon, wie Ostindienfahrer versuchten, ihre neuen sozialen Beziehungen mit jenen in deutschen Ländern in Einklang zu bringen. Einige Testatoren verfügten Legate an Verwandte, in der Regel
Geschwister oder deren Kinder. In anderen Fällen teilten Testatoren ihren Nachlass und benannten sowohl die zurückgelassenen Familien als auch ihre neuen Familien als Erben. Wieder andere vermachten ihren gesamten Nachlass an die Familie in deutschen Ländern. Hierbei handelte es sich vor allem um Männer, die nur kurze Zeit in Asien gelebt hatten, bevor sie testierten.


Die Untersuchung der Anliegen der zurückgebliebenen Familien, mit denen sie sich hilfesuchend an ihren König wandten, hat gezeigt, dass empire vielfältige Effekte und Folgen sowohl für die zurückgelassenen Familien als auch darüber hinaus hatte. Die Lebenswelten und sozialen Beziehungen von Ostindienfahrern in Süd- und Südostasien, die Anwesenheit und der Handel mit verschlaven Menschen, uneheliche Kinder und außereheliche gemischts-ethnische Beziehungen hält in Form von wirtschaftlichen Profiten und Erzählungen in den Geschichten der in Deutschland zurückgebliebenen Familien nach. Konflikte über Erbschaften, besonders wenn neue Beziehungen in Ostindien erbrechtlich zur Konkurrenz wurden, führten zu der Frage, was es bedeutet, verwandt zu sein, und wie dieses Verwandt-Sein belegt werden konnte. Ostindienmigration stellte außerdem eine wirtschaftliche Einnahmequelle dar und schuf Arbeit für eine Vielzahl von Akteurinnen und Akteuren, deren Einbindung in die Aktivitäten der Ostindienkompanien bislang unbeachtet geblieben ist. Lokale Herrschaften,
Gerichte, Priester und Notare wurden involviert, wenn Erben Abstammungs-
nachweise, Legitimationen und Vollmachten zur Hebung von Erbschaften be-
nötigten. Kaufleute, Konsuln und andere Agenten und Agentinnen verdienten
an Verwandten, die Informationen zum Leben oder Tod eines Ostandienfahrers
einziehen wollten. Unter ihnen fanden sich auch Betrüger, die mit falschen Erb-
schaften hoffnungsvolle und oft vermeintliche Verwandte von Ostandien-
fahrern in den Ruin trieben – ein Phänomen, das deutsche Regierungen bis weit
in das 19. Jahrhundert beschäftigte. Lokale Herrschaften und zentrale Regie-
 rungsorgane wurden in die Probleme und Konflikte von Familien verwickelt, die
sich aus der Ostandienmigration ergaben, und sie mussten neue Routinen entwi-
cckeln, diese zu lösen. Die Supplikanten, ihre Wünsche, Sorgen und Nöte, trugen
damit zu einer Verknüpfung von familiären Interessen, globalen Verstrickungen
und Staatsbildung bei. Wie diejenigen, die die Reise nach Ostandien angetreten
haben, konnten so auch jene, die zurückgeblieben waren, zu Agenten globaler
Verknüpfungen werden.

Mit Blick auf die Frage nach dem Zusammenhang von Familie und empire, die
am Beginn der Untersuchung stand, lassen sich die Ergebnisse der Studie in drei
Thesen zusammenfassen: 1. Familie komplizierte empire, indem Familien die wirt-
 schaftlichen und sozialen Möglichkeiten von empire für ihre eigenen Interessen zu
 nutzen suchten. 2. Familie ermöglichte empire, indem Familieninteressen Migra-
tion motivierte und die Unterstützung von Familienmitgliedern die Mobilität ein-
zelner Ostandienfahrer erlaubte. 3. Empire verkomplizierte Familie, durch die
Trennung von Familien und die Bedingung veränderter Geschlechterrollen, aber
auch durch die Integration neuer und fremder Praktiken und Beziehungen in die
Familie, wie Sklaverei, Adoption, und gemischt-ethnische Beziehungen. Diese
Ergebnisse haben Implikationen für drei historiographische Felder: New Imperial
History, Geschichte der deutschen Frühen Neuzeit und Globalgeschichte.

Historikerinnen und Historiker frühneuzeitlicher Imperien haben die zentrale
Rolle von Familie für koloniale Expansion und Herrschaft sowie empire-building
herausgearbeitet. Die vorliegende Studie nimmt Impulse dieses Forschungsfeldes
auf, in dem bislang britische, französische, spanische, portugiesische und nieder-
ländische Eliten im Mittelpunkt standen; gleichzeitig stellt die Arbeit eine Erwei-
terung dieses Feldes dar, indem sie sozial und geografisch neue Akteurinnen und
Akteure in die Analyse einbezieht. Damit leistet die Studie einen Beitrag dazu,
Empires und Kolonialismus zu de-nationalisieren und zu de-zentrieren.

Zweitens zeigt die Studie, dass Familien, nicht nur Kaufleute, Missionare und
Forscher, die überseeischen Handelsimperien und deutsche Länder miteinander
in Beziehung brachten. Männer, Frauen und Kinder aus dem Heiligen Römi-
schen Reich und Preußen im 18. Jahrhundert lebten globale Leben, erfuhren
Globalisierung und gestalteten diese selbst mit. Empire, so eine wichtige Erkennt-
nis der Untersuchung, hatte weit größere und sozial breitere Auswirkungen auf
frühneuzeitliche deutsche Gesellschaften, Menschen, Regionen, Regierungen
und Geschichte als bisher angenommen. Kolonialismus war nicht etwas, das bei
den westlichen Nachbarn kritisch beobachtet und als abstrakte Vorstellung in


Der mikrologische Blick auf Familien in globalen Kontexten hat darüber hinaus wichtige methodische Implikationen für die Globalgeschichte. So erlaubt er zum einen die im Zentrum vieler Globalgeschichten stehenden Verbindungen und Vernetzungen, ihr Funktionieren aber gerade auch ihre Grenzen, ihr Nicht-Funktionieren und Scheitern „unter die Lupe‘ zu nehmen. Gleichzeitig macht der mikrologische Blick auf Familien Akteurinnen und Akteure von Globalisierung sichtbar, die in vielen Globalgeschichten unsichtbar bleiben, weil sie nicht mobil waren: hierbei handelt es sich nicht nur um Frauen (als Reisende, als Schwestern, Mütter und Ehefrauen, als versklavte Sex- und Haushaltsarbeiterinnen, außereheliche Partnerinnen, Freundinnen und Geschäftspartnerinnen), sondern auch um Männer, die als Väter, Brüder oder Neffen zurückblieben und teilhatten oder teilhaben wollten an der Welterfahrung der Ostindienfahrer.

