



# **Tilling the Hateful Earth: Agricultural Production and Trade in the Late Antique East (Oxford Studies in Byzantium)**

*Michael Decker*

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## **Tilling the Hateful Earth: Agricultural Production and Trade in the Late Antique East (Oxford Studies in Byzantium) Michael Decker**

This book explores the agrarian landscape and economy of the eastern Mediterranean from modern Israel to Turkey. This region experienced a surge in population between the fifth and sixth centuries AD that raised the population to levels often only regained in the late twentieth century. Cities expanded and the eastern lands reached a pinnacle of cultural expression and economic prosperity in the century before the arrival of Islam. Behind all this lay the ability of Roman farmers to feed themselves by producing a reliable surplus of food. Michael Decker describes precisely how this was done: how plants critical to survival were grown and how new plants were introduced. He also catalogues the range of intensive farming methods used and the rise of cash-crop farming based on olive oil and wine that was traded throughout Europe, western Asia, and parts of Africa.

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