



STOCKCERO TEACHING KIT (122)

TITLE: *Infortunios de Alonso Ramírez*

AUTHOR: Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora

ISBN: 978-1-934768-39-6

Editor: Asima F.X. Saad-Maura

I. OVERVIEW & SIGNIFICANCE

Published in Mexico in 1690, *Infortunios de Alonso Ramírez* by the polymath scholar Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora is a text of immense importance for the study of colonial Latin American literature, maritime history, and early prose narrative. The book recounts the extraordinary global journey and harrowing captivity of Alonso Ramírez, a young artisan born in San Juan de Puerto Rico, who travels across the Americas, the Philippines, and the Indian Ocean before being captured by English pirates and eventually returning to Spanish territories in Yucatán.

Whether viewed as a work of creative fiction penned entirely by Sigüenza y Góngora or as a faithful historical testimonial dictated by Ramírez, the text provides a vivid window into the late 17th-century Hispanic world as the Spanish Empire faced irreversible decline. Meticulously edited by Asima F.X. Saad-Maura, this critical edition preserves the format, punctuation, and orthography of the original 1690 editio princeps. Supported by comprehensive footnotes and nautical glossaries, it bridges the gap between historical documentary evidence and literary analysis.

II. CONTEXT & CRITICAL APPROACHES

This text offers a rich, interdisciplinary framework for exploring colonial geopolitics, religious identity, maritime culture, and the boundaries between history and fiction in the Hispanic Baroque.

The Debate Over Authorship and Genre:

Examine the enduring scholarly debate surrounding the book's creation. Is it an early Spanish American novel (as argued by Lucrecio Pérez Blanco and others) or a factual historical report of a shipwreck and captivity (supported by Estelle Irizarry's stylometric analyses)? Discuss how the text blurs the line between autobiography, testimony, and fiction.

Religion, Heresy, and High-Seas Geopolitics:

Analyze how Alonso Ramírez constructs his identity through the lens of Counter-Reformation Catholicism. Contrast his absolute terror of Protestant English pirates with his relief upon encountering Catholic Frenchmen or Spanish authorities. How does religious affiliation dictate safety, trust, and survival across global waters?

The Marian Cult and Imperial Ideology:

Explore the prominent role of the Virgin Mary—specifically the Virgin of Guadalupe—in the narrative. How do Alonso's fervent prayers and vows to the Virgin serve as both spiritual sustenance and a manifestation of Creole identity within the structures of the Spanish Empire?



The Stockcero Guarantee

SpanishBookPress Editions.

Printed in the USA. Never backlisted. Always available.

Copyright © 2025 Stockcero, Inc.

3785 N.W. 82nd Avenue, Suite 302, Miami, FL 33166, USA

Maritime History and Global Networks:

Utilize the text's extensive nautical terminology and geographical scope to discuss the globalized nature of the Spanish Empire in the 17th century. How do trade routes, pirate activities across the Atlantic and Pacific, and administrative mechanisms in New Spain and the Philippines operate as a backdrop for individual survival?

III. ADVANCED DISCUSSION & RESEARCH PROMPTS

These prompts encourage deep engagement with the text, critical thinking, and comparative analysis suitable for advanced undergraduate and graduate seminars.

Cervantine Echoes: Compare Alonso Ramírez's narrative with the Tale of the Captive in Part I of Cervantes' *Don Quixote*. What structural, thematic, and ideological elements do these two captivity narratives share, and how does Sigüenza y Góngora adapt the Cervantine model to a late 17th-century American context?

The "First Universal American": Discuss the significance of Alonso Ramírez identifying as a native of Puerto Rico while spending much of his life traversing global spaces. How does this prefigure modern debates surrounding transnationalism, diaspora, and Caribbean literature of migration?

Textual Fidelity vs. Modernization: Analyze Saad-Maura's editorial decision to retain the original 1690 orthography, punctuation, and brackets. How does preserving these archaic typographical features affect a modern student's reading experience compared to heavily normalized editions?

The Pirate "Other": Examine how English and non-Catholic pirates are represented in the text. How do their acts of cruelty compare to the institutionalized pressures Alonso faces upon returning to Spanish jurisdiction (such as issues regarding the Bula de la Cruzada)?

IV. SUGGESTED FURTHER READINGS & BIBLIOGRAPHY

This section complements the study of *Infortunios de Alonso Ramírez*, providing avenues for deeper research into colonial Mexican literature and maritime captivity tales.

Primary Text:

Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora. *Infortunios de Alonso Ramírez*. Edited by Asima F.X. Saad-Maura. Stockcero. (TK ORDER: 122)

Key Secondary Scholarship:

Castro, Belén, and Alicia Llaena. *Infortunios de Alonso Ramírez*. Edición crítica. Madrid: Cátedra, 2003.

Irizarry, Estelle. *Infortunios de Alonso Ramírez*: Edición facsimilar con estudio preliminar. San Juan: Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, 1990.

Leonard, Irving A. *Books of the Brave*. Harvard University Press, 1949. (Essential context for the circulation of books and travel tales in colonial Spanish America).

Pérez Blanco, Lucrecio. *Infortunios de Alonso Ramírez*. Madrid: Historia 16, 1988.

Ross, Kathleen. *The Baroque Narrative of Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora*. Cambridge University Press, 1993.



The Stockcero Guarantee

SpanishBookPress Editions.

Printed in the USA. Never backlisted. Always available.

Copyright © 2025 Stockcero, Inc

3785 N.W. 82nd Avenue, Suite 302, Miami, FL 33166, USA

V. RELATED STOCKCERO RESOURCES

Origins, Picaresque & Costumbrismo (6-Book Bundle).

Other titles in the bundle: *La vida de Lazarillo de Tormes*, *El lazarillo de ciegos caminantes*, *La Quijotita y su prima*, *Don Catrín de la Fachenda*, *Manuela. Novela bogotana*.

[Browse Collection](#)

Interested in adopting this text for your course?

[Request an Evaluation Copy](#)

or [Browse our Full Catalog](#)



The Stockcero Guarantee

SpanishBookPress Editions.

Printed in the USA. Never backlisted. Always available.

Copyright © 2025 Stockcero, Inc

3785 N.W. 82nd Avenue, Suite 302, Miami, FL 33166, USA