

NAHUATL STUDIES AND THE "CIRCLE" OF HORACIO CAROCHI

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In the seventeenth century in New Spain there was an extensive literary culture which developed around figures such as don Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz.¹ In addition to these famous individuals, there were other literary circles which focused not on Spanish letters, but on the study of the Aztec language, Nahuatl. The circle which developed around P. Horacio Carocho, S. J., was by far the most important of these for the development of the professional study of Nahuatl. This group of scholars provided important groundwork for later students of the language. Moreover, they also contributed to a dramatic change in orientation of works written in Nahuatl. This paper will take a look at Carocho and his circle and their impact on the study of Nahuatl.

The foundations of the study of Nahuatl by the Europeans were laid in the sixteenth century principally by Franciscan friars. The names of these early scholars are common to all students of Nahuatl, since we still rely so heavily on their efforts. The *Vocabulario en lengua castellana y mexicana y mexicana y castellana* of Fr. Alonso de Molina serves to this day as the dictionary of choice for most scholars.² Fr. Andrés de Olmos and Fr. Bernardino de Sahagún also rank among the founding fathers of Nahuatl study. Olmos is rightly famous for his

¹ While a large bibliography exists for both Sigüenza y Góngora and Sor Juana, these two works can serve as a beginning: Octavio Paz, *Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, o Las Trampas de la Fe*, México, 1982, Fondo de Cultura Económica, also available in English as *Sor Juana, Or the Traps of Faith*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988; Irving A. Leonard, *Don Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, a Mexican Savant of the Seventeenth Century*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1929.

² While the book was first published in 1571, several editions of the work are available. The most common has a forward by Miguel León-Portilla, and is a facsimile published in 1970 by Editorial Porrúa, in Mexico.

early grammar of Nahuatl, *Arte para aprender la lengua mexicana*, although it remained unpublished until 1875.³ Sahagún devoted his life to the study of Aztec life and culture. His most celebrated work is the *Florentine Codex*. He also wrote a Spanish version of the *Florentine Codex* which scholars know as the *Historia general de las cosas de la Nueva España*.⁴ The pace of Nahuatl studies declined notably following the early years of the seventeenth century. Consequently the work of Carochi, coming in the middle of the century, stands as a renewal of interest in the serious study of the language.

Commemorations of the 500th anniversary of Columbus's voyage have helped to foster an interest in the pre-Columbian cultures, and Nahua studies have certainly benefitted from this. Modern scholars often lose sight of the original purpose for the investment of time and energy by the early scholars of Nahuatl. The first students of Nahuatl were priests and friars. They were convinced that the Christian religion was the only true religion, and that it was absolutely necessary to extirpate idolatry and convert the natives to Christianity. The incentive behind the study of Nahuatl language and Nahua culture was to better enable the friars to convert the natives.⁵

The tone and character of works published in Nahuatl through the sixteenth century and early seventeenth century did not change dramatically. Published works still included collections of sermons, catechisms, confessional guides, and grammars. A new trend began in about 1601, principally through the publications of Fr. Juan Bautista. Rather than concentrate on works destined to serve parish clergy in their ministry, there emerged a literature in Nahuatl. The works uniformly dealt with sacred topics, but no longer was their immediate purpose to aid parish clergy, but rather to provide didactic material written in Nahuatl, both for the use of the clergy and perhaps the edification of literate Nahuatl speakers. Included in these works are Bautista's *Vida*

³ For a comprehensive look at works published in Nahuatl see Ascensión H. de León-Portilla, *Tepuztlahtcuilolli: Impresos en Náhuatl*, 2 vols., México, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas e Instituto de Investigaciones Filológicas, 1988, For the works by Olmos see vol. 2, p. 293-294.

⁴ The works of Sahagún are widely available, *Historia general*, México, edited by Ángel María Garibay, Editorial Porrúa, 1975, *Florentine Codex*, 11 vols., Salt Lake City. University of Utah Press, 1950-69, translated and edited by Charles Dibble and Arthur J. O. Anderson.