9 Glossary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Court of Directors</td>
<td>Executive board of the EIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edictalcitation</td>
<td>(German) Summon issued when the place of residence of the indited individual is unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geheimer Rat</td>
<td>(German) before a name: privy councillor (title); in context of administration: Privy Council, central Brandenburg-Prussian administrative chamber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hauptmann</td>
<td>(German) Captain (title)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hauptmannin</td>
<td>(German) wife of a Hauptmann</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hofrat</td>
<td>(German) Counsellor of the Court, title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heren Zeventien</td>
<td>(Dutch) Gentlemen Seventeen; executive board of the VOC, consisting of the 17 directors of the VOC chambers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligenzblatt</td>
<td>(German) Intelligence gazette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juffrouw</td>
<td>(Dutch) Miss or Mistress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kabinetsministerium</td>
<td>(German) Central governmental authority in Brandenburg-Prussia: Department of external or foreign affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kammergericht</td>
<td>(German) Chamber of Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manumission</td>
<td>Freeing of an enslaved person, often by will at the slaveholder's death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pagoda</td>
<td>Gold coin used in South India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presidency</td>
<td>Largest administrative unit of the EIC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
probate account  In British jurisprudence a list of income and expenses of an estate in the first year after the death of the deceased

Reichsthaler  (German) German silver coin

Resident  (Dutch) local commander of a Dutch trading post; (German) commercial agent responsible for consular duties before the establishment of an official consulate

Rixdaler  (Dutch) also Rijsdaalder. Coin used in the Dutch East Indies; 48 Dutch stuivers or 2.4 gulden

Rupee  Indian silver coin

Seelenverkäufer  (German; Dutch: zielverkoper). Literally: soul sellers; recruiters for the VOC who supply mustered men with food, clothes, and housing before embarkation; usually reimbursed through letters of debt to be drawn from the men’s salaries

Sicca Rupee  Rupee used in Bengal by the EIC

vrijburgher  (Dutch) Free European citizen not employed by the VOC

Weeskamer  (Dutch) Orphan Chamber. Acts as probate office in the Dutch East Indies; responsible for the protection of the interests of orphans and minors and the administration of estates of Europeans who died without a will

Weesmeesters  (Dutch) governors of the Orphan Chamber; forming the Board of Governors of the Orphan Chamber (Het College van Weesmeesters)
10 Appendix

10.1 Family index

This family index contains all families and East Indies travellers who are cited in this thesis and who form the sample described in Chapter 2. The index has two main functions. First, it serves as an aid to locating families in the thesis. The numbers at the end of each entry refer to the pages where the family or a member of the family is discussed either in the text or in the footnotes. Second, the index gives an overview of family relationships as well as occupational and travel data for the East Indies travellers to the extent that these could be reconstructed in the course of my research. The information, especially on type of employment, rank, and subsequent positions or East Indies postings, is not comprehensive. The idea is to give the reader the opportunity to further contextualize the families (or members of a family) referenced in the thesis. The index is an invitation to continue research into these families and their histories.

‘EIT’ signifies the East Indies traveller. If several individuals from the same family travelled to the East Indies, they are numbered 1), 2), 3), etc. Family members who are known but remained in Europe are listed but without numbers. Similarly, people born in the East Indies are not assigned a number. ‘EIT?’ indicates that there is some doubt as to whether this particular East Indies traveller ever existed. The years listed after the Company (EIC or VOC) indicate the duration of company service. In case of service with the VOC, this is followed by the name of the outbound ship and the rank at which the individual was recruited with subsequent ranks or positions. ‘Time spent in EI’ refers to the whole period spent in the East Indies. Often, this is the same as the duration of service, but sometimes it is longer when the person in question left service but remained in the East Indies as a free burgher. If not otherwise stated (usually with the words repatriated or returned), the East Indies traveller (probably) died in the East Indies. Where parents of the East Indies travellers are listed without reference to their death, they were (probably) alive at the time of recruitment.

Besides the sources quoted in the footnotes, the online searchable VOC employment database (VOC: opvarenden) has been used to reconstruct the duration of company service and rank at recruitment; these employment records sometimes also contain information on family relations, i.e., when money was paid to relatives in Europe or when the employee left a wife and/or children behind in the East Indies. In addition, the published lists of VOC employees (Naam-boeck[je] van de wel edele heeren der booge Indiasche regeeringe […] op Batavia […] were used to
reconstruct fragments of VOC careers; the online database ‘Sri Lanka, Colombo District, Dutch Reformed Church Records, 1677–1990’, available through familysearch.org, was used to reconstruct family relations in Colombo; the India Office Records: Ecclesiastical Returns (BL IOR/N-series), available through findmypast.co.uk, were used to reconstruct family relations in Madras and Bengal. For families at the Cape of Good Hope Hoge’s *Personalia of the Germans at the Cape* (1946) provided some additional biographical information. For families in Batavia the lists of marriages (‘Huwelijken te Batavia in de Compagniestijd’) compiled by W. Wijnaendts van Resandt and published in several issues of *De Nederlandsche Leeuw* were consulted through the online searchable *De Nederlandsche Leeuw 1883–1932* at www.knggw.nl/raadplegen/de-nederlandsche-leeuw/.
Allet (Elliot), EITs:
- 3) William, child of 1) Richard and 2) Elizabeth (†31 Jan. 1770 on board the Royal Captain). Place of origin: Germany. EIC/Protestant settlers for Sumatra


Baker, EITs:

Becker, EIT: Heinrich Wilhelm (†1783).
Place of origin: Everingen. VOC (duration of service unknown). Outbound ship: unknown. Recruited rank: soldier; farmhand from 1771. Time spent in EI: 2–1783. Posting: Cape of Good Hope. Parents: Peter (shepherd, was alive when son left for EI, † before 1793) and Catharina Margarethe, née Spelgen (fl. 1793) 250, 257.


