



Versión en INGLÉS



The Taller de Documentos Gráficos of the Coordinación Nacional de Conservación del Patrimonio Cultural

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Abstract

The Taller de Documentos Gráficos (TDG) of the Coordinación Nacional de Conservación del Patrimonio Cultural (CNCPC) is dedicated to the conservation of cultural and documentary heritage. It was founded in August of the year 1973 and in this trajectory up to the present, a large number of restorers, technicians, specialists in various areas and students have worked and collaborated, which represent part of the conservation and restoration of paper works of art in our country. For the elaboration of this article, testimonies and documents are collected, from the Paul Coremans Library, as well as the Photo Library and the Historical Archive of the CNCPC.

Keywords

History; documentary heritage; conservation; restoration; paper.

In the present number of the *CR. Conservación y Restauración* journal, dedicated to the International Course on Paper Conservation in Latin America: Meeting East, that, since its beginning in 2011, has been the headquarters of the Taller de Documentos Gráficos (TDG)¹ of the Coordinación Nacional de Conservación del Patrimonio Cultural (CNCPC),² of the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH),³ the proposal arose to dedicate the Memory section to the history of this conservation studio.

Given the quantity of people, events and works of art related with this place, it seeks to contribute to history with information collected from oral testimonies and documents found in the Archivo Histórico of the CNCPC (AHCNCP), the Biblioteca Paul Coremans and the Fototeca of the CNCPC. It is expected to make visible treatments criteria, the type of work that has been conserved in the studio, the materials and equipment used, as well as projects, dynamics and events that also tell the story of the conservation of documentary collections in our country.

The presented text has been prepared with the help of the team of conservators of the TDG, especially Marie Vander Meeren, since she has worked in the studio since 1984 and for this reason she has been witness and an essential part of the trajectory of that space, and Tania Estrada Valadez, for the guide, impulse and bibliographical research to build it.

¹ Documentary Heritage Conservation Studio (note from the translators).

² National Agency for Cultural Heritage Conservation (note from the translators).

³ National Institute of Anthropology and History (note from the translators).



Background

The history of the TDG is related to that of the CNCPC, which origin was in 1962, with the creation of the Departamento de Catálogo y Restauración del Patrimonio Artístico of the INAH⁴ promoted by Manuel del Castillo Negrete, where efforts to unify conservation criteria was made. In 1964, the department received support from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) with the mediation and intervention of Paul Coremans and, in 1967, the Centro Regional Latinoamericano de Estudios para la Conservación y Restauración de Bienes Culturales⁵ was created for the conservation training of professionals from Latin America, which would later also have the support of the Organization of American States (OAS).

At the beginning of the department, the cultural heritage conservation activities were focused in archeological and colonial assets, especially wall painting, canvas painting and sculpture (Santaella, 2006), as described in the work reports of the studios from 1963 to 1968.⁶ However, it should be mentioned the conservation work in paper and bibliographic material in the INAH had its antecedents since 1943 in the Museo Nacional de Antropología e Historia,⁷ in a studio run by Juan Almela Melia and his wife Emilia Castell Núñez (Romero, Enríquez, Milán, 2020).

In 1996, the Departamento de Restauración del Patrimonio Cultural⁸ established its headquarters in the former Churubusco convent, together with the Centro de Estudios para la Conservación de Bienes Culturales “Paul Coremans” (CNCPC, 2022), with Manuel del Castillo Negrete as director of both centers and where the CNCPC is currently located. The fact that these two centers, of work and study, were together, promoted a synchrony and links in term of dynamics, use of materials, tools and equipment, processes, intervention criteria and work methodology (figure 1).



Figure 1. Conservation studies in 1966.
Image: M. Corona, @Fototeca CNCPC-INAH,
April 25, 1966.

⁴ Department of Catalog and Restoration of the Artistic Heritage. The National Institute of Anthropology and History was created in 1939.

⁵ Regional Center for Studies on the Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Assets (note from the translators).

⁶ AHCNCP, Sergio Arturo Montero, Informe de trabajo de los talleres de la Dirección de Restauración del Patrimonio Cultural. 1963-1968, 1963.

