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Nota di contenuto	Commodities and the politics of value / Arjun Appadurai -- Cultural biography of things : commoditization as process / Igor Kopytoff -- Two kinds of value in the Eastern Solomon Islands / William H. Davenport -- Newcomers to the world of goods : consumption among the Muria Gonds / Alfred Gell -- Varna and the emergence of wealth in prehistoric Europe / Colin Renfrew -- Sacred commodities : the circulation of medieval relics / Patrick Geary -- Weavers and dealers : the authenticity of an oriental carpet / Brian Spooner -- Qat : changes in the production and consumption of a quasilegal commodity in northeast Africa / Lee V. Cassanelli -- Structure of a cultural crisis : thinking about cloth in France before and after the Revolution / William M. Reddy -- Origins of swadeshi (home industry) : cloth and Indian society, 1700-1930 / C.A. Bayly.
Sommario/riassunto	The meaning that people attribute to things necessarily derives from human transactions and motivations, particularly from how those

things are used and circulated. The contributors to this volume examine how things are sold and traded in a variety of social and cultural settings, both present and past. Focusing on culturally defined aspects of exchange and socially regulated processes of circulation, the essays illuminate the ways in which people find value in things and things give value to social relations. By looking at things as if they lead social lives, the authors provide a new way to understand how value is externalized and sought after. They discuss a wide range of goods - from oriental carpets to human relics - to reveal both that the underlying logic of everyday economic life is not so far removed from that which explains the circulation of exotica, and that the distinction between contemporary economics and simpler, more distant ones is less obvious than has been thought. As the editor argues in his introduction, beneath the seeming infinitude of human wants, and the apparent multiplicity of material forms, there in fact lie complex, but specific, social and political mechanisms that regulate taste, trade, and desire. Containing contributions from American and British social anthropologists and historians, the volume bridges the disciplines of social history, cultural anthropology, and economics, and marks a major step in our understanding of the cultural basis of economic life and the sociology of culture. It will appeal to anthropologists, social historians, economists, archaeologists, and historians of art.
