Inspired by the New Fiscal History, this book represents the first global survey of taxation in the premodern world. What emerges is a rich variety of institutions, including experiments with sophisticated instruments such as sovereign debt and fiduciary money, challenging the notion of a typical premodern stage of fiscal development. The studies also reveal patterns and correlations across widely dispersed societies that shed light on the basic factors driving the intensification, abatement, and innovation of fiscal regimes. Twenty scholars have contributed perspectives from a wide range of fields besides history, including anthropology, economics, political science, and sociology. The volume’s coverage extends beyond Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Near East to East Asia and the Americas, thereby transcending the Eurocentric approach of most scholarship on fiscal history.

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