

**Money in a Human Economy.** *Keith Hart*, ed. New York: Berghahn, 2017. 314 pp.

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This edited volume in Berghahn's Human Economy series, which Keith Hart directs from the University of Pretoria, is part of a larger trend in economic anthropology that uses history to critique capitalism as opposed to an earlier trend that celebrated cultural pluralism in an era of neoliberal globalization. Twelve chapters are organized into three sections—"Thinking About Money," "The Evolution of Money Today," and "Money in Its Time and Place"—preceded by an introduction from Hart that positions money as a research and theory concern within his human economy perspective: a research focus on being human across scales that links everyday life, small-scale economic activities with participation "in the widest circles of humanity, in world society" (5). A second introductory chapter by Hart positions capitalism in the history of money.

Yet if the ambition to link the small scale with the global system's totality is a strong point of the human economy approach, a step forward from anthropological research that champions the small scale as the locus of ethnographic theory production per se, this volume sometimes falls short of a sophisticated understanding of that totality because several contributions show limited concern for the particularities of historical political economies. Hart's discussion of *oikonomia* as the guiding principle of classical Greek economies is emblematic of a stereotyping of past political economies throughout the book, which in this case results in a lack of attention to past injustices as he and several of his contributors ignore the fact that the majority of humans in the Greek *oikonomia* were slaves, owned by the male heads of the *oikoi*.

**Comment [MOU1]:** AUTHOR: Additions okay? You are talking about Hart, but it sounds as if this disregard for past injustices is representative of more than Hart's essays.

PN: Thanks, excellent observation.

In an extension of the big-brush approach, Hart's timeline for a periodization of the modern era is Western-centric and disregards Asian dominance in the global system prior to 1800 as well as the importance of Caribbean and other plantation regimes in the making of industrial capitalism. Instead, Hart writes in stone Karl Polanyi's misunderstanding of capitalism as a disembedding market fundamentalism. If the latter came to dominate world history from the mid-1800s on, Hart identifies yet another such rupture as he follows mainstream accounts that see the rise of neoliberal capitalism as a "watershed" (17) in the 1970s, when Keynesian humanity fell from grace and let offshore banking bring "the informal economy to the heart of global finance" (21). A critical historical anthropology now challenges such commonplace periodizations of global political economies—before and after 1800, it rejects the neo-Polanyian idea of a 1970s rupture and highlights instead the fact that capitalism was informal in its cradle—with offshore banking being commonly practiced throughout the 20th century and neoliberals being concerned less with free markets than with oligopolies and murderous, Pinochet-style dictatorships.

This is not to deny the relevance of Hart's overall project. Yet few of the contributions live up to the research question that he so poignantly identifies: "After all, how does the pairing of George III and the East India Company differ from George W. Bush's relationship with firms like Halliburton?" (38). Instead, Jane Guyer—again with empathy for Greek slave owners and warmongers and their agora—offers a rather randomly chosen comparison of different measurements of worth across time and space. Noam Yuran revives Werner Sombart's empirically unsound claim that capitalism originated from the secularization of love and then links this to Max Weber's elaborations on the Protestant ethic to conclude that capitalism "is an economy organized around what cannot be bought" (97): love and salvation, respectively. Joseph Noko's "The Shadow of Aristotle" chapter is interesting, however, especially if read as an overview of the forgotten predecessors of David Graeber's debt thesis. Other contributions, such as Supriya Singh's chapter on the future of money, offer sound

**Comment [AY2]:** Change to "this"

**Comment [MOU3]:** AU THOR: Maybe 'reinforces'? Or okay as is if you prefer.

PN: go with "reinforces"

**Comment [MOU4]:** AU THOR: Edits okay?

PN: Please cut "being" in both instances, otherwise okay

**Comment [AY5]:** cut

**Comment [AY6]:** cut

**Comment [MOU7]:** AU THOR: Okay to omit 'inclusive public space'? Seems a common enough term. Perhaps agoras?

PN: Not okay, "inclusive public space" plus page number (gone missing) marks direct quote from Guyer and thus highlights her misunderstanding of what the agora was (in fact, the agora was not an inclusive public space as I show throughout)

historical and ethnographic detail but then again forward ahistorical claims, such as “the future of money is being shaped by the growing economic and political influence of the global South” (103), without concern for the long history of banking globalization in tax havens and the wider offshore world. Bill Maurer, in one of the few chapters in the volume that offers an ethnography of money proper, extends Karl Marx’s work **for** the world of standardized national currencies that emerged in the 20th century but then falls back on the neo-Keynesian call for a Tobin Tax in his conclusion.

**Comment [MOU8]:** AU  
THOR: to?  
PN: Okay

The chapters in the “Money in Its Time and Place” section are outstanding, however. Marina Martin’s historical ethnography of the South Asian hundi exchange system, where family trading houses acted as guarantors for bills of exchange and remittances, uncovers the articulation of trust relations in 19th-century India and **shows** how British colonial judicial diversion paved the way for today’s stigma **of hundi as** informal and a “marker of the black market economy” (211). Sean Maliehe serves up a formidable ethnohistory of money and markets in Basotho from the 1830s to the **1930s**. Yet his conclusion that there was a period of economic independence up to the 1870s, when “money and markets worked for ordinary Basotho” before they “were used to turn Lesotho into a reservoir for cheap labor through land appropriation” (245), again searches for a Polanyian great transformation and thus unnecessarily creates an isolationist view that ignores the author’s earlier discussion of regional slave raiding **of** the Basotho chieftainships prior to the 1870s. Finally, the two concluding chapters, by Hadrien Saiag on gender and money in Argentinian informal exchange systems and by Federico Neiburg on the Haitian dollar as an imaginary currency, add further perspectives on the permanence of unequal exchanges in seemingly clandestine small-scale exchanges and on the role of monetary exchange rates and relations as synthesizers of “collective history” (283).

**Comment [MOU9]:** AU  
THOR: Okay, as in chapter title?  
PN: Okay

**Comment [MOU10]:** AU  
THOR: by?  
PN: Yes

Although several chapters in *Money in a Human Economy* are well worth reading, other chapters are reminders that ancient Greek *oikonomia* and other manifestations of past

political economies need closer scrutiny if they are to inform general anthropological theory. If the discipline now sheds its culturalist skin in researching capitalism, historical anthropology—of money and aspects of political economies more generally—may want to follow suit and abandon stereotypical views of worldwide historical ruptures.

**Comment [AY11]:** Change to “world-historical conjunctures and era-making ruptures”