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| Sommario/riassunto | Well before states, literacy, or legal systems, there were commerce and trade, which are found in all societies irrespective of politics, social norms or ideologies. Athenian landowners, Roman senators and Qing mandarins screened their participation in commerce and trade. Legal and informal institutions were developed to secure persons and property, resolve commercial disputes, raise capital and share risk, promote fair dealing, regulate agents and gather market information. Law and Commerce in Pre-Industrial Societies examines commerce, its participants and these institutions through the lens of nine pre-industrial societies: Hunter/gatherers, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Athens, Rome, the early Islamic world, medieval Europe, medieval Southern India and Qing China. The book provides historical perspective to contemporary debates about the relationship between commerce and |

law, public ordering versus privately created systems of law, the rule of law and the relative merits of courts versus merchant networks to resolve disputes.