

THE HELVETIANS PARLEY WITH CAESAR

GRAMMAR ASSUMED:

Conditions

WHEELOCK: CHAPTER 33

Caesar here illustrates how he, as commander of the Roman forces in Gaul, deals with an arrogant adversary.

Contrā Helvētiōs, quī in agrōs populōrum vīcīnōrum invādēbant, Caesar bellum suscepit. Cum potuisset ūnō diē pontem in Ararī facere et suum exercitum trādūcere, Helvētiī, quī diēbus vīgīntī idem difficillimē cōnfecerant, lēgātōs ad eum mīsērunt. Hī ita dīxērunt: "Sī pācem populus Rōmānus nōbīscum faciet, in illīs fīnibus ubi volueris, manēbimus. Sed sī bellō nōs diūtius premere in animō habēs, cōgitā dē antiquā fāmā nostrā. Ita enim ā patribus māiōribusque nostrīs didicimus ut māgis virtūte bellum gerāmus quam īnsidiīs. Quod sī contrā nōs tuum exercitum dūcās, nōn solum salūtem tuam, sed etiam honōrem populī Rōmānī certē āmittās."

Hīs Caesar ita respondit: "Etiam sī vestrōrum priōrum vitiōrum memoriā dēpōnere possem, certē nōn possem ignōscere vestrīs novīs sceleribus. Nisi quōs obsidēs dabit, pācem vōbīscum nōn faciam."

Helvētiī, sī Caesarī tum cēssissent, meliōrem fortūnam invēnissent. Sed īnsolenter respondērunt: "Nōbīs ā māiōribus nostrīs hic mōs trādītus est: Helvētiī obsidēs accipiunt, nōn dant."

—adapted from Caesar, *The Gallic War* 1.13f.

VOCABULARY:

Helvētiī, -ōrum, m. pl.: Helvetians, one of the tribes living in ancient Gaul (now France and Switzerland)

vīcīnus, -a, -um: neighboring

invādō, -ere, -vāsī, -vāsus: to rush in, fall upon, seize

pōns, pontis, m.: bridge

Arar, Araris (ablative Ararī), m.: the river Arar (now Saône) which flows into the Rhône river

trādūcō, -ere, -dūxī, -ductus: to lead across, bring over

idem: i.e. ūnō diē pontem in Ararī facere

cōnficiō, -ere, -fēcī, -fectus: to complete, finish

lēgātus, -ī, m.: legate, ambassador

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gerāmus: present subjunctive where imperfect might be expected; shows a result that holds true in the present time

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quod sī: but if

dēpōnō, -ere, -posuī, -positus: to lay aside

ignōscō, -ere, -nōvī, -nōtus: to pardon, overlook (+ dative)

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obses, -sidis, m. or f.: hostage

īnsolenter (adverb): arrogantly

¹ subj. is Caesar ² viginti goes w/ the abl. diebus - abl. of time ³ "with greatest difficulty"

⁴ perf. active subjunctive
2nd person sing. of /volo, velle, volui/ ⁵ in animo habere = to intend to (infinitive) ⁶ maiores = elders/ancestors

⁷ magis...quam = "rather (blank)...than (blank)" ⁸ quos = "those who are..."

⁹ cedo + dative = yield to