

temere duces creant, atque eos mores probant, quos libido
20 furorque persuaserit. Tempore vero procendente homines
viribus et industria praestantes per tyrannidem coepisse
dominari, ut olim Nemrot, paulatimque crescentes eam
constituisse.

Rempublicam quam apud Peruentes, et Mexicanos nostri
25 invenerunt, barbaram quoque ipsam, sed a cetera barbarie
Indorum plurimum abhorrentem. Quare genus hoc
hominum silvestre ex barbaris profugisque hominibus
maxime propagatum ratio ipsa persuadet.

TRANSLATION

Learned men recorded in letters (the fact) that all memory of those was extended (to be extended) particularly up (back) to four hundred years, beyond that (limit) of age nothing other than dense shadows of ignorance present themselves. And it is not especially to be wondered at, since a history of inexperience of letters deserves pardon, in (for) which (circumstances) exact calculation of greater numbers by that quipu ought to be the more (a matter of) wonder, because up to this (limit) of age it is (remains) enduring. To me long inquiring, whether some other notation might exist among those barbarians, from which place the first ancestors of these migrated here, indeed nothing has come forth about this matter, but that rather they generally thought themselves born and established in this land; unless they were checked by the Catholic faith, (they thought) from one (man) all the race of mortals to have sprung. Indeed noble authorities hold by no mediocre conjectures that for these barbarians no kings existed (no kings to have existed), no certain civilized state (to have been) founded, for as long as possible (known) (them) to have lived group by group haphazardly, as now the Floridians and Brazilians, as the Chiriguani, as nearly all races of Indians, who have no certain kings, but just as the fortune of war or peace carries (them), suddenly and rashly they choose leaders, and they approve those customs which desire or rage has persuaded. Indeed,

with time advancing, men outstanding in strength or industry (to) have begun to dominate through tyranny, as once Nimrod (did), and little by little increasing (to) have established it.

That State which our people found among the Peruvians and Mexicans, also itself barbarous, but abhorring very much the brutality of the rest of the Indians. Therefore reason itself persuades that this woodland race of men was increased (to have been increased) greatly by barbaric and fugitive men.

GRAMMAR AND WORD USE QUESTIONS

- Find and explain a metaphor in the first sentence. See Appendix 3 for the definition of the term metaphor.

Tenebras ignorationis "shadows of ignorance."

- Find a causal *cum* clause in the second sentence. Since it is causal, how should you translate *cum*? Translate the clause.

Cum literarum imperitia veniam historia promereatur; cum = since "since a history of ignorance of letters deserves pardon."

- Translate the subjunctive indirect question which *an* introduces in the third sentence.

"Whether among these barbarians some other notation might exist."

- Further on in the same sentence, the *nisi* clause is evidently subjunctive by attraction. Translate this clause.

"Unless they might be checked by the Catholic faith."

- In the next sentence, what does the major clause *nobiles auctores tenent* set up?

An indirect statement.

- Find and translate an example of litotes in this passage.

Coniecturis non mediocribus "not mediocre conjectures."

- Nulos reges* is the first subject of *fuisse*; *rempublicam* is the second. Translate these two clauses with *hisce barbaris*.

"For these barbarians no kings to have been; no established state to have been."

- In the next sentence (lines 21–23), we find a present ablative absolute that was also used in Chapter 24. Translate it.

Tempore procedente "time advancing."

9. In this sentence, find and translate the infinitives that serve as verbs in the indirect statement.

Coepisse “to have begun”; *dominari* (which completes *coepisse*) “to dominate”; *constituisse* “to have established.”

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. By the best calculations of the scholars of Acosta's time, how far back does the racial memory of the native peoples extend?

About four hundred years.

2. What is the only system of notation that Acosta has discovered among them?

The quipu, a system of knotted cords.

3. What do the natives believe about themselves?

That they have always lived in this area.

4. In what kind of societies do they live?

Loose ones, whose leaders are chosen rashly or have seized power through force.

5. In the center of the passage, what five widely separated groups of New Spain inhabitants has Acosta named? How does this give weight to his conclusions?

The Floridians, who live in Florida; the Brazilians; the Chiriguani of Bolivia and Argentina; the Peruvians; and the Mexica. Looking at the map given with the introduction to the student text, we can see that Acosta has knowledge of many New World peoples in many areas and that broad knowledge strengthens his conclusions.

6. What conclusion does reasoning suggest?

That the peoples arose from barbarians and simply multiplied.

© Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, Inc.
www.BOLCHAZY.com