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# “Your Father’s Interests”: The Business of Kinship in a Trans-Mediterranean Jewish Merchant Family, 1776–1790

FRANCESCA BREGOLI

IN APRIL 1782 in Tunis, a contract to reorganize the Salomone Enriches & Joseph Franchetti Company stipulated that the firm’s associates in Livorno and Smyrna “ought to execute solely the orders contained in the letters, which this company will write to them; to those sent by their Fathers, they ought not to pay heed in the least.”<sup>1</sup> The company, which aimed “to trade from here through Smyrna and Livorno and wherever else [they wish],” presented the typical structure of family-based, Mediterranean Jewish commercial firms.<sup>2</sup> The eponymous partners, Salomone Enriches and Joseph Franchetti, directed the business from Tunis, with the help of several associates, most of whom were relatives.<sup>3</sup> Their sons, who years earlier had been sent to Smyrna and Livorno to learn the trade, were appointed in 1782 to oversee these two branches.<sup>4</sup> To ensure that personal and family

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1. Tribunale dei Massari, filza 325, inc. 142 (n.n.), Archivio della Comunità Ebraica, Livorno, Italy; part of the contract is published in Jean-Pierre Filippini, “Gli ebrei e l’attività economica nell’area nord-africana,” *Nuovi studi Livornesi* 7 (1999): 145.

2. Filippini, “Gli ebrei e l’attività economica,” 135; Jean-Pierre Filippini, *Il porto di Livorno e la Toscana (1676–1814)*, vol. 2 (Naples, 1998), 259–61.

3. Ten people appeared on the contract as partners, with distinct rights and duties according to their standing and investment.

4. The same contract established the Livornese branch as an independent company under the name of Enriches Franchetti C., while the Smyrna branch remained subsumed within the Tunisian mother company. Filippini, *Il porto di Livorno*, 260.

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interests did not prevail over the broader goals of the firm, the document explicitly requested that the young Enriches and Franchetti men, who were separated from the physical center of the company as well as their households of origin, obey company orders only, without taking into account private letters from their fathers.

This injunction was routinely ignored by Joseph Franchetti (1721/1734–ca. 1794), whose correspondence with his sons presents a telling mix of deeply personal and commercial themes.<sup>5</sup> Between 1776 and 1790, Joseph wrote dozens of letters every year, mostly in Italian, to a number of business associates, 396 of which were copied in two folio-size letter books documenting his outgoing correspondence.<sup>6</sup> Official Jewish business correspondence, such as that of the international Sephardic firm Ergas and Silvera extensively studied by Francesca Trivellato, rarely addresses family matters at length.<sup>7</sup> However, the Franchetti letter books do not preserve the official letters of the Salomone Enriches & Joseph Franchetti Company, which would have dealt almost exclusively with commercial issues, but rather Franchetti's unofficial exchanges.<sup>8</sup> Among the recipients were two of his sons, Reuben and Isache, and his brother-in-law, Benjamin Baruch; the seventy-nine letters addressed to them (approximately twenty percent of the total), frequently interspersed with Hebrew expressions, contained discussion of not only commercial but also private affairs.

Although most extant business letters seldom “give us clues about the

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5. On the Franchetti family, see Mirella Scardozzi, “Itinerari dell'integrazione: Una grande famiglia ebrea tra la fine del Settecento e il primo Novecento,” in *Leopoldo e Alice Franchetti e il loro tempo*, ed. P. Pezzino and A. Tacchini (Città di Castello, 2002), 271–320; Scardozzi, “Una storia di famiglia: I Franchetti dalle coste del Mediterraneo all'Italia liberale,” *Quaderni storici* 38 (2003): 697–740; Amedeo Spagnoletto, “Nuove fonti sulla famiglia Franchetti a Tunisi, Smirne e Livorno fra XVIII e XIX S.,” *La Rassegna mensile di Israel* 76 (2010): 95–113.

6. Franchetti Family Archive, MS General 237, vols. 2.1 and 2.2, Columbia University Library, New York, N.Y. The letter books do not preserve any letters sent in 1785, 1788, or 1789. Volume 1 is paginated with a number on the left side of two facing pages. Volume 2 follows the traditional recto and verso pagination. In the following notes, references to volume 1 will be followed by “left” and “right,” while references for volume 2 will be marked “r” and “v.” For a preliminary description of the manuscripts, see also Spagnoletto, “Nuove fonti,” 99–105.

7. I thank Francesca Trivellato for confirming to me that few family affairs are discussed in the correspondence of the Ergas and Silvera Company.

8. Franchetti distinguished between “lettere della Compagnia” and “lettere particolari”: MS General 237, 2.1, 5 right.

emotional lives of their authors and recipients,”<sup>9</sup> Franchetti’s correspondence constitutes an exception, as it offers a glimpse into personal, often fraught exchanges between relatives who knew each other well and did business together. If the letters to business associates outside the family are brief and to the point, usually no longer than one manuscript page, those to Reuben, Isache, and Benjamin generally average three to six pages; but letters addressed to his sons reach fifteen, eighteen, and even twenty-three pages, composed over a period of several days and characterized by a disorderly, colorful, and often emotional style. These letters primarily deal with commercial matters but are interspersed with lengthy asides, above all practical and ethical advice, blandishments, harsh reprimands, as well as reminders of parental love and the importance of Judaism.

This correspondence brings to the fore paradoxical but common aspects of eighteenth-century mercantile Jewish life. Kinship ties are understood to have been crucial for the functioning of Jewish diasporic trade, but familiarity and affective bonds are the very elements that are strained by diasporic separation. How could Jewish merchant households preserve a sense of ongoing familiarity once family members were physically separated? The continued maintenance of a sense of obligation, respect, and honor within and outside the family are equally regarded as key elements to ensure trust and smooth transactions<sup>10</sup>—but they too were naturally challenged by a diasporic context. How were Jewish households able to inculcate values of probity and creditworthiness in family members who could not be directly monitored since they were stationed in distant countries? As we will see, specific strategies were deployed to overcome these challenges.

#### MOBILITY AND SEPARATION: QUESTIONS AND SOURCES

In his recent assessment of early modern Jewish culture, David Ruderman pointed to mobility as one of five crucial criteria that help define a Jewish early modernity.<sup>11</sup> Throughout Jewish society, individuals were

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9. Francesca Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers: The Sephardic Diaspora, Livorno, and Cross-Cultural Trade in the Early Modern Period* (New Haven, Conn., 2009), 181.

10. Cornelia Aust, “Daily Business or an Affair of Consequence? Credit, Reputation, and Bankruptcy among Jewish Merchants in Eighteenth-Century Central Europe,” in *Purchasing Power: The Economics of Modern Jewish History*, ed. R. Kobrin and A. Teller (Philadelphia, 2015), 71–90.

11. David B. Ruderman, *Early Modern Jewry: A New Cultural History* (Princeton, N.J., 2010), 23–55.

on the move to an exceptional degree, as compared with other segments of the population. Itinerant scholars, merchants, brides, paupers and vagrants, as well as refugees fleeing war zones or inquisitorial zeal, contributed to the transregional circulation that characterized the early modern Jewish experience. One by-product of such heightened mobility was the fragmentation of households. This was especially true in the case of migrants fleeing from religious and economic tribulations.<sup>12</sup> Still, separation was not only the result of persecutions and forced migration.

For members of the early modern Jewish mercantile elite, the subject of this essay, family separation was ostensibly a natural fact of life. Men were often sent away at a young age in order to train as apprentice merchants. Young women traveled great distances to be married, with the goal of forging lasting business alliances. Fathers spent long periods away from their wives and children. There is a broad consensus that kinship ties maintained by separated relatives were crucial for the functioning of Jewish maritime and overland trade networks, as they helped spread out risk, increase potential for success, and expand business to multiple markets.<sup>13</sup> A focus on the forging of new family connections through marriage has especially characterized research of Jewish trade networks in the western Mediterranean and Eastern Europe. Trivellato's studies of Sephardic Jews have investigated the key role of consanguineous unions and resulting devolutionary practices, illuminating the ways in which family bonds ensured the financial success of this trading group.<sup>14</sup> Cornelia Aust's research on Ashkenazic merchants similarly shows that marriages over long distances were strategically planned to help open up new market opportunities.<sup>15</sup>

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12. Evelyne Oliel-Grausz, "Modalités d'accueil et de contrôle des passants et migrants dans la diaspora séfarade d'Occident (XVIIe–XVIIIe siècles)," in *Gens de passage en Méditerranée de l'Antiquité à l'époque moderne: Procédures de contrôle et d'identification*, ed. C. Moatti and W. Kaiser (Paris, 2007), 135–54; Tirtsah Levie Bernfeld, *Poverty and Welfare among the Portuguese Jews in Early Modern Amsterdam* (Oxford, 2012), 22–28.

13. Similar arguments can be made for other long-distance maritime merchants, such as the Greeks or the British: Elena Frangakis-Syrett, "Networks of Friendship, Networks of Kinship: Eighteenth-Century Levant Merchants," *Eurasian Studies* 1/2 (2002): 183–205.

14. Trivellato, *Familiarity of Strangers*, 132–52.

15. Cornelia Aust, "Jewish Mobility in the Eighteenth Century: Familial Networks of Ashkenazic Merchants across Europe," *European History Yearbook* 16 (2015): 20; Aust, "Between Amsterdam and Warsaw: Commercial Networks of the Ashkenazic Mercantile Elite in Central Europe," *Jewish History* 27 (2013): 44–45.

