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in order to collect numerical information. The study captures the underlying objectives and structures, as well as the methods to compile statistics. Nele Bracke investigates the meaning and significance of government statistics in the 19th-century State and society. In Belgium, early social scientists established an internationally renowned 'statistical system' designed to collect information about the country, the people and the society. This 'statistical system' was built around the 'Commission centrale de Statistique' (statistical committee) and the production of demographic, economic and agricultural censuses. In the first part of the book, the author analyses the institutional history of the 'Commission centrale de Statistique' and its predecessors. In the second part of the book, she studies the censuses.
