

financial practices. The main exception is at the end of Chapter 9, when Murphy presents the records of the number of enslaved people in one bank's mortgages relative to the slaves reported in the slave census. I found myself wondering what fraction of enslaved people secured mortgages and what fraction of slaveholders raised funds this way. However, aggregate numbers will be a huge undertaking, beyond the scope of this book, and Murphy has laid much of the groundwork for future scholars to conduct that research by tracing these debts.

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The Story of Work: A New History of Humankind. *By Jan Lucassen.* New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2022. 544 pp., 18 color + 9b-w illus. + 3 figs. + 6 maps. Paperback, \$25.00. ISBN: 978-0-300-26706-8.

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Reviewed by Tobias F. Rötheli

If it were not for the subtitle, referring to the whole of human history, a reader might innocently expect such a book to start just a few hundred years ago. Possible starting points could be the industrial revolution and the labor movement, the guilds of the Middle Ages, and, of course, farming. Yet, Jan Lucassen in his magnificent survey offers much more. To be sure, there must be a conceivable reason to start an account of humans' central occupation as far as 700,000 years ago, as this book does. For sure, it is interesting to look at the interplay of biological evolution with changes in climate and the environment, technical innovations, and the struggle for survival. However, Lucassen's motive for focusing on the prehistory lies in our long record of reciprocity and equality in sharing as hunters and gatherers. It is the neolithic revolution starting roughly 12,000 years ago with the domestication of plants and animals that brings forth farming and husbandry. Growing sedentary communities and their food surpluses led to social classes and serious inequality. For a scholar as deeply concerned with fairness as Lucassen is this is where the human enterprise got into trouble.

Not everybody will concur with this perspective reminiscent of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Yet again, the book is much more.

With the developing cities and states in Mesopotamia, India, and China, the division of labor took off. Organizationally, these regional systems were ruled by an elite (e.g., temple) that determined the use of the surplus of produce. Four types of labor relations and roles formed: wage labor, slavery, self-employment, and employers. This mix—as well as further differentiations—makes for much of the history covered. One of the chilling themes in the story of work running all the way to the present day is unfree labor, particularly in the form of slavery. Its protracted history taking off with wars—another implication of larger social groups—and captives being forced into enslavement as opposed to being killed outright. Lucassen traces the course of unfree work globally and in its many variants in the ancient Middle East, Europe, Africa, and Asia. It is just one of many topics where the book describes causes and consequences globally, e.g., by describing slavery's long-term detrimental effects on social and economic developments in Africa.

The clearest contrast to labor subordination is cooperation in the form of free wage labor which is a central element of market economies, just as is the trade of goods and services. The book makes the case that market transactions were dependent on—and conducive to—the development of coins of small denomination. Only with coins worth a fraction of a daily wage was it possible to make everyday purchases. This “deep monetization” evolved after 500 BCE in Europe, India, and China. Clearly, the development of legal prerequisites, economic freedoms, and deep monetization are a case of cultural co-evolution. Several civilizations in the east and in the west were able to sustain this development. Yet, as exemplified with medieval Europe, this process can also go into reverse. With the demise of the Roman Empire, cities largely disappeared and peasants returned to subsistence agriculture with almost no labor specialization. Comparable processes are described for India. In both Europe and India monetized market economies recovered by about 1500 CE. This deviation from unilinear development – the appearing, vanishing, and reappearing – seem to be of concern from the perspective of a historian. In this view what develops is likely to evolve and to lead to differentiation. By contrast, economics tends to perceive this differently: here, available technologies and preferences are seen to interact at any point in time with scarcity of resources in determining outcomes, including forms of work. Add to this mix the elements of education, law, governance, and representation that all imply an organized collective effort, and it becomes clear how the organization of work can progress and regress.

The book is particularly captivating with its coverage of a wide range of issues: the reader learns about work sharing in households (early with African cattle herders, later in homesteading), the development of professions, the enormously varying range of women's rights and options, child work on farms and in mining, the Indian caste system and serfdom in Eastern Europe. Besides the regions already mentioned, the Americas are covered from the tributary-redistributive societies of the Incas, Mayas, and Aztecs, to the seventeenth-century Spanish colonists in Mexico, the weavers of Quito, and the African slaves on plantations in Brazil, the Caribbean and North America. An especially well-organized part of the book outlines the developments of work forms driven by the mechanization of the industrial revolution. In the textile industry the movement from the older form of cottage industry and subcontracting, to increasingly centralization in factories with remuneration gradually moving from piece rates to time wages.

In the last part of the book covering the time after 1800, distributional issues again play a central role. Conflicts about working conditions, length of work, and wages influence legislation and drive unionization. Lucassen is strongly committed to equalizing the distribution of income, also when discussing scenarios for the future. Here, an economist needs to emphasize points that are also developed in the book: prosperity builds on ingenuity, effort, long work hours, education, and diligence. Consequently, the (welfare) state guiding income distribution must factor in the international competition from hard-driving suppliers of goods and services, as well as rising migratory pressures.

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Reckoning with Slavery: Gender, Kinship, and Capitalism in the Early Black Atlantic. *By Jennifer Morgan.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021. 296p. Cloth, \$107.95. ISBN: 978-1-4780-1323-5.

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Reviewed by Samantha Payne

Jennifer Morgan has devoted her life to trying to understand the role of gender and reproduction in the emergence of racial capitalism.