Before kinship ties (whether based on blood or marriage) could be deployed as useful tools in the commercial sphere, however, they had to be built, nurtured, and maintained. My argument moves from the premise that family bonds among distant relatives require careful tending. They do not simply “exist”—rather they are constructed, cultivated, and strengthened (or, in some instances, weakened) through specific strategies of inclusion and exclusion, socialization, and disciplining. Such practices, which constitute traditional foci in the study of sedentary families, have not been sufficiently investigated when it comes to Jewish transnational kinship.<sup>16</sup> How did Jewish transnational relations function concretely? Given the difficulty that geographical distance creates in preserving affective ties, how were familial bonds and a sense of shared kinship maintained, or challenged, over time and over space, as family networks spread out? We know even less about the emotional worlds and values of close relatives who lived far from each other, often in different lands: what expectations and concerns did they harbor? I suggest that, although familial separations are a presumed ingredient of diasporic trade, we should consider them to have been emotionally fraught, and focus more pointedly on the processes that sustained familiarity in spite of separation and distance.

If evidence of matrimonial and devolutionary practices is crucial to understanding how membership and hierarchy were maintained and reinforced within diasporic kinship constellations, correspondence was one of the key avenues for families—including Jewish families—to teach shared values across space, reinforcing rights and stressing obligations and duties. As David Cressy put it in his now classic discussion of seventeenth-century transatlantic communication, letters provided “an emotional lifeline . . . that stretched across the wide ocean to inform, comfort or persuade kinsmen and friends on the other side.”<sup>17</sup> Personal letters thus not only can shed light on politics of kinship but may additionally offer glimpses into the emotional worlds of Jewish families. By providing a snapshot of active and ongoing ties, they allow us to trace the

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16. David Warren Sabean and Simon Teuscher, “Rethinking European Kinship: Transregional and Transnational Families,” in *Transregional and Transnational Families in Europe and Beyond: Experiences since the Middle Ages*, ed. C. H. Johnson et al. (New York, 2011), 1–22. While international families are customarily studied as networks, Sabean and Teuscher remark that a network perspective may lose track of hierarchies and structures of power and authority within transnational groups (pp. 5–6).

17. David Cressy, *Coming Over: Migration and Communication between England and New England in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, 1987), 213.

range of household members and kinsmen with whom Jews connected and how they recalled them once they were separated. Letters may help us trace the frequency of familial interactions, how distance modified them, and whether the awareness of family bonds became weaker or more intense as a result of distance.<sup>18</sup>

One of the greatest challenges in pursuing this line of research is the scarcity of available early modern documentation on separated Jewish households, especially in non-Ashkenazic areas.<sup>19</sup> While extant Yiddish correspondence has elicited significant scholarly interest, fewer letters from the rest of the Jewish world have been investigated.<sup>20</sup> For the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, some examples are found in Hebrew epistolary collections from Italy, which circulated in manuscript as models of letter writing.<sup>21</sup> Additionally, the Cairo Genizah holds a number of early modern Judeo-Spanish letters written by distant parents to their children, as well as by separated siblings.<sup>22</sup> When we move into the eighteenth century, documentation is spottier. Some significant correspondence from the Anglo-Jewish and Atlantic worlds has survived, such as the letters of the Prager brothers<sup>23</sup> and of Abigail Franks,<sup>24</sup> but few per-

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18. Joseph Davis, "Concepts of Family and Friendship in the 1619 Yiddish Letters of Prague Jews," *Judaica Bohemiae* 49.1 (2014): 27–58.

19. For the medieval period the documentation is richer; the Cairo Genizah includes a large number of business and personal letters that have been mined to reconstruct Jewish economic and family life in the medieval Mediterranean basin: S. D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza*, vols. 1 and 3 (Berkeley, Calif., 1999).

20. On Jewish correspondence in Ashkenazic areas, see the illuminating essay by Elisheva Carlebach, "Letter into Text: Epistolarity, History, and Literature," in *Jewish Literature and History: An Interdisciplinary Conversation*, ed. E. R. Adler and S. E. Jelen (Bethesda, Md., 2008), 113–33, and the references there; Davis, "Concepts of Family and Friendship."

21. *Igrot bet Karmi: Kremona 550–557*, ed. Y. Boksenboim (Tel Aviv, 1983); *Igrot yebude Italyab: Mišhar meba-meab ba-16*, ed. Y. Boksenboim (Jerusalem, 1994).

22. Eliezer Gutwirth, "A Judeo-Spanish Letter from the *Genizab*," in *Judeo-Romance Languages*, ed. I. Benabu and J. Sermoneta (Jerusalem, 1985), 127–38; Gutwirth, "The Family in Judeo-Spanish Genizah Letters of Cairo (XVIth–XVIIIth C.)," *VSWG: Vierteljahrsschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 73 (1986): 210–15.

23. Gedalia Yogev, *Diamonds and Coral: Anglo-Dutch Jews and Eighteenth-Century Trade* (New York, 1978), 183–274.

24. Edith B. Gelles, *The Letters of Abigail Levy Franks, 1755–1748* (New Haven, Conn., 2004); Leo Hershkowitz and Isidore S. Meyer, *The Lee Max Friedman Collection of American Jewish Colonial Correspondence: Letters of the Franks Family (1755–1748)* (Waltham, Mass., 1968). For eighteenth-century Jewish correspon-

sonal testimonies from the Mediterranean regions have been unearthed and studied. This scarcity is all the more striking because the eighteenth century was characterized by an expansion of letter writing across social classes, particularly as ideals of sensibility became widespread.<sup>25</sup> For these reasons, the recently recovered letter books of Joseph Franchetti—a particularly rich historical source—deserve attention.

#### JOSEPH FRANCHETTI AND HIS CORRESPONDENCE

Joseph Franchetti was a successful merchant of Mantuan background based in Tunis.<sup>26</sup> Although Mediterranean Jewish trade is often associated with Sephardic families of Iberian origin, the Franchetti were Italian Jews, who both collaborated and competed with their Sephardic coreligionists, vying to tap into similar Mediterranean networks of trade. Despite the family's Mantuan origin, the younger Franchetti men carried Tuscan papers.<sup>27</sup> As Livornese subjects, they enjoyed European consular protection in Smyrna and a privileged status in Tunis.

Until 1794, when all surviving members of the family moved to Livorno, we could describe the Franchetti as an example of the Westernized Jewish groups known as *grana* and *francos*. The *grana* lived in Tunis separately from the indigenous Arabic-speaking Jewish community (known as *twanwa*).<sup>28</sup> These Jews were collectively identified as Livorn-

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dence, see also Cecil Roth, *Anglo-Jewish Letters (1158–1917)* (London, 1938), 85–204.

25. The rich evidence from England and its colonies has led to a significant increase of studies dedicated to Atlantic correspondence. See especially Sarah M. S. Pearsall, *Atlantic Families: Lives and Letters in the Later Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 2008).

26. I am grateful to Baron Alberto Franchetti for sharing with me his unpublished reconstruction of the family's genealogic tree; according to him, Joseph was born in Tunis. Spagnoletto, on the other hand, claims that Franchetti was born in Mantua ("Nuove fonti," 96). Indeed, Franchetti refers repeatedly to his "brothers" in Mantua: MS General 237, 2.1, 169 right (July 22, 1778); 2.2, 43v (March 22, 1782), 110v (January 30, 1783), 127v (June 20, 1783). While his birth in Mantua is probable, I have not been able to verify this.

27. MS General 237, 2.1, 194 right (March 26, 1779); 2.2, 54r (May 27, 1782).

28. This separation was made official in 1710, with the creation of the autonomous Kahal Kados de Portugueses en Tunes. Yitzhak Avrahami, *Pinkas ba-kebilab ba-yebudît ba-Portugezît be-Tunis, 1710–1944* (Lod, 1997); Jacques Taïeb, "Les juifs Livournais de 1600 à 1881," in *Histoire communautaire, histoire plurielle: La communauté juive de Tunisie: Actes du colloque de Tunis organisé le 25–26–27 Février 1998 à la Faculté de la Manouba* (Manouba, 1999), 153–64; Elia Boccara, "La comunità ebraica portoghese di Tunisi (1710–1944)," *La Rawegna Mensile di Israel* 66 (2000): 25–98.



ese, but several of them originated in fact from other Italian centers such as Venice and Mantua.<sup>29</sup> In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the *grana* dominated Tunis's commerce through the Giornata, a large business company akin to a guild, licensed by the Bey.<sup>30</sup> The term *franco* in turn referred to Jews from the Italian peninsula, again primarily from Livorno but also from Venice, Ancona, and Mantua, who established commercial firms in the Ottoman regions and exerted a Westernizing impact.<sup>31</sup> Although *grana* and *francos* are usually studied separately, the Franchetti case shows that these groups shared similar traits, as well as actual family and business connections. Both *grana* and *francos* maintained ongoing cultural and political ties with Christian Europe and carried European papers, which gave them privileged status and European consular protection in Muslim lands, creating a bridge between the Eastern and Western Mediterranean. Italian-Sephardic business partnerships and family alliances were not out of the ordinary, as in the case of the Franchetti and Enriches firms.

In the 1770s and 1780s, the core of Franchetti's business was the sale of Tunisian *chechias*, as we know from the careful studies of Mirella Scardozi and Jean-Pierre Filippini.<sup>32</sup> These hats, made in Tunis with European wool acquired from Livorno, were highly sought after in the Ottoman Empire, with Smyrna serving as key distribution center.<sup>33</sup> The strategic arrangement of the Enriches and Franchetti Company, with its presence on three Mediterranean coasts, placed these entrepreneurs at the forefront of the chechia trade in the last quarter of the century.<sup>34</sup> But

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29. Elia Boccara, "Una famiglia di mercanti ebrei italo-iberici a Tunisi nella seconda metà del XVII secolo: I Lombroso," *Materia giudaica* 12 (2007): 195–210.

