



# An Account of the Antiquities of the Indians: A New Edition, with an Introductory Study, Notes, and Appendices by José Juan Arrom (Chronicles of the New World Encounter)

By José Juan Pané

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Accompanying Columbus on his second voyage to the New World in 1494 was a young Spanish friar named Ramón Pané. The friar's assignment was to live among the "Indians" whom Columbus had "discovered" on the island of Hispaniola (today the island shared by Haiti and the Dominican Republic), to learn their language, and to write a record of their lives and beliefs. While the culture of these indigenous people—who came to be known as the Taíno—is now extinct, the written record completed by Pané around 1498 has survived. This volume makes Pané's landmark *Account*—the first book written in a European language on American soil—available in an annotated English edition.

Edited by the noted Hispanist José Juan Arrom, Pané's report is the only surviving direct source of information about the myths, ceremonies, and lives of the New World inhabitants whom Columbus first encountered. The friar's text contains many linguistic and cultural observations, including descriptions of the Taíno people's healing rituals and their beliefs about their souls after death. Pané provides the first known description of the use of the hallucinogen *cohoba*, and he recounts the use of idols in ritual ceremonies. The names, functions, and attributes of native gods; the mythological origin of the aboriginal people's attitudes toward sex and gender; and their rich stories of creation are described as well.

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### Review

“[This book] is important for the way in which it anticipates some of the main issues concerning the production of Latin American literature.”—Roberto González Echevarría, author of *Myth and Archive: A Theory of Latin American Narrative*

“[This is a] highly accessible English translation. . . [of] the earliest work dealing exclusively with the indigenous inhabitants of the New World.”—Patricia Seed, Rice University

### From the Back Cover

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### About the Author

Fray Ramon Pané, a self-described “poor friar of the Order of Saint Jerome,” arrived in Hispaniola with Christopher Columbus in 1494 where he spent the next two years living with and recording the lives of its indigenous inhabitants.

José Juan Arrom is Professor Emeritus of Latin American Literature at Yale University and the author of numerous books, including *Imaginación del Nuevo Mundo*.

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