Berlich, EIT: Johan(n) Daniel (†1783).

Biedermann, EIT: Matthias (†1795).

Blom, EIT?: First name not recorded. No record of any employment in the VOC. Heinrich Paulsen (burgher and wigmaker, fl. 1779) and his siblings in Alt Stettin believed that they were next of kin and entitled to the estate of ‘Commandeur Blom’ in Batavia amounting to 6–7 tonnes of gold 250


Boesenberg, EITs:
- 2) Maria Elisabeth, née Bohlen († between July 1783 and March 1784). Place of origin: Pyrmont. EIC/14th Hanoverian infantry regiment. Time spent in EI: 1782– at least 1783. Husband’s posting: Madras. Wife of 1) Johann August. Their daughter, Anna Catharina, was born during the sea voyage (*1782), their son, Georg Heinrich, in Madras (*1783). In July 1783, after Johann August’s death, Maria married Carl Gottlob Hildebrand in Madras 91, 92


Slaveholder: yes: Belinda, Peggy, and Malotty


Breymann, EITs:


Cavallier, EIT? Issac. No record of any employment in the VOC. According to Jean Esaye Cavallier (Accise-Commiss in Charlottenburg), Issac went to
‘Batavia or rather to the island of Surattee’ in 1710 at the rank of ship surgeon. Jean Esaye stated that he was Isaac’s brother and made inquiries into his estate. 251


**Dornheim (Dornheijm, Dornleim, Tornheijm, Tormijn, Dornbach)**, EIT: Johann (Johann) Friedrich (Fredrik) Christoph (Christoff(el)). Place of origin: ‘Apulta’, probably Apolda. VOC (1751–1792). Outbound ship: Kieritschenel. Recruited rank: soldier; later occupation: printer and publisher. Time spent in EI: 1751–1792. Posting: Colombo. Wife in EI: Maria Elisabeth Dietiksz or Dietrichsz van Colombo (†1756). Children: Maria Mackdale (~1762) and a son, name unknown. Siblings: Maria Elisabeth, Johann Gottlieb Daniel, Johann Wilhelm, and Johanne (one of her sons, a shoemaker, tried to get hold of Johann Friedrich’s estate in 1817) 134, 135, 148–149, 151, 198, 256

**Dührenthal**, EIT: Johann Christoph (†before 1793). Place of origin: Berlin?


Flagg or Flach, EITs:


Funck, EIT: Conrad. Place of origin: Germany. EIC (c.1778–1795). Occupations: sergeant and commander of the Police Guard. Time spent in EI: at least 17 years. Postings: ’different stations’ and Calcutta. Travelled to Germany ‘to see his friends’, leaving behind his wife and children. Returned to Calcutta, but was ordered to be send
back to Europe in 1795, outcome unknown. Wife and children in EI: yes, a ‘native woman’, maybe Mary Funck. Children’s names unknown 124–125

**Funck (Funcken)**, EIT?: Johann (Hans) Philip. Place of origin: Belsenberg. Left his wife Ursula Barbara, née Eßlinger, and went according to his own letter to the East Indies with the VOC in 1739 on the *Bikvleet*. No record of employment could be identified. His wife filed for divorce. Parents: Hans Michel, mother’s first name unknown (née Stier?) (both fl. 1739) 101, 118, 120–123, 126


**Gloeden, von, EIT**: Carl Wilhelm. Place of origin: Breslau (now Wrocław). Professional background: former lieutenant. VOC (1780–1781 repatriated). Outbound ship: *Held Woltemade* (was seized by the British near the Cape of Good Hope). Recruited rank: sergeant. Said to have travelled to EI to recover an inheritance on Ceylon belonging to his wife (name unknown) 249


**Grimm**, EITs:


- 2) Johanna Maria Luise, née Junnhans (†1783). Place of origin: Preußisch Minden. EIC/15th (later 14th) Hanoverian infantry regiment. Time spent in EI: 1782–1783. Husband’s posting: Madras. Wife of 1) Caspar. Their son Georg Carl was born on the *Nottingham* on the night of the 8/9 Feb. 1782, but he probably died a couple of days later. After Caspar’s death, Johanna Maria married Carl Gottlob Hildebrand while still on board the *Nottingham* 90–91, 92


Haase (Hase, de Haas), EIT: Gottfried (Gotfried) (†1757). Place of origin: Kaporn (now Wsmorje). Professional background: carpenter. VOC (1753–1757). Outbound ship: Giessenburg. Recruited rank: junior ship's carpenter. Time spent in EI: 1753–1757. Posting: Batavia. Parents: Jacob (fisherman, † unknown, before 1765) and Barbara Haase, later married name Liebertin (fl. 1765). Siblings: Jacob (mariner), Johann (fisherman), Maria Reinhardtin (wife of a smith), Barbara Fischerin (wife of a fisherman), and Elisabeth Schlimmermannin 252


Hanschke (Hanske), EIT: Friedrich (Fredrik) Ludwig (Lodewijk) (†1761). Place of origin: Berlin. Professional background: baker. VOC (1756–1761). Outbound ship: Oranjezaal. Recruited rank: sailor. Time spent in EI: 1756–1761. Postings: Batavia, Bantam. Parents: father, name unknown (baker, fl. 1756?). Rumour had it that Friedrich went to EI in 1752 and died at the Cape of Good Hope in 1755. Certain news about his death was requested when his father’s estate was divided in 1791 252

Stachhini), John (mother unknown, maybe Anna), adopted daughter Sarah (mother unknown), natural sons Benjamin and Jeremiah (their mother was Ester). Female beneficiary in EI: 'my girl' Ester 71, 206–207.


**Heckmann, EITs:**


2) Wilhelmine, née Spangenberg. Place of origin: Saxony-Weimar. Travelled with her first husband, sergeant Gravers, to India. EIC/15th (later 14th) Hanoverian infantry regiment. Time spent in EI: 1782– at least 1784. Husband’s posting: Madras. First daughter of 1) Caspar and 2) Wilhelmine, Charlotte Sophie, was born in Madras in May 1784 (godmother was Charlotte Sophie Spangenberg in Weimar). For their second daughter, Justina Ernestina, the parents chose Caspar’s sister Ernestina Bodenstein in Weimar-Meiningen as godmother. Two more children, Johannette Louise and Joachim Christoph Heinrich, were born in 1787 and 1788 152.