30. Avrahami, *Pinkas ha-kehilab*, 21.

31. Anthony Molho, "Ebrei e marrani fra Italia e Levante ottomano," in *Storia d'Italia: Annali XI: Gli Ebrei in Italia*, ed. C. Vivanti (Torino, 1997), 2:1009–43; Esther Benbassa and Aron Rodrigue, *Sephardi Jewry: A History of the Judeo-Spanish Community* (Berkeley, Calif., 2000): 34, 46, 74–79.

32. Filippini, "Gli ebrei e l'attività economica," 140; Scardozi, "Una storia di famiglia," 702; Scardozi, "Itinerari dell'integrazione," 271–74.

33. Scardozi, "Una storia di famiglia," 701–2. On European commerce in Smyrna, see Elena Frangakis-Syrett, *The Commerce of Smyrna in the Eighteenth Century, 1700–1820* (Athens, 2012).

34. The company had operated under the same leadership but with a different contract since 1770 (MS General 237, 2.2, 29r). In spring 1781, Franchetti's brother-in-law Benjamin Baruch, located in Smyrna, refused to sign the new contract, a decision that led to his departure and the restructuring of the company: MS General 237, 2.2, 1r, 6v, 8r. The partnership with the Enriches family was dissolved around 1794. When the Tunisian hub declined in the late 1780s,

like other Jewish merchants, Joseph Franchetti did not specialize in one good only.<sup>35</sup> Well before 1782, he additionally traded in Spanish grain and other foodstuffs, weapons, and occasionally Jewish ritual objects, working with influential Livornese merchants such as Paltiel Semach and David de Montel.<sup>36</sup>

After marrying Ester (also known as Diamante) Baruch, Joseph had five children, all born within three to four years of each other. His sons—Abram (b. 1754), Reuben (b. 1757), Jeudà (b. 1760), and Isache (b. 1763)—as well as his daughter, Sara (b. 1767), all participated in the successful story of this family firm, playing different but equally crucial roles. The betrothal of Sara at a young age to a capable member of the Enriches clan, Hay son of Mordohay, reinforced the union between the two families, while the sons fostered the success of the firm serving first as clerks or apprentices for other merchants and later joining the family firm as full-fledged partners. As with many Jewish family firms, members of the immediate household were dispatched abroad to secure the company's commercial position in distant markets. Joseph's eldest child, Abram, remained with his father in Tunis, but his younger sons were sent to learn the trade not long after reaching the age of majority. During their apprenticeships, they were meant to first hone their writing skills and then learn the business, in order for them to later join their father's company.

A long period of apprenticeship away from home was common for young Jews in the early modern period. Among the lower and middle classes, children were often sent to apprentice at around thirteen, the age of Jewish majority.<sup>37</sup> It seems that young Jewish merchants, who carried a heavier financial responsibility than their less affluent peers, began apprenticing at a slightly older age. In the late seventeenth century, Western Sephardic fathers were advised to send their sons to train at a mer-

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with the emergence of Tuscan production centers, the Franchetti moved their center of operation to Livorno (Scardozi, "Una storia di famiglia," 702).

35. For a survey of the goods Jewish merchants like the Franchetti exported from Tunisia to Livorno and imported from Livorno to Tunisia, see Filippini, *Il porto di Livorno*, 250–55, 274–76.

36. Spagnoletto, "Nuove fonti," 98.

37. As a boy, the Londoner Daniel Mendoza, who would later gain fame as a pugilist, was sent to serve and live with a glasscutter even before his bar mitzvah. Within the course of a few years, he apprenticed with a greengrocer, a tea dealer, and a tobacconist: Elliott Horowitz, "The Worlds of Jewish Youth in Europe, 1300–1800," in *A History of Young People in the West*, vol. 1, *Ancient and Medieval Rites of Passage*, ed. G. Levi and J.-C. Schmitt (Cambridge, 1997), 106.

chant's firm when they reached sixteen, for a period of five to six years.<sup>38</sup> In the converso diaspora, too, Portuguese youth were sent to Spain to train in the companies of other converso merchants at the same age.<sup>39</sup> A period of apprenticeship starting at around fourteen or fifteen (or even later) seems to have been the case for the Italian Franchetti.<sup>40</sup>

Reuben left home in 1771, and in the early 1770s he was in Livorno working on behalf of the Tunisian firm Jacob Zevi and Company.<sup>41</sup> From there, Reuben was posted to Smyrna; we find him there in 1776, together with his uncle Benjamin Baruch.<sup>42</sup> Jeudà joined them in 1778 to become a *scritturale* (clerk), the first step in his mercantile apprenticeship.<sup>43</sup> Isache, the youngest son, was sent to Livorno also in 1778 to pursue the same education, under the dual supervision of the merchants Abram Coen de Lara and David de Montel.<sup>44</sup> Between 1771 and 1778, Joseph Franchetti saw three children leave the family home. While Jeudà occasionally returned to Tunis for short periods of time, it appears that Joseph did not see Reuben and Isache for well over a decade—if ever again.

Given the impossibility of bridging the geographical distance that kept them apart, letters allowed Franchetti to maintain contact with his children, in the hope of shaping their growth as men and traders. As mentioned above, approximately 20 percent of his extant outgoing correspondence between 1776 and 1790 was directed to Reuben, Isache,

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38. Julia R. Lieberman, "Childhood and Family among the Western Sephardim in the Seventeenth Century," in *Sephardi Family Life in the Early Modern Diaspora*, ed. J. R. Lieberman (Waltham, Mass., 2011), 163. See also Lieberman, "Adolescence and the Period of Apprenticeship among the Western Sephardim in the Seventeenth Century," *El Prezente: Studies in Sephardic Culture* 4 (2010): 14–16.

39. Lieberman, "Childhood and Family," 160.

40. For earlier examples in the Italian, non-Jewish mercantile world, see Maria Elisa Soldani, "'Molti vogliono senza maestro esser maestri.' L'avviamento dei giovani alla mercatura nell'Italia tardomedievale," in *I giovani nel Medioevo: Ideali e pratiche di vita*, ed. I. L. Sanfilippo and A. Rigon (Rome, 2014), 157–58. On Jewish apprenticeships in early modern Italy, see Roni Weinstein, "'Thus Will *Giovani Do*': Jewish Youth Sub-Culture in Early Modern Italy," in *The Pre-modern Teenager: Youth in Society, 1150–1650*, ed. K. Eisenbichler (Toronto, 2002), 67.

41. MS General 237, 2.1, 4 left (January 28, 1776). In June 1782, Joseph wrote that his wife's great wish was to kiss Reuben again because she had not seen him in eleven years (2.2, 59v). It appears that Joseph Franchetti was one of Zevi's partners until 1776, when the contract was dissolved.

42. MS General 237, 2.1, 3 left–5 left (January 28, 1776).

43. MS General 237, 2.1, 159 left (May 28, 1778).

44. MS General 237, 2.1, 165 left (July 17, 1778), 169 left (July 22, 1778).

and Benjamin Baruch.<sup>45</sup> Although replies have not survived, it is possible to reconstruct some of their aspects based on Joseph's reactions. These letters thus offer a rare entryway into familial relations as they evolved over the course of about fifteen years.

In her important study of families and letter-writing in the eighteenth-century Atlantic world, Sarah Pearsall shows how correspondence between relatives functioned to ease the anxieties brought about by a mounting trend of Atlantic mobility resulting from colonial growth, revolution, and slavery. Through a specific language of sensibility and a marked emphasis on feeling, letters, she argues, "carved out a space of familiarity, even when family members found themselves on different sides of the ocean."<sup>46</sup> Correspondence crisscrossing the ocean was a tool to both monitor and offer advice, admonishing distant children about which ideals and habits made one a good man and a successful merchant. The personal letters of English merchants helped fathers inculcate values of credit and industry in their sons, cousins, nephews, and other young men who regarded them as figures of authority.<sup>47</sup>

Joseph Franchetti's correspondence similarly served to advise, praise, and chastise—broadly speaking, to educate—his younger family members in light of specific mercantile, family, and Jewish values. The letters show a strong conceptual overlap between familial responsibility and business duty, rhetorically enjoining the recipients in intersecting obligations toward his *casa* (intended both as household and firm<sup>48</sup>) to preserve the family's reputation, honor, and capital from the ever-looming threat of ruin;<sup>49</sup> additionally, they often make use of a highly emotional language, which is worth a closer examination.

The following sections analyze the principles that animated Joseph's attempts to guide younger family members from a distance and the ways

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45. No surviving letters to his son Jeudà (alternatively based in Livorno and in Smyrna) exist, although he is often mentioned in the correspondence to his brothers.

46. Pearsall, *Atlantic Families*, 24.

47. Pearsall, *Atlantic Families*, 111–42.

48. Franchetti used the word *famiglia* to refer to a family composed of husband, wife, and children, and the term *casa* to denote his extended household, a physical abode, as well as a commercial firm (less frequently referred to as *casa di negozio*).

49. MS General 237, 2.2, 132r–132v: "if you can remedy your mistake as I said . . . otherwise goodbye house Franchetti . . . oh, wicked son, you have ruined the poor house Franchetti." This is in keeping with broader eighteenth-century trends. Market values and family values were just as closely intertwined in the correspondence of Atlantic fathers and sons as they were in Franchetti's.

in which he tried to inculcate a sense of familiarity and obligation in them once they were away from home. Since letters can only perform their communicative mission insofar as they adhere to shared cultural conventions, I treat them as artifacts that can reveal broader values and codes of communication, although only future research and the discovery of comparable Jewish archives will allow us to assess more fully this correspondence's representativeness. I now turn to three main themes: values of mercantile masculinity and the reliance on surrogate Jewish father and brother figures to monitor young men's behaviors; the ideal role of Judaism in promoting economic success and attendant anxieties concerning moral and financial ruin; and the overlap between love and material interests that shaped Franchetti's own understanding of fatherhood and sonship.