⁷ National Museum of Anthropology and History (note from the translators).

⁸ Department of Conservation of Cultural Heritage (note from the translators).



Until the year 1968 there is no record of a destined area for the conservation of paper at the conservation reports of the studios at the AHCNCPC, however, in the *Bollettino dell' Instituto di Patologia del Libro* published in 1970, there is a reference about the activities made in 1966 for the international cooperation in the conservation of cultural assets, where is mentioned a "course of theoretical-practical lessons on the conservation and restoration of archive and library materials by UNESCO", in the Centro Latinoamericano de Estudios de Conservación y Restauración de Bienes Culturales (Vaccaro, 1970: 93).

The creation of the paper conservation studio in the CNCPC

Romero, Enríquez y Milán (2020) point out that book conservation is a term that arises in 1967 by Christopher Clarkson after the flood and alluvium of Florence, Italy, therefore, at the end of the 1960s and the beginning of 1970s, worldwide attention was turned to archives and libraries, where international exchanges and contributions were promoted for this purpose, and Mexico was not exception, according to the testimony of the conservator Elvira Pruneda (Terrazas, 2015a), Manuel del Castillo Negrete specifies actions that promotes the conservation of paper and bibliographic heritage.

In the AHCNCPC there is a record of a paper bases object in the year of 1969⁹ and it could be the first time that attention was given to this type of material in the said center. This report prepared in the chemistry laboratory of the Centro de Estudios para la Conservación de Bienes Culturales "Paul Coremans", in charge of Beatriz Soto as responsible of the initial studio and of the Q. F. N. Sara Catalina Pavón, about the analysis of paper based object with a cloth support with number: P/1-1-70. The report contains a description of the characteristics and condition of the work, the results of the analysis carried out as pH measurement, identification of the paper and cloth type, as well as the nature of the stains and the adhesive, solubility test of inks, among others. The development of this report is noteworthy since, although there is no evidence that there was a conservation studio established in the work center for that year, at least in the chemistry laboratory they began to attend this type of assets with a technical-scientific methodology.

Elvira Pruneda mentions the creation of a studio-laboratory for paper conservation at a department in the Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores,¹⁰ it also promoted the training of Mexican conservators at the Instituto de Patología del Libro in Rome (Terrazas, 2015a),¹¹ as well as the assistance of UNESCO specialist: Emerenziana Vaccaro from the Instituto de Patología del Libro of Roe and Françoise Flieder of the Centre de recherches sur la conservation des documents graphiques de Paris, both in 1970. Information that coincides with the relation of given courses by technicians of the UNESCO between 1966-1978 carried out by Espinosa (1981) (figure 2).

Vaccaro reviewed in detail the content of the course¹² and mentioned that it was taught in the mornings to the students of the center and in the afternoon the lessons were repeated for "restorers, chemists and other technicians who make up the permanent staff of the center" (1970: 218). In

⁹ AHCNCPC, Memento Homo, 1969.

¹⁰ Secretary of Foreign Affairs (note from the translators).

¹¹ Elvira Pruneda and Pilar Ávila had a scholarship in 1971 (Terrazas, 2015a). Vaccaro (1970) refers that Carlota Creel was student in the 1970-1971 course.

¹² Topics included the history of the manuscript book, the typographical art, the art of bookbinding, manufacturing techniques for parchment, papyrus, paper and inks, history of restoration and conservation methods in libraries and archives, demonstration of conservation stages of a book or document, German and English techniques of conservation, the operation of the conservation laboratory installed in the Biblioteca Nacional Central de Florencia (National Central Library of Florence) after the flood of 1966, practical conservation exercises, studies of chemistry and biology applied to restoration and general rules conservation of libraries and archives (Vaccaro, 1970: 217).





