NAHUATL STUDIES AND THE "CIRCLE"
OF HORACIO CAROCHI

JOHN F. SCHWALLER

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. 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 Carochi, 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 Carochi 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. 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 Saint of the Seventeenth Century, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1929.

2 While the book first in several editions of the work was 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early grammar of Nahuatl, Arte para aprender la lengua mexicana, although it remained unpublished until 1875. 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. 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 Nahuatl 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 extinguish 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.

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 de milagros de San Antonio de Tepozotlán, and Francisco de Tolentino. All of these occurred, specifically Luis de Tolentino, the narrative of the same time the menology as his Arte appeared in 1605. It is not until the mid-seventeenth century, one might suppose, that Carochi was born in Florence about the exact date of 1601, and arrived in Mexico in 1610, having received his formal training in the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuits in Puebla, and later xeric to the Jesuit
render la lengua mexicana, 1875. Sahagún devoted his life to the study of the Florentine Codex, which he translated into Nahuatl. His most celebrated work is the Florentine Codex, which was published in six volumes between 1577 and 1585. The codex is a comprehensive summary of the Aztec culture and society, and it is considered one of the most important and influential works in the study of Nahuatl.

Sahagún's work was followed by other studies in the field of Nahuatl studies. In the 17th century, the study of Nahuatl continued to grow, and new trends began in about 1645, with the publication of Luis de Guevara's "Huei Tlamahuizoltica," a work that described the apparition of the Virgin of Guadalupe. This event was significant because it marked the first time that the Virgin of Guadalupe was venerated as the patroness of Mexico.

One of the most important figures in the study of Nahuatl during this period was Horacio Carochi. Carochi was born in Florence in 1579, and he entered the Society of Jesus in 1601. He arrived in New Spain in 1605, and he spent most of his life in Mexico City. Carochi was deeply involved in the study of Nahuatl, and he published several works on the language. His most important work was "Arte de la lengua mexicana," which was published in 1645.

Carochi's work was part of a "circle" of scholars who were interested in the study of Nahuatl. This group included Francisco Medina, who wrote "Vida y milagros de San Nicolás de Tolentino," and other authors who wrote similar works. These works were all published in print between 1601 and 1605, and they were part of a new trend in the study of Nahuatl.

By 1657, Carochi seems to have returned to Tepotzotlan, where he remained until his death in 1662. Carochi was involved in ministry directly, and indirectly, to the natives. 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. Regardless of this possible assignment, we know that upon his assignment to Tepotzotlan, he became deeply involved in the study of native languages and cultures.
languages. Curiously his first, and seemingly more intense, interest was in Otomi, 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. At least one contemporary letter suggests that Carochi learned his Otomi directly from a local Indian.

Carochi’s first book had to do with Otomi not Nahuatl. In 1625 he finished a grammar of Otomi for use within the Colegio. It was never published, however, although there are references to a manuscript copy and a dictionary. 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. 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 “hw”. Consequently, until Rincón, received the kind of attention these features of Nahuatl. Just after more than a century.

In his grammar, Rincón, some of the important features of Spanish, specific system was the most complete five categories: agudo, acute, which he called the long vowel he called the accent: & . These two long vowels and had either a falling tone: a. For the undifferentiated diphthongs, which he marked with the letter “h”, and had either a falling or rising tone. The glottal stop was the only aspect which received some early recognition among the Jesuits. What he did not use it in the final section where he did not use it in the final section where he left the same except for vowel length or the glottal stop.

Following Rincón, no one paid much attention to the glottal stop question then arises as to how he handled these issues, fully half and a quarter definitively on the subject in his *Arte mexicana* prior to Nahuatl. He did not use it in the final section where he only partially described.

In his position as priest, Carochi had the opportunity to listen more carefully and applied the same careful standard orthography with the graph “h”.

---

more intense, interest was references to him mention his teacher, at least for del Rincón. Rincón had Arte mexicana, in 1595, Tlatlan college, and among fifty years later. At least he learned his Otomí directly from the forefront of Na-

A Nahuatl grammar, which of diacritics to show long ues of Nahuatl, while aware the orthographic methods of indicate the presence of the first has recognized that age in the colonial period for orthography of the lan-
thad, although at the same n difference was that the del, Rincón, Carochi, and markings to give further esence of the glottal stop, received some early recog-
alled it was indicated by the “h” to represent sounds the digraph “kh”. Confesiones del siglo XVI, México, de la Viñaza, Bibliografía coecores de Rivadeneyra, 1892, and Concordance to the re, 1985, p. 9. Nahuatl, Austin, University

sequently, until Rincón, neither vowel length nor the glottal stop received the kind of attention they deserved, as important phonological features of Nahuatl. 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. 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: ã. 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: ã, 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

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: á. The simple short vowel Carochi marked with the acute: à. Carochi provided for marking short vowels which were followed by the stop, using the grave accent: á. Yet when the glottal stop occurred after a short vowel in a phrase final position, Carochi used the circumflex: ä.¹⁶

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.²² 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.²³ 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.²⁴ Born sometime between 1600 and 1604, don Bartolomé studied theology within the University of Mexico, graduating by about 1622. Alva was a secular trained by the Jesuits. At Chiape de Mota. This part of Mexico City is located and Nahuatl. Don Bartolomé, he published his Confesión Nahuatl for use by parish bishop, and appeared the Manual mexicano, a hand the manual of the archdiocese.