#### BECOMING A MAN, BECOMING A TRADER

Values of mercantile masculinity are prominently displayed in the correspondence, illuminating the moral qualities and prudential virtues that Franchetti aimed to impress on his children, and how he envisioned their transition into manhood. An analysis of his language clarifies both the ways in which Jewish mercantile youth (as opposed to Jewish youth *tout court*) was perceived in the eighteenth century and a merchant's self-perception of what it meant to be a father, which oscillated between two apparently contrasting but in fact complementary poles—on the one hand, strict, patriarchal rebuke, and on the other hand, tender, paternalistic affection. While Franchetti's values highlight significant similarities between the sensibility and morals of this Jewish father and that of non-Jewish merchants in comparable situations, the young men's Jewishness brought about specific concerns as well as particular supervising strategies.<sup>50</sup>

Because of his Mantuan background, Franchetti likely shared perspectives on youth that were common among Italian Jews. In early modern Italian Jewish communities, bachelors were commonly associated with

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50. Early modern concepts of parenthood and childhood among Western European Jews are still relatively under-researched, despite a growing literature on domestic service and marriage practices. A notable exception is the work of Julia R. Lieberman. On childhood in Ashkenazic communities, Gershon D. Hundert, "Jewish Children and Childhood in Early Modern in East Central Europe," in *The Jewish Family: Metaphor and Memory*, ed. D. Kraemer (Oxford, 1989), 81–94; Tali Berner, "Constructions of Childhood in Early Modern Jewish Ego-Documents," *Journal of Family History* 39 (2014): 101–13.

sinful behavior, primarily sexual looseness but also group violence;<sup>51</sup> and as Roni Weinstein has emphasized, rabbinic scholars in particular depicted young people as “frivolous, sinful, violent, and inclined to unbridled behavior.”<sup>52</sup> In addition to these normative Jewish views, Franchetti seems to have also internalized ideas of youth widespread among non-Jewish traders. In England, for example, where—as Margaret Hunt has shown—Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish merchant families worried about their children in similar ways, “the erring son” had become “a stock character in trading life” by the eighteenth century, accompanied by widespread anxieties about the temptations of youth, a time associated with lack of self-discipline, and other fears related to parental inability to properly raise children.<sup>53</sup> Among the English middle classes, efforts were therefore directed to shape young men into creditworthy, reliable businessmen.<sup>54</sup>

Jewish merchants like Franchetti, preoccupied with the risks and potential of youth, expected adolescents to learn to behave according to their status and prospects. Through education and example, their children would overcome the dangerous instincts of youth and embrace the values of prudence, self-control, and honor that permeated advice literature for merchants: they would, in short, “become men.”<sup>55</sup> The correspondence displays, often within the same letter, a characteristic oscillation between tender overtures and strict tones, strategically deployed to drive home notions of honor, credit, and manhood. For one thing, sons were to

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51. Horowitz, “The Worlds of Jewish Youth,” 93–97; Weinstein, “‘Thus Will *Giovani* Do’”; Weinstein, “Between Liberty and Control: Jewish Juveniles in Early Modern Italy” (Hebrew), *Zemanim: A Historical Quarterly* 102 (2008): 30–37.

52. Weinstein, “‘Thus will *Giovani* Do,’” 58. For these reasons, Jewish leaders promoted ways to channel and control youthful passions, for instance through mandatory school attendance until sixteen or eighteen, or encouraging the establishment of youth confraternities: Horowitz, “The Worlds of Jewish Youth,” 92; Weinstein, “‘Thus will *Giovani* Do,’” 68–69.

53. Margaret R. Hunt, *The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender, and the Family in England, 1680–1780* (Berkeley, Calif., 1996), 50–51.

54. Hunt, *The Middling Sort*, 46–72.

55. In the Western Ashkenazic milieu, the memoirs of Glickl bas Leib of Hameln offer a rich trove of maternal advice to children growing up in trade, stressing values of honesty, piety, and creditworthiness. On the notion of honor in Glickl, see Natalie Zemon Davis, “Religion and Capitalism Once Again? Jewish Merchant Culture in the Seventeenth Century,” *Representations* 59 (1997): 68–69.

be raised according to severe standards and never coddled, lest they become spoiled and potentially dangerous for the business. Tellingly, Joseph faulted his partner Salomone Enriches for siding too readily with his own sons [*da [sic] ragione ai suoi figli*]: “I, on the contrary, consider mine wrong [*do' [sic] il torto ai miei figli*],” he claimed.<sup>56</sup> But strict vigilance and requests for obedience were usually accompanied by expressions of affection. Such oscillation between loving paternalism and harsh patriarchalism seems to have been typical of fathers' letters in the eighteenth-century mercantile community, whether Jewish or not.<sup>57</sup>

The conceptual alternation between benevolence and repression that informed Franchetti's view of fatherhood also shaped his advice to his brother-in-law. Writing to Benjamin in 1776, Franchetti enjoined the younger man to be less affectionate with Reuben, who had been placed in his care. Instead of behaving “like a father” to Reuben, Benjamin ought to “beat him up harshly” (in Franchetti's colorful language, *intendo che lo bastonate di crudele*) and prevent the boy from going out on his own, lest he take up *li cattivi andamenti* (bad ways), as some Jewish passengers traveling from Smyrna to Tunis had reported to his great chagrin.<sup>58</sup> On that occasion, he extolled the pedagogical strictness of his business associate Abram Coen de Lara, as a sure method to make boys into men: “I want to leave [Reuben] there [in Smyrna] so that *he will become a man and learn how to earn his bread*, and Coen [de Lara], the way he is, will keep him in line and not let him learn the violin and other things like you let him *with your caresses*; I am actually thinking of sending my son Jeudà with Coen *so he will become a man*.”<sup>59</sup> In a later letter, Benjamin was however invited to act *as a father*—in this case, meaning a stern figure of authority—and exert firm control over Reuben's behavior: “I understand that you will regard my Reuben *as your own son*, and as a result he will not be able to waste his time in useless pastimes and expenses, such as the violin.”<sup>60</sup>

But what did it mean exactly to “become a man” for an aspiring Jewish merchant? John Smail has argued that for eighteenth-century English fathers and their sons “coming of age in trade,” masculinity and capitalism

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56. MS General 237, 2.1, 230 right (February 7, 1780). Franchetti wrote this in a letter to Salomone's son Isache Enriches, a young married man who had been sent to Livorno to work for the firm and to live together with Isache Franchetti, then seventeen years old.

57. Pearsall, *Atlantic Families*, 111–13, 135, 141.

58. MS General 237, 2.1, 26 left (June 11, 1776).

59. MS General 237, 2.1, 23 right (June 11, 1776). Emphasis mine.

60. MS General 237, 2.1, 56 left (September 8, 1776). Emphasis mine.

were inextricably linked.<sup>61</sup> A comparable argument can be made for the Franchetti family. Franchetti routinely associated costly, genteel pastimes, such as learning the violin or going to the theater, with waste of one's precious time, and by extension the potential loss of credit and business opportunities (as well as with the perdition of one's soul, as we will see below); these activities, linked with a "feminized" aristocratic way of life and frequent social mingling with non-Jews, contrasted starkly for him with success ("in Livorno, the practices of the comedians have been and will be the ruin of the principal merchants with the largest warehouses, and even *ħas ve-sbalom* of the soul").<sup>62</sup>

On the contrary, becoming a man was coterminous with becoming an independent, reputable trader ("now he has 300 *zecchini* per year . . . we will see if he will become a man or not," he wrote about his son Jeudà, often described as an unpredictable [*volubile*] youth who had little interest in pursuing commerce).<sup>63</sup> A crucial aspect of that process of maturation was his sons' ability to mind and safeguard their own *interesse*, without sacrificing hard-earned income to external pressures or selling themselves short ("as the boy that you are, you didn't [request your payment]," he scolded Reuben, but "[if] you are not good when it comes to your interest and are afraid to ask what's due to you, what will you do for the interest of others?").<sup>64</sup> In Franchetti's world, reaching manhood (*farsi uomo*) meant the attainment of financial autonomy. In the process of *farsi uomo*, the personal example set by hard-working, disciplined, and successful fathers remained essential: "I know well that every Father must seek his sons' interest," Joseph wrote Isache, "and for this reason I have been laboring in my life for 45 years, in order to make you into men [*per farvi*

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61. John Smail, "Coming of Age in Trade: Masculinity and Commerce in Eighteenth-Century England," in *The Self-Perception of Early Modern Capitalists*, ed. M. C. Jacob and C. Secretan (Basingstoke, 2008), 232. For letters as a tool to reimagine and shape the male mercantile self, see Toby L. Ditz, "Shipwrecked, or Masculinity Imperiled: Mercantile Representations of Failure and the Gendered Self in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia," *Journal of American History* 81 (1994): 51–80; Ditz, "Formative Ventures: Eighteenth-Century Commercial Letters and the Articulation of Experience," in *Epistolary Selves: Letters and Letter Writers, 1600–1945*, ed. R. Earle (Aldershot, 1999), 59–78.

62. MS General 237, 2.2, 36r (March 18, 1782); in this and following quotes, the expression *ħas ve-sbalom* appears as a Hebrew abbreviation in the text. See also MS General 237, 2.1, 193 left (March 26, 1779); 2.2, 78v (undated, but August 1782).