Figure 2. Emerenziana Vaccaro.
Image: ©Fototeca CNCPC-INAH, 1970.

addition, based on Vaccaro's reviews of some visits carried out, there is a proximity to the activities related to the conservation of documentary heritage in that moment, because she points out that, in the Archivo General de la Nación (AGN),¹³ it is "in a small conservation and bookbinding laboratory attached to the archive, where old volumes are bound and documents, even undamaged ones, are laminated with plastic for preventive conservation purposes" (Vaccaro, 1970: 218); likewise in the Biblioteca de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) in the conservation laboratory in charge of the widow of the professor Almela Melia, practiced a treatment with nylon veil as preventive conservation and point out that the methods carried out there "are the ones that least differ from those practiced in the Instituto de Patología del Libro" (Vaccaro, 1970: 218).

In the AHCNCPC there is a document from August 1973 where they mention the creation of the new paper conservation studio at the Departamento de Restauración del Patrimonio Cultural, headed by Sara Catalina Pavón, where a request is made for furniture, materials, tools and equipment.¹⁴ They specify the works that are under treatment and detail the processes to be made; stands out the diversity received in the studio, since there is record of: a manuscript, a graphic work of art, photographs and a book, that variety continuous to be a complex condition and a challenge in the conservation of documentary collections to this day.

On the other hand, the information about the paper conservation studio is verified with the Fototeca of the CNCPC registry, where the first photographs of the studio were taken in 1974 and correspond to the space where the TDG is currently located, although smaller. In the photographs, the studios are divided by windows, the paper conservation studio had desks a negatoscope, a drying rack, a mechanical press and work tables, which have been preserved until now (figure 3).

¹³ General Archive of the Nation (note from the translators).

¹⁴ AHCNCPC, Informe de trabajo del taller de papel, 1973-1983.





Figure 3. Sara C. Pavón in the paper conservation studio. Image: Arq. Zepeda, ©Fototeca CNCPC-INAH, August 23, 1974.

In the period between 1973 and 1976, Sara C. Pavón, Alicia Islas and Margarita Montañón report on the processes carried out in the paper conservation studio. Through the photographs and documents, information is available on the materials and techniques they used, which is valuable to know the trajectory in the paper and book conservation processes, as well as to follow up on the subject of previous interventions. They mention, for example, the lining process with nylon and polyamide monofilament, ironing, reinforcement with cellulose acetate, bleaching and deacidification, to list a few.

A stage of technologic and scientific innovation

According with the records found at AHCNCPC¹⁵ and oral testimonies, in 1977¹⁶ a stage of high productivity in the paper conservation studio started, which is reflected in the treatment reports carried out, an increase in human resources, registered work of art, equipment acquisition, and even, they use a new terminology. Since that year, documentation has been found regarding the restorations carried out by María Esther Gámez, José Antonio Ramírez and Juan Chávez Morones and, since September, Ignacio Delfín has signed on as coordinator of the TDG.

In the Fototeca of the CNCPC there is a large photographic record of the 1979 paper conservation studio, where there are images of an expanded space¹⁷ with new materials, tools, furniture and equipment, stands out, for example, the DELMA paper reintegrating machine, presses: hydraulic, mechanical and for large-format work, a guillotine, sinks for the washing area, a hydropulper, a Dutch battery, a micrometer and a potentiometer. A studio with a nuance of technological and scientific innovation at the service of the restoration of documentary heritage is observed.

¹⁵ *Idem.*

¹⁶ In 1977, the CNCPC is the Department of Restoration of Cultural Heritage and it's under the direction of the architect Carlos Chanfón Olmos (CNCPC, 2022).

¹⁷ The expansion was because of the relocation of the ceramic studio (Terrazas. 2022).



In the case of the DELMA paper reintegrating machine, the conservator Elvira Pruneda shared that was Carlota Creel Algara who, in a trip to Bulgaria, brought precise information about a paper reintegrating machine, in such a way that the project was developed by Ignacio Delfín (Terrazas, 2015a) and was completed in 1975 with the support of the Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología (Conacyt)¹⁸ (Terrazas, 2015b).

