Solá, José O.
Reseña de "Cayeyanos: familias y solidaridades en la historia de Cayey" de Fernando Picó
The City University of New York
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In *Cayeyanos*, as in his earlier works, Fernando Picó has reconstructed the history of a Puerto Rican town in splendid fashion. In this book Picó explores the history of Cayey through the lives of families and individuals of various social classes. Much like an archeologist, the author excavates the vast wealth of documents found in different archives and academic centers to reconstruct life outside the main cities of the island—San Juan and Ponce. The scope of this book is ambitious: it is a micro-history of a town from the point of view of the people from its origins in the late 1700s to the year 2000. To accomplish his goal in *Cayeyanos* Picó carefully selects a few individuals and families to explain how local, national, and international events unfold in this region of Puerto Rico.

To reconstruct the history of the *Cayeyanos*, Picó, as mentioned above, uses both official government sources as well as sources originating from the popular sectors. Picó actually attempts to write a history, as he states, much like Richard Price’s *First Time*. Price, an anthropologist, writes a history of the Maroon people of Surinam using both official government documents and the oral histories of this community. To highlight the two interpretations of events Price places both stories in the text. The outcome is a text that has within each page two stories running parallel to each other. Picó’s work by no means tries to accomplish this academic exercise, but the author does reconstruct the history of the *Cayeyanos* from two different points of view—the official perspective as generated from government documents, and the other outlook generated from popular lore. I will argue that Picó throughout his career has written from a position where the reader can see the complexities of human interaction, as described by people working for government agencies and through the lenses of the masses.

By excavating the Puerto Rican archives, Picó is able to construct a detailed history of Puerto Rico. Those familiar with his work, and those of us that have had the privileged of seeing him pour over hundreds of documents, know that Fernando tirelessly combs the official documents as sources to understand the lives of popular groups in Puerto Rico. As in his previous works, Picó digs into a number of sources to write this book. In *Cayeyanos* Picó uses ecclesiastical documents (baptism, marriage, and death registries) to reconstruct the history of the family in Cayey. He also uses these documents in combination with property and tax records, wills, petitions to municipal officials, slave records, and workbook documents to measure the rate of property lost or gained by individuals in Cayey, including a reconstruction of the prominent and not so prominent families in this town. Picó is also interested in reconstructing the daily lives of the *Cayeyanos*. To accomplish this the author uses police records, court documents, private correspondence, newspapers, and magazines of the particular period under examination, as well as oral histories collected by local historians.

Scholars and students of Puerto Rican history, as well as historians of the Caribbean, should pay close attention to this book because throughout his writings Picó constantly is telling us about the number of topics yet to be investigated. As an author whom many consider to be one of the best scholars of nineteenth-
century Puerto Rican history, Pico has told us in *Cayeyanos* that the history of the island, especially the period between the late 1700s and the 1800s, still needs to be written. Such statements might puzzle anyone who is familiar with the Puerto Rican historiography of the nineteenth century. Yet it is clear that Picó is saying that the current historiography of the island continues to avoid certain themes or periods. In chapter two Picó argues for the need to research the history of the slave family (p. 23) and how slaves participated within the microeconomy around the plantations (p. 25).

In *Cayeyanos*, Picó thus reconstructs in brevity how the actions of slaves contradict the notions about their passivity. To the contrary, and in agreement with scholars such as Luis Figueroa and Rebecca Scott, Picó’s interpretation of slavery in Puerto Rico sheds a new light into the internal dynamics of the system. Indeed, he goes further by describing the brutality and importance of the slave system in the island. He concludes that slaves were key in the development of the economy of this town. Furthermore, he concludes from the census from Cayey that slaves accounted for more than twenty percent of the population during the first half of the nineteenth century. Notaries’ records of the nineteenth century show the brutality slaves endured. Within the wills Picó consulted he found countless descriptions of the bodies of slaves. These descriptions not only described the slaves’ height, hair, and age, but also the scars and physical conditions of these individuals. Much like describing household goods, these writings show the inhumanity of the slave system.

Picó’s *Cayeyanos* leaves the reader wanting more. His careful construction of elite, lower class, and slave families, the struggles faced by the plebe, the economic fluctuations affecting the local economy, and the political changes that came with transitions both from the island governments, as well as those caused by conflicts abroad, creates an interesting micro-history of a Puerto Rican town. Yet this is also the main problem with this work. This is not an in-depth description of Cayey or the people of this town, but rather a careful opening of a window to a history that is still to be written. In *Cayeyanos* Picó has produced a wonderful read that should be of interest to historians and students of Puerto Rican, Caribbean, and Latin American History.

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**Cave of the Jagua: The Mythological World of the Taínos**

By Antonio M. Stevens-Arroyo

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**REVIEWER:** Luis N. Rivera-Pagán, Princeton Theological Seminary

La apreciación de la vida cultural de las comunidades indígenas que habitaban las Antillas comienza desde el mismo primer viaje de Cristóbal Colón. Sensación causó la carta de febrero de 1493 en la que el Almirante llamó la atención a los seres que, en sus palabras, “andan todos desnudos, hombres y mugeres asi como sus madres los paren; aunque algunas mugeres se cobrian un solo lugar con una foja de yerba ó una cosa de algodón que para ello hacen”.

La desnudez de los arahuacos antillanos fue objeto de opuestas consideraciones. Podía ser señal de prístina inocencia—no se olvide que en el Génesis la inicial falta de vestidura de Adán y Eva así lo era. El mito del noble salvaje o ser humano natural tiene en las referidas primeras observaciones colombinas un asidero que aún se niega a morir. Pero, la desnudez también puede ser señal de salvajismo, de incultura, igual que de violación del pudor que exige la conciencia de la universalidad del pecado. Una de las