**Hensch (Hens(z)), EITs:**


Parents of 1) Johann Heinrich and 2) Johann Friedrich: Michael (assistant rector of the Latin school) and Dorothea Elisabeth Friedrich (both † before 1754). Siblings: Johann Christian (cantor), Anna Maria Kellnern, and Sophie Hedewig Bansin.

Hensel, EIT: Gottlieb (Godfried) (*c.1740–†1765). Place of origin: Königsberg. Professional background: seaman? VOC (1755–1765). Outbound ship: Keukenhof. Recruited rank: able seaman; later modder mandoor (overseer of the cleaning of the canals; in the German translation of his will it reads ‘overseer of the slaves’ [‘Aufseher der Sclawe’]). Time spent in EI: 1755–1765. Posting: Batavia. Parents: Christoph Friedrich (burgher and tailor, †c.1747) and Hedwig Hensel, née Hoffmännin (fl. 1774). Gottlieb named the free Christian woman Christina Calmink (Kalming) in Batavia his universal heir.


Hohendorf (Hohendorp), von, EIT: Johan(n) (Joan) Andreas (Andries) (†1760). Place of origin: East Prussia? VOC (c.1738/39–1760). Employment record could not be identified. Outbound ship: unknown. Recruited rank: Unter-Offizier? Later extraordinary and then ordinary councillor of the Dutch East Indies. Time spent in EI: c.1738/39–1760. Postings: Batavia, Semarang. Wife in EI: Philippina Theodora, daughter of Governor-General Jacob Mossel (†1748). Parents: Elisabeth Antonetta, née Groeben, Widow Hohendorf (fl. c.1754). Kin: several parties came forward and made claims to the estate. They were questioned about the circumstances of Hohendorf’s migration and kinship relations. Some said he was the natural son of Major Abraham Christoph von Hohendorf, but that it was unknown who his mother was. Others believed he was the son of Justiz-Direktorin Keith. There was also the rumour that he went to the East Indies after having killed someone in a duel 166, 231, 248

Hohnholdt (Hohenholdt, Hunoldt), EIT?: Johann Jacob. Place of origin: Königsberg. No record of any employment in the VOC. According to his alleged brother, the tailor George Carl (Karl) Hohnholdt, Johann Jacob, also a tailor, went to the East Indies, where he became ship captain and owner of a sugar plantation. In another petition George Carl stated that Johann Jacob signed on with the VOC in 1736 and died in Batavia at the rank of an officer. George Carl Hohnholdt tried for several years to get hold of what he believed was his just inheritance 250–251


Hoolbeck (Hoolbeek), EIT: Christian. Place of origin: Stolzenburg near.
Danzig? Professional background: surgeon in the Prussian army; requested permission to leave and signed on as surgeon on a VOC hospital ship in Texel where he served in 1780. In 1781 he appears to have signed on with the VOC again. Employment records could not be identified. Parents: Christian (surgeon, fl. 1790) 138


Hübner (Hebnar, Hubner, Hewner, Heepner), EIT: Fred(e)rick. Place of origin: Dettenhausen. Professional background: miller or millwright. EIC/Protestant settlers for Sumatra. Occupations: planter, miller, millwright, baker? Time spent in EI: 1770-1777 (repatriated). Posting: Bencoolen. Spent a year at the Cape on his way back to Europe. In Bencoolen he lived and worked together with Andrew Bruyan (Bruyone, Proujang). Received an individual bequest from William Brandt, see also Brandt 86, 88

Huhn, EIT: John D. (†1799). Place of origin: Brandenburg. EIC but not in Company service. Occupation: Surgeon. Time spent in EI: c.1766–1799. Residing in: Calcutta. No family relations could be identified with certainty. In March 1799, a girl named Charlotte Huhn was born in Calcutta, no father or mother recorded in baptism register 71


Christoph and godfather of 3) Carl. Common-law husband of 2) Anna Maria (Marian) and father of 3) Carl and 4) Julius. Slaveholder: yes; Hucker(border) and Ramjany (were brought to Germany in 1773) 27–28, 36, 74, 101–106, 125, 132, 133, 135, 144–145, 146, 147, 153, 154–159, 162, 163, 164, 186, 199


- 3) Carl (Charles) Christian August (*1766–†1853). Place of origin: Ludwigsburg. Accompanied his parents 1) Christoph Adam and 2) Anna Maria (Marian) to India in 1769; was sent back to England in 1772 for his education 83, 103–106, 153, 186, 199


Maria Albertina (later married name Haendler) in Germany 98, 214, 252, 269


**Kampfz, von, EIT: Christoph Otto (also Ernst Friedrich) (*1748–†1796 or 97).** Place of origin: Deven. EIC (1765–1773). Recruited rank: ensign; dismissed in 1773, then private merchant? Moved to the Cape of Good Hope in 1778 in the service of the VOC as sailor. Time spent in EI: 1765–1779 and 1784–1786 (repatriated). Posting: Calcutta; later residing at the Cape of Good Hope. Wife at the Cape: Anna Catharina Koekemoer (⚭1777 or 78, ⚬1790). She accompanied Christoph Otto to Mecklenburg in 1786 or 87. The couple brought along a black woman named Clara, her stepson Valentin, and a black boy or man named Abraham. Siblings: August Ernst (lieutenant in Prussian military service). Slaveholder: yes 169–170

**Kannengießer (Cannegieter), EIT: Johann (Jan) Georg (Jürgen).** Place of origin: Nordhausen. VOC (1727–1737 repatriated). Outbound ship: Reigersbroek. Recruited rank: soldier. Time spent in EI: 1727–1737. Postings: Batavia, Ceylon. It is probable that he is the same person who signed on with the VOC in 1738 on the Wapen van Hoorn as a galley boy, name in the pay ledger: Jan Jurriaensz Kannegieter. If this is the case, his father was Johann Martin Kangießer (cook). Kin: cousin? Christian Leonhard 162