Between the 1970s and early 1980s, the introduction of equipment for mechanized and massive processes in paper and book restoration studios was an international strategy, thus, the Dirección de Restauración del Patrimonio Cultural¹⁹ and the Escuela Nacional de Conservación, Restauración y Museografía “Manuel del Castillo Negrete” (ENCRyM)²⁰ were at the forefront, and in the paper conservation studio the scope of the conservation center and its position in Latin America was shown.

In 1979 there is also a record of new conservators such as Juana María Langle, María de la Luz Rodríguez, María Elena Uribe and Esperanza Gómez. In addition to the reports on the restoration of paper based objects, which are becoming more detailed, in the Biblioteca Paul Coremans of the CNCPC there is a document from 1981, which was coordinated by Ignacio Delfín together with a group of students, entitled *Guía de Restauración de Documentos Gráficos*. It includes information regarding the facilities, the equipment, the treatments carried out and the organization of the paper conservation studio made up of three areas: laboratory, restoration and binding. Ignacio Delfín as a chemical engineer was a key element for the modernization of the studio and update on issues related to the manufacturing technique, deterioration processes and paper restoration treatments. In the reports of the paper conservation studio between 1977 and 1981, new terms appear on restoration processes such as: lamination, manual and mechanical reintegration of missing parts, use of mowilith, methyl cellulose as a glue, carboxymethyl cellulose as an adhesive, dry cleaning, profiling, pressing, assembly, among others (figures 4 and 5).

Lucía de la Parra, who was an assistant teacher with Ignacio Delfín for a semester in the early 1980s, commented in an interview on the diversity of work they worked on, which included manuscripts, plans, maps, bindings, documents, and pointed out that photography was no longer being worked at that time (Terrazas, 2022a). In her testimony, she shares that during the morning conservation staff would use the studio and in the afternoon it was used for lessons with the students. Apparently, it was a very active time, between the school and the center, where the students were involved in the dynamics of the studio (figure 6).

Also, at the beginning of the same decade, the Permanent Committee for the Conservation of Documents, Books and Graphic Materials (Codolmag) began to be held,²¹ with the aim of training people who handle documents and graphic materials in view of the need to unify technical and theoretical criteria of professionals of the area.²² For several years there was active participation by TDG members in these meetings.

¹⁸ National Council for Science and Technology (note from the translators).

¹⁹ Directorate for the Restoration of Cultural Heritage (note from the translators).

²⁰ National School of Conservation, Restoration and Museography (note from the translators).

²¹ The Codolmag “is composed by the directors of the next institutions: The Archivo General de la Nación, the Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, the Instituto de Investigaciones Bibliográficas of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, the Instituto de Estudios y Documentos Históricos, A.C. and the Dirección de Restauración el Patrimonio Cultural de Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia”, AHCNCPC, Expediente Codolmag, 1981.

²² AHCNCPC, Expediente Codolmag, 1981.





Figure 4. José Antonio Ramírez at the TDG with colonial manuscripts from the Museo Histórico de Churubusco. *Image: María Elena Uribe, ©Fototeca CNCPC-INAH, October 1980.*



Figure 5. Juan Chávez Morones at the TDG with colonial manuscripts from the Museo Histórico de Churubusco. *Image: María Elena Uribe, ©Fototeca CNCPC-INAH, October 1980.*



Figure 6. Ignacio Delfín during the lining process in the artwork *Las Garzas* in students practice. *Image: ©Fototeca CNCPC-INAH, 1979.*

From 1982²³ in the AHCNCPC, there are no more documents where Ignacio Delfín represents the studio as coordinator, instead there are new conservators in the conservators staff: Eva Rodríguez, Hilda Ortiz Mena and Laura Casas, who in different reports, requests or documents sign indistinctly as coordinators, heads or managers of the TDG²⁴ (figure 7) along with María Elena Uribe. Soon, the records of that decade mention the restorers Lydia García, Cristiane Marion and Marie Vander Meeren, who continues to work as conservator-restorer of the studio.



Figure 7. Eva Rodríguez with the work of art *Antiguo y Nuevo Testamento*, code 121/88.
Image: Ricardo Castro, ©Fototeca CNCPC-INAH, february 1990.

