

EAP383: Preserving and cataloguing the Luis Reyes García collection of native language audios and copies of nahua documents

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2010 award - Pilot project

£4,945 for 3 months

A survey report was produced, providing details of the Luis Reyes García's private collection, the methodology for cataloguing the archive and the improvement in storage facilities.

Further Information

You can contact the EAP team at endangeredarchives@bl.uk

Catalogue of Luis Reyes García's Private Collection

Introduction

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Luis Reyes García's work has been an important addition to ethnohistory research in Mexico. His humble background, born in a small Nahuatl village in the State of Veracruz, was not an impediment to achieve national and international recognition due to his prolific academic life.

Reyes García's main academic objective was the study of Nahuatl documents, his mother language, as well as mentoring ethnohistoric students with indigenous backgrounds served as a vehicle between the academic education and their communities, thus placing the interests of these communities on the scale of national interest.

The enormous contribution of Luis Reyes' legacy to the historiographic debate resides in his published works such as: *Historia Tolteca Chichimeca (Tolteca-Chichimeca History)* in co-authorship with Paul Kirchhoff (1976), *Cuahtinchan del siglo XII al XV. Formación y desarrollo de un señorío prehispánico (Cuahtinchan, from XII to XV Century. Creation and development of a pre-Hispanic lordship)* (1988), *Documentos sobre tierras y señoríos de Cuahtinchan, Puebla, 1496-1900 (Documents on the Cuahtinchan, Puebla lands and lordships 1496-1900)*, (1978), *La escritura pictográfica de Tlaxcala, (Pictographic writing in Tlaxcala) coord.* (1993), *Historia de Tlaxcala de Diego Muñoz Camargo (Diego Muñoz Camargo's History of Tlaxcala)*

(1998), *Anales de San Juan Bautista* (Annals of Juan Bautista) (2001); which are the most quoted among ethnohistorians.

The Catalogue that is presented here is the result of financial support provided by the British Library, Project EAP 383, to organize, classify and create a catalogue of Luis Reyes García's personal collection. Through their funding, we have been able to recognize the importance that ethnolinguistic and ethnohistory have had on Mexican scholars from the 1960's to 2000's. The relevance of this collection resides in the meticulous analysis and methodology that Luis Reyes García developed, which uses theories and analytical tools that create an interdisciplinary approach between linguistics, ethnolinguistics, anthropology, economics, history and even literature. Luis Reyes' methodology was well known by scholars, but looking carefully into his collection allowed us to access and understand this methodology in detail.

The collection is composed of index cards, audio-taped interviews, photographs, maps, worksheets (genealogies, table analysis), specialized magazines and personal items; all of which reveal Luis Reyes' professional activity as a scholar and professor. The documents show a methodology that combines an ethnohistorical and ethnolinguistic analysis from a specific period of time taking place between 1964 and 2004.

One particular aspect on the vast collection is the index card section, which includes transcriptions of documents in Spanish or Nahuatl, translations and analysis of colonial documents, as well as ethnographic work. As a result of his meticulous methodology, we can find innumerable comparison tables, genealogies, collection worksheets, bibliographic comments, ancient and modern maps, transcription and palaeography of documents in Nahuatl and in Spanish, translated documents in Nahuatl, interview transcripts in native languages, linguistic analysis cards, etc.

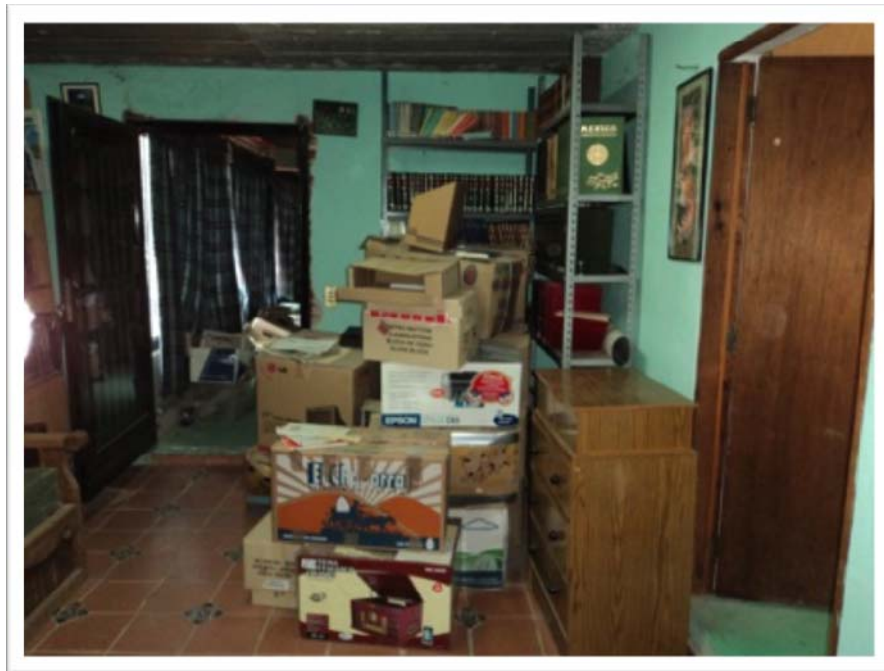
The project organized, classified and catalogued Luis Reyes García' collection in order to facilitate future consultation; it also aimed to preserve and protect it. Guillermo Goñi Motilla, Guadalupe Niembro and Raúl Mácuil Martínez conducted the identification of documents, photographs and native language audiotapes. Also, the archival work was done by the students of the Philosophy Faculty from the University of