**Kendl see Meiselbach.**


**Klaas, EIT: Lorenz.** Place of origin: Hof in Bayreuth. VOC (time of service unknown). Outbound ship: unknown. Recruited rank: unknown. Time spent in EI: 1780s? Posting: Semarang. Left behind his wife (name unknown) and two daughters in Germany. He named his daughters, Mrs Fischerin and Mrs Benkerin, heirs and they collected their inheritance in 1793 98, 269

**Klöpsch, EITs:**


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Köhler, EIT: Daniel (†1785). VOC. Alleged outbound ship: Egstrom. No record of employment could be identified. Alleged kin: Carl Friedrich Koehler. Fraud case involving Johann Heinrich Treher 265


Krampf, EITs:


Kriel(e), EIT: Samuel Christian (~1706–†1779), Place of origin: Frankfurt an der Oder. Probably educated at the Klosterschule in Berlin, then medical studies in Frankfurt an der Oder and Leiden. Signed on with the VOC 2 times: 1. 1741–1745 last record. Outbound ship: Ruiter. Recruited rank: surgeon; returned to Europe (probably together with his wife). 2. 1756–1779. Outbound ship: probably Amelisweert, passenger. Occupation: surgeon and stadsdoctor in Batavia. Time spent in EI: 1741–c.1745 and 1756–1779. Posting: Batavia. Wife in EI: Gertruijde de Pinket, daughter of Johannes Pinket and Elisabeth de Soute. Samuel appointed the niece of his late wife, Susanna Elisabeth Pinket, his universal heir and made bequests to the daughters of several men in Batavia. Between 1788 and 1793 several people in Brandenburg claimed to be related to Samuel Kriele and tried to get hold of a share of his estate. Their kinship ties could not be verified. Slaveholder: yes 257

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Kröse (Kroese), EIT: Gerhard (Gerardus, Gerrit) (†1778). Place of origin: Dedendorp. VOC (1767–1778). Outbound ship: Vlietlust. Recruited rank: able seaman; later burgwer in Bengal and gezaghebber of the D’Klerq. Time spent in EI: 1767–1778. Postings: Colombo, Bengal, Semarang. Parents: Johann Friedrich (soldier and grinder in Danish service), mother’s name Matte? († unknown, both before 1780). Siblings: Anna Elisabeth (wife of Nicolaus Noorthous) and two half-brothers Johann Heinrich (Friedrich?) and Christoph.

Krüger, EIT: Joachim Friedrich (†1784). Place of origin: Angermünde? VOC (time of service unknown). Outbound ship: unknown. Recruited rank: unknown. Occupation: apothecary. Time spent in EI: ?–1784. Posting: Cape of Good Hope. Children: daughter Mrs Juncker, living in Hamburg; unknown if she was born at the Cape and sent to Europe or if her father left her in Germany when he went to the EI. Parents: father was a smith (name and † unknown). Siblings: Anna Dorothea (married to plumber Weiss) 98, 214, 248

Krumbholtz, EIT?: Andreas. No record of any employment in the VOC. The two brothers Johann (innkeeper) and Christian (peasant) Krumbholtz from Gotha believed that they were the next of kin of Andreas Krumbholtz, a ship captain who died in the East Indies in 1749 after having made a rich marriage. They offered 20,000 Thaler to the Orphan House in Potsdam in return for the king’s help to get hold of their inheritance, which they believed amounted to 300,000 gulden.

Kühn, EIT?: Gottfried. Place of origin: Friesack. Professional background: baker’s apprentice. His sister, Anna Elisabeth Kühn, Widow Thielen, made inquiries into the life or death of her brother. Consul Gregory’s report from Amsterdam is inconsistent and refers to a man named Godfried Keuningh from Königsberg who signed on with the VOC in 1749 on the Haarlem but died shortly after 138, 235–236, 254


Labatz, EIT?: Martin. No record of any employment in the VOC. Went allegedly to ‘Troia in Batavia’ as a ship captain and left behind an estate of 150,000 Reichsthaler, which he gave to his brother, Simon Labatz in Pinnow/Uckermark. Maria Sabina Labatzen (married name Tescher) stated that she was the daughter of Simon Labatz and thus entitled to her uncle’s estate 162–163


Langenecker (Langenikker), EIT: Johan(n) Ernst. Place of origin: Stendal. Professional background: barber. VOC (1744–1753 missing). Outbound


Lycke (Luecke, Lücke), EIT: Johann (John) (Daniel) Friedrich (Frederick) (*1751–†1789). Place of origin: Egeln near Magdeburg. Professional background: medical studies in Egeln. Travelled to the EI around 1773, probably with the VOC from Amsterdam. Employment record could not be identified. Later he appeared in the territories of the EIC as surgeon. Time spent in EI: c.1773–1798. Postings: Calcutta, Calcapore. Children in EI: George (later a surgeon in British service, mother unknown). Parents: Johann Andreas Christoph (innkeeper, was arrested after Johann deserted) and Marie Elisabeth, née Schnaebel (both † after 1773). Siblings: Maria Elisabeth Kühne 154, 203, 209–211

Madelung, EIT: Friedrich Wilhelm (†1783). Place of origin: Weimar/Saxony? Lieutenant in the service of the
EIC/15

th (later 14

) Hanoverian infantry regiment (1782–1783). Time spent in EI: 1782–1783. Postings: Madras, Arcot. Parents: mother’s name not recorded (fl. 1788). Siblings: August Wilhelm (merchant; his oldest son, Wilhelm, was Friedrich’s godson and appointed universal heir) 217, 252

Mauve (Maue, Moule, Nauve, Nauwe), EITs:

- 1) Johann (John) Bogislaus (Bogislaw, Borgensolf) (*1723 or 26–†1781). Place of origin: Stettin. Signed on with the VOC in 1754 at the rank of soldier for the Akerendam but did not embark. Went to Copenhagen and in 1756 to Bengal. Not clear with which company (Danish Asiatic Company or EIC); then service in VOC? and employment with the merchant Christian Schröder; eventually major in the service of the EIC. Time spent in EI: c.1756–1782. Posting: Berhampore. Brother of 2) Daniel Friedrich 76, 147, 169, 170–171, 230, 248–249