63. MS General 237, 2.2, 78r (undated, but August 1782).

64. MS General 237, 2.1, 28 left–29 left (June 24, 1776); see also 4 left (January 28, 1776); 103 left (March 22, 1777).



*uomi (sic)*] and be able to live according to your birth.”<sup>65</sup> In some cases, an older brother may serve as a mentor. Calling on Reuben in 1778, when Jeudà arrived in Smyrna where he was set to apprentice, Franchetti urged the more experienced son to use care, attention, and discipline to “make a good man of trade” out of his younger brother.<sup>66</sup>

When unmediated parental or fraternal guidance was not available, correspondence supplied a steady stream of prudential advice. The values of familial loyalty, professional discipline, religious observance, and mercantile honesty that Franchetti sought to impart through his letters aimed to protect his offspring from the dangers of youthful passions and bad company that might ruin his and their business. Extravagance was an especially abhorred vice that elicited great fears in Franchetti.<sup>67</sup> Although conspicuous consumption and aristocratic aspirations were relatively common among the upper classes of Jewish society in Italy, particularly among the international Sephardic merchants of Livorno,<sup>68</sup> Franchetti fretted that expensive entertainment and an overly refined lifestyle would taint his sons’ reputation, with irreparable consequences for his own and the firm’s standing.<sup>69</sup> Reports of his sons’ alleged lack of religious observance were an equally serious cause of distress, evidence of the intertwining of Jewish piety and economic success in Franchetti’s mind, to which I will return.

When he received allegations of extravagant expenses or irreligion, Franchetti resorted to forms of emotional manipulation meant to induce guilt in his offspring in the hope of reforming their behavior. On such occasions, he hinted at the deteriorating health of various members of the family, surely destined to an early grave because of these disobedient children, or invoked his wife’s emotional vulnerability. “Don’t mind [my ruin],” he wrote Isache in an especially apoplectic moment, chastising the boy for his numerous expenses, “I did not think that my Isache would have wasted in such a short time his father’s capital, gained with sweat

65. MS General 237, 2.1, 193 left (March 26, 1779).

66. MS General 237, 2.1, 174 left (September 2, 1778).

67. See for instance MS General 237, 2.1, 5 left (January 28, 1776); 2.2, 28v (January 20, 1782); 111r (January 30, 1783); 127r (June 20, 1783).

68. For examples of conspicuous consumption among early modern Italian Jews, see Vivian Mann, ed., *Gardens and Ghettoes: The Art of Jewish Life in Italy* (Los Angeles, 1989). For aristocratic aspirations among the Jewish elites in Livorno, see Francesca Bregoli, “The Merchants at the Casino: Sephardic Elites and Leisure Time in Eighteenth-Century Livorno,” in *From Catalonia to the Caribbean: The Sephardic Orbit from Medieval to Modern Times: Essays in Honor of Jane S. Gerber*, ed. F. Francesconi, S. Mirvis, and B. Smollett (Leiden, forthcoming).

69. MS General 237, 2.2, 46r (March 22, 1782); 127v (June 20, 1783).

and blood . . . my dear Isache, you have killed me . . . your mother is three-quarters dead because of you for my sins [*bahabonot*].”<sup>70</sup> With Reuben, rumored to have joined a group of freemasons in Smyrna in 1783, to his father’s horror, Franchetti pleaded: “My darling, hearing these rumors . . . for an old Father like me, and your religious brother, who is ill, you have sent us to our grave *has ve-shalom*.”<sup>71</sup> These attempts underscore the importance of guilt in shaping diasporic relations in which love and interest were intertwined, while simultaneously demonstrating the limits of paternal reach and prudential advice in transnational merchant families. They additionally raise the question of what sort of safety networks and disciplining structures were in place to control young men once they had left home.

When a boy was sent to a port where he did not come under direct familial supervision, other trusted adult men from the Jewish mercantile community were supposed to play a key role of socialization, education, and control. Just as lower-class Jewish boys and girls who were sent to work as domestic servants came under the care of the master and lady of the house,<sup>72</sup> so young men sent to apprentice away from home as clerks and factors were placed in the care of older business associates who worked and lived with them.<sup>73</sup> In this case, the systems of control also extended to the members of a broader network of Jewish commercial relations who informally kept an eye on the boys even without living or working with them. Parents recruited established business partners—often with moving calls for help—to offer protection and to monitor family members stationed far away, and to report back on the qualities and behaviors of these young men, creating a network of control and information.<sup>74</sup> The associates were explicitly requested to serve as surrogate brothers<sup>75</sup> and fathers;<sup>76</sup> for their

70. MS General 237, 2.2, 133r (June 20, 1783); the term “bahabonot” used in the letter transliterates the common Hebrew expression *be-’avonot*. See also MS General 237, 2.2, 43v (March 22, 1782), 47r (May 10, 1782), 156v (June 24, 1783).

71. MS General 237, 2.2, 122v (July 15, 1783).

72. Weinstein, “Thus Will *Giovani* Do,” 67.

73. This phenomenon parallels practices of apprenticeship in the non-Jewish world.

74. MS General 237, 2.1, 106 right (May 5, 1777), 173 left (August 18, 1778), 182 right (December 7, 1778), 189 left (January 28, 1779).

75. “Dear friend, please recognize the youth of my son on my account, and love him as your own brother,” Franchetti wrote to the son of his partner Salomone Enriches, also called Isache, who had been sent to Livorno to live and work with Isache Franchetti: MS General 237, 2.1, 230 right (February 1780).

76. MS General 237, 2.1, 166 right (July 17, 1778), 169 left (July 22, 1778).

part, the young men were requested to treat these people as “true” fathers and brothers.<sup>77</sup>

After the company decided to send his fifteen-year-old son Isache to Livorno to apprentice as a clerk in 1778, Franchetti turned first to Abram Coen de Lara, the company partner with whom Isache would work and live in the port, recommending his well-being in an emotionally loaded letter and enjoining Coen to be like a father for the boy: “He ought to respect you as if you were me, not less and not more, it is in your right to beat him or kiss him like your own son, and raise him to be god-fearing like your own son.”<sup>78</sup> Soon after, he wrote letters to all of his Jewish associates in the port, such as David de Montel, Samuele and Moise Leon, and Paltiel Semach. In the hope that “in spite of the freedom found over there, which is detrimental for youth, [Isache] will not take bad turns, being a young man of good habits and even better inclinations,” he begged them repeatedly to watch over him, fearing for his safety and his morals in the Tuscan hub.<sup>79</sup>

While Franchetti’s letters mention female relatives or in-laws in several contexts to provoke emotional responses such as guilt, he never summons them there as surrogate mothers. Rather, the letters call on a network of male Jewish friends and associates to educate, protect, and control boys and young men and to impart to them directly those values of professional self-control, Jewish religious observance, and mercantile honesty that absent fathers could only impress from afar. When it came to transnational households, it is then possible to suggest, familial discipline and order were enforced with the help of webs of quasi-paternal and quasi-fraternal relations forged within a community of like-minded Jewish merchants.

#### JUDAISM, REPUTATION, AND ANXIETY

If such Jewish networks performed important tasks of socialization and supervision for merchants’ children, Judaism was also at times invoked as a safeguard for successful business. A stress on religious piety as a

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77. MS General 237, 2.1, 103 left (March 22, 1777); 2.2, 60v (July 18, 1782). For a similar phenomenon among seventeenth-century Portuguese merchants, see Daviken Studnicki-Gizbert, *A Nation upon the Ocean Sea: Portugal’s Atlantic Diaspora and the Crisis of the Spanish Empire, 1492–1640* (Oxford, 2007), 80–81.

78. MS General 237, 2.1, 169 left (July 22, 1778).

79. MS General 237, 2.1, 166 right (July 17, 1778). See also 190 left (January 28, 1779), 195 left–195 right (May 20, 1779), 197 left (May 19, 1779), 197 right (May 19, 1779), 211 left (July 23, 1779), 218 right (September 24, 1779); 2.2, 119r (July 4, 1783).

marker of an honorable merchant accompanied Franchetti's admonishments and moral advice to his sons. For instance, bemoaning the firm's feared ruin in 1782 because of Isache's excessive expenses in Livorno, Joseph urged him simultaneously to be "a good son and a true Jew," by following his father's orders: "I will not have any problems in dragging you before a court, therefore behave like a good son and a true Jew [*judè*], and then I will say that you value honor and Judaism more than any other interest and you will be like my innards . . . and I will shed my blood for you."<sup>80</sup>

This emphasis on religious observance needs to be further contextualized. The eighteenth century has been traditionally described as a time in which attitudes toward trade allegedly became more secular and cosmopolitan, and the European "commercial society" grew more tolerant and open.<sup>81</sup> Indeed, while there is a consensus that the central-eastern European court Jews by and large retained an observant and modest lifestyle,<sup>82</sup> studies on Sephardic traders have usually stressed their degree of acculturation and aristocratic aspirations, their successful engagement in cross-cultural trade, and episodes of Jewish transgression in which they participated.<sup>83</sup> Hayim Yosef David Azulai, who lived in Livorno toward the end of the eighteenth century, paints a rather unsparing portrait of the city's mercantile elite in his sermons.<sup>84</sup> Still, it is likely that the lack of observance on the part of Jewish merchants involved in Mediterranean trade—who were not only Sephardic but also Italian, North African, and Ottoman—may have been exaggerated.<sup>85</sup> Franchetti, for one, cared

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80. MS General, 2.2, 71r (August 15, 1782).

81. Francesca Trivellato, "Images and Self-Images of Sephardic Merchants in Early Modern Europe and the Mediterranean," in *The Self-Perception*, 50.

82. Glickl bas Leib famously begins her memoirs by inviting her children to "serve God from [their] heart," pray "with awe and devotions," and "put aside a fixed time for the study of the Torah." The injunction to "diligently go about your business" follows these religious prescriptions: *The Memoirs of Glückel of Hameln*, trans. M. Lowenthal (New York, 1977), 2.

83. For Livorno, see Trivellato, *Familiarity of Strangers*, 84–92; on deviance among the Sephardim of Amsterdam, see Yosef Kaplan, *An Alternative Path to Modernity: The Sephardi Diaspora in Western Europe* (Leiden, 2000).

