

Caesar DBG 1.1

Gallia est omnis divisa in tres partes . . . Hi omnes linguas, institutis, legibus inter se differunt.

Gaul is all divided into three parts . . . All these differ among themselves in language, institutions and laws.

Compare that sentence to this sentence of Columbus

In omnibus his insulis nulla est diversitas inter gentis effigies, nulla in moribus atque loquela.

Nor are they slow or rude; in fact they are men of the greatest and most penetrating natural ability, and men who cross that sea not without wonder give back an account of everything, but never have they seen clothed races and ships of this kind. Immediately after I arrived at that sea, from the first island I violently snatched Indians, who might learn from us: and they might teach us equally, those things of which they themselves have knowledge in these regions. And from this plan it (our project) advanced. For after a brief time we ourselves understood them and they us by gesture and signals, then they understood words and they were of great benefit to us. Those come with me who now nevertheless always think me to have jumped down from the sky, however much for a long time they have dwelled with us and they dwell with us today. And these are first, who announce it wherever we have landed, some without interruption speaking to others in an advertising (promoting) voice. "Come, come and you shall see the celestial race." For this reason women as well as men, children as well as adults, youth as well as old men, fear held shortly before having been laid aside, Eagerly saw us (a great crowd again and again pressing together) some bringing food, others drink with great love and incredible kindness.

Each island has many canoes of solid wood, although narrow, nevertheless in length and form similar to our biremes, moreover they are swifter in their course. They are controlled by oars alone. Of these certain ones are large, certain ones are small, certain ones all in the middle, nevertheless more are greater biremes, each may be rowed by eighteen rowing stations. With these they are carried (it is traversed) into all the islands, which are innumerable, and with these they exercise their trade and commerce is made between them. I saw some of these biremes or canoes which carried seventy or eighty oars.

In all these islands there is no diversity among the groups in appearance, none in customs or language. In fact all understand each other in turn. This thing is very useful to that which I believe our Serene King to desire especially, of course, their conversion to the holy faith of Christ. To which indeed, as much as I was able to understand, they are very favorable and inclined.

GRAMMAR AND WORD USE QUESTIONS

- Why does the *qui*-clause (line 6) have a subjunctive verb?
It is a relative clause of purpose.
- Identify the construction of *putant me desiluisse e coelo*. Translate it.
Indirect statement—" (who) think me to have jumped down from the sky" or "(who) think that I have jumped down from the sky."
- Why would Columbus use *desiluisse* (line 10) rather than the more dignified *descendisse*?
He shows a growing impatience with this insistence that he and his men are heavenly beings.
- Identify its construction and translate *elata voce* (line 14) literally.
Ablative absolute—"with a voice having been promoted."
- What is the construction of the phrase in brackets?
Ablative absolute (For translation, see #6 below.)
- How is it translated literally? With more standard wording?
A great crowd pressing together again and again. While a great crowd pressed close together every time.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- What does Columbus want to make clear about the natives?
They are not sluggish or rude.
- How did Columbus acquire guides? Was this plan a success?
He captured a few and took them with him by force. It was successful, because each group learned from the other.
- What does Columbus think should have caused the natives to revise their first opinion of him and his men?
They have been living close to the Spaniards for some time.