
Norman E. Whitten, Jr. has written a book rich in descriptive detail concerning black frontiersmen in western Colombia and northwestern Ecuador. The book is divided into two separate sections: Part I, Afro-Hispanic Adaptation; and Part II, Afro-Hispanic Culture. Part I relies heavily on published secondary material (especially Robert Cooper West) in describing the physical setting and historical dimensions of the region. Whitten’s major contributions clearly lie in the second section where he carefully describes the black frontiersmen’s dwellings, occupations, rituals, kinship patterns, and social relationships. Of special value are his discussions of secular and sacred rituals (97–145). The meanings of dances, stories, and religious ceremonies are succinctly analyzed and make fascinating reading. Whitten concludes with some thoughts concerning modern race relations and an analysis of the various words used to describe the black frontiersmen (174–184). Unfortunately, the reader is never exactly certain what is meant by the term Afro-Hispanic (Whitten acknowledges this problem, xiv), or what African and Hispanic forces mingled to create the specific rituals and customs in the region under examination.

Temple University

William F. Sharp


This is a new edition of a great masterpiece of Spanish political economy. Sancho de Moncada lived and wrote in Toledo and Madrid during the crucial early decades of the seventeenth century. He was the most important member of a large group of intellectuals who published lengthy tracts on the question of Spanish decline. But, as the editor points out, Moncada’s work both anticipated and refined many of the arguments of his contemporaries. Among other topics, Moncada dealt explicitly with the relationship between Spain and the Americas, and, in particular, the effects of treasure imports on the economy and society of Spain. Thus, the work serves as an important introduction to an understanding of Spanish thought on the colonial problem at an important historical juncture.

The scholarly introduction by the editor combines an appreciation of Moncada’s talents with an analysis of the intellectual, social, and political situation of Golden Age Spain. Moncada’s essay is reproduced in its original form, with extensive marginal citations to other contemporary works.

The City College of New York

Michael Weiss