

HISTORICAL ARCHIVE OF EUROPEAN RESTORERS

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ABSTRACT: *The Historical Archive of European Restorers project focuses on the recovery of historical memoirs of Conservator - Restorers and on their most relevant works or heritage projects in the partner countries. The results of the study have been recorded in a database to facilitate access to all researchers.*

KEYWORDS: heritage, history of restoration, databases, files, biographies, restorers

The original aim of this, the Historical Archive of European Restorers project, was to collate and store dispersed information on restorers and their historical restorations, as collated by international teams in their respective countries: Great Britain, Italy, France, Hungary, Germany and Spain.

With the economic support of the European Commission, a database to manage the information was created using UNESCO's RESE programme. Each team was given specific areas of action; an initial aim of the project was to locate the private files and notes of restorers to avoid losing any information contained therein.

The cataloguing of the restorers' personal files was an arduous labour. However, by reading their biographies and analysing their work, this labour turned out to be very fruitful exercise indeed, and today we know much more about the history of the Restoration in Spain in the 20th century than we did previously.

In the documents studied to date, we discovered that close relations existed between Spanish restorers and many of their European homonyms in different countries, ie Cesare Brandi, Domenico Fiore, Salvatore Liberti, Ada Capasso, Manilio Santini, Maria Motzo, Luigi Pigazzini y Pasquale Rotondi (Rome, I.C.R.) Maria Bazzi (Milán), Mr. Bromelle (London, Victoria and Albert Museum), Sr. Corradini (Buenos Aires, Argentina), Sr^a Gabricevic (Belgrado), Dr. Hermesdorf (Maastricht), Sr^a. Linard (Paris), Henri Lebrun (Paris), Dr. Holbergsgade (Copenhagen), Dr. Ruhemann (London), Dr. Straub (Zurich), Sr^a. Volkmer (New York), Dr. Werber (London, British Museum) Deoclecio Redig de Campos (Direttore dei Musei Vaticani), Juan Carlos Steppe (University of Lovaina), Walter V. S. Cook (Institute of Fine Arts of New York), Clara Mc. Gowan Cioban, Herman Trimbor (University of Bonn), Leandro de Saralegui (Academia de Bellas Artes de San Carlos), Alessandro Strini, Nikos Kessanlis (I. C. R. Rome), Mauro Pellicoli (Pinacoteca di Brera in Milan), Paolo y Laura Mora (I. C. R. Rome).

This list, which only constitutes a part of the large number of names of foreign specialists with which Spanish restorers had professional relationships, shows the wealth of contacts in the area of the cultural heritage among the countries of the European Union (this was voluntarily researched by the Historical Archive of the European Restorers project).

The creation of a network of experts on the history of restoration within the Historical Archive of the European Restorers has enabled this knowledge of these close relationships among the restorers of different nations to be spread. Collating, coordinating and uniting the research of each group to create a database on the history of restoration has allowed information and documents to be shared, which in turn has made the deepening of knowledge on the works of the studied restorers possible.

The study of the history of restoration and the preservation of cultural goods in Spain brings with it a special conjuncture; indeed certain difficulties arise that make this different from studying the same discipline in other countries. Firstly, one has to bear in mind that restorers were not highly valued figures in Spain up until recent times. This meant that during the 19th century, those who were dedicated to the art of restoration were mainly painters who worked at Royal Academies of Fine Art, who from time to time turned their skills to restoring works of art damaged either by time or by unusual accident. Even during much the 20th century, when the theoretical and practical discipline of restoration entered the academic spectrum, Spanish law neither encouraged nor enforced technical reports or studies to be drawn up before any restoration or preservation work was allowed to begin. The institutions that for decades had provided professionals dedicated to working on heritage, the Royal Academies of Fine arts, did not provide in their curricula any courses specialising in restoration, and their files have very few entries on preservation of ancient works. The Provincial Commissions that came to exist in the different Spanish provinces immediately after the disentanglements of the ecclesiastic goods in the middle of the 19th century were dedicated almost exclusively to the restoration of architecture. The information contained in the archives of fine arts academies is very patchy until the start of the 20th century. As far as museums are concerned, the most important art galleries of the peninsular territory, the Prado Museum of Madrid, the Museu Nacional D'Art de Catalunya of Barcelona and the Museum of Fine Arts San Pio V of Valencia did not file any reports on restorations until the 1980s. This all accounts for the shortage of documentation on restoration work up to the very recent past and justifies, partly, the shortage of studies on the topic and the difficulty to gain access to information. At present, professional restorers do not dedicate much time to the study of the history of the restoration; indeed the education and training given in the schools of restoration is fundamentally scientific and technical, and even within the speciality