Puebla: Emmanuel Michel Flores Sosa, Scarlet Muñoz Ramírez, María José Hernández Alonso, Edgar Hernández Espinosa, Leticia Martínez Pérez, María Merced Rodríguez Pérez, Vidzu Morales Huitzil, Sara Guadalupe Vera Hernández, Anayeli Hernández Cruz, Miguel Ángel Villegas Hidalgo, Emmanuel Rodríguez López, Alberto Sarmiento Tepoxtécatl. I thank them deeply for their commitment and their collective effort. In addition, I would like to thank Alfredo Martínez González, who is the owner of this collection, for allowing us to do this project. Finally, I would like to thank the History Department of the Philosophy Faculty from Benemérita Universidad Autónoma Puebla, with a special thanks to its Director, Dr. Alejandro Palma Castro, as well as Dr. Manuel de Santiago, head of the Biblioteca José María Lafragua of the same university, who gave us their unconditional support at all times.



1. Luis Reyes García' Collection

Luis Reyes García's collection is located on Camino Real 14, Barrio de Tetela, Primera Sección, Municipio La Magdalena Tlatelulco, Tlaxcala. It belongs to the Luis Reyes García's Library, inherited by Alfredo Martínez González, who is the library and collection's custodian. A portion of the collection is housed in a second floor room (5x7m.), with windows that look over the interior yard, and for most part it is well preserved. The library contains Luis Reyes' specialized library, organized on 14 metal shelves. However, the collection was not located on these metal shelves; some of it was found on the floor inside the library room. Another part of the collection was located in the corridor, either in carton boxes or piled up on the floor outside of the Library room. In the early stages of this project, a portion of the documentation was not even in the house, but had been transferred to Dr. Guillermo Goñi's house, where a selection of documents had been collected for publication purposes.





Unfortunately, some documents were missing. We did not find the photocopies and analysis of documents from the Fiscales' archives,¹ which Luis Reyes and his students were working on before he passed away. These documents of the archive were written in Spanish and Nahuatl, and they consisted of photocopies of wills, annals, Fiscales' memoirs, archive inventories (such as Santa Inés Zacatelco), antique maps, etc. We know, from an article published by Guillermo Goñi,² that these documents were handed to the Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social (CIESAS) for publication, which to this date has not been done. However, there is no indication that these documents were removed from the collection. The only indication we have so far about where the documents were transferred is the statement in Guillermo Goñi's article.

Accordingly, we presume that the collection underwent two interventions: incorporation and removal of documents from it. The first main intervention happened after Luis Reyes' death and was performed by Alfredo Martínez González, who incorporated documents from Luis Reyes' office in México City. The second intervention was made to remove unedited articles for publication purposes. Guillermo Goñi selected the documents and eventually handed in to Teresa Rojas Rabiela the articles for publication. In both interventions archival standards were not followed, which means that the original organization of the collection was improperly modified. Therefore, many files were separated from the original group of documents and later regrouped according to each selector's criteria.

Once we were able to establish the conditions of the collection and the interventions that had taken place, we decided to follow the archival principle of precedence (respect of fonds) as the methodology for the physical organization of the records, because it was impossible to recreate the original order since it was no longer operable. The archival principle of precedence establish that a record reflects the action that created it, therefore it must not be mixed with others, which makes it possible to maintain certain cohesion between records and their classification. Documents are

¹ Fiscalía is an institution that was in charge of the Church and religious life of the Indians.

² Guillermo Goñi Motilla, "Bibliografía del maestro Luis Reyes García", in *Tlahcuilo. Boletín del Archivo Histórico del Estado de Tlaxcala*, vol. 2, núm. 8-9, Nueva Época. Tlaxcala, 2009, p. 134-141.

instruments for conveying information about their original order.³ This archival principle of precedence provides a structured and logical order that unifies the documents of the repository, and preserves its significance to properly understand them as a whole.

