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Sommario/riassunto

Originally published in 1994, this book links the distant past with the urgent problems of today, taking the reader on a literary and scientific tour of global pollution from pre-history to the post-industrial age. Ancient problems such as lead poisoning in Rome and water pollution in Mesopotamia provide the background to a discussion of modern catastrophes including the hole in the ozone layer, climate change and the global drinking water crisis. The book chronicles 800 years of pollution in London, charts the growth of environmental activism and spotlights the rise of the consumer society as the driving force behind today's malaise.

The story of how we have polluted our planet is told here for the first time in a way that links the distant past with the urgent problems of today. Adam Markham takes the reader on a literary and scientific tour of the world of pollution from pre-history to the post-industrial age. Ancient problems such as lead poisoning in Rome and water pollution in Mesopotamia provide the background to a discussion of modern catastrophes including the hole in the ozone layer, climate change and the global drinking water crisis. Along with consumerism, the development of cities, global population growth and untrammelled industrial expansion have taken their toll. Adam Markham brings together these seemingly disparate strands of history into a highly readable account, that tells us as much about the future of pollution as it does about the past.