⁵ Luis Nicolau D'Olivera, *Fray Bernardino de Sahagún (1499-1590)*, Salt Lake City, University of Utah Press, 1987, p. 30-31, *et passim*. Louise M. Burkhart, *The Slippery Earth*, Tucson, University of Arizona Press, 1989, p. 9-14.

y milagros de San Antonio de Padua and *Libro de la miseria*, his translation into Nahuatl of Motolinia's *La vida y muerte de los niños de Tlaxcala*, and Francisco Medina's *Vida y milagros de San Nicolás de Tolentino*. All of these works appeared in print between 1601 and 1605. It is not until the middle of the century that a similar production occurred, specifically Luis Lasso de la Vega's *Huei Tlamahuizoltica*, in 1649, the narrative of the apparition of the Virgin of Guadalupe. At this same time the members of the Carochi circle were also active, as his *Arte* appeared in 1645.

Before describing the trends in Nahuatl study in the middle of the seventeenth century, one should consider the life of Horacio Carochi.⁶ Carochi was born in Florence in 1579, although there are minor debates about the exact date of his birth. He entered the Society of Jesus in 1601, and arrived in New Spain in 1605. This would indicate that he received his formal training in theology and philosophy in Italy prior to arrival in Mexico. Most of the scholars who have studied Carochi's life have concluded that in 1609 he began his service in the Jesuit college at Tepotzotlan, where he would spend most of the rest of his life. In 1617 he took his final vows in the Society of Jesus. After years of teaching and study, in 1645 he became the rector of the Colegio Máximo in Mexico City. In this office he was involved in the confrontation which the Jesuits had with don Juan de Palafox, the bishop of Puebla, and later viceroy of Mexico, over the payment of the tithe. He also served as the vice-provost of the Casa Profeso in Mexico, until 1647 when he became provost.⁷ By 1657 he seems to have returned to Tepotzotlan, where he remained until his death in 1662.

From the time of his arrival in Mexico, Carochi was involved in ministry directly, and indirectly, to the natives. One source indicates that he served as a missionary in the San Luis de la Paz region of the modern state of Guanajuato, upon his arrival in New Spain.⁸ Regardless of this possible assignment, we know that upon his assignment to Tepotzotlan he became deeply involved in the study of native

⁶ For the biography of Carochi see Miguel León-Portilla, "Estudio introductorio", in Horacio Carochi, *Arte de la lengua mexicana*, México, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1983, p. ix-xx. For the basic chronology and bibliography see Francisco Zambrano, *Diccionario bio-bibliográfico de la Compañía de Jesús en México*, México, Editorial Jus, 1965, vol. 4, p. 653-669.

⁷ The records are a bit unclear over the office which he held, and the exact terms. In Spanish the office was *prepósito*. León-Portilla glosses the title as *superior* or *rector*. It might be closer to the modern provost. León-Portilla, "Estudio introductorio", xix. Zambrano, *Diccionario*, vol. 4, p. 657-660.

⁸ Zambrano, *Diccionario*, vol. 4, p. 655.

languages. Curiously his first, and seemingly more intense, interest was in Otomí, not Nahuatl. Most of the early references to him mention both languages. Many sources indicate that his teacher, at least for Nahuatl, was the famous Jesuit, P. Antonio del Rincón. Rincón had published his own Nahuatl grammar, the *Arte mexicana*, in 1595, which was the standard text at the Tepotzotlan college, and among the Jesuits generally, until Carochi's appeared fifty years later.⁹ At least one contemporary letter suggests that Carochi learned his Otomí directly from a local Indian.

Carochi's first book had to do with Otomí not Nahuatl. In 1625 he finished a grammar of Otomí for use within the Colegio. It was never published, however, although there are references to a manuscript copy and a dictionary.¹⁰ It was not until the publication of his *Arte de la lengua mexicana*, that he clearly emerged as a scholar of Nahuatl, but with that one publication he was thrust into the forefront of Nahuatl studies.