84. Meir Benayahu, *Rabi Hayim Yosef David Azulai* (Hebrew; Jerusalem, 1959), 42. Among Azulai's patrons was Eliezer Recanati, a wealthy merchant and leader of the Livornese community. Franchetti urged Isache to study Torah with Recanati's sons, see below.

85. For instance, Livornese traders had a vested interest in supporting rabbinic scholars like Azulai who passed through the city: Francesca Bregoli, "Printing, Fundraising, and Jewish Patronage in Eighteenth-Century Livorno," in

deeply about the rabbinic education of his children, whom he often calls *talmidim* (students) of Isaac Alfasi (1013–1103), also known as RIF, the medieval North African exegete whose halakhic code *Sefer ha-halakhot* came to represent talmudic study in Italy after the Church banned the printing and possession of the Talmud in 1553.<sup>86</sup> Before their departures, Jeudà and Isache had the opportunity to study more than Alfasi's work, as in October 1776, after many requests, Joseph managed to procure a copy of the Amsterdam Talmud through Livorno "for the instruction of [his] sons," with the help of David de Montel.<sup>87</sup>

Further research may be able to clarify whether Franchetti's origin and background as an Italian Jew living in Tunisia rendered him more traditionally inclined and set him apart from Sephardic coreligionists who were reputed to have a laxer approach to Judaism. Still, it is worth recalling that even among otherwise acculturated Jewish traders in Amsterdam and London, religious adherence was regarded pragmatically as assurance of mercantile probity and a guarantee of sound business reputation as late as the 1770s and 1780s.<sup>88</sup> Franchetti's focus on talmudic study was indeed intertwined with a deep concern about his children's religious reputation, and he insisted on their display of observance in appropriate public forums such as the synagogue: active observance and piety connected the individual merchant with the larger communal sphere, where reputations were enhanced or disgraced. In this sense, Franchetti's consideration of the utility of Jewish observance for commercial success may have been more widespread among Mediterranean merchants than previously believed.

The larger European context supports this view. In the tradition of the early modern *ars mercatoria*, love and fear of God were crucial elements in the education of an apprentice trader, keys to his success, and safeguards for orderly affairs. Jacques Savary's *Le parfait negociant* (1675), one of the most popular manuals for merchants in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, urged young men to pay the utmost attention to their Christian duties: "The first thing that apprentices should keep

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*Jewish Culture in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Honor of David B. Ruderman*, ed. R. I. Cohen, N. B. Dohrmann, A. Shear, and E. Reiner (Pittsburgh, 2014), 250–59.

86. MS General 237, 2.1, 193 left (March 26, 1779). On various occasions Franchetti erroneously refers to Alfasi as Shlomo, instead of Isaac.

87. MS General 237, 2.1, 40 left (June 25, 1776), 52 right (August 23, 1776), 62 right (October 1, 1776). The cost of the set was 67.5 *pezze da otto reali*.

88. Yogev, *Diamonds and Coral*, 267–70. See also Todd M. Endelman, "Secularization and the Origins of Jewish Modernity—On the Impact of Urbanization and Social Transformation," *Simon Dubnow Institute Yearbook* 6 (2007): 165–66.

before their eyes is the love and fear of God, without which God will never bless their work and they will never succeed in their affairs.”<sup>89</sup> To “love and serve” God, Savary recommended that apprentices diligently hear Mass every day (“there are enough convenient occasions, coming and going through the city, and those who are obliged to stay at length in their warehouses and stores can get up half an hour earlier in the morning”), on top of attending Mass in their parishes every Sunday with their masters. A lack of religious piety and observance led instead to “disorders” in commerce.<sup>90</sup> Such recommendations were common in other European merchant guides.<sup>91</sup>

Although we don’t know whether Franchetti had read Savary directly, he seems to have translated the pervasive religious advice of Christian manuals into a Jewish idiom: instead of Mass, he prescribed regular synagogue attendance for the three Jewish daily prayers, as well as daily study of biblical, rabbinic, and zoharic texts. In keeping with Savary’s recommendations, in his view Jewish observance not only protected the virtue of his sons but also guaranteed sound business. Thus, Joseph’s stark assertion on a different occasion—“I always pray God that, if my sons are not good Jews [*jeudim*], God take them from the world”<sup>92</sup>—takes on multiple meanings.

Once his sons left the paternal household, Franchetti emphasized that they should preserve their Jewish piety and continue learning *for economic success*: “David tells us that you have absolutely no religion,” he anxiously wrote Reuben in 1777, “and it’s rare that you say tefillah [*teffila* (= shacharit)], mincha [*menba*], arvit [*barbit*],<sup>93</sup> and you do not go to the holy

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89. Jaques Savary, *Le parfait negociant* (Paris, 1675), 55. Additionally, parents ought to carefully consider the Christian qualities of the merchant with whom they apprenticed their sons as virtue, love, and fear of God were the qualities upon which their children’s spiritual salvation depended (p. 48).

90. Savary, *Le Parfait Negociant*, 55.

91. Giovan Domenico Peri urged young apprentices to go to mass every morning in his *Il negoziante* (Venice, 1662), 27. The advice to pray daily is also found in English manuals: Donald J. Harreld, “An Education in Commerce: Transmitting Business Information in Early Modern Europe,” in *Information Flows: New Approaches in the Historical Study of Business Information*, ed. L. Muller and J. Ojala (Helsinki, 2007), 78.

92. MS General 237, 2.2, 59r (June 21, 1782).

93. I render the names of the Jewish prayers with their common Anglicized versions to preserve the flavor of Franchetti’s language. In brackets are the spellings as they appear in the original letter, which offer a sense of how Franchetti and his circle pronounced these words. The prayer names are spelled variously in the books: in different letters, we find *teffila*, *teffilla*, *teffilã*; *minha* and *menha*;

synagogue even on Shabbat, and if this were true . . . I gave your uncle orders that *if you don't go to the synagogue every day* [to pray] tefillah with a minyan [*mignan*] as . . . all Jews [there] do, first he ought to beat you up and then he ought to tie you up and send you back here, because if a talmid of rabbi Shlomo [*sic*] Alfasi [like you] does this, *it is certain that you will never make any gains*, neither you nor your parents and brothers, and I swear to you that your brothers go to the holy synagogue with a minyan every day, then every evening they study [*meldano*] in my house the Torah portion, the Prophets, and the Zohar, and at noon an hour of Talmud."<sup>94</sup>

Although many young men abandoned their religious education once they reached the age of Jewish majority in order to pursue commerce,<sup>95</sup> the letters' rhetoric shows that Jewish study and piety could be presented not only as a path toward virtue and spiritual salvation but also as a gate to economic profit and material security. Even in the late eighteenth century, as commercial society was ostensibly secularizing, intra-Jewish networks still played a crucial role in making reputations and securing deals; to foster trust, it must have been essential for merchants participating in these networks to preserve a respectable standing as pious and observant Jews.

Occasional reports concerning Franchetti's sons' religious laxity were therefore a cause of great anxiety. The danger of his sons' spiritual perdition and accompanying material ruin loomed large among Franchetti's overlapping fatherly and mercantile concerns. The allures of acculturation and the risks of estrangement in a foreign land—particularly fraternization with non-Jews and the pursuit of secular pleasures—led to suspicions and misunderstandings. From Smyrna, as we saw above, Franchetti received word in 1783 that Reuben had fallen in with a group of Christian "freemasons": "Signor Iacob [Enriches] . . . now tells our company that you have become a freemason . . . and you do not know what Judaism [*Jodu*] means, and say neither tefillah, nor mincha, nor arvit, and you do not wash your hands before eating and do not say the blessing, and only that the *barelim* [*sic*] [=uncircumcised] freemasons greet you all day with the sign of the cross [*il segno dello selem*] *has veshalom*."<sup>96</sup> He could only hope that these were all lies.

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harbit (the letter h is often used to convey the guttural sound of 'ayin) as well as arbit.

94. MS General 237, 2.1, 141 right (November 21, 1777).

95. Mordechai de Soria, *Oracion panejirico doctrinal sobre la mala tentacion . . . en Primero de Sucot* (Livorno, 1751).

96. MS General 237, 2.2, 122r–v (July 15, 1783).

Even more than Ottoman Smyrna, it was the Tuscan port of Livorno that elicited Franchetti's consternation. From Tunis, which Franchetti often described as a provincial backwater, Livorno represented not only the allure of a bustling, sophisticated city but, more perilously, unmatched possibilities for unfettered freedom and dangerous interaction with non-Jews. If they did not preserve their virtue and commitment to Jewish tradition, children sent to Livorno at a very young age without familial supervision risked not only the perdition of their souls but also the ruin of their fathers.<sup>97</sup> The frequentation of "comedies" in particular epitomized the ills of the Tuscan port for young Jewish traders.<sup>98</sup>

In his first letter to Isache after he had left home, Joseph stressed that the most essential of the boy's duties was to pray and study and urged him not to waste his time by going to the theater: "It is not mandatory that a young man your age remain there [in Livorno] to attend to a commercial firm *in a land of freedom*, far away from Barbary . . . so it is up to you to show me that you behave like a religious person, and obey everybody . . . go to the holy synagogue daily for shacharit [*chabrit*], mincha, and arvit, and every morning and evening in your yeshivot [*esivot*] study with the sons of Mr. Recanati,<sup>99</sup> *which is the essential thing*, and don't go all the time to see comedies, which is what ruins youth, [for] this world and the next."<sup>100</sup> To his father's great chagrin, Isache demonstrated time and again a predilection for this kind of pastime and a genteel lifestyle ("I supposed you went to Pisa with your usual rascals, where you attend feasts and luncheons every Sunday");<sup>101</sup> his penchant for the broader Tuscan culture earned him the sarcastic moniker of *filosofetto* (little philosopher).<sup>102</sup>

97. MS General 237, 2.2, 75r, 84v (no date, but August 1782).

98. MS General 237, 2.2, 84r–85r (no date, but August 1782), 133r (June 20, 1783). Franchetti had heard rumors about the ruin of the Jewish firms Castro, Caravaglio, and Bonfil, all attributed to the excessive expenses of dissolute sons chasing after secular pleasures and entertainments in Livorno.

