



## Prologue to Republics of the World | Prologo a las Republicas del Mundo

### Text Information

Author | Jerónimo Roman

Language | Spanish

Period | 16th Century

Genre | History

Source |

Collection | Making History: Chronicles, Legends and Anecdotes

URL | [http://sourcebook.stanford.edu/text/roman\\_prologue\\_republics\\_world/](http://sourcebook.stanford.edu/text/roman_prologue_republics_world/)

Transcription, translation and introduction by Leoardo Velloso Lyons.

### Introduction to the Text

### Introduction to the Source

### About this Edition

### Further Reading



## Prologue to Republics of the World | Prologo a las Republicas del Mundo

PROLOGO DIRIGIDO ALA S.C.R.M. del Rey don Philippe, II.  
de las Españas, nuestro Señor

S.C.R.M.

A LOS Reales pies de V.M. pongo las Republicas del mundo que yo he escripto, para que queden llenas de esplendor y de immortalidad, como lo quedó la figura de Phidias en la celada de la diosa Pallas.

Comencé en mi juventud esta obra y acabe la en los treyn-ta y nueve años de mi edad, trabajando continuamente en ella, assegurando mis esperanças y su buena dicha en que avia de servir con esta labor a V.M. porque estoy cierto que aunque los negocios arduos pueden divertir a los grandes Reyes de la dulçura de la lection, a lo menos no dexan por esso de favorecer las letras y las artes.

No creo que el aver gastado mucho tiempo en este genero de lection enflaquecerá a la obra, pues si se mirare atentamente, ninguna cosa ay en el mundo que consigo trayga curiosidad que no esté aqui. Solo trances de armas, caydas de Principes, y reveses de fortuna faltan, pero de esse menester bastantemente emos escripto en las Monarchias, como ya por Memorial lo dixé a V.M. el año passado.

Todo genero de letras es grato, pero aquel que trata de variedad es más apacible, porque el ingenio humano como no pueda tener constancia en una cosa, recrease quando vee otra de que no tenia noticia. No creo que es ageno de monge averme dado a tanta variedad de lection, debaxo de nombre de historia, pues solo este estilo de escrivir pertenece solamente a los Ecclesiasticos y a las personas mas religiosas, porque el primer libro que vuo en el mundo fue historia, que fue el Genesis, y escrivio Moysen, que fue sacerdote, capitan y sancto, y todo lo de mas que toca a historia en la sagrada escriptura lo escrivieron, o Profetas, o Pontifices. Entre los Chaldeos los sacerdotes escrivian las cosas que hazian los Reyes, y en Roma el Pontifice Maximo estava obligado a concertar los Annales de la republica. De manera que no deshara mi profesion el aver gastado muchos años en esta diversidad de cosas reduzidas a historia.

PROLOGUE WRITTEN FOR H.R.S.R. King Philip II, of the Spanish kingdoms, our Liege

S.C.R.M<sup>1</sup>.

At your majesty's royal feet I lay the *Republics of the World*<sup>2</sup>, which I have written so that they may be full of splendor and immortal renown, just like Phidias's statue of the goddess Athena's helm.

I began this work in my youth and finished it at thirty-nine years of age, continuously laboring over it, keeping my hopes up that I would one day serve your royal majesty with this work. For I am certain that even though tough matters may divert great kings' attention from the pleasure of learning, at least they do not cease to favor the arts and letters on that account.

I do not believe that my having spent much time on this kind of learning will weaken this work, because, if carefully examined, one will see that there is nothing in the world worthy of our curiosity that does not appear in this work. Only clashes of weapons, falls of princes, and reversals of fortune are missing, but on this subject we have written enough in *The Monarchies*<sup>3x</sup>, as I already told Your Majesty last year.

All genres of writing are worthy; however, the one that deals with a variety of subjects is most pleasant, because human intellect cannot sustain a focus on one thing alone, and it rejoices when it encounters something it did not know before. I do not believe that it is unfit for a monk to have devoted himself to various kinds of learning within the subject of history, because this genre of writing is the only one to belong exclusively to the clergy and to the people who are most religious, since the first book that the world saw was one of history: that was Genesis, written by Moses, who was a priest, a captain and a saint; and everything else in Holy Scripture that belongs to the subject of history was written by either prophets or religious authorities. Among the Chaldeans, the priests were the ones who wrote about the deeds of kings, and in Ancient Rome it was the *Pontifex Maximus*<sup>4</sup> who had to oversee the republic's annals. And so, my having spent many years with this variety of topics belonging to history will not undo my profession.