- 2) Daniel Friedrich (*1725–†1778). Place of origin: Stettin. Professional background: Amtsrat. VOC (1777–1780). Outbound ship: Delfshaven (shipwrecked). Recruited rank: seaman. Time spent in EI: 1777–1780. Adult children in Germany: Johann Heinrich Friedrich (sergeant in the regiment of Winterfeld), Andreas Christof Gottlieb or Gottlob (merchant, but left Prussia in 1784 and probably travelled to the EI; in 1787 he appears in Sandow near Frankfurt an der Oder; there is an employment record for a man named Godliep Maue from Stettin, who signed on with the VOC in 1791 at the rank of able seaman on the Vaso da Gama and died in 1792. It could not be verified if this was the son of 2) Daniel Friedrich Mauve). Brother of 1) Johann Bogislaus. Parents of 1) Johann Bogislaus and 2) Daniel Friedrich: Christian (merchant and senator in Stettin, †1744) and Flora Elisabeth von Liebherr († unknown). Siblings: Matthäus Friedrich Christian (*1716, quartermaster), Elisabeth Marie (*1717–†1786), Christian (*1719–†1781, wine merchant), Carl Heinrich (*c.1720s–†1782 or 86), Flora Charlotte (*1731) 76

Meiselbach, EITs:


Coninck and Beiersen in Copenhagen, ship’s name: *Princess Friderica*, captain Jens Rosted. Parents: C. C. Metzendorf (storehouse manager [*Lagerer*] in Hamburg), mother’s name unknown (both *fl*. 1778) 131, 133, 134, 137


**Meyn (Meijn, Mein, Meij)**, EIT: Christi(a)an Wilhelm (Willem) (*†*1763). Place of origin: Tilsit. Probably: VOC (1731–1735 repatriated). Outbound ship: *Stadtwijk*. Recruited rank: *adelborst*. Certainly: VOC (1742–1743 vrijburgier). Outbound ship: *Huis te Rensburg*. Recruited rank: *landspasaat* (rank under corporal). At the Cape he boarded the *Sara Jacoba* with the rank of junior merchant; later captain and second auctioneer. Time spent in EI: at least 1742–1763. Posting: Batavia. Wives in EI: 1. Johanna Keijsens (in 1744 she adopted Paulus van Batavia, son of the free woman Rasmi van Ter- 82 naten); 2. Hendrina Gertruijda van Rijneveold, Widow of Ilsbrand Vincent (*1760). Children in the EI: adopted son Friedrich Wilhelm (mother unknown; married Anna Maria in Scheveningen/Netherlands, returned to Batavia with the rank of a soldier in 1787, leaving Anna Maria and his child behind; she later requested to be compensated). Natural son Wilhelm Christian (mother unknown; assistant in the service of the VOC on Timor, sent to the Netherlands for his education? Married Catharina Elizabeth Keijser but abandoned her according to her will). Stepson Herman Simon Vincent (in 1761 in Europe for his education). Female beneficiary in EI: the free local woman Dialima van Macasser. Siblings: Johannes Friedrich (his son, Christian Wilhelm, received a legacy from his uncle Christian Wilhelm), Regina, Johann Jacob Patzscher, and Anna Barbara Patzscher, all in Tilsit and beneficiaries of their brother by his will. Slaveholder: yes, the enslaved woman Sonting and probably others 193, 204–205, 209, 248, 257


**Neuhaus (Nijhausen)**, EIT: Johann (Jan) Casper (*†*1783). Place of origin:

Otto, EIT: Michael (Michiel, Miggel, Michiel) (†c.1785). Place of origin: Tilsit. Professional background: blacksmith. Signed on with the VOC probably 3 times: 1. 1772–1775. Outbound ship: Landskroon. 2. 1775–1777. Outbound ship: Honkoop. 3. 1777–1779. Outbound ship: Ceres; always at the rank of scheepskorporaal. In 1782 he signed on for service on the Monneckendam and died probably in 1785 (employment record could not be identified). Michael’s heirs, i.e. his siblings, later forfeited their inheritance because Consul Chomel, who had collected their money, became insolvent and absconded 62

Pankuke (Pancuke), EITs:


Piron, von, EITs:
- 1) Felix (†1774). Place of origin: Java; allegedly son of an Indian prince and a Christian slave woman. Had some relation with a woman named Rachel Molijn in Batavia who made Felix her heir. Around 1746, still a child, he was brought to Königsberg by Theodosius Polykarp Woyt. Married 2) Anna Dorothea von Eidelstaed, Eidelstein or Eulenstein (between 1758 and 1761). Seven children. In 1769 he travelled to Amsterdam and from there (c.1771) to the EI in the service of the VOC as krankbesoeker (visitor of the sick). He brought along his wife 2) Anna Barbara and six children, leaving behind the oldest daughter, Rahel Dorothea (* before 1761). Time spent in EI: c.1771–1774. Postings: Batavia, died on his way to Malacca 101–102, 104, 106, 124, 125, 231, 240, 242–245, 253


**Plüschkow (Pluskow, Plüskow), von,**


**Purgoldt, EIT?** First name not recorded.
No record of any employment in the VOC. Died supposedly in 1763 on the island Laurentii as a ship captain in Dutch services. Sophia Amalia von Purgoldt, née von Wildten, claimed to have a right to his estate

was sent to Europe to the care of Jakob’s stepfather for his education.


Reinhard(t) (Rijnhaard, Reijnhard, Reynhart), EITs:
Outbound ship: Herstelder. Recruited rank: soldier. 2. 1788–1798 repatriated. Outbound ship: Vrouwe Katharina Johanna. Recruited rank: sergeant; later bookkeeper and overseer of the dams (Bendungan). Time spent in EI: 1774–1785 and 1788–1798 (repatriated). Between 1785 and 1788 Johann Carl appears in Kelbra as ‘Kauf- und Handlungs-Herr’. When he left for his second term in 1788, he left behind his pregnant wife Anna Sophia Victoria Benzlern, daughter of Johann Heinrich Bentzler (1786), and his daughter Christina Antonetta (*1787) (the second daughter, Johanna Sophia Friederique Albertina, was born in 1788). On his way back to Europe in 1797/98, he got involved in a property cause at the Vice-Admiralty Court at the Cape. During this time he stayed with Christian Ludwig Kendler, see Meiselbach/Kendler.