In that year there is a change in the reports of the processes carried out, the conservation techniques or materials are not detailed, instead, they mention the percentage of progress, an approximate time to complete the processes and, in a section of observations, information about its dynamics and activities. From the documentation it is perceived that it is a very active time of work and participation in events: the Conservation meeting, the Photographic Material Conservation Meeting and the Codolmag, to name a few. It is also noted that they continue with the preparation of pulp for the DELMA machine for mechanical infills, bleaching tests, conservation mountings, the use of Japanese paper and rice flour. In addition, it highlights that students are involved in the conservation treatments of paper based objects. In addition, there are the first reports on conservation projects on documentary heritage from communities,²⁵ as well as conservation and preservation assessments from libraries and archives (Terrazas, 2022b).

²³ In 1982 the Dirección de Restauración del Patrimonio Cultural is in charge of Jaime Abundis Canales (CNCPC, 2022).

²⁴ AHCNCPC, Informe de trabajo del taller de papel, 1973-1983.

²⁵ The first asset from the community was the Plano topográfico-hidrográficode San Miguel Allende, en 1983 (de la Garza, 2005: 38).



The transition of materials, techniques and criteria in the conservation of paper and books

At the beginning of the 1990s, in various AHCNCPC documents,²⁶ Marie Vander Meeren signs as coordinator of the studio. In one of these reports, the restorer addresses the Dirección de Restauración del Patrimonio Cultural,²⁷ to point out that the TDG does not work with photographic and film material, to which she adds recommendations from specialists in the field. This document shows that the TDG seeks to mark a line of work for a certain type of assets according to the profile of the conservators and the means they had, and in turn, the recognition of the specialization required by the care of specific goods that are part of the documentary collections. During that decade, activities were implemented that will influence the line that is carried out in the paper conservation studio until today.

One of the activities is that conservators alternated their work in the workplace with an active participation in the training of the ENCRyM students, through advice and constant interaction with them in support of the teachers. This binomial promoted an approach by the students to the dynamics of a conservation studio in labor sphere and, for the workers, perhaps a constant questioning of criteria and decision making about their work. Thus, in 1995, conservator Marie Vander Meeren officially took charge of the school's paper conservation studio and the students, as Eva María Rodríguez and Ignacio Delfín did in the past.²⁸ It was, through the field trips with the students and her in charge, that for three consecutive years, exercises were carried out for conservation assessment of documentary collections, which encouraged the construction of methodologies, strategies, protocols and actions which are now implemented on the conservation of documentary heritage.

On the other hand, another line of action that would influence the decision making and treatments for the conservation of bibliographic material was the invitation made by Marie Vander Meeren to the book conservation specialist Martha Romero Ramírez to join the school studio. Thanks to this invitation book conservation treatments were updated, differentiating them from the ones for flat paper based objects (Romero, 2020).

Finally, in 1997, the conservator Marie Vander Meeren is accepted to go to the Japanese Paper Conservation (JPC) course in Japan, this experience traces a line that marks a new trajectory of the TDG. The influence had an impact on several levels, both in the CNCPC studio, in the training of students, and in the Biblioteca Nacional de Antropología e Historia,²⁹ since the restorer had a commission for the care of the collection of Mesoamerican codices.

With this new lines of action, that is, the attention to documentary collections where stabilization and preventive conservation measures are beginning to be prioritized over the direct treatment of assets. The specialized treatment of bibliographic material and the incorporation of Japanese conservation materials and techniques in Western heritage, it is that some of the equipment for mechanized and massive processes of the 1980s is gradually changed (figure 8).

²⁶ AHCNCPC, Expediente Taller de Documentos Gráficos 1975-1997.

²⁷ María Luisa Franco Brizuela was in charge of the Dirección de Restauración del Patrimonio Cultural del INAH (CNCPC, 2022).

²⁸ AHCNCPC, Expediente: Taller de documentos Gráficos 1975-1997.

²⁹ National Library of Anthropology and History (note from the translators).





Figure 8. Taller de Documentos Gráficos. Image: Ricardo Castro, ©Fototeca CNCPC-INAH, March 1998.