Suelen en este lugar los auctores enfalçar a los Principes que intitulan sus trabajos, y mostrar la dificultad que tuvo la obra, mas yo para lo primero no soy bastante, ni ay necesidad, pues por todo el mundo ay levantados trp-  
pheos en nombre de V.M. En lo segundo no ay para que yo enfalce la obra, porque para que ella tenga fuerças bastante a mi que V.M. se tenga por servido de mis estudios y llamolos mios, porque por mi trabajo, y sin favor humano aprendi lo que se, por lo qual Artaxerxes estimó en muchó una mançana que le dio un labrador, pareciendo le buena, y preguntando le, que de que arbol la avia cogido, respondió: "Señor, de uno que yo planté y he labrado con mis manos." Por lo qual estimó en más el presente. Yo no offrezco agua en las palmas, como el otro la dio a Dario rey Persa, ni mançana a Artaxerxes, mas lection universal, y que ningun Griego, ni Latino se occupó en semejante exercicio. Y pues aquellos fueron premiados por tan pequeños servicios, y es loada de los auctores la liberalidad de aquellos grandes Reyes. Yo solo me contentaré con que V.M. reciba alegremente esta mi obra, como el Inclyto rey don Joan el II, vuestro quarto aguelo recibió de un simple pastrocillo una perdiz, estando en la torre de Montalvan, echando mano de la sencillez del çagal y no del don.

It is customary for authors in their prologues to elevate the princes whose names their works bear, as it is for authors to describe how difficult it was to write them. But I am not sufficiently qualified for the first task, nor is there any need for it, as all over the world many have lifted trophies in Your Majesty's name. With respect to the second custom, there is no need for me to praise this work because for me it is enough that Your Majesty consider himself well served by my labors. And I call those labors mine as it was due to my efforts, and to no other human aid, that I have learned what I have. It was for that same reason that Artaxerxes much appreciated an apple that a farmer gave him<sup>5</sup>. Because it seemed to him that the apple was good, Artaxerxes asked the farmer from which apple tree he had gathered it, to which the farmer responded: "My lord, from a tree I planted myself and upon which I toiled with my own hands." For that reason, Artaxerxes appreciated the gift even more. I do not bring you water with my own hands, as another brought to Darius, King of Persia, nor do I bring you an apple, but rather a universal teaching, which no Greek nor Roman has carried out in similar way. And those Greeks and Romans were awarded for such small services, and we know from other authors that those great kings were very liberal. I will be contented with Your Majesty's happily receiving my work, just like the illustrious King John II, your fourth-degree grandfather<sup>6</sup> who received a quail from a simple young shepherd when he was in the tower of Montalban, which he then appreciated not because of the gift itself, but because of the shepherd's simplicity.

De V.M.R. humilde vassallo que sus reales manos besa

Your Royal Majesty's humble servant who kisses your royal hands,

F. Hieronymo Roman

Father Jeronimo Roman

## Critical Notes

- 1 SCRM is the king's title, as it was used since Charles V, Philip II's father, which means "Sacred Catholic Royal Majesty."
- 2 I.e. the book itself, in reference to the book's title
- 3 Jerónimo Román wrote another work called *Memoriales de las monarquías del mundo*, which is what he references as "The Monarchies." For Román, *The Monarchies* was the correlate volume to the *Republics of the World*.
- 4 I.e. the high priest of the *Collegium Pontificum*
- 5 This seems to be a reference to Artaxerxes II, the King of Kings of the Achaemenid Empire from 404 BC until his death in 358 BC. He was called the Mnemon by Greek authors, which means "having good memory." His generosity towards the givers of gifts, however small, is chronicled in Plutarch's *The Parallel Lives*.
- 6 King John II was Philip II's grandfather's (the Portuguese king, Manuel I).