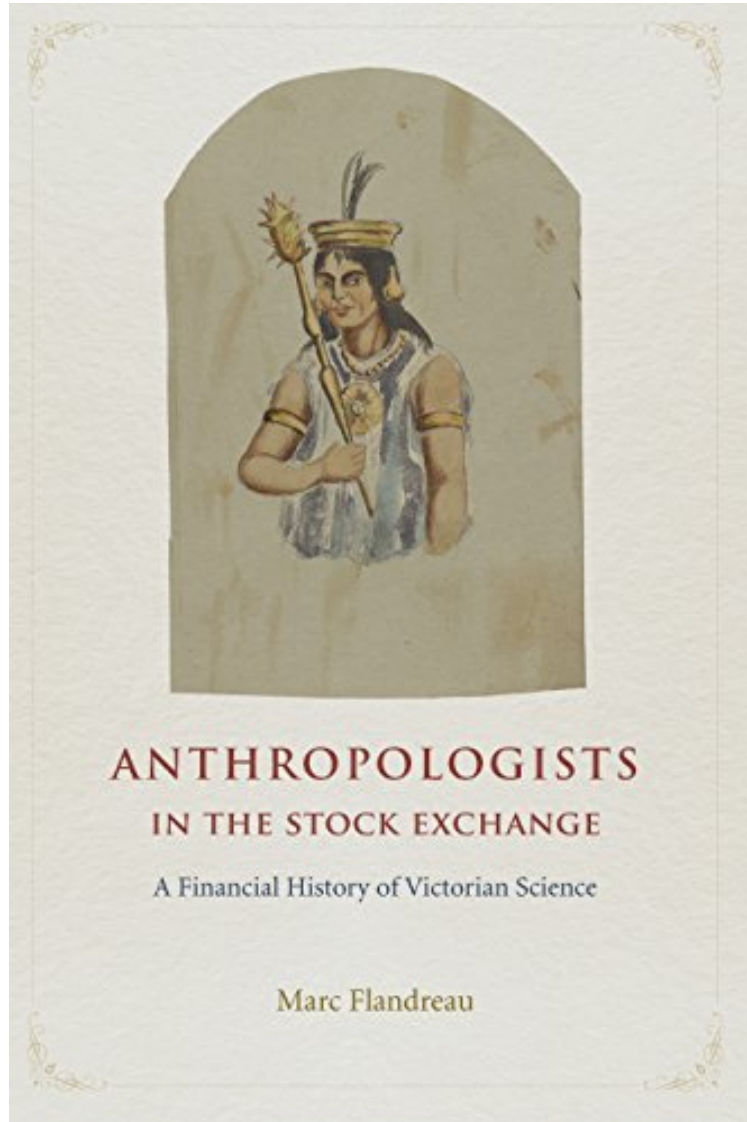


Anthropologists in the Stock Exchange: A Financial History of Victorian Science

Marc Flandreau

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Marc Flandreau : Anthropologists in the Stock Exchange: A Financial History of Victorian Science before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Anthropologists in the Stock Exchange: A Financial History of Victorian Science:

Uncovering strange plots by early British anthropologists to use scientific status to manipulate the stock market,

Anthropologists in the Stock Exchange tells a provocative story that marries the birth of the social sciences with the exploits of global finance. Marc Flandreau tracks a group of Victorian gentleman-swindlers as they shuffled between the corridors of the London Stock Exchange and the meeting rooms of learned society, showing that anthropological studies were integral to investment and speculation in foreign government debt, and, inversely, that finance played a crucial role in shaping the contours of human

knowledge. Flandreau argues that finance and science were at the heart of a new brand of imperialism born during Benjamin Disraeli's first term as Britain's prime minister in the 1860s. As anthropologists advocated the study of Miskito Indians or stated their views on a Jamaican rebellion, they were in fact catering to the impulses of the stock exchange—for their own benefit. In this way the very development of the field of anthropology was deeply tied to issues relevant to the financial market—from trust to corruption. Moreover, this book shows how the interplay between anthropology and finance formed the foundational structures of late nineteenth-century British imperialism and helped produce essential technologies of globalization as we know it today.

Economic historian Flandreau takes seriously the role anthropologists played as brokers when European colonialism and empire dominated the globe during the mid-19th century. He provides a different lens or modality of knowledge than the traditional bureaucratic modality, which links bureaucratic authority to knowledge production and institution creation. The author calls the new framework the "stock exchange modality" and views it as important because commercial expansion was the financial context to the formation of imperial knowledge. Flandreau seeks to "derive a novel theoretical perspective on the making of anthropology through a renewed understanding of the making of its institutions." He cleverly demonstrates who, why, and how anthropology was used and valued by the agents of the London Stock Exchange, which was heavily invested (literally and figuratively) in assessing the value of colonial assets. The author artfully describes how some of the same social and political underpinnings deployed to promote railroads and steamships were used to promote learned societies. Flandreau, a detailed historian and great storyteller, describes the unsavory white-collar criminals and sophisticated scientists who manipulated and captured the value of science based on the rules of capital markets. Highly recommended.