

CONTENTS

<i>List of figures</i>	<i>page</i> viii
<i>List of maps</i>	xiii
<i>Preface</i>	xv

Introduction: thinking about medieval Europeans in their natural world	I
1 Long no wilderness	21
Natural dynamics in Holocene Europe	22
Cultural adaptations and impacts up to the Roman Climatic Optimum	29
Environmental precedents and legacy of classical Mediterranean civilization	33
‘Barbarian’ adaptations: the Iron Age in northern Europe	43
2 Intersecting instabilities: culture and nature at medieval beginnings, c.400–900	51
Environmental relations in the decline of classical civilization	52
The discontinuities of late antiquity, c.350–750	57
The pressure of a different climate	67
Anomalous adaptations for anomalous times and ecosystems:	
Frisia and the origins of Venice	71
The Carolingian age: window on a work in progress	78
3 Humankind and God’s Creation in medieval minds	85
The White thesis, its critics and adherents	87
The limits to basic medieval Christianization	91
A hostile material world	94

vi	<i>Contents</i>	
	Nature as sign	97
	Partners: beneficent <i>Natura</i> and human collaboration	101
	Voices of experience	108
	Summation: hegemonies, diversities, and the gap between medieval ideas and action	110
4	Medieval land use and the formation of traditional European landscapes	113
	Bread and meat, power and numbers	114
	Medieval landscapes transformed: the great clearances	119
	Intensified cereal landscapes in Mediterranean Europe	133
	From wetlands and other deviant forms to grain lands	136
	Not by bread alone	142
	Environmental consequences of new anthropogenic ecosystems	148
5	Medieval use, management, and sustainability of local ecosystems, 1: primary biological production sectors	155
	Sustainability in systems based on indirect solar energy	155
	Traditional European agroecosystems: the north	158
	Traditional European agroecosystems: the Mediterranean	169
	Pastoral connections	174
	Woodmanship	181
	Using wildlife	188
6	Medieval use, management, and sustainability of local ecosystems, 2: interactions with the non-living environment	196
	The energy basis for medieval society	196
	Inorganic resources: mining, metallurgy, and other manufactures	215
	Urban ecologies	227
	Assessing historic sustainability	237
7	‘This belongs to me ...’	241
	How medieval men (and women) possessed the earth	243
	Commoners, communities, and lords	247
	Higher authority: the state, public rights, and the ‘common good’	263
8	Suffering the uncomprehended: disease as a natural agent	279
	Pathogenic disease: introductory concepts	280

<i>Contents</i>	vii
Baseline disease conditions in pre-industrial Europe	283
The ‘Justinianic plague’	285
Leprosy	286
The Black Death	289
English sweats	298
Malaria	299
9 An inconstant planet, seen and unseen, under foot and overhead	304
Subterranean violence	305
Recapturing past planetary variability above and below ground	313
Medieval European climates at the century scale	318
Europe’s ‘warm’ Medieval Climate Anomaly	320
Transition to a ‘Little Ice Age’	323
The Little Ice Age	328
Some case studies of climate, weather, and medieval cultures	329
10 A slow end of medieval environmental relations	342
Ecological crisis? Anthropogenic overshoot, slow chill, sudden natural shock	342
By long-term cultural evolution?	351
Unintended consequences from an anthropogenic shock: the Columbian encounter in European perspective	364
<i>Afterword</i>	371
<i>A sampler for further reading</i>	378
<i>Index</i>	391