Figura 1. Portrait of Antonio Alarcón Cabrera, 1950 circa (Concepción Alarcón's archive)



Figura 2. Portrait of Luis Roig d'Alós with his collaborators, 1955 circa (Pilar Roig Picazo's archive)



Figura 3. Photo of the frescoes of the Santo Angel church (Vall d'Uxó) before Restoration, 1941 (Pilar Roig Picazo's archive)



Figura 4. Photo of the frescoes of the Santo Angel church (Vall d'Uxó) after Restoration, 1942 (Pilar Roig Picazo's archive)

of restoration in the various faculties of fine arts, there are few lines of historic research being pursued in this respect. History of restoration is neither taught in the departments of History of Art at universities, nor promoted in doctoral theses and research studies.

The History of the Conservation and Restoration of cultural goods in Spain began in the 18th century. A few previous cases exist but it was not until the Bourbons came to the Spanish Crown that it became possible to speak about prominent figures dedicated to the care and restoration of paintings. In concrete, it was the fire of the Fortress of Madrid that heralded the arrival

of certain figures educated in fine arts to this area of restoration. During the fire in the Royal Palace, which damaged part of the royal collections, many of the paintings and sculptures in the building were rescued from the flames in a hurried manner and a large quantity were severely damaged. After the deflagration, the royal painter Juan García de Miranda worked to return the enormous number of artworks their original beauty and, in some cases, to adapt them to their new locations. This labour was later continued by the painter Andrés de la Calleja who managed to restore the works of art in the same character in which they were originally painted.



Figura 5. Photo of Francisco Núñez de Celis with Gonzalo Perales and Francisco Arquillo, 1965 circa (M^a del Mar Núñez de Celis' archive)



Figura 6. Portrait of Luis Roig d'Alós, 1955 circa, (Pilar Roig Picazo's archive)

Nevertheless, it was not until the 19th century when the appearance of the real conservator / restorer of works of art could really be spoken of. The defining moment of such a figure within the Spanish monarchy came with the work of Vicente Poleró y Toledó, who, in his *Arte de la restauración - Observaciones relativas a la restauración de cuadros* published in 1853, outlined the fundamentals of a Spanish theory on restoration. Nevertheless, real reports on restoration did not exist until the end of the 19th century, when the restorer Nicolás Gato de Lema penned a report in a letter of the restoration in 1892 of a depiction of Christ by Jose Ribera in the Deputation of Vitoria.

The 20th century saw the appearance of professional restorers in the area of public administration. In most cases they were professionals in the world of fine arts, as was the case of Francisco Núñez Losada in Madrid, Luis Roig d'Alós in Valencia or Manuel Grau in Barcelona. All of them had been trained in the high schools of fine arts or in the schools of arts and trades of their respective cities and had an artists' education. The arrival of these professionals, who in addition to being restorers were either painters or sculptors, to the world of the conservation of works of art, took place during the first decades of the 20th century. They were all self taught, due mainly to their strong desire to overcome the inadequacies of the Spanish educational system. For this reason, many of them turned to the works and advice of restorers overseas, in Germany and particularly in Italy, who had access to far greater resources. There was frequent contact between them and the likes of Cesare Brandi, Mauro Pellicoli, Paolo and Laura Mora and many more.

Only in 1939, due of the pressure exercised by characters such as Luis Roig d'Alós and Fernando Labrada, did the central government in Madrid allow the High Schools of Fine arts of Valencia and Madrid to incorporate the subjects of restoration in to their curricula. From this time onwards, the situation of the discipline improved until 1942, when Francisco Núñez Losada was awarded the Chair of Restoration at the School of Madrid and in 1948 Luis Roig d'Alós achieved the same in the School of Valencia. Despite the creation

of both Chairs, the practice of restoration continued to be exercised for many years by technical personnel trained outside the academic arena.