Parents of 1) Johann August and 2) Johann Carl: H. K. Reinhard (fl. 1793). Other relations: Johann Carl Bischoff (friend of the family and godfather of Johann Carl’s children) 72–78, 94, 95, 108, 111, 116, 131, 137, 161, 170, 174


Rossem von, EIT?: Anthon. The widow Johanna Eleonora Getraut Dragon claimed to be the entitled heir to the estate of Governor van Rossem. According to her petition, van Rossem was born in The Hague the youngest of 17 children. After studies at the university of Leiden he went to the East Indies. After ten years, he returned to the Netherlands and married the daughter of Captain Weler. Together, they sailed to Batavia. Because of a storm they came to the Coromandel Coast where they established themselves. After the death of his wife, he married the daughter of the governor of the ‘island [sic]’. Rossem and his second wife inherited the estate of said governor and Rossem became governor himself. He later inherited a fortune from his second wife and appointed his sister and the relatives of his first wife heirs to his estate. This story could not be verified 242


Schaumleffer (Shaumleffen, Schamloffe, Schomloffen), EITs:
- 3) Christopher, child of 1) Herman and 2) Catherine. Place of origin: Germany. EIC/German Protestant settlers for Sumatra. Time spent in EI: 1770– at least 1771 88
- 4) Elisabeth, child of 1) Herman and 2) Catherine. Place of origin: Germany. EIC/German Protestant settlers for Sumatra. Time spent in EI: 1770– at least 1771 88
- 5) Mary, child of 1) Herman and 2) Catherine. Place of origin: Germany. EIC/German Protestant settlers for Sumatra. Time spent in EI: 1770– at least 1771 88


Scheller (Schaller), EIT: Sebastia(an Valentin (Valentyn, Valentijn) (*1720–†1780). Place of origin: Magdeburg. VOC (1740–?). Outbound ship: unknown. Recruited rank: assistant; later bookkeeper, merchant. Time spent in EI: 1740–1780. Posting: Cape of Good Hope. Wives at the Cape: 1. Gesina Franck (♂1752); 2. Wilhelmina Maria v. d. Poel. Children: yes, six? In 1764, two sons, Johannes Andries (*1746) and Jacob Martin (*1750), were sent to Europe to the care of Sebastian’s brothers for their education. They remained in Europe. A third son, Frederick, was apparently sent to Europe in 1771 but returned to the Cape? Parents: Johann Andreas (†1733) and Dorothea Elisabeth, née Mollenhauer (†1755). Siblings: brothers (names unknown, merchants in Magdeburg) 153, 246–247


Schlieder, EIT: Christian Ernst. Place of origin: Magdeburg. Professional background: merchant apprentice. No record of any employment in the VOC. According to his sister Catharina Dorothea Meßerschmiedin (wife of a carpenter), he signed on with the VOC in Amsterdam in 1740. She provided a detailed account of how Christian was recruited; however, she had no evidence for her story 237, 238


married Anna Maria Bowers in 1825) 71, 194, 198–199, 200, 203


Schubert, EIT: Jacob (†1783). Place of origin: Danzig. Signed on with the VOC 3 times: 1. 1769–1773. Outbound ship: Derdevaak. Recruited rank: third mate; 2. 1773–1776. Outbound ship: Venus. Recruited rank: first mate. 3. 1780–1783. Outbound ship: Ceres. Recruited rank: master. Parents: Maria Grundeman (fl. 1783?). Siblings: Michiel, Maria, and Christina. A woman named Neumannin claimed to be next of kin of Schubert; however, the proof of pedigree she provided differs significantly from Jacob’s family relations in his will 253

Schultz, EIT: Christian Friedrich (*1737). Place of origin: Altmark. Professional background: baker’s mate. Allegedly, he signed on with the VOC in 1764. No record of employment in the VOC. Parents: father (name unknown, former priest in Baben). Siblings: Joachim Dietrich (Zinsmeister) and Stephan (miller). Stephan administered his absent brother’s capital, which mainly consisted of 8 scheffel barley rent. Because of poverty, he needed this rent himself and therefore made inquiries into the life or death of his brother. In case Christian was still alive, Stephan attached a letter to him (which Consul Chomel sent to Batavia on the off chance), asking if he could get the rent as a gift 64


Female beneficiary in EI: the free Christian woman Jamila van Nias, Christian name Johanna Lourens. Parents: Johann Achatz (Accise-Einnehmer, † before 1770) and Anna Gertrut, née Wernich (†1770). Siblings: eight sisters, the youngest was Dorothea Elisabeth (married to Andreas Zabel; their son Andries Zabel was also in the service of the VOC) 207–208


Sperling, EITs:
- 2) Johan(n) Caspar (Casper). Place of origin: Magdeburg. Professional background: medical studies? VOC (1773–1793 repatriated). Outbound ship: Mars. Recruited rank: third surgeon; later superintendent of the Outer Hospital. Time spent in EI: 1773–1793 (repatriated). Wife in EI: Petronella, née Muller, accompanied her husband to Europe in 1793. Children in EI: adopted son Pieter Casparus (*1789, mother was the free non-Christian woman Amarentia van Balij), Clementia (mother was the late enslaved woman Sara; adopted by Johann Laurens Groos shortly before Johann and Petronella went to Europe), Fredrik Godlob (*1793, born in Amsterdam). Probably related to 1) Godfried, but no direct link could be identified 124, 166–167


Stäudlen (Stäudlin, Steudle), EITs:


Stolzenberg, EIT: Levin Friedrich. Place of origin: Stafstein (Staffelstein?). Corporal in the service of the EIC/15th (later 14th) Hanoverian infantry regiment. Time spent in EI: 1782–at least 1788. Posting: Madras. Wife in EI: Franciscas de Roche, daughter of de Roche, born in Madras (1788). Their daughter Maria Francisca was baptized in the Catholic church in Madras in 1789 92