The most important feature of Carochi's Nahuatl grammar, which distinguishes it from all others, is the use of diacritics to show long vowels and the glottal stop. The early scholars of Nahuatl, while aware of these features, were hard pressed, using the orthographic methods of Spanish common in the sixteenth century, to indicate the presence of the features. One modern scholar, John Bierhorst has recognized that the priests and friars who studied the language in the colonial period fell into one of two groups according to their orthography of the language. The norm became the Franciscan method, although at the same time there was a Jesuit method.¹¹ The main difference was that the three important Jesuit grammarians of Nahuatl, Rincón, Carochi, and later Aldama y Guevara, utilized diacritical markings to give further information about vowel length and the presence of the glottal stop. The glottal stop was the only aspect which received some early recognition among the Franciscans, and in general it was indicated by the letter "h". Yet the Spaniards also used the "h" to represent sounds not present in Spanish, namely "w" through the digraph "h".¹² Con-

⁹ Joaquín García Icazbalceta, *Bibliografía mexicana del siglo XVI*, México, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1954, p. 420.

¹⁰ Zambrano, *Diccionario*, vol. 4, p. 663-64. Conde de la Viñaza, *Bibliografía española de lenguas indígenas de América*, Madrid, Sucesores de Rivadeneyra, 1892, p. 266, *items*, p. 891-93.

¹¹ John Bierhorst, *A Nahuatl-English Dictionary and Concordance to the Cantares Mexicanos*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1983, p. 9.

¹² J. Richard Andrews, *Introduction to Classical Nahuatl*, Austin, University of Texas Press, 1975, p. 5-7.

sequently, until Rincón, neither vowel length nor the glottal stop received the kind of attention they deserved, as important phonological features of Nahuatl.¹³ Just why he paid so much attention to these, after more than a century of neglect, is not known.

In his grammar, Rincón used a simple set of diacritics to represent some of the important sounds of Nahuatl which were not readily apparent in Spanish, specifically vowel length and the glottal stop. His system was the most complex of the three scholars, involving a total of five categories.¹⁴ Rincón identified two types of long vowel, one called *agudo*, acute, which he marked with the acute accent: á. The other long vowel he called the *grave*, grave, and he marked with the grave accent: à. These two long vowels were found in word final position and had either a falling tone, the grave, or a rising tone, the acute. For the undifferentiated vowel, he had a category called *moderado*, moderated, which he marked with the circumflex: â. The glottal stop only occurs following a short vowel. Consequently, Rincón divided short vowels into two categories, those followed by the glottal stop, which he marked with the caron: ă, and those without, which were unmarked. This complicated system, then became the standard for use among the Jesuits. What is interesting about Rincón's system is that he did not use it in the publication of his grammar, but merely in a final section where he contrasted words which could be written the same except for vowel length and the glottal stop.

Following Rincón, no further authors deal with the issues of vowel length or the glottal stop until Rincón's student, Horacio Carochi. The question then arises as to why Carochi would focus his attention on these issues, fully half a century after his mentor had written rather definitively on the subject? One possible reason is that Carochi studied Otomí prior to Nahuatl. In Otomí intonation is key. By having learned to listen more carefully in his study of Otomí, perhaps Carochi then applied the same careful analysis to Nahuatl, and realized that the standard orthography was missing some key elements which Rincón had only partially described.

In his position as professor at the Jesuit Colegio de Tepotzotlan, Carochi had the opportunity to directly change the study of Nahuatl

¹³ Frances Karttunen, *An Analytical Dictionary of Nahuatl*, Austin, University of Texas Press, 1983, p. xix-xxiii.