Space transformation and work dynamics

At the beginning of the 21st century, one of the main events that transformed the space and work dynamics of the TDG of the CNCPC was the change of headquarters of the ENCRyM between 2003 and 2004. Then the conservators stopped interacting with the students, with which the conditions of the conservation studios, since their creation, were modified and changes and new projects were raised.

At that time, the workforce was made up of Rosario Bravo, Juan Chávez, José Antonio Ramírez and Thalía Velasco, she says that the dynamics in those times was focused on intervening the works of art that arrived to the studio to be conserved (figure 9). With the restorer Thalía Velasco, projects and research stand out at different times around the conservation of choir books, which years later, in 2013, would materialize in a comprehensive project for the collection of the Museo Nacional del Virreinato³⁰ of great importance (Terrazas, 2022c).

In 2007, the Stabilization and Conservation of Cuitzeo Collection Project in Michoacán, was carried out, directed by Marie Vander Meeren, it focused on stabilization and preventive conservation actions, where stands out processes such as fumigation by thermonebulization, inventory, registration, cleaning, elaboration of guards and protection in polypropylene file boxes. On the other hand, activities on the organization and cataloging of documents, coordinated by Miguel Nájera, were carried out.

In that same year, it also initiates a constant dynamic on the care of documentary assets from communities, an activity that continues and is promoted to the present day. In 2007, the Project for the conservation of the parish archive and books of the community of Santa María Acapulco,³¹ began.

³⁰ National Museum of Viceroyalty (note from the translators).

³¹ The project was part of the Conservation project of the cultural assets of the temple of Santa María Acapulco, Santa Catarina, San Luis Potosí, under the coordination of Renata Schneider Glantz.





Figure 9. Treatments in the document of Louis Pasteur at the TDG.
Image: Archivo del Taller de Documentos Gráficos, ©CNCPC-INAH, 2008.



Figure 10. pH measurement with potentiometer of a work of art from San Nicolás Coatepec.
Image: Archivo del Taller de Documentos Gráficos, ©CNCPC-INAH, 2012.

The project had several seasons until 2011 and some of the conservators of the TDG participated: Marie Vander Meeren, Ana Peniche, Paulina García and Diana Velázquez Padilla. The intervention of assets from that context originated a special approach in criteria, decision making and treatments that were in accordance with the needs of the communities. In the project, some of the reported restoration analyzes and processes were: XRF in iron gall inks,³² registration of sewing routes in the books, surface cleaning, identification of iron ions, pH measurement, aqueous cleaning,³³ pulp fillings in suction table, lining, air-drying and then controlled flattening, use of Klucel® G in alcohol for cleaning leather, enclosures and polypropylene boxes (figure 10).

In 2009, a refurbishment of the CNCPC facilities was carried out, so the TDG was temporarily transferred to the ENCRyM until April 2011, during this time there was an organization of tools, equipment and materials, as well as discards and renewals. It is worth mentioning the management and negotiation of Marie Vander Meeren³⁴ for the acquisition and installation of a stainless steel bar with sinks for washing, gas stove, drawers, refrigerator, boiler, which equipped the studio.

Towards specialization in conservation and restoration of paper based items

In 2011, with the ICCROM Latam program, the TDG hosts and organizes of the evaluation seminar: Japanese techniques and materials applied to the conservation-restoration of objects made with Western paper, promoted by the initiative of Marie Vander Meeren. From this seminar there are very active years thanks to the interaction with specialists from both Ibero-America and Japan, since 2012 the International Course on Paper Conservation in Latin America: Meeting East was held, together with the Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties (TNRICP), an institute that has been represented by doctor Masato Kato and his team. The course was held for five consecutive years since 2012 and two more in 2018 and 2019 (figure 11).



Figure 11. 2013 edition of the course at TDG. Image: Archivo del Taller de Documentos Gráficos, ©CNCPC-INAH, 2022.

³² Study made in collaboration with UNAM to determine the composition of the inks. ATDG, Informe de restauración de los manuscritos parroquiales de Santa María Acapulco del 2011.