Another important step in the evolution of the restorer was the creation in 1961 of the Institute of Historical Spanish Heritage. This centre, with its headquarters designed the architects Moneo and Figueras and by Luís Roig d'Alós, began to work a few years later as centralized institution in charge of the conservation and restoration of hispanic heritage, and at the same time, in its headquarters, courses began to be given to train technical restorers. In 1969, within this institution, the School of Restoration Arts was created, whilst the Archives and Libraries Headquarters created the National Service for the Restoration of Books and Documents. Both teaching institutions were later unified to form the Higher School of Restoration and Preservation of Cultural Goods. The current professional situation of the sector remains the same, with, on the one hand, schools of restoration, which do not form part of any university, and on the other, the specialised restoration departments within faculties of fine arts in the universities.

This was the situation that the Spanish group faced at the start of this project on the Historical Archive of European Restorers; a new field in which locating documents on historical restorations of cultural goods was the principal problem.

Given the shortage of studies on history of restoration, the Spanish group focused on the personal files and notes of the restorers as its principal source of information. Locating these notes became an urgent matter to prevent them from getting lost. The institutional files were not in danger of disappearing, so their location and study was considered a secondary aim. In the first phase of the research, we proceeded to the homes of the descendants of the restorers who had lived in the principal Spanish areas of Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia, as well as to Ganada, home of one of the most important restorers of 20th century Spain, Leopoldo Torres Balbás.



Figura 7. Photo of the San Saturio frescoes during Restoration, 1976 (M^a del Mar Núñez de Celis' archive)



Figura 8. Photo of the San Saturio frescoes after Restoration, 1978 (M^a del Mar Núñez de Celis' archive)

The particular character of these sources of information added further difficulties to those inherent to any historical investigation. Firstly, there was the location of the personal documents of the chosen restorers, Leopoldo Torres Balbás, Manuel Grau, Luís Roig d'Alós, Francisco Núñez de Celis and Enrique Alarcón Cabrera. In those cases where documentation on relevant restorers remained, we proceeded to act as archivists and organize the personal documentation to be able to extract the necessary information at a later date. In the majority of cases, however, much of the documentation referred only to the personal life of the restorers, and only in a few cases was any information available on their professional activity.

Once all information useful for further study has been collated, further problems appeared. The main one was that of images that had been worked but which lacked any form of identification. Where this happened, we proceeded to explore the Spanish heritage in search of those works and their location. Once we had located the works of art, we proceeded to analyse the restoration work of the images, on many occasions helped by manuscript annotations of the restorers in the form of, notes or formulae etc.

The work of the Spanish group resulted in the collation of a broad amount of information on the restorers who were studied and, in many cases, the recovery of their personal files. The information has been placed in a database so it can be consulted by experts. In similar vein, we began to publish articles, such as the one on Luís Roig d'Alós in the 16th International Meeting on Heritage Conservation and on Enrique Alarcón Cabrera in the magazine R&R. We also published a single volume containing all the information compiled by the European groups.

Luís Roig d'Alós was born in Valencia in 1905, the city in which he died in 1968. His first artistic schooling took place in the School of Arts and Trades of Valencia, though the High school of Fine Arts of San Carlos also played a fundamental role in his training. His teaching career began in 1933 when he joined the High school of Fine Arts of San Carlos as teacher of drawing, and later in 1935 in the Faculty of Medicine as anatomical sculptor. In 1939, for the first time in Spain, restoration was established by Madrid as a speciality within the High Schools of Fine Arts. This new speciality was developed initially and immediately in only two Spanish schools - Madrid and Valencia. This

work was carried out by the teachers Fernando Labrada y Luís Roig d'Alós respectively, who took on the role of organising the teaching of the new courses, orientated towards setting up the speciality of restoration in both cities. Luís Roig d'Alós' work at the head of the speciality of restoration in the High school of Fine Arts of San Carlos of Valencia was fundamental for the development of the discipline in Spain, since he reformed the educational aspect of the subject, extending the course to three years and designing new study plans that were then applied in Valencia, Madrid and Barcelona, and later on in Seville. In 1948 Roig d'Alós obtained the Chair of Restoration of the High school of Fine Arts of San Carlos of Valencia after having passed the Civil Service exam. Amongst his work, his interest in fresco recovery procedures stands out, in particular, his work on the burnt frescoes of the Communion Chapel of the church of Santos Juanes and of the church of the Holy Angel in Vall d'Uxó.

