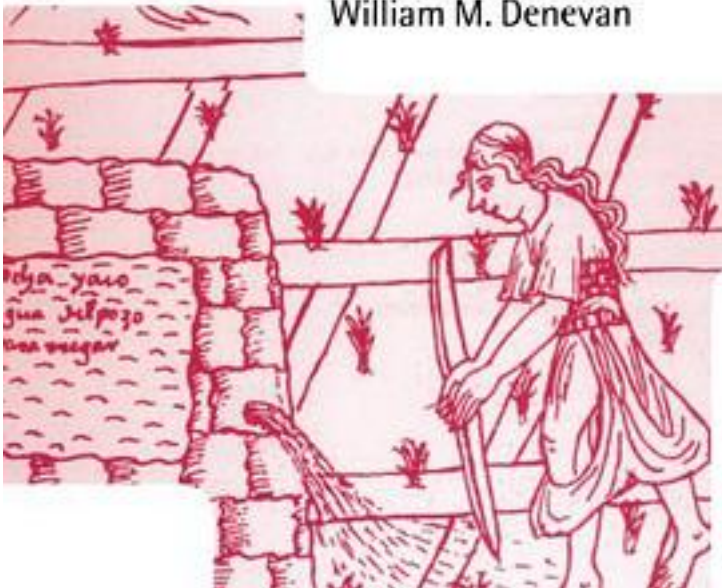


Cultivated Landscapes of Native Amazonia and the Andes



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William M. Denevan



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The Andes and Amazonia are two of the harshest regions on earth. The opportunities for productive agriculture, even with modern methods, seem limited given conditions of climate, terrain, and soils. Nevertheless, indigenous people, both prehistoric and more recent, developed systems of cultivation that have been intensive, highly productive, and sustainable, reclaiming marginal lands and supporting large numbers of people and complex societies. This valuable reference work examines native South American agriculture. Its focus is on field types and field technologies, including agricultural landforms such as terraces, canals, and drained fields which have persisted for hundreds of years. The evidence utilized comes from abandoned fields, historical documents, and current practices. What emerges is a picture of indigenous farming practices in rain forests, savannas, swamps, rugged mountains, and deserts. This knowledge provides unique techniques and some basic principles for farming difficult environments.

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