¹⁴ Antonio del Rincón, *Arte Mexicana*, México, Pedro Balli, 1595, f. 63v-64; Una Canger, "Philology in America, Nahuatl", *Historical Linguistics and Philology*, Jacek Fisiak, ed. Berlin & New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1990, p. 110-111.

in his time. Carochi's system of diacritics were a development on those of his teacher. In his work, Carochi lauds the efforts of Rincón but notes that his teacher did not incorporate the diacritics into his published work, an oversight Carochi sought to correct. Where Rincón had recognized five different categories, Carochi uses only four. Carochi does not distinguish between the rising tone and falling tone long vowels, marking all long vowels simply with the macron: *ā*. The simple short vowel Carochi marked with the acute: *á*. Carochi provided for marking short vowels which were followed by the stop, using the grave accent: *à*. Yet when the glottal stop occurred after a short vowel in a phrase final position, Carochi used the circumflex: *â*.¹⁵

As the Rincón grammar had served as the model when Carochi learned Nahuatl, so Carochi's methods would serve the Jesuits nearly until their expulsion in 1767. José Agustín Aldama y Guevara produced a Nahuatl grammar in 1754 which partially incorporated the system of diacritical marks. He limited them to three, however: the acute for the short vowel followed by glottal stop, the circumflex for the phrase final glottal stop, and the grave for the long vowel. Although Aldama y Guevara credits Carochi for his discussion of adverbs, he does not give any attribution for the system of diacritics.¹⁶ In 1759, another Jesuit, Ignacio Paredes, undertook a revision of Carochi's work. Yet this edition lacked the feature which was so very distinctive in Carochi, and Rincón's work, the use of the diacritical marks.¹⁷ It is small wonder, then, that a circle of scholars would develop around Horacio Carochi.

Of the disciples of Carochi, the one about whom we know the most is don Bartolomé de Alva. All of the evidence points to Alva being the brother of the famous Texcocan historian don Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxóchitl.¹⁸ Born sometime between 1600 and 1604, don Bartolomé studied theology within the University of Mexico, graduating by about

¹⁵ Carochi, *Arte de la lengua mexicana*, f2-2v; Canger, "Náhuatl", p. 110-112; Frances Karttunen, *An Analytical Dictionary of Nahuatl*, Austin, University of Texas Press, 1983, xix.

¹⁶ José Agustín Aldama y Guevara, *Arte de la lengua mexicana*, México, Imprenta Nueva de la Biblioteca Mexicana, 1754.

¹⁷ Ignacio de Paredes, *Compendio del Arte de la Lengua Mexicana*, México, Imprenta de la Biblioteca Mexicana, 1759.

¹⁸ Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxóchitl, *Obras Históricas*, 2 vols., ed. and introduction by Edmundo O'Gorman, México, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1977, vol. 1, p. 28-30, vol. 2, p. 346-9; Ángel María Garibay, *Historia de la Literatura Náhuatl*, México, Editorial Porrúa, 1953-55, vol. 2, p. 340. Also see José Mariano Beristáin y Souza, *Biblioteca septentrional*, Amecameca, Colegio Católico, 1883, vol. 1, p. 58-9.

1622. Alva was a secular priest, although quite possibly he had been trained by the Jesuits. At one time he served as the parish priest of Chiapa de Mota. This parish, located some sixty miles north-northwest of Mexico City is located in a mixed linguistic area of both Otomí and Nahuatl. Don Bartolomé was a scholar in his own right. In 1634 he published his *Confessionario mayor y menor en lengua mexicana* in Nahuatl for use by parish clergy. The work was dedicated to the archbishop, and appeared the same year as Francisco de Lorra Baquío's *Manual mexicano*, a handbook of parochial administration, based on the manual of the archdiocese of Toledo, but translated into Nahuatl.