Once this standard was established for the archival description, we proceeded to classify the records according to the categories: fonds, section, series and sub-series (see the annexed classificatory table). The standard archival description was established according to Luis Reyes' actions: research, lecturing and personal documents. We also described the series according to the type of document, since they were separated in the two previous interventions, which made it impossible to reconstruct the records' original order.

As mentioned above, most of the documents were well preserved, although that was not the case of some of them, which were seriously damaged. In particular the audio records were in poor conditions, piled up in boxes and disorganized. Some photographs were damaged as well.



The first step in the archival procedure was to clean up each document, removing paper clips or staples, and placing the documents in acid-free folders, each folder containing a file. In the same way, maps, photographs, microfilm and audiotapes were cleaned and placed in special envelopes made of acid-free paper. Each file was classified by fonds, sections, series or sub-series, and placed progressively in archive boxes. Both, files and boxes were labelled with the classificatory archival standard. The second step was to register the files, following its order in the box, by the title of the document and the number of pages it had. Thus, a database was created on Excel to be later transferred to an ACCESS computer program.

³ Recording technologies have proliferated, so that documents may be textual, graphic, photographic, audio, video, or electronic.



As a result we accomplished the classification of Luis Reyes' private collection in 81 archival boxes, which makes a total of 38.13 lineal meters of documents.

Box size	Amount of boxes	Meters
Archival (10 cm)	13	1.30
Small (41 cm)	12	4.92
Letter Size (50.5 cm)	17	8.60
A4 Size (63 cm)	37	23.31
TOTAL	81	38.13

The collection comprises documentation from a period between 1955-2004, containing photocopies, codices, analysis and reproduction of documents dated from 1524 to 2004. Each archival box has a label that gives a standard description, as well as the number of the files it contains.

The database contains information regarding concepts such as: standard description (fond, section, series, sub-series); location (box, file, number of pages; date; place; time, language, photocopies, print, typing, pictographic, manuscript, audio, content,

author, title, editorial, conservation state and observations. These concepts were defined based on the standard description.

2. Standard Description.

The standard description was based on two main considerations: 1) Luis Reyes Gracia's professional life was devoted to research and lecturing. Therefore, both academic activities are inseparable to the effects of creating documents. 2) Ethnohistory and ethnolinguistics disciplines cannot be separated from each other as they are parallels in Luis Reyes's books and articles. Ethnolinguistics projects were the origin of ethnohistoric ones and vice versa.

Due to this circumstance, we established two main fonds: one entitled Research and Lecturing, and the second one named Private Documents. The Fonds Research and Lecturing was classified in three sections: 1) Ethnohistory and Ethnolinguistics, 2) Research in Anthropology, and 3) Magazines and News Papers. The fonds Private Documents was classified in two sections: 1) Administrative, and 2) Private.

The Fonds 'Research and Lecturing' contains all documents, reproductions, codices, maps, photographs, audios, transcriptions, index cards, study programmes, research projects, etc., which were generated or compiled as the result of Luis Reyes' professional activity as researcher and professor, from the beginning of his academic career until his death. This fonds is divided into three sections:

1. Section - Ethnohistory and Ethnolinguistics. This section contains all documents (from reproduction of codices and primary sources, index cards, analysis work sheets, and articles) created either by research or lecturing courses in undergraduate and graduate programs. We decided to keep the two disciplines attached, as they were profoundly bound in Luis Reyes' academic career. This section was divided into nine series:

Series - Articles and analysis. Under this series we classified all documents that constitute part of a research project; whether they were primary sources

(photocopies, photos of codices, photocopies of documents), or a work-in-progress: dictionary index cards, bibliographic cards, analysis cards or drafts of published articles. We only considered as an exception to this standard the maps, texts, document reproductions or photos that were not directly related to a specific file. This exception was a consequence of the above mentioned interventions that modified the original order of the collection. In those files where there was a direct relation to a particular research topic, the original order was kept.