The Confesionario did not clearly tie him to the prefatory comments a Jesuit had been commissioned to review the work to assure Alva expressed his praise into account Baroque mystery of both Nahuatl and had been tutored by angels admiring the work, and Indians. In short, Alva One additional piece reasons not quite clear, was by famous Golden Age Pedro Calderón de la Bar de Amescua's El anima Vega's La madre de la to Father Jacome Basil roehí. Between the first a author, which is a satire One can see from the Carochi and Alva was Golden Age plays event Colegio de San Gregori Ch.
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 Chiaapa de Mota. This parish, located some sixty miles north-northwest of Mexico City is located in a mixed linguistic area of both Otomi and Nahuatl. Don Bartolomé was a scholar in his own right. In 1634 he published his Confesionario 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 Baquio's Manual mexicano, a handbook of parochial administration, based on the manual of the archdiocese of Toledo, but translated into Nahuatl.

The Confesionario 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 Otomi 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


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 1767.1 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 Huehuehtlahtollī initially attributed to the Franciscan Fr. Juan Bautista. More recent scholarship has placed it within the Carochi circle because of the use of diacritics.2 The Bancroft Dialogues, or Huehuehtlahtollī, are a collection of moral dialogues in the old style, very similar in content and form to other collections of huehuehtlahtollī 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 a 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 Teponatzotl.

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”.3 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 collections of sermons by the authorship or even the title “Camino del cielo” as the title of Nahuatl didactic work, centered on oriented material, and it has been

The three manuscripts so far described were acquired at one time formed part of the collection of the Colegio de San Gregorio. They were divided up between the library of the college, when the building was burned, the collection of the Colegio de San Gregorio. The Ramsey collection was acquired by Henry Stevens, and a large portion of the collection was purchased by Quaritch, and purchased at the auction block in London. The sixty manuscripts which were divided up between the Newberry Library, the collection of the Colegio de San Gregorio. Moreover the same library also contained

23 Schwallar, Gula, 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.
regard to the Carochi correspondence and can be found in the use of the
word "Camino" in Nahuatl. It in fact is a collection of Scripture, and the
choice of 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 hallmark 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 Ramirez collection sold in London in 1880. The so-called "Camino" was item 510, the Golden Age comedies, item 515, and the Dialogues, item 521.

The Ramirez collection was formed in the mid-nineteenth century. José Fernando Ramirez 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 Ramirez collection returned to Mexico in 1871 and was held first by Alfredo Chavero, who purchased it from Ramirez' estate, and later by Manuel Fernandez del Castillo. Eventually the collection arrived on the auction block in London. 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, Ramirez 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-

collections of sermons by Carochi in Nahuatl. 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 hallmark 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 Ramirez collection sold in London in 1880. The so-called "Camino" was item 510, the Golden Age comedies, item 515, and the Dialogues, item 521.

The Ramirez collection was formed in the mid-nineteenth century. José Fernando Ramirez 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 Ramirez collection returned to Mexico in 1871 and was held first by Alfredo Chavero, who purchased it from Ramirez' estate, and later by Manuel Fernandez del Castillo. Eventually the collection arrived on the auction block in London. 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, Ramirez 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-

...
dictions 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”.

During the middle of the seventeenth century Mexico was under­
going 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 lite­
rary 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 with­
out attribution: the huehuehtlahtolli and the reputed “camino del
cielo”. Later scholars did indicate that Alva wrote such a didactic work,
as we might tentatively ascribe it to him. Still the huehuehtlahtolli
remains a bit of an enigma.

In their study of the huehuehtlahtolli, 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. 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 Ixtlixóchitl. This might possibly link the piece
to both Carochi and Alva. Alva was, after all, the brother of the
historian Alva Ixtlixóchitl. He might well have known much about

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

The relation to Alva’s better known group which included Sigüenza y Góngora. In fact,
Diego de Alva Ixtlixóchitl, cacique of San Juan Teotlalco, Juan de Alva, the nephew of
don Fernando’s older brother, passed to the children of don Diego. Sigüenza y Góngora
suits over the possession of ancient books and, with the Alvas, was involved in the
1680s or 1690s the question of testamentary succession. Don Diego, Sigüenza y Góngora,
passed to the proposed children. Sigüenza learned of what Sigüenza knew of the
Ixtlixóchitls. Alva was, possibly even more, clear about Alva. It is equally possible
that Sigüenza entered the Jesuit novitiate years before the Nahuatl studies begin.

The legacy imparted by the colony is difficult to ascertain as there is no greater impact on Nahuatl
as residencies passed to the children of Sigüenza y Góngora. In
Spanish colonial period, in 1759, some works, like the continuities, Carochi’s own
interest in the Golden Age, are covered by modern scholars.

30 Alva Ixtlixóchitl, Ob.
31 Ibid., p. 92-93.
32 Karttunen and Lockhart, Art of Nahuatl Speech, p. 6.
It also demonstrates making an important change. It had been centered around the secular. Garibay describes the production of this group, and Carochi, As of yet reasonable to assume that the piece which came out of the two just two people, Carochi and the translation of the text, such a didactic work, was the reputed "camino del huehuehtlahtollí.

Lockhart and Karttunen the Jesuit Colegio before the diacritics were added that the piece originally mentioned several represented corresponds to the name Juan Bautista Pomar that possibly link the piece all, the brother of the have known much about

Texcoco 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. 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. At least one scholar posits that Sigüenza learned Nahuatl from a member of the Alva family. 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. 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.
31 Ibid., p. 92-93.
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.