

# Carlos De Sigüenza Y Góngora I

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(b. [Mexico City](#), 20 August 1645; d . [Mexico City](#), 22 August 1700)

*mathematics, astronomy, natural history.*

Sigüenza's father was tutor to Prince Baltazar before going to [New Spain](#). After receiving his first education at home, Sigüenza entered the Jesuit Colegio de Tepozotlán and took his first vows in 1662. He continued his studies at the Colegio del Espíritu Santo at Puebla until 1667, when he was expelled for disciplinary reasons; he remained a secular priest. During the following years Sigüenza was a student at the University of Mexico and chaplain at Amor de Dios Hospital. In 1672 he was awarded the chair of astrology and mathematics at the university and occupied it for more than twenty years.

In 1680, to calm the fears aroused by a comet, Sigüenza wrote *Manifiesto filosófico contra los cometas* (1681), which drew a reply from Martín de la Torre the same year. To answer it Sigüenza wrote *El Belerofonte matemático* (now lost), which aroused the antagonism of Father Eusebio Kino, a Jesuit missionary who was a renowned mathematician and astronomer, leading him to publish a strong response to Sigüenza's arguments: *Exposición astronómica del cometa* (1681). Kino's book gave Sigüenza the opportunity to publish in 1690 *Libra astronómica y filosófica*, a short book of great significance for its sound mathematical background, anti-Aristotelian outlook, and familiarity with modern authors: Copernicus, Galileo, Descartes, Kepler, and [Tycho Brahe](#).

As royal cosmographer, Sigüenza made valuable observations and drew good charts. These included a general map of [New Spain](#), probably the first by a Mexican, best known through a reproduction by Beaumont in 1873–1874; a map of the lakes of the Valley of Mexico, probably made in 1691, but not published until 1748, and reprinted in 1768, 1783, and 1786; and a map of the bay of Santa María de Galve (Pensacola), 1693. In 1692 the viceroy's palace was set on fire during a riot and Sigüenza risked his life to save valuable papers in the archives.

Sigüenza projected writing a history of ancient Mexico and collected much material, but little was published. His manuscripts, now lost, were considered by contemporaries of great value. He assembled a large library, said to be the best in the realm. In 1693 Sigüenza was sent with Admiral Andrés de Pez to reconnoiter Pensacola Bay: he kept an interesting diary and made valuable charts.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. Original Works. Besides those works cited in text, Sigüenza wrote *Piedad heróica de don Fernando Cortes* (Mexico City, 1689); *Trofeo de la justicia española* (Mexico City, 1691); *Mercurio volante* (Mexico City, 1693), and several unpublished MSS.

II. Secondary Literature. See F. Pérez Salazar, *Obras de Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora con una biografía* (Mexico City, 1928); J. Rojas Garcidueñas, *Don Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora. Erudito barroco* (Mexico City, 1945); I. A. Leonard, *Don Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora. A Mexican Savant of the Seventeenth Century* (Berkeley, 1929).

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