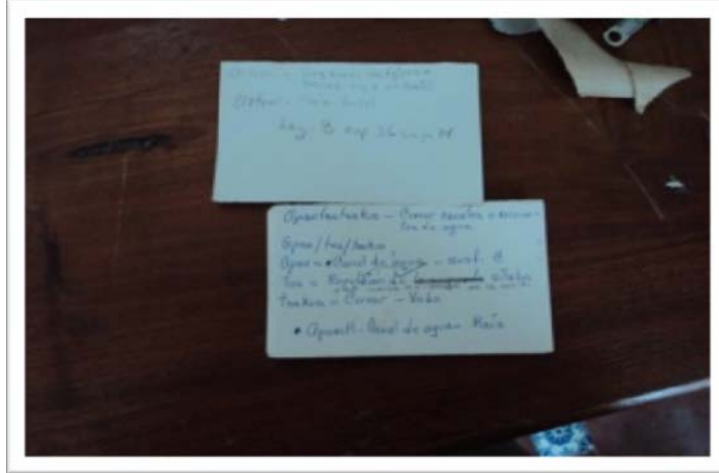
Series - Students Projects. To this group belong all documents that were created by students, such as thesis proposals, homework, reading reports, etc. It also includes the undergraduate and graduate study programs.

Series - Research Projects. It includes the applications for financial support, grants, and other aspects regarding research projects.

Series - Indigenous Projects. This series is comprised of databases about indigenous villages, native languages statistics, etc.

Series - Maps and codices' reproductions. This series was divided into four sub-series: Reproduction of codices, reproduction of antique maps, analytical maps, specialized maps.

Series - Index Cards. This series was divided into four sub-series: Dictionary Index Cards, Bibliography Index Cards, Archival Index Cards, and Analytical Index Cards.



Series - Photographs. This series was divided into three sub-series: paper photographs, slides, and negatives.

Microfilms.

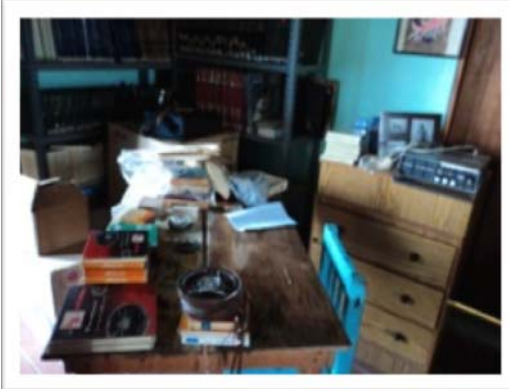
2. Section Research in Anthropology. This section contains all documents that were created as a consequence of using an anthropological methodology in research. This section was divided in three series:

Series - Field Work. This contains the Luis Reyes' notes of field research.

Series - Transcription of Interviews. It contains transcriptions of interviews collected by Luis Reyes, his colleagues or his students.

Series - Audios. Audiotapes of recorded interviews, registered on magnetic tape.

It also includes some cassettes with regional music from indigenous communities.



3. Section Magazines and Newspapers. The Fonds Research and Lecturing contains a section named Magazines and Newspapers, which contains all publications related to Luis Reyes' academic activity, specifically those that were a part of his research or lecturing interest. This section is divided into 7 series:

Series - Specialized Magazines. Specialized publications related to Luis Reyes' research.

Series - Pamphlets. Publications in form of pamphlets about academic events or research.

Series - Gazettes. Periodic publications from research institutions.

Series - Bulletins: Periodic publications edited by research institutions.

Series - Newspapers. Newspapers containing relevant information for research or Luis Reyes' academic activity.

Series - Invitations and Academic Events. Printed invitations to academy related events, presentations, book presentations, conferences or congress.

Series - Political Magazines. Proceso and Nexos, both Mexican magazines.

The second fonds, **Personal Documents**, contains Luis Reyes' private documentation. It was divided in two sections: Administrative (contracts, salary certifications, legal agreements, etc.) and Private (family affairs, correspondence, private relationships, etc.). The section Private was divided in three series: Personal, Carteles and Posters, and CD's, Diskettes, etc.

3. Preserving and managing the Collection

Once the collection was classified, organized and catalogued, we proceed to label the boxes with the standard description that identify them, according to fonds, sections, series and sub-series:

Luis Reyes García' Collection
Archival Box: 35
Fonds: Research and Lecturing
Section: Ethnohistory and
Etnolingüística
Serie: Articles and Analysis (102 files)
Serie: Index Cards (1 file)
Total: 103 files

The collection was housed in the Luis Reyes García's Libray, the boxes were placed on metal shelves that Alfredo Martínez González designed and constructed himself for that purpose. A total of 81 archival boxes were located on the metal shelves and some of them on tables or on the floor (see picture).



1. Fiscalía was an institution that was in charge of the Church and religious life of the Indians.
2. Guillermo Goñi Motilla, “Bibliografía del maestro Luis Reyes García”, in Tlahcuilo. Bolítan del Archivo Histórico del Estado de Tlaxcala, vol.2, núm, 8-9, Nueva Época. Tlaxcala, 2009, p. 134-141.

3. Recording technologies have proliferated, so that documents may be textual, graphic, photographic, audio, video or electronic.