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## BOOKS IN REVIEW

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### INTRODUCING NAHUATL

*INTRODUCTION TO CLASSICAL NAHUATL*. By J. RICHARD ANDREWS. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1975. Text: pp. 502, \$39.50. Workbook: pp. 222, \$14.50.)

The aim of this book is to teach students to read Classical Nahuatl; it could be used by a class (it was written and tried out by the author at Vanderbilt University) or by an interested person on his own. However, learning to translate Classical Nahuatl is difficult. In modern times, students have taken up the task using as their main teaching aids the grammars and dictionaries written by Spanish missionaries. Since the missionaries, other scholars have contributed useful works: Rémi Siméon, in the nineteenth century, compiled a dictionary based chiefly on Molina's and adding items, but without a reverse index; Schoembs (1949) gave a good outline of Nahuatl morphology; Garibay (1940) is a useful pedagogical grammar and so is the more recent work by Thelma Sullivan (1976). A translation into Spanish of Rémi Siméon is now also available.<sup>1</sup> As for descriptions of the language by linguists, leaving aside those which examine only phonology or selected features of the grammar (and those are not very numerous),<sup>2</sup> we know of only Swadesh and Sancho (1966) and Newman (1968), and neither serves the purpose of a reference grammar (Swadesh and Sancho is too brief). The best description is Newman's: it is short but clear and well organized and gives a good idea of the structure of the language. In such a brief work, however, the student of Nahuatl with a grounding in linguistics would not find much of the detail needed to translate a text. He still would have to go to the old grammars or his class notes, provided he had studied with a good teacher.<sup>3</sup>

The trouble with an old grammar—say, with Carochi's, which is the best in my opinion—is that although it contains a wealth of detail, the information is difficult to retrieve. It has a table of contents, but nothing like a modern alphabetical index, tables of suffixes and prefixes, cross references, and so on. In spite of Carochi's insight into the language, the traditional Latin model intrudes.

Phonology and morphology are well covered, but syntactic information is scattered and at times not explicit.

I believe that Andrews' *Introduction* will serve the purpose of the much-needed reference grammar. This is not to say that learning Classical Nahuatl will now be easy. Traditionalists will find Andrews' work more difficult than the old familiar grammars for two main reasons: terminology;<sup>4</sup> and a grammatical analysis that is not the usual one. (The facts, however, are the same.) Even the order of presentation differs from the conventional one that deals with phonetics and/or orthography, parts of speech, derivation and composition, and, perhaps, syntax. Andrews' approach gives more weight to syntax, chiefly in the lessons that deal with supplementation, modification, and conjunction. The treatment is systematic and thorough and constitutes his main contribution to the description of Classical Nahuatl grammar. The book contains a preface, a list of abbreviations and symbols, a chapter on pronunciation and transcription, and is divided into four main parts: basic verb words; derived verb words; noun words, supplementation; and modification, complementation, and conjunction. There are seven appendices, which include paradigms, a vocabulary, and an index. The text contains no exercises, only some analyses of words. The *Workbook*, however, contains only exercises: translation, analysis, transformation, etc., with answers provided in the Key.

There are some basic differences between Andrews' analysis and the more traditional ones. For instance, the analysis of nouns as predicative complements of equational sentences: *calli*, 'it is a house'. This is of course due to the fact that one could say: *n-oquich-tli*, 'I am a man', prefixing the subject forms used to conjugate verbs to nouns. Since there is no overt third person, *oquichtli* means 'he is a man' and *calli* means 'it is a house', regardless of the translation into English. Other grammarians had noted the presence of zero morphemes (e.g., Newman, p. 193) in discussing verbs, but had not carried the analysis to its logical conclusion. Olmos, for instance (pp. 17–18) says that the pronouns *ni*, *ti*, *ti*, and *an* are used in verb conjugations for first and second persons singular and plural, but that third persons do not use pronouns. He then adds. "Y cuando estos pronombres se ayuntan a nombres se entiende el presente de *sum*, *es*, *fui*" ("When these pronouns are added to nouns one understands the present tense of the verb 'to be'").

Nouns can occur in absolute or possessive state according to Andrews. In the first instance there is an obligatory occurrence of a person prefix which may be zero ( $\emptyset$ ) of a state prefix, which in the case of the absolute is always  $\emptyset$ , a stem, and a number suffix that may be realized as *-tli*, *-tl*, *-in*, or  $\emptyset$  in the singular and as *-tin*, *-meh*, or *-h* in the plural. Thus, *chichi* would be analyzed as having  $\emptyset$  person,  $\emptyset$  state, *chichi* (stem), and  $\emptyset$  number. The *-tl* of *cuahuatl* is a singular number suffix and not an absolutive suffix as in, say, Newman's description. One can immediately see that the  $\emptyset$  for absolute state is thus analyzed because the possessives occur in that position whereas the plural suffixes contrast with the ones which have been called absolutive by most grammarians.