Teuber, EIT?: Christian Friedrich (c*1732). Place of origin: Sorau (now Zary). No record of employment in the VOC. Went allegedly as ship surgeon to the Cape of Good Hope where he died around 1769, leaving behind 3,000 Thaler. His sister Magdalena Friedericque Teuber claimed to be his sole heir. In 1788, she gifted her alleged inheritance to Friedericque Charlotte Heinrich as compensation for care received during an illness. Friedericque Heinrich in turn offered the prospect of this inheritance as a 'Fond' to the king 162

Manekin). Made bequests to his nephews, the sons of Marie Dorothee 253 Trosihn (Trosiehn, Drosihn, Droschin, Dreschin, Droschin), EITs:
Voss, de, EIT(?):
- 2) Rautenberg, first name unknown. Went allegedly to the EI to collect his inheritance. No record of employment in the VOC
Whiteshoe (Weithshak, Withsue), EITs:
- 1) George († after 1780). Place of origin: Germany. EIC/German Protestant settlers. Time spent in EI: 1770– at least 1780. Posting:


Wiegerman(n) (Wigerman), EITs:


wife, Gesche, and children in Germany 98, 160

Wöhrenhoff (Weurenhoff), EITs:
- 2) Carl Nicolaus Koch (*c.1702–†1736). Place of origin: Cölln/Pomerania. Professional background: apothecary. VOC. Employment record could not be identified. According to his brother-in-law Andreas Wöhrenhoff he was in the EI between 1724–1736, went out on the *Westerdijksborn* as a soldier. Siblings: Sophie Dorothea. Uncle of 1) Johann Heinrich 231

Wraatz, EIT: Hermann. Place of origin: German-speaking country. Employment record could not be identified. Identified on a Danish ship, the *Printz von Augustenborg*, in 1798 near the Isle de France; before that he was posted in Bengal. Parents: father M. Wraatz (†fl. 1798). Siblings: yes (names unknown) 137, 146

Ziehe (Ziche), EIT?: Johann Christian. No record of employment in the VOC. Went allegedly to the East Indies in 1722. Several people, among them Maria Elisabeth Fischern from Jüterborg, claimed to be his heirs 231, 242, 266–267

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B506: Testament van Tobias David Blume en akte van substitutie door zijn bruid Christiana Elizabeth Feimig, weduwe van Willem Berg, aan executeurens testamentaire Andries Christoffel Fehrman en Carel Wilhelm Thalman, opgesteld door notaris Jacob Nicolaas Michell

D448: Akte van adoptie door het echtpaar Jeremias Jacobus Domenicus en Maria Jacoba de Hooge van Jeremias Lodewijk Dominicus, geadopteerde zoon van Johannis Scheedel, opgesteld door notaris Huibert Ketelaar.

G361: Uittreksel uit de notulen van de Raad van Indië, betreffende het ontslag van Johan Paul Guijot

G507: Akte van adoptie door Johan Laurens Groos van Clementia, dochter van de overleden slavin Sara, in eigendom toebehoord hebbend aan Johan Casper Sperling, opgesteld door notaris Jacob Pierre Freni

G527: Akte van adoptie door Johan Paulus Guijot van Jean Gottfried, zoon van de overleden slavin Levina van Balie, opgesteld door notaris Johannes Greving

G541: Brief van Jan Lodewijk Gregorij, resident van de Pruissische koning, aan de weeskamer Batavia, betreffende de nalatenschap Guijot en Meijn

G614: Inventaris van de boedel van Johan Paul Guyot, opgesteld door de weeskamer. Afschrift

H938: Akte van adoptie door Daniel Godlieb Hold van Charlotta Elisabeth Hold, dochter van het echtpaar Jeboes en Senong, opgesteld door notaris Carel Kuvel

K632: Testament van Catharina Elizabeth Keijser, verlaten echtgenote van Willem Christiaan Meij, opgesteld door notaris Herman Scheltus
L572: Akte van adoptie door Erhard Christiaan Lantzius van George Fredrik, zoon van Ang Itnio, opgesteld door notaris Jacob Nicolaas Michell

L642: Akte van adoptie door Eerhard Christiaan Lantzius van Wilhelm Fredrik, zoon van Saria, opgesteld door notaris Huibert Ketelaar.

L654: Akte van adoptie door Erhard Christiaan Lantzius van Margaretha, dochter van Saria van Batavia, opgesteld door notaris Daniel Lodewijk Dewin

M529: Brieven van Jan Coningh aan de weeskamer Batavia, als administrerende de nalatenschap van Christiaan Willem Meij of Meijn, en aan de heer of mevrouw Binck, betreffende de genoemde nalatenschap. Met als bijlagen rekeningen courant en een afschrift van een brief van de overledene aan de heer Coningh, 1762. Met een memorie voor de weeskamer, betreffende vragen met betrekking tot de nalatenschap.

M669: Brief van Anna Maria Meijn, gehuwd met Frederik Willem Meijn, aan de weeskamer te Batavia, betreffende het verzoek om geldelijke steun voor de verzorging van hun dochter. Met als bijlage een uittreksel uit het trouwboek van Scheveningen [...].

M748: Holografisch testament van Christiaan Willem Meijn, ook genoemd Christiaan Willem Meij. Met onderhandse nadere codicillaire dispositie. Tevens een akte van verzegeling van het testament van de heer Meijn, opgesteld door notaris Pieter Jacob Bert.

M795: Akte van adoptie door het echtpaar Johan Casper Sperling en Petronella Muller van Pieter Casparus, zoon van Amarentia van Balij, opgesteld door notaris Nicolaas van Bergen van der Grijp

M977: Akte van adoptie door Johanna Keijsers, gehuwd met Christiaan Willem Meij, van Paulus van Batavia, zoon van Rasmie van Ternaten, opgesteld door notaris Abraham van Dinter


P813: Gerechtelijke stukken betreffende de rechtszaak door Jan Hendrik Postel, als in huwelijk hebbend Amelia Cornelis, weduwe Sanders, tegen Bartel Cornelisz, gehuwd met Clara Arons

R637: Akte van adoptie door Carel Fredrik Reimer van Anna Carolina, dochter van Anna Maria Pasqual, opgesteld door notaris Nicolaas van Bergen van der Grijp

R677: Brief van Joh. Carl Reinhard aan Ysbrand Jepma te Batavia, betreffende geleverde goederen uit de boedel van wijlen S. Bakker

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