Francisco Núñez de Celis was born in Madrid in 1919 and began his artistic training with his father, Francisco Núñez Losada, painter and restorer. He studied at the Cervantes Institute of Madrid, at the School of Arts and Artistic Trades and later at the High School of Fine Arts of San Fernando in the same city. During the course of his training, an important relationship with Paul Coremans grew up during his visits to Spain. His teaching career began in 1950 when he was a teacher at the School of Arts and Trades in Seville, and continued at the High School of Fine Arts of San Fernando of Madrid where he was awarded the chair of restoration in 1961. After this, the restorations carried out by the workshop of the School grew to a large number, among which the most important works were the restoration of Antonio Zapata's frescoes in San Saturio in Soria and the restoration of the altarpieces in the parish of Simancas's. During these years he continued painting, and received numerous medals and prizes at national level, including in 1961 a Juan March grant. Among his co workers were Margarita San Andrés, Zoraida Cárdenas, Teresa Escotado (Professor of Restoration of the University of País Vasco), Francisco Arquillo (Professor of Restoration of the University of Seville) and Gonzalo Perales (Restorer of the Prado Museum and director of the Institute of Historical Spanish Heritage).

Manuel Grau i Mas was born in Barcelona in 1892, the city in which he passed away in 1974. He began painting at a very young age, particularly with watercolours. He studied drawing and painting at the



Figura 9. Photo of Verónica before Restoration, 1963 (Concepción Alarcón's archive)

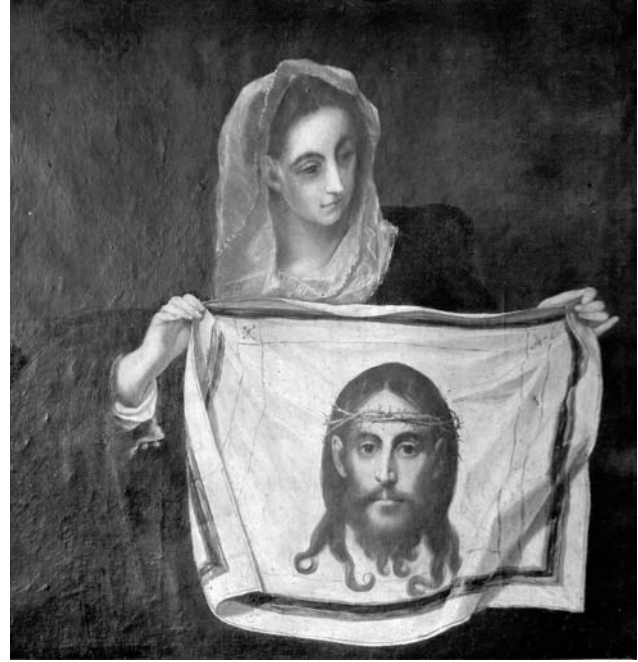


Figura 10. Photo of Verónica after Restoration, 1963 (Concepción Alarcón's archive)

School of Arts and Trades of the Lonja de Barcelona where his classmates numbered Joaquim Folch i Torres and Oleguer Junyent. He began his practice as an illuminator of manuscripts and at the same time he put on several exhibitions, among which the one at Galeries Laietanes stood out the most. In 1927 he began working at the workshops of the Town Hall of Barcelona to prepare the Universal Exhibition of 1929, where he took charge of the paintings, whilst sculptures were entrusted to Lluís Iglesias. During the same year of 1927, Manuel Grau married Adela Colominas and they were to have three daughters, Josefina, Adela and Maria Rosa. From 1927 onwards, he formed part of the Junta de Museos de Barcelona and in 1931 he was given a stipend to travel to Italy for one year where he worked in Milan with the restorer Mauro Pellicoli. After his return he was made the Director of the Workshop of Restoration of the Museu d'Art de Catalunya, which he ran with Domènec Xarriè. The municipality entrusted him with the creation of a School of Restoration, but he was not able to carry the project out. In 1933 he organised the move of the Roman wall paintings of the necropolis of Tarragona, in 1934 he restored El Greco's painting of Sities's Cau Ferrat and in 1940 he restored Goya's frescos in San Antonio, Florida, in Madrid. He also restored the wall paintings of Vic's Cathedral by Josep Maria Sert. In the 1950s he worked on the restoration of the Verge dels Consellers by Lluís Dalmau. His experience was requested internationally on several occasions, as happened in 1931 in Milan for a study on the restoration project on Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper and in 1950 by the British Museum and the National Gallery. Among his official recognitions, 1932 stands out when he was given the job of Restorer of works of art of the Museums of the City of Barcelona, as does 1940 when the Headquarter of Fine arts nominated him Restorer of the Artistic Heritage of Spain, 1952 when he was nominated Fellow of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of Saint George; and 1958 when he received the Cross of Alfonso X The Wise. His protégées number Domènec Xarriè, Joaquim Pradell i Ventura, Francesc Vallés, Maria Lluïsa Sainz de la Maza, Marçal Barrachina and Ramon Lluï Monlleó.