The *Confessionario* by don Bartolome de Alva, while important, did not clearly tie him to the Carochi circle. A clearer tie is seen in the prefatory comments Alva made to Carochi's *Arte* in 1645. Alva had been commissioned by the viceroy, the Count of Salvatierra, to review the work to assure that it was morally and theologically correct. Alva expressed his praise for Carochi in the highest terms, even taking into account Baroque hyperbole. Alva exclaimed that Carochi's mastery of both Nahuatl and Otomí was so complete that he must have been tutored by angels. Alva extolled Carochi's efforts, praising and admiring the work, and noting the true devotion Carochi had for the Indians. In short, Alva found the work to be worthy of publication.

One additional piece credited to Alva was written about 1641. For reasons not quite clear, Alva set about translating three Spanish plays, by famous Golden Age playwrights, into Nahuatl. The works include Pedro Calderón de la Barca's *El gran teatro del mundo*, Antonio Mira de Amescua's *El animal profeta y dichosa patricida*, and Lope de Vega's *La madre de la mejor*. The first work was dedicated by Alva to Father Jacome Basilio and the last was dedicated to Horacio Carochi. Between the first and second work is an *entremés*, by an unknown author, which is a satire on clerical and judicial abuses.¹⁹

One can see from these exchanges that the relationship between Carochi and Alva was very warm. The manuscript by Alva of the Golden Age plays eventually formed part of the library of the Jesuit Colegio de San Gregorio.²⁰ It is not unreasonable to assume that Alva

¹⁹ John Frederick Schwaller, "Guías de manuscritos en Náhuatl", en *Estudios de Cultura Náhuatl*", México, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, 1987, v. p. 55. For a study and modern translation of the Calderón de la Barca piece, see William A. Hunter, "The Calderonian *Auto Sacramental*, 'El Gran Teatro del Mundo'," *Publications*, Tulane University, Middle American Research Institute, vol. 27, p. 105-201.

²⁰ Garibay, *Historia*, vol. 2, p. 342.

prepared copies of his translations for Carochi, and that the library inherited the copies from the Jesuit, since most of the holdings of the Society of Jesús were collected there after the expulsion in 1767.²¹ The manuscript eventually came to the United States, and it now forms part of the collection of the Bancroft Library of the University of California, Berkeley.

Another manuscript intimately connected with the Carochi circle is also housed in the Bancroft. This is the famous *Huehuehlahtolli* initially attributed to the Franciscan Fr. Juan Bautista. More recent scholarship has placed it within the Carochi circle because of the use of diacritics.²² The Bancroft Dialogues, or *Huehuehlahtolli*, are a collection of moral dialogues in the old style, very similar in content and form to other collections of *huehuehlahtolli* such as those collected by Olmos and Sahagún. They seem to date, generally, from 1570-80 and particularly the Texcoco region. Exactly how Carochi, or the member of his circle, came to work with these dialogues is quite unknown. It seems that they did serve as models for correct speech probably in the courses in Nahuatl which Carochi offered at the colegio de Tepotzotlan.

There is a third manuscript of interest with regard to the Carochi circle. It is held at the Newberry Library, in Chicago, and can be placed generally within the Carochi circle because of the use of the diacritics. The manuscript was incorrectly identified by a seller as a fragment of Martín de León's *Camino del cielo*. It in fact is a collection of fragmentary pieces of sermons, commentaries on Scripture, and discourses on the Ten Commandments. Although diacritics are not used throughout the work, there is one inscription on one fragment which reads: "To Father Horacio Carochi".²³ This implies that the piece was dedicated to Father Carochi, in a manner very similar to the dedication of the Golden Age plays by Alva. One of the scholars studying the Jesuits of Mexico attributed a piece called "camino del cielo" to Carochi, and that manuscript was held in the library of the Colegio de San Gregorio. Moreover the same library also contained

²¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 200.

²² Frances Karttunen and James Lockhart, *The Art of Nahuatl Speech, The Bancroft Dialogues*, Los Angeles, UCLA Latin American Center Publication, 1987, p. 2-6.

