

DOCUMENT REPORT: DESCRIBING THE “INDIAN”

1. Description and Purpose

The [first] assignment of this course is an essay comparing Bartolomé de las Casas's (1484–1566) *Apologetic History of the Indies* (ca. 1551) with Bernardo de Vargas Machuca's (ca. 1555–1622) *Indian Militia and Description of the Indies* (1599). You will carefully and critically read through designated selections from these two texts and compare how their authors described indigenous peoples. The purpose of this assignment is to think about the different ways in which Europeans both understood and described the “other” they encountered in the New World. This document analysis provides you with an opportunity to exercise your historical imagination and to engage with primary sources in a critical fashion. You must think about the biases of the authors and how they viewed the world they were experiencing. The articles by David A. Brading and Kris Lane cited below are there to provide you with a general sketch of Las Casas and Vargas Machuca and the context in which they wrote.

2. Important Details

Due Date, Time, and Place: To be determined (email before midnight)

Length: [XX] pages (double-spaced, 12-font, Times New Roman)

Sources:

- Bartolomé de las Casas. “Apologetic History of the Indies.” In *Introduction to Contemporary Civilization in the West*, 3rd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960).
- Bernardo de Vargas Machuca. “Qualities and Customs of the Indians in General.” In *The Indian Militia and Description of the Indies*. Translated by Timothy F. Johnson (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008): 170–181.
- David Anthony Brading. “Chapter 3: The Unarmed Prophet.” In *The First America: The Spanish Monarchy, Creole Patriots, and the Liberal State, 1491–1867* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991): 59–78.
- Kris Lane. “Introductory Study.” In Bernardo de Vargas Machuca, *The Indian Militia and Description of the Indies*. Translated by Timothy F. Johnson (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008): xvii–lx.