



# History of Puerto Rico: A Panorama Of Its People

By *Fernando Pico*

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## **History of Puerto Rico: A Panorama Of Its People** By Fernando Pico

This book traces Puerto Rico's history from its geological formation (to the 21st century). It covers recent research on topics such as the island's Indian culture, the nationalist movement, and the class structures...superbly synthesized by Puerto Rico's leading historian. This is an updated and expanded translation of the Puerto Rican edition by the author of "Historia General De Puerto Rico".

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## Editorial Review

### Review

"An intelligent and up-to-date work." -- *Annales*

"Superbly synthesized" -- *Hispanic American Historical Review*

"Essentially, this is an updated and expanded version of the second edition of the brilliant work published in Spanish in 1986...Like all excellent histories of the Caribbean, this one is inordinately rich on the social aspects of community formation and the inevitable cross-imperial relations that invariably frustrated local administrators -- *Choice Magazine*

"An intelligent and up-to-date work." -- *Annales*

"Superbly synthesized" -- *Hispanic American Historical Review*

HISPANIC AMERICAN HISTORICAL REVIEW vol 88.no. 4 2008 "Since 1986 students of Puerto Rican history have benefited from several editions of Fernando Pico's *Historia general de Puerto Rico*, which now appears in a welcome English version, updated and translated by the author. Simultaneously, Ediciones Huracan in San Juan has released a new Spanish edition under the original title. Pico is a leading historian of the island, having worked with primary sources and published on various topics and time periods; his knowledge of Puerto Rican historiography is broad and deep. The book is especially recommended for the general public and for use as a core text in undergraduate surveys of Puerto Rican history. As the subtitle in English implies, the Puerto Rican people, in all their diversity, are placed at the center of Pico's analysis, and he argues that the processes they initiated "are more important than the decisions made by the ruling figures of the North Atlantic" (p. xi), at least in the long term. While Pico gives consistent attention to the initiatives and impacts of nonelites, it is clear that at times these were swamped -- though never annihilated -- by those of foreign capital and governments. A second goal is to "address the claims made by" four currents of Puerto Rican historiography -- great men/moralistic, institutional, and social/economic studies, and studies of "historians' own ambivalent practices" (p. viii) -- which Pico accomplishes implicitly for the most part, even in the footnotes. Pico is unfailingly polite and jargon-free even when openly disputative. He chides the Taino roots movement gently for contributing to the marginalization of African heritage in Puerto Rico, courteously demolishes the notion that either the Bourbons or municipal authorities had much control on the ground in the eighteenth century, and casts doubt on the argument that a separate Creole bourgeoisie took clear form by the end of the 1800s. The most impassioned section of the book is the final few pages, which constitute a moving call to celebrate Puerto Rican diversity, achievements, and commitment to education and social justice. The narrative achieves a very readable synthesis of much of the progress in Puerto Rican historiography as a whole, incorporating political, diplomatic, and military history with social, economic, and to some extent cultural history, and beginning with a brief chapter sketching the geological zones and ecosystems of the island. The select bibliography lists several dozen secondary sources published since the first Spanish edition of 1986, and a brief hunt through the notes, particularly for the last two chapters on recent history, reveals more. Pico often begins chapters by placing Puerto Rico in relevant broader contexts such as the early modern Atlantic World or the expanding United States hemispheric hegemony in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Organized chronologically, the book offers a quite even coverage of the four main periods (1510-1765, 1765-1825, 1825-1895, since 1898), -- *Hispanic American Historical Review*

## About the Author

Fernando Pico , University of Puerto Rico is author of several books including "Puerto Rico 1898: the War after the War"

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