



# **The Yanoama Indians: A Cultural Geography (Texas Pan American Series)**

*William J. Smole*

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The Yanoama are one of the most numerous remaining aboriginal populations of the South American tropical forests, and their large territory constitutes a significant culture region. Although other scholars (anthropologists, geneticists, linguists) have studied this contemporary "neolithic" population, this is the first geographic study of the Yanoama. It is also the only book to focus on the Yanoama highland core area—the Parima massif—and it is the first study to analyze Yanoama horticulture as an integral part of their ecosystem.

The author is concerned principally with the spatial dimension as developed in Yanoama culture, with the spatial patterns of functioning systems, and with Yanoama ecology in this highland habitat. The natural environment is viewed, not as a cultural determinant, but as part of the total ecosystem. Livelihood activities constitute a major organizing theme and, among these, gardening receives the most attention. Frequently classified as a nomadic hunter-gatherer group, the Yanoama are found to have a deep-seated horticultural tradition, and many new data on this tradition are presented. As this study reveals, the Yanoama have created and maintained a cultural landscape that bears their distinctive stamp.

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