²³ Schwaller, *Guías*, 18. My deep thanks go to Joaquín Galarza who studied the Ayer collection Nahuatl manuscripts and whose typescript "Preliminary checklist to Mexican manuscripts in the Newberry Library", was as the point of departure for my own research and serves as the original cataloguing of the collection.

collections of sermons by Carochi in Nahuatl.²⁴ Regardless of the authorship or even the title of the work, the Ayer manuscript is a Nahuatl didactic work, containing some sermons and other religiously oriented material, and it has the hallmarks of the Carochi circle.

The three manuscripts studied thus far are all held in the United States, two in the Bancroft Library and one in the Newberry. Yet all at one time formed part of the same collection, all were taken out of Mexico together, and all later sold at auction in Europe. They all came from the Ramírez collection sold in London in 1880. The so-called "Camino" was item 510, the Golden Age comedies, item 515, and the Dialogues, item 521.²⁵

The Ramírez collection was formed in the mid-nineteenth century. José Fernando Ramírez was a collector and bibliophile. He purchased manuscripts on the open market, and seems to have also extracted many from the Franciscan and former-Jesuit conventual libraries. At one point he offered his collection to the Mexican state as the basis for a National Library, with the proviso that he be made the curator of the library. When the political climate shifted, in 1851, he sold his home in Durango and part of his collection, boxed up the rest, and fled Mexico. He continued to collect in exile.

The Ramírez collection returned to Mexico in 1871 and was held first by Alfredo Chavero, who purchased it from Ramírez' estate, and later by Manuel Fernández del Castillo. Eventually the collection arrived on the auction block in London.²⁶ Three people purchased the vast bulk of the collection: the London rare book dealer, Bernard Quaritch; Henry Stevens; and Count Heredia, of Spain. Many of the works purchased by Quaritch ended up in the Ayer collection of the Newberry. Stevens was buying specifically for Bancroft, and so those pieces ended up in the Bancroft Library. Nearly all of the Nahuatl manuscripts went to either Ayer or Bancroft. This explains how these pieces were divided up between two different libraries. In all likelihood, Ramírez acquired all three from the same collection, probably the library of the former Jesuit college.

These three manuscripts are quite different from one another in terms of content. One is a series of admonitions in the old style, another a handbook for parochial administration, the last Golden Age comedies translated to Nahuatl. This tremendous divergence gives some in-

²⁴ Zambrano, *Diccionario*, vol. 4, p. 666-67.

²⁵ José Fernando Ramírez, *Bibliotheca mexicana*, London, Puttick, 1880.

²⁶ Schwaller, *Guías*, p. 9-10.

dications as to the diversity of the Carochi circle. It also demonstrates that Nahuatl studies were on the verge of making an important change. Prior to this point nearly all the production had been centered around missionary activity and Christian indoctrination. The translations of the Golden Age pieces shows that the Nahuatl literary culture had begun to move beyond the religious on to the secular. Garibay describes this movement as the "Broken flight".²⁷

During the middle of the seventeenth century Mexico was undergoing a cultural renaissance. Within the Hispanic world the literary production of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz and don Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora are well known. Immediately before they appeared on the scene, there was an equally vital literary culture. Earlier lights had been Bernardo Balbuena and Juan Ruiz de Alarcón. The latter went to Spain for his fame. Given the rather high level of polite interest in literary accomplishments in the colony, it should come as small surprise that among scholars dedicated to Nahuatl a similar circle of scholars might form.

At present it is difficult to determine if the production of this group came from more scholars than just Alva and Carochi. As of yet no other individuals have emerged. It is reasonable to assume that there were others. The nature of the works which came out of the group is diverse enough to indicate more than just two people. Carochi wrote his grammar, Alva a *confessionario* and the translation of the Golden Age pieces. Yet there were still at least two other works without attribution: the *huehuehllahtolli* and the reputed "camino del cielo". Later scholars did indicate that Alva wrote such a didactic work, and so we might tentatively ascribe it to him. Still the *huehuehllahtolli* remains a bit of an enigma.

