



Imperfect Balance: Landscape Transformations in the Precolumbian Americas

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We often envision the New World before the arrival of the Europeans as a land of pristine natural beauty and undisturbed environments. However, David Lentz offers an alternative view by detailing the impact of native cultures on these ecosystems prior to their contact with Europeans. Drawing on a wide range of experts from the fields of paleoclimatology, historical ecology, paleontology, botany, geology, conservation science, and resource management, this book unlocks the secret of how the Western Hemisphere's indigenous inhabitants influenced and transformed their natural environment.

A rare combination of collaborators uncovers the changes that took place in North America, Mexico, Central America, the Andes, and Amazonia. Each section of the book has been comprehensively arranged so that a botanical description of the natural vegetation of the region is coupled with a set of case studies outlining local human influences. From modifications of vegetation, to changes in soil, wildlife, microclimate, hydrology, and the land surface itself, this collection addresses one of the great issues of our time: the human modification of the earth.

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