The transcription used in the book is a variation of the traditional orthog-

raphy. Andrews made an effort to include vowel length and glottal stops; traditional orthography often ignores these because, in spite of their being phonological, many of the early grammarians could not hear them. In the Preface, Andrews states he followed Carochi's *Arte*, supplementing it with data from the modern dialects, mostly Brewer and Brewer (1962). If he were writing now he could profit from the very useful work of Una Canger and her students (1976).<sup>5</sup>

The spelling in *Introduction* is consistent but it is ambiguous in the case of ⟨ia⟩ which represents both /ia/ and /iya/, as Andrews himself points out (p. 19). Traditional spelling forces Andrews to list spelling changes such as those entailed by the loss of the final vowel in class B verbs: /k/: -qu > -c, /k<sup>w</sup>/: -cu > -uc, /s/: -c > -z (p. 20). For a linguistic description, a phonological spelling would have been more satisfying, but since this is a textbook, Andrews was wise in opting for a modified form of the classical spelling. People who will later handle the original texts would be confused by the changes from one system to the other.

The chapter on pronunciation is carefully done and enough explanations are given relating the orthography and pronunciation. In addition there is an appendix that discusses spelling conventions in older Nahuatl texts, which should be very helpful to the advanced student.

In the Preface, Andrews lists his sources as Sahagún, Molina's dictionary and grammar, Olmos, Antonio del Rincón, Galdo Guzman, and Carochi. He also gives a list of suggestions for further study that serves as a bibliography. He never intended to be exhaustive since this is an introductory book.

From the remarks thus far made, the reader will be aware that this book is much more than the introduction it claims to be. It is a complete description of the language and a very thorough textbook. One has little to compare it with since it is really the only textbook available. There is *Curso de Náhuatl moderno* by Beller and Beller (1976), which is an oral approach to modern Huastec Nahuatl; *Nahuatl práctico* by Horcasitas (1978), which is based on modern Central Nahuatl; and a small book by Robinson (1970), *Gramática inductiva mexicana (Nahuatl de la Sierra de Puebla)*. All three have to do with present-day dialects.

Two other modern works dealing with the teaching of an indigenous American language come to mind: Bills, Vallejo, and Troike, *Spoken Bolivian Quechua* (1969) and Kalectaca, *Lessons in Hopi*, edited by Ronald Langacker (1978). Both aim to teach a *spoken* language and both have a native as coauthor. The lessons in the Hopi text have vocabulary, grammar explanations, and exercises; those in the Quechua book have graded dialogs, vocabulary, and different kinds of drills and exercises. The Nahuatl book is designed to teach a *written* language. Because it expects the student to be able to construct sentences in the target language, some of the explanations are done from the point of view of the English-speaking student. For instance, the relational suffixes are compared to the English "sideways," "shoreward," etc. The lesson on comparison is done from the point of view of the student since Nahuatl really had no systematic way of comparing and used juxtaposition to a large extent.

To sum up: Andrews' book can be considered a reference grammar for the language and a good textbook for dedicated students who want to be able to

cope with Nahuatl texts. They will be able to tackle the language in a much more systematic way and thus devote more of their time to actual reading and translation.

YOLANDA LASTRA DE SUÁREZ  
*Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas, UNAM*

#### NOTES

1. Mexico: Siglo XXI, 1978 (I have not examined it).
2. See, for example: Ronald Langacker, "Relative Clauses in Classical Nahuatl" (*IJAL* 41 [1975]:46–68); Jane M. Rosenthal, "The Omnipresent Problem of Omnipresent in Classical Nahuatl" (MA thesis, University of Chicago, 1971); Verónica Vázquez Soto, "Fonología generativa del Náhuatl Clásico" (*Licenciatura thesis, Escuela Nacional de Antropología, Mexico*).
3. A translation of Clavijero's *Reglas de la lengua mexicana* by J. O. Anderson is also available.
4. Some examples of the terminology that is not traditional: relational nouns (postpositions), entitive affixes (semi pronouns, verbal affixes, etc.), connective *-ti* (ligature), and antecessive order prefix (temporal augment: Garibay). However, the careful reader not familiar with this type of terminology should have no trouble because Andrews carefully defines his terms and they can be looked up by using the index.
5. In this work, roots are listed alphabetically in phonemic transcription and all Nahuatl items appearing in Carochi's *Arte* are listed with his own spelling and with the appropriate page references.

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