³³ It is reported the use of wáter-alcohol (1:1), canasol and citricidin.

³⁴ Sponsorship given by the nonprofit organization Support to the development of the archives and libraries of Mexico (ADABI MÉXICO).



The different courses have promoted the learning of the TDG conservators in the application of Japanese conservation techniques, materials and tools to Western documentary heritage, as well as in the general approach in works with paper support for their understanding and treatment, stands out the invitation to do a professional internship at the TNRICP.³⁵ As a consequence of all these events, the TDG-CNCPC is positioned in the conservation and restoration of paper based objects in Latin America (figure 12).

On the other hand, in 2014, the CNCPC made efforts to create the Image Conservation and Restoration Studio,³⁶ which was planned to converge with the TDG in the care of documentary collections, specifically on materials photographic, sound, film and audiovisual (figure 13).

A year later, in a parallel line, the Documental National Program for the Conservation of Documentary Heritage (PNCPD) was created by the restorer Teresita Díaz Villanueva³⁷ in order to establish regulatory and technical guidelines, as well as criteria for the conservation of documentary collections. Currently, the Área de Conservación y Restauración de la Imagen is not in operation, but there is a project within the PNCPD to conserve INAH photographic archives.³⁸ The TDG, in coordination with the PNCPD, has participated in conservation assessments, stabilization projects, consultancies and courses on the care and stabilization of archives, photo libraries or libraries (figure 14).³⁹

In the last decade, in the TDG there has been a direction towards training, updating and specialization in various topics related to the conservation of documentary heritage. The great demand for the conservation of assets have generated lines of experimentation and research, such as: the investigation of iron gall inks in the AGN, the conservation and stabilization project of choir books of the Museo Nacional del Virreinato, the use of paper pulps, that started with the Santa María Acapulco project and have evolved in the use of various materials to elaborate pulps and the methodology for the documentation of water marks and manufacture marks on paper, as well as research and deepening about restoration processes that are carried out, for example: the preparation and use of paper with various adhesives to be reactivated, assembly of works, cleaning, drying of work, among many others (figure 15). There has also been an exchange of information between specialists from different areas, in order to acquire registration tools and procedures for the approach and knowledge of materials, manufacture and deterioration of documentary heritage, as well as conservation materials, tools and treatments.

³⁵ The invited restorers from the TDG were: Patricia de la Garza Cabrera (2013), Tania Estrada Valadez (2014), Jeniffer Ponce Fernández (2015) and Ana Dalila Terrazas Santillán (2016).

³⁶ The conservators in this area were: Nadine Vera Berenger, Gisa Villanueva Camarena, Carina Cruz Fuentes and Ariadna Rodríguez Corte.

³⁷ In the PNCPD work the conservators Aura Ortiz Garnica, Luz Marlene López Torres, Diana Cardona Ramos, Teresita Bernarda Díaz Villanueva.

³⁸ This project was in charge of the conservators: Diana Cardona Ramos with the collaboration of Ariadna Rodríguez Corte.

³⁹ The projects that TDG and PNCPD have collaborated together are: Preventive and stabilization project of the conventual choir book archive at Museo Regional de Querétaro, Conservation Survey of the conventual collection of Cuitzeo Michoacán, Conservation Survey and preventive measures of the Casa Morelos historical archive, Packaging and moves of the photographic archive of the Archeology historical archive, Preventive conservation course for librarians and archivists, Stabilization and conservation of a collection of glass negatives at Fototeca Romualdo García-Museo Alhóndiga de Granadinas, Guanajuato and Conditions Survey and stabilization of the photographic archive at Centro INAH Yucatán.





Figure 12. Manufacture of a *karibari* for drying with tension, directed by Tania Estrada and Patricia de la Garza after their professional stays at the TNRICP. Image: Archivo del Taller de Documentos Gráficos, ©CNCPC-INAH, 2014.



