Drawing on macro-historical sociological theories, this book traces the development of intellectual property as a new type of legal property in the modern nation-state system. In its current form, intellectual property is considered part of an infrastructure of state power that incentivizes innovation, creativity, and scientific development, all engines of economic growth. To show how this infrastructure of power emerged, Laura Ford follows macro-historical social theorists, including Michael Mann and Max Weber, back to antiquity, revealing that legal instruments very similar to modern intellectual property have existed for a long time and have also been deployed for similar purposes. Using comparative and historical evidence, this groundbreaking work reflects on the role of intellectual property in our contemporary political communities and societies; on the close relationship between law and religion; and on the extent to which law’s obliging force depends on ancient, written traditions.

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The Intellectual Property of Nations

SOCIOCAL AND HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES
ON A MODERN LEGAL INSTITUTION

LAURA R. FORD
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Preface and Acknowledgments

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