In their study of the *huehuehllahtolli*, Lockhart and Karttunen posit that the text was in the possession of the Jesuit Colegio before Carochi's time, and that during his residency the diacritics were added and the text revised.²⁸ They also concluded that the piece originally came from the Texcoco region, since that city is mentioned several times in the text and that the popular lore represented corresponds to that described by scholars of the region, notably Juan Bautista Pomar and Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxóchitl. This might possibly link the piece to both Carochi and Alva. Alva was, after all, the brother of the historian Alva Ixtlilxóchitl. He might well have known much about

²⁷ Garibay, *Historia*, vol. 2, p. 340.

²⁸ Karttunen and Lockhart, *Art of Nahuatl Speech*, p. 6.

Texcocan lore himself. It is not too farfetched to think that Carochi might have sought the assistance of Alva in dealing with the text.

The relation to Alva Ixtlilxóchitl links the Carochi circle to the better known group which surrounded Sor Juan and don Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora. In 1682 don Carlos de Sigüenza befriended don Diego de Alva Ixtlilxóchitl when the latter sought to gain the title of *cacique* of San Juan Teotihuacan.²⁹ It seems that Sigüenza knew don Juan de Alva, the nephew of don Bartolomé and son of don Fernando, who had previously been *cacique* of Teotihuacan. Upon the death of don Fernando's older brother, don Luis de Alva, the title of *cacique* passed to the children of don Fernando, first to don Juan and later don Diego. Sigüenza y Góngora assisted the family in their prolonged court suits over the possession of the title. Eventually, at some point in the 1680s or 1690s the papers of the Alva family, and a collection of ancient books and manuscripts of the historian don Fernando de Alva, passed to the possession of Sigüenza.³⁰ At least one scholar posits that Sigüenza learned Nahuatl from a member of the Alva family.³¹ Consequently, it is possible that Sigüenza knew don Bartolomé de Alva, and possibly even learned Nahuatl from him. Certainly much of what Sigüenza knew of the Aztec past was due to the family of Alva. It is equally probable that Sigüenza had known Carochi. Sigüenza entered the Jesuit noviate house in Tepotzotlan in 1660, just two years before the Nahuatl master's death.

The legacy imparted by the Carochi circle to Sigüenza y Góngora is difficult to ascertain across the years. Unfortunately the group had no greater impact on Nahuatl studies. Carochi's system of diacritics did not become standard, and in fact has remained unused until rediscovered by modern scholars.³² No other authors attempted to translate European works, other than religious materials, into Nahuatl until the nineteenth century. After Carochi, then, Nahuatl scholarship fell back into the same pattern it had followed for the century prior to his emergence. Some works, like Molina's *Doctrina cristiana*, were reprinted continually. Carochi's own grammar was only reprinted once in the colonial period, in 1759, edited by the Jesuit P. Ignacio de Paredes. Curiously, Paredes did not adopt the system of diacritics in his own works in Nahuatl.

²⁹ Leonard, *Sigüenza y Góngora*, p. 28-29.

³⁰ Alva Ixtlilxóchitl, *Obras históricas*, vol. I, p. 37-42.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 92-93.

³² Karttunen and Lockhart, *Art of Nahuatl Speech*, p. 14.

Carochi and don Bartolomé de Alva mark an important moment in the development of Nahuatl letters. They approached the language with a completely new perspective. Their efforts sought to capture the nuances which had been lost to earlier generations of scholars. Carochi sought to avoid the barbarisms which so plagued other nonnative speakers of the language. Alva attempted to broaden the language by presenting European works in it, while also experimenting with the system of diacritics. Yet these attempts failed. The philosophical climate of New Spain in the midseventeenth century could not accept that speaker of the native languages might be served by writings on topics other than religion. The students of Nahuatl were so accustomed to the orthographical system developed by the early friars that the adoption of Carochi's posed a significant effort, which none of them were willing to make. And so this magnificent flight of Nahuatl studies failed.