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Sommario/riassunto	Although social sciences such as anthropology are often thought to have been organized as academic specialties in the nineteenth century, the ideas upon which these disciplines were founded actually developed centuries earlier. In fact, the foundational concepts can be traced at least as far back as the sixteenth century, when contact with unfamiliar peoples in the New World led Europeans to create ways of describing and understanding social similarities and differences among humans. Early Anthropology in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries examines the history of some of the ideas adopted to help understand the origin of culture, the diversity of traits, the significance of similarities, the sequence of high civilizations, the course of cultural change, and the theory of social evolution. It is a book that not only illuminates the thinking of a bygone age but also sheds light on the sources of attitudes still prevalent today.