99. The wealthy Recanati family ran one of the most prosperous firms in Livorno. They were the first Italian Jews to join the primarily Sephardic government of the community in 1715, when the Grand Duke allowed Italian Jews to be selected for leadership positions.

100. MS General 237, 2.1, 193 left (March 26, 1779). Emphasis mine. Portions of this letter were published in Spagnoletto, "Nuove fonti," 102–3.

101. MS General 237, 2.2, 133r (June 20, 1783).

102. MS General 237, 2.2, 27r, 29v (January 20, 1782), 36r (March 18, 1782), 44v (March 22, 1782), 92v (December 20, 1782). In reality, pace Franchetti senior, Isache's profound integration in Livorno's society and culture and his "unusual intellectual interests," in Mirella Scardozzi's words, did not detract



Joseph's fears were not unique. Concerns about young people living in a foreign port were common in early modern Christian merchant culture. Some were connected with the lurking threats of a different religion. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Constantinople had the reputation of a dangerous, libertine capital among Venetian officers, who were especially hard pressed to protect young patrician men sent there to train as aspiring merchants. It wasn't only conversion to Islam, either forced or voluntary, that elicited the "paternal concern" of Venetian officials in the Ottoman Empire but also the risk of financial ruin some youths ran if they fell in with bad company.<sup>103</sup> Unbridled freedom associated with life away from home was a cause of concern not just for fathers but also for some self-aware sons: the young British merchant Thomas Stevens, writing from Amsterdam to a friend, remarked that, "being in foreign country [*vic*] and having as much liberty as myself think proper as having no father or brothers to tell me whether I do right or wrong," he found himself fearing for his own financial ruin.<sup>104</sup>

Mediterranean Jewish merchants like the Franchetti are sometimes depicted as cosmopolitans who took advantage of family ties across regional borders in order to foster their business. Yet Joseph's correspondence complicates this portrayal. For one thing, it takes us beyond notions of rational business choice and allows us to appreciate emotionally fraught but widespread mercantile practices, such as dispatching sons abroad for the good of the company, that routinely elicited fear and anxiety in fathers and mothers, as well as nostalgic longing for their far-away children.<sup>105</sup> Moreover, despite the "cosmopolitan" nature of their trade, people like Franchetti still displayed a keen understanding of cultural and religious differences across the Mediterranean and expressed concerns about their children's preparedness to navigate the attractions and dangers of life in foreign countries without parental supervision.

#### LOVING SON, SUCCESSFUL MERCHANT

After considering the individual and group strategies through which Franchetti attempted to socialize and control his far-flung children, I now

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from his natural talent and tremendous success as a merchant: Scardozzi, "Una storia di famiglia," 709.

103. Eric Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople: Nation, Identity, and Coexistence in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Baltimore, 2006), 99–101.

104. Smail, "Coming of Age in Trade," 234.

105. The correspondence mentions on a number of occasions the longing of Franchetti and his wife for Reuben, whom they haven't seen in years. I plan to elaborate on this issue separately.

turn to examine how he fostered a sense of familiarity and obligation in them once they left the paternal household. Significantly, his language is characterized by an overlap of emotional terminology and contractual market ideals—of sensibility applied to explicit material interest. Franchetti frequently mentioned feelings of love toward his sons as the root of their bonds of mutual obligations and the commercial success that would result from them. In itself, the mention of love in business correspondence is not unusual; merchants routinely relied on the language of friendship, love, and affection, a practice rooted in classical examples. Since most business letters were exchanged between people who lacked any real intimacy, this language has been understood as resulting from a purely utilitarian desire to create a web of mutual obligations and build trust. Invoking friendship and love was an effective way to create and imply forms of reciprocity, while “affection was synonymous with diligence.”<sup>106</sup> Indeed, Franchetti often invoked *amore* (love) and *amicizia* (friendship) in his dealings with his long-time Livornese associate, David de Montel, to persuade him into business deals and the exchange of favors.<sup>107</sup> But how should we understand the language of love among close relatives who traded together?

With his sons, Franchetti never mentioned the noun *amore*, using instead the adjective *amoroso* (loving) to describe his and their feelings of reciprocal affection (*padre amoroso, figlio amoroso*). While there can be no doubt that Joseph loved his sons (as he constantly worried for their health and well-being), his letters invoked the feeling of love simultaneously as the foundation of trust between parent and child, in line with the term’s conventional understanding in early modern business parlance, and as a reminder of genuine fondness. Special caution is warranted in approaching Franchetti’s mentions of loving feelings. We may never know to what extent his appeals were strategic, but it is safe to argue that the utilitarian mercantile language of love takes on additional layers in these exchanges, and we enter a more intimate dimension of trust building than previously explored. Thus, by taking seriously the language of emotions in merchant letters we can achieve a better sense of the ways in which the dynamics of an early modern firm resulted from strategies that

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106. Trivellato, *Familiarity of Strangers*, 181; Trivellato, “Images and Self-Images,” 52. On the importance of ties of “friendship” in the Levant trade, see also Frangakis-Syrett, “Networks of Friendship,” 194–95.

107. MS General 237, 2.1, 40 right (June 25, 1776), 172 right (August 18, 1778), 193 left (March 26, 1779), 206 right–209 left (July 16, 1779), 219 left–220 left (September 24, 1779), 227 right (November 14, 1779); 2.2, 8r (May 18, 1881).

explicitly appealed to the heart. At the same time, we can further explore the role that business itself played in building and cementing a sense of shared kinship and family values.

In Franchetti's correspondence, loving feelings between parent and child and economic viability were connected; a contractual understanding in which ideas about love and market were tangled influenced his notions of what it meant to be a father and a son. Franchetti understood the obligations engendered by his sons' loving feelings toward him as a guarantee for the firm's success. Writing Isache in 1783 to request him to curb expenditures, Franchetti portrayed himself as a man who "describes *his real heart* toward a *prudent, loving son*, and who values the reputation of *his loving sons*."<sup>108</sup> In turn, he viewed his role as a loving father as one of responsibility toward his sons (and other young, son-like figures such as his brother-in-law, to whom he presented himself as a "true father"),<sup>109</sup> granting reasonable demands, providing for their well-being, and striving for their economic happiness. Franchetti allowed for his sons' financial requests "as a loving father" when they did not jeopardize the firm,<sup>110</sup> or bought gifts for them, such as fine cloth for suits and shirts.<sup>111</sup> If a loving son obeyed his father in commercial matters, he would be treated lovingly in return.

In this contractual understanding of father-son emotional-commercial relations, filial affection ought to be manifested through obedience ("Mark well that I am *your loving father*, and I won't say anything more on the matter," Franchetti reminded his son Isache on the occasion of a disagreement).<sup>112</sup> The lack of prompt submission to the paternal commands, on the other hand, was liable to erode the loving relation between father and son. It might bring about a chill in the epistolary exchange or the emphatic expression of disappointment. For instance, following Reuben's reluctance to continue working in Smyrna in 1777, Franchetti sent him a particularly aloof letter, which led Reuben to ask if his father had thought of writing "a stranger," and not his "dear son." Sensing his father's displeasure, Reuben asked for forgiveness, submitting to his orders. Reiterating his affection for his son ("whom I love, as much as a *loving father*"), Franchetti archived the incident with benevolent, paternal-

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108. MS General 237, 2.2, 126r (June 20, 1783). Emphasis mine.

109. MS General 237, 2.1, 69 left (November 21, 1776).

110. MS General 237, 2.1, 54 left (September 8, 1776); 2.2, 70v (August 15, 1782).

111. MS General 237, 2.1, 79 left (December 19, 1776), 169 right (July 22, 1778); 2.2, 127r (June 20, 1783).

112. MS General 237, 2.2, 52v (May 27, 1782). Emphasis mine.

istic tones: “I am extremely pleased with your compliance, through which I concede you my forgiveness, which you *lovingly* implore, and let us never speak again of such things, unheard of between a *tender father and a beloved son*.”<sup>113</sup>

In addition to being a manifestation of filial love, obedience paid off, Franchetti repeatedly suggested (“Obey your father if you want to earn money,” he wrote to Reuben, summing up pithily his approach to his children’s education).<sup>114</sup> Respect for the fifth commandment, couched in economic terms, was a crucial ingredient of his admonishments: “All the sons who observe the divine precept to obey their parents, their affairs always turn out perfect, on top of their merit before the Lord God,” Franchetti advised Reuben and Jeudà.<sup>115</sup> “I am telling you that I want to be obeyed completely,” he urged Isache, claiming that obedience was mandatory if the boy “want[ed] to observe the divine precept of honoring father and mother.”<sup>116</sup> “Obey the advice of your parents and you will gain this world and the next,” Franchetti insisted.<sup>117</sup>

Accordingly, the very reminder of the fact that Joseph was their father, with or without the mention of loving feelings, aimed to engender ties of business obligations: “It seems to me that the Son may go towards the Father in all sincerity, and satisfy all of his requests very punctually,” he put it to Reuben.<sup>118</sup> Therefore, another way for Reuben, Jeudà, and Isache to show filial affection was to strive for their father’s personal economic interests, on top of the pursuits of the firm. “*If you are a loving son*,” he prodded Reuben in 1776, as he asked for his help in recovering a credit, “you have to ensure at all costs that I get reimbursed . . . strive intently . . . so I will be able to see ever more that *you really care for your Father’s interests*.”<sup>119</sup> The young men were repeatedly urged to care for their “Father’s interests” as a way to demonstrate their good aptitude for commerce (“and if you manage to get this done through your good work, you will let me understand that you are capable, and that your Father’s interest is close to your heart”<sup>120</sup>) and their maturity (“I observe that you are young and do not think about your Father’s interests”<sup>121</sup>).