Enrique Alarcón Cabrera was born in 1912 in the city of Alicante. He studied in the Schools of Arts and Trades of Alicante and Murcia and complemented his training in painting and sculpture working with the painters Manuel Cantos and Heliodoro Guillén and the sculptor Rafael Reus. During the twenties and thirties he worked painting in his city and collaborated actively with one of the major parties of Alican-

te, the Hogueras de San Juan, with several designs of comical character for temporary monuments that were constructed to be later burned. In 1941 he married Concepción Álvarez Gómez and was to have two children, Enrique and Concepción.

In 1947 a religious figure from Alicante convinced him of his aptitude for painting and Antonio Alarcón moved with his family to Madrid to form a part of the staff at the Prado Museum. During these early years of his residence in Madrid, Alarcón managed to become a watchman in the museum and dedicated large amounts of his time to making copies of the pictures. At the same time, he began to work carrying out restoration work for private collectors in what came to be the beginning of the creation of a solid clientele of aristocrats and members of high society in Madrid with whom he maintained a healthy relation up to his death.

In 1950 he gained employment as a restorer in the Prado Museum and up to his death in 1970 he continued to work on numerous paintings of the museum besides on works of other collections as the Goya of the Bank of Spain in Madrid or the Pablo de San Leocadio's San Miguel in Orihuela's Diocesan Museum.

Leopoldo Torres Balbás was born in 1888 in Madrid and studied architecture in the city's School of Architecture, completing his training in the Archaeological Section of the Centre of Historical Studies.

His principal activity as a restorer took place in Granada after he was appointed Conservative Architect of the Alhambra in 1923. It was in this city, until the beginning of the Spanish Civil war in 1936 that he carried out his work on the following monuments, amongst others: Galería norte de Machuca (Alhambra de Granada, 1923-1930), Tocado de la Reina (Alhambra de Granada, 1924-1930), Sala de los Reyes (Alhambra de Granada, 1924-1933), Habitaciones y Palacio de Carlos V (Alhambra de Granada, 1924-1934), Patio de los Arrayanes (Alhambra de Granada, 1924-1936), Sala de las Dos Hermanas (Alhambra de Granada, 1925-1933), Patio de la Alberca (Alhambra de Granada, 1926-1927), Patio de los Leones (Alhambra de Granada, 1926-1934), Exconvento de San Francisco (Alhambra de Granada, 1927-1936), Habitación de los Gobernadores (Alhambra de Granada, 1929), El Cubo (Alhambra de Granada, 1929-1935), Iglesia de San Juan de los Reyes (Granada, 1929), Corral del Carbón (Granada, 1929-1930),

Casa del Chapiz (Granada, 1929-1931), Palacio de Daralhorra en el Convento de Santa Isabel la Real (Granada, 1930), Casa de los Girones (Granada, 1931), Arco de Belén, Santa Fe (Granada, 1931), Torre de Comares (Alhambra de Granada, 1931-1932).

His time as conservator of the Fort of Malaga in 1934 and 1935 stood out, as did his work in 1940 in Sigüenza's Cathedral after its destruction during the civil war. After being awarded the Chair of History of Architecture and Plastic Arts at the Higher School of Architecture of Madrid, he became very active in education, and published numerous essays and articles.