Figure 13. Teamwork between the Área de Conservación y Restauración de la Imagen and the TDG conserving a photograph and manuscript on parchment that registers the Decree of the expropriation of the oil industry in 1938. Image: Archivo del Taller de Documentos Gráficos, ©CNCPC-INAH, 2015.



Figure 14. Condition survey and stabilization project of the choir books collection at the Museo Regional de Querétaro, carried out by TDG and PNCPC teams. Image: Archivo del Taller de Documentos Gráficos, ©CNCPC-INAH, 2018.





Figure 15. Washing of a document, TDG. Image: Archivo del Taller de Documentos Gráficos, ©CNCPC-INAH, 2019.

In recent years, the conservation work has continue on documentary heritage belonging to communities from different regions of the country and we have sought the adequate conditions to promote the involvement direct stakeholders, such as authorities and civilians, so they understand their important role in the preservation of their heritage.

In addition to the treatment of documentary heritage, the TDG carries out other activities such as: consulting and supervision of conservation projects, preparation and deliver of training and course, participation in academic events, seminars and publications, among others. In 2018, Marie Vander Meeren, representing the TDG of the CNCPC, participated in the creation of the Norma Mexicana para Acervos Documentales. Lineamientos para su preservación.⁴⁰

In 2019, a new adaptation was made in the conservation studio in order to expand the space and incorporate the PNCPC. Until that year the conservators at TDG were: Tania Estrada, Patricia de la Garza, Ariadna Rodríguez, Ana Dalila Terrazas, Ana Rosa Toca and Marie Vander Meeren (figure 16).

Currently the TDG and PNCPC team are working together to define and change the name of the current studio. It seeks to replace “graphic documents”, that began to use since 1974, with “documentary collections”, since we think that this term includes the heritage that is preserved and restored at the present time. There is also the proposal to name it “Laboratory for the conservation of documentary collections” in order to have a more interdisciplinary intervention criteria vision.

⁴⁰ Mexican Standard for Documentary Collections. Guidelines for its preservation (note from the translators).





Figure 16. View of the TDG at present. *Image: Archivo del Taller de Documentos Gráficos, ©CNCPC-INAH, 2022.*

Conclusions

The material found in the CNCPC collections is very valuable, as well as the testimonies of workers who shared information and memories to outline the history of the TDG. In this article, the transformation of techniques, methodologies, materials, equipment and dynamics is settled; above all, it was sought to give a space to the people who have built the conservation studio, since at each moment there were very significant contributions and efforts on innovation, research, experimentation and adaptation. Since the creation of the TDG there are still things that remain, especially the sense of conserving the documentary collections, the greatest quantity and in the best possible way, only that at each stage, the strategy has been changed, from the technical-scientific methodology, the mechanized processes, the specialization in conservation, to preventive conservation.

Through the documents, photographs and testimonies, some names of those who have been part of the TDG of the CNCPC have been recovered, these are: Sara Catalina Pavón, Alicia Islas Jiménez, Margarita Montañó Alcántara, Ignacio Delfín Márquez, Juana Ma. Langle Gómez, Juan Chávez Morones, José Antonio Ramírez Benítez, Ma. Esther Gámez González, María de la Luz Rodríguez Rosete, Esperanza Gómez Z., Ma. Elena Uribe M., Eva Ma. Rodríguez Caballero, Hilda Ortiz Mena Fernández, Lydia García Cruz, Laura Casas Torres, Christiane Marion A., Marie Vander Meeren, Martha Guajardo Peredo, Ma. Elena Mustre, Thalía Velasco Castelán, María del Rosario Bravo Aguilar, Norma Alicia García Huerta, Diana Velázquez Padilla, Patricia de la Garza Cabrera, Tania Estrada Valadez, Ana Laura Peniche Montfort, Alma Paulina García Murillo, Carina Cruz Fuentes, Jennifer Ponce Fernández, Laura Olivia Ibarra Carmona, Ana Dalila Terrazas Santillán, Ariadna Rodríguez Corte, Ana Rosa Toca Ochoa.

Finally, a duty remains for those who make up the conservation studio: to leave a record with detailed and organized information for future generations and continue with the construction of the future of this history.

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