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113. MS General 237, 2.1, 104 left–right (May 5, 1777). Emphasis mine.

114. MS General 237, 2.2, 147r (December 9, 1784).

115. MS General 237, 2.2, 57v (June 21, 1782).

116. MS General 237, 2.2, 70v (August 15, 1782).

117. MS General 237, 2.2, 115v (March 28, 1783).

118. MS General 237, 2.1, 49 left (July 29, 1776); 2.2, 70r (August 15, 1782).

119. MS General 237, 2.1, 74 left (December 10, 1776). Emphasis mine.

120. MS General 237, 2.1, 86 left (February 17, 1777).

121. MS General 237, 2.1, 119 left (July 6, 1777).

The strong connection between the notions of paternal authority and commerce done right is corroborated by the fact that when the boys did not submit to his orders, Franchetti characterized their lack of submission as bordering on or as outright illegitimacy. As young Reuben kept proving himself incapable of recuperating his father's money, Joseph's paternalistic air turned sour, threatening that he would not consider Reuben his son any longer, but only a traitor and a fool (*minchione*).<sup>122</sup> "I do not have any suspicion that you are not *my legitimate son*, as I know the honesty of your lady mother," he ironically reprimanded Isache on a different occasion, when the boy hesitated to follow his father's orders.<sup>123</sup> But as his youngest son continued to stick to his own decisions, omitting important information from his reports, Franchetti erupted: "What can I tell you, [you are] ungrateful and a bastard *has ve-shalom* Franchetti."<sup>124</sup> It comes as no surprise that the ultimate threat for a rebellious son—hence comparable to illegitimate offspring—was the prospective of his disowning, which would legally seal the young man's illegitimate status.<sup>125</sup> Although Franchetti never acted on his threats, other disappointed merchant fathers did.<sup>126</sup>

The association of lack of mercantile obedience with illegitimacy is highlighted further by the conflict that accompanied the dissolution of the partnership between Franchetti and his brother-in-law Benjamin Baruch, whose refusal to sign the firm's new contract in 1781 led to the reorganization of the company. In that occasion, rumors began spreading about Benjamin's maneuvers to ruin Reuben's business in Smyrna for his own profit. When those particular affective bonds and intertwined material interests came under stress, Franchetti resorted repeatedly to invoking the importance of blood ties with his wife's brother—who in fact was not his consanguineal but his affinal kin. After the partnership was ultimately dissolved and the accounts needed to be settled, Joseph wrote to Benjamin: "I never heard that blood can turn into water, but since I experienced it from you, I can only say that either you or I are *not legitimate* [-born], *as your blood turned into stinky water*."<sup>127</sup>

It seems that, insofar as material, economic interest was articulated through the language of emotions and the affirmation of "loving" feelings, successful business practices were also possibly a vehicle for maintaining

122. MS General 237, 2.1, 123 left (August 1777).

123. MS General 237, 2.2, 70v (August 15, 1782). Emphasis mine.

124. MS General 237, 2.2, 135r (July 27, 1783).

125. MS General 237, 2.2, 43v (March 22, 1782); 156v (June 24, 1787).

126. Pearsall, *Atlantic Families*, 149–78.

127. MS General 237, 2.2, 1v (March 19, 1781). Emphasis mine.

a sense of legitimate kinship built on a contractual understanding of family relations among relatives living far apart. Years ago Natalie Zemon Davis remarked on the “proximity between commercial matters and family matters” for early modern Ashkenazic merchants in Central and Eastern Europe, communities in which marriage and commercial deals were negotiated on the same occasion and divorces could shake up established economic networks with far-reaching consequences.<sup>128</sup> The argument can be pushed further: the porousness between business and family affairs was not only a result of intersecting practices but of interconnected moral ideas and sentiments as well. Family was literally conceptualized as business, and vice-versa. Kinship bonds are often regarded as one important foundation of diasporic mercantile success, but if we take transnational kinship not as a given but as ties that had to be constantly reinforced and maintained over space, Franchetti’s correspondence suggests a seemingly paradoxical, but in fact complementary, perspective: legitimate kinship and sonship and a sense of blood ties were themselves contingent on business done right.

#### CONCLUSION

Although historians today no longer subscribe to a view of automatic and unproblematic ethno-religious solidarity and trust among members of the same “trading diaspora,”<sup>129</sup> discussions of merchant communities still regularly gesture to the importance of family and kinship groups as a crucial ingredient of their feasibility and success. Kinship ties among separated relatives, it is understood, were used in the commercial sphere to build capital and business partnerships. But the very diasporic nature of early modern Jewish trade poses a challenge: how could members of a merchant household maintain a sense of familiarity and obligation once distance strained their relations? How were young men, believed to be especially prone to sin, monitored and controlled? These questions get at the issue of trust building in merchant groups through an approach that privileges small-scale process over grand structure. As this essay has argued, a greater attention to emotional discourse in merchant letters helps reorient our thinking on how Jewish family ties were preserved

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128. Zemon Davis, “Religion and Capitalism Once Again?,” 72–73.

129. Abner Cohen, “Cultural Strategies in the Organization of Trading Diasporas,” in *The Development of Indigenous Trade and Markets in West Africa*, ed. C. Meillassoux (Oxford, 1971), 266–81, and Philip D. Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History* (Cambridge, 1984). For a recent critique, see Sebou David Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean: The Global Trade Networks of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa* (Berkeley, Calif., 2011), 166–201.

and restructured over time on the one hand, and on the strategies that traders used to supervise distant family members on the other, bringing into focus the interpenetration of domestic, commercial, and religious spheres.

For one thing, Joseph Franchetti's correspondence shows how a sense of familiarity and shared belonging could be maintained, reinforced, or undermined. Franchetti's emphasis on the relation between filial love and obedience and on the connection between appropriate business behavior and legitimacy reveals that notions of kinship were closely intertwined with concepts of business done correctly and honorably, and therefore profitably. The very idea of legitimate belonging to the family was tied with submission to the patriarch and head of the firm, understood as leading to the family's and hence the firm's financial success. Such a contractual view, in which love and market ideals are mutually related, influenced notions of fatherhood and sonship for Franchetti.

By offering examples of the ways in which a Jewish father and businessman gave intertwined moral and practical advice to younger men, this correspondence additionally shows how the genre of merchants' advice literature and Jewish ethical advice could be adapted to concrete, evolving situations. In many ways, the tropes in the letters conform to extant non-Jewish models of writing to sons "growing up in trade." The ideals of commercial masculinity that Franchetti aimed to impart to his sons—prudential values such as honor, creditworthiness, and trustworthiness, accompanied by the rejection of an extravagant and genteel lifestyle—were common among non-Jewish merchants active in the eighteenth century.<sup>150</sup> Similarly, several of Franchetti's fears and anxieties can be detected among non-Jewish merchants. This is in line with our understanding of early modern Jews embracing available ideals of credit and commerce. Without minimizing cultural differences between the Anglo-Saxon and Mediterranean worlds, as well as Jewish specificities, early modern merchant practices displayed significant similarities across religious and ethnic borders. Merchants of widely different backgrounds employed common "communication codes" that enabled smooth cross-cultural transactions. This shared language of business, which Francesca Trivellato's studies have illuminated, was established on collectively recognized concepts of honor and credit.<sup>151</sup>

I would suggest that among these universally recognized codes was

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150. Hunt, *The Middling Sort*, 46–72; Pearsall, *Atlantic Families*, 111–42; Smail, "Coming of Age in Trade."

151. Trivellato, *Familiarity of Strangers*, 177–93.

also an idiom of kinship and an emotional language of trade, based on shared parental hopes and fears concerning the correct rearing of future merchants, which we find among English and Atlantic merchants as well as in a Jewish merchant family like the Franchetti. In turn, this points to the existence of an eighteenth-century (or perhaps more broadly early modern) mercantile “emotional community,” to adopt Barbara Rosenwein’s terminology, in which merchants made use of a shared emotional vocabulary of love and anxiety to bridge physical distance, in the attempt to process and overcome uncertainty.<sup>132</sup>

At the same time, while Franchetti adopted ethical codes and harbored worries and anxieties shared by contemporary Christian traders, the family’s Jewishness singles their experience out from better-studied English and Atlantic cases. Franchetti’s letters suggest that Judaism still played a central role, both discursive and practical, in the self-perception and self-presentation of Jewish merchants, and hence in how they raised their children. This is evident in three respects. First, Judaism still defined the horizon of expectation and the decidedly unc cosmopolitan worldview of this father, anxious about his sons losing themselves, and the firm’s fortune with them, in strange lands. Second, Franchetti emphasized the importance of continued Torah study and synagogue attendance as a means of achieving and safeguarding commercial success, translating a theme popular in seventeenth-century treatises on the *ars mercatoria* into a Jewish idiom and drawing our attention to the ongoing prominence of religious reputation among Jewish merchants as late as the last decades of the eighteenth century. Assumptions concerning secularization and Jewish merchants in Western Europe need to be reassessed to accommodate the continued importance of Jewish observance as a trust-building tool. Finally, intra-Jewish male relations created webs of parafamilial control within the larger Jewish mercantile community, with specific circles playing an essential practical role: summoned to act as controlling agents, networks of trusted traders envisioned as quasi-fathers and quasi-brothers socialized and supervised young men far away from home, monitoring the intertwined familial, commercial, and religious interests of fellow Jewish merchants.

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132. Barbara Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca, N.Y., 2006), esp. 24–26.