Over the years he was awarded membership of various societies and institutions such as Fellow of the Royal Academy of the History, Chief of section of the Institute Benito Arias Montano of the CSIC, Member of the National Museum of Architecture Valencia of Don Juan, Fellow of Honour of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Telmo in Málaga, Fellow of Number of the Royal Provincial Academy of Fine Arts of Granada, Fellow of the Royal Academy of Sciences, Beautiful Letters and Noble Arts of Cordoba, Fellow of the Hispanic Society of America of New York, Fellow of the Argentinean Academy of the History and Fellow of the Royal Academy of History. He was nominated also Doctor Honoris Causa by the University of Algiers and Doctor Honoris Causa by the University of Rabat. His extensive work as a historian and restorer of Spanish architecture was continued after his death in 1960 by his numerous students, such as Fernando Chueca Goitia and Antonio Labrada.

Since the history of restoration is a recently formed discipline in Spain, it remains a relatively unexplored field, of which the Historical Archive of the European Restorers is only a beginning. In this initial phase, we have become acquainted with the characters of some of the most important restorers of our history, but there remains much work to be done in a country lacking in tradition of the study of the history of restoration of its heritage.

The Spanish research group proposes to continue its labour along several lines. First, and with the support of the Associazione Secco-Suardo, the creation of a Historical Archive of Spanish Restorers is planned, with its physical location in the Universidad Politécnica de Valencia. The object of these archives is to prevent documents and information on Spanish restorers and their work on heritage from getting lost. To that end, we hope to make restorers and indeed the general public aware of the existence of this type of documentation, to ensure that, in the event of the death of a restorer, the history of his work does not disappear forever, but can be kept in the Historical Archive of Spanish Restorers, so that any expert on the matter may consult it.

We will also continue our works on locating and cataloguing the personal notes and files of deceased restorers. We have also begun to carry out similar work on current restorers, to compile their personal files before any possible dispersion of them, as frequently happens after any death. Besides, the work cataloguing the professional careers and works of living restorers will also allow us to increase the material available, by, for example, registering the oral testimonies of individual restorers.

With this next phase just beginning, we hope to extend the scope of the labours of the Spanish research group to include the files of institutions such as the Royal Academies of Fine Arts or the Institute of Historical Spanish Heritage, as well as the files and archives of the principal museums. By locating and analysing these

documents, we hope not just to provide information on restorers and their concrete restorations, but also to penetrate further the history of restoration from the perspective of these institutions, their history, their attitude towards conservation of heritage over the time, and the training that they provided to restorers.

Finally, the Spanish group has several fundamental aims to better allow future research in to history of restoration in Spain: to promote doctoral theses, to publish articles and to transcribe and publish as yet unpublished manuscripts of those restorers studied. The ultimate aim of these initiatives is to spread throughout Spanish and European society knowledge of a subject which, until now, has remained largely unexplored, to further make society more aware of its art heritage.

AUTHORS

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Pablo González Tornel: is a Doctor in History of Art, and a University Professor in the Official Master's Degree in Science and Restoration at the UPV. He has participated in several research projects and contracts allocated to the recuperation of Heritage, such as the master plan of B.I.C. of the San Juan Hospital of Valencia. He has written several papers and books concerning the History of Art and Patrimony among which his recent book *Arte y Arquitectura en la Valencia de 1700 (Art and Architecture in the Valencia of 1700)* stands out. He has also participated in conferences and in the recent European project *Archivo Histórico de los Restauradores Europeos acerca de la Historia de la Restauración (Historic Archive of the European Restorers about the History of the Restoration)* and is familiarised with this activity as well as the management of databases concerning it.

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Versión española

TÍTULO: *Archivo histórico de los restauradores europeos*

RESUMEN: *El proyecto "Archivo Histórico de los Restauradores Europeos" se centra en la recuperación de las memorias históricas de los conservadores-restauradores de los países socios del proyecto y de las intervenciones más relevantes de éstos en torno al Patrimonio Histórico-Artístico. Los resultados obtenidos han sido sistematizados en una base de datos para facilitar el acceso a los investigadores.*

PALABRAS CLAVES: *patrimonio, historia de la restauración, bases de datos, archivos, biografías, restauradores*