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Unboxing Spain's Colonial Past in the Rif

Situating memory work and transborder publics in a Domestic
Basement Archive in Madrid

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Cover image: Spanish Heritage in the Rif: The Spanish militarily fortified Islote de Alhucemas /Nekor Island off Sfiha beach. Photo by Carla Tiefenbacher

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Unboxing Spain's Colonial Past in the Rif

Situating memory work and transborder publics in a Domestic Basement Archive in Madrid

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Abstract In the Northern Moroccan city of Al Hoceima, Spanish and Moroccan history of the 20th and twenty-first century converge. The protracted anti-/colonial war fought between parties on both territories gave rise to the bloody Spanish Civil War and Francoist dictatorship and formed a basis for post-independence military oppression in the Rif uprisings 1958/59. A growing body of ethnographic work focuses on memory work on both topics in this area from Moroccan perspectives and with eyes on oppressed subjects (Aixelà-Cabré 2022, Nahhass 2022). Drawing on recent work on 'implicated subjects' (Rothberg 2019), I argue that it is also necessary to consider ongoing trans-Mediterranean and Spanish memory activism in order to fully understand the workings and duress of colonialism in Spain and Northern Morocco. To that end, the following paper analyzes archival practices about colonial Alhucemas and postcolonial Hoceima surrounding one private collection among this last generation of Spanish colonizers. It builds on fieldwork I conducted among former Spanish residents of Al Hoceima. As children and young adults, they grew up in relative colonial freedom under the totalitarian Franco regime. As adults, they witnessed two transitions: the transition to Moroccan independence 1956 and the transition to Spanish democracy from 1978 onwards, and many of them engage in collecting practices surrounding these transitions. This paper outlines how objects circulate in and out of one of their archives and how publics congregate around them. Through the objects, Former Residents, Spanish institutions, Spanish and Rifian actors become actors and publics who enter in relationships of co-operation without consensus about a shared narrative of perpetrators, victims and history at large. Three contested issues are made to travel through the analyzed collection: a continuously invoked notion of *convivencia*, (architectural) traces of a colonial past in the Hoceima cityscape and administrative and social secrets of mutual surveillance. I am interested in how these issues form part of a boundary infrastructure of memory work between Spain and Hoceima (Star and Griesemer 1989, Star and Bowker 2017, Schubert 2017). This working paper will serve as an intermediary step to explore competing and shared notions of victimhood, forms of co-operation and the creation of transborder publics around the entangled histories of life on both shores of the Mediterranean.

Keywords: community museum, archive, colonial, Francoism, Spain, Morocco, Rif, publics, boundary objects, infrastructures

1. Introduction

In mid-March 2022, a storm crosses the Mediterranean Sea, hits Spain and covers much of Madrid in reddish sand that a week before had belonged to the Sahara. I arrive in Madrid half a day after the sand. Its grains stay with me as I visit my initial gatekeeper: a man in his 80s, a married father of two daughters and several grandchildren, a retired entrepreneur and enthusiastic fisherman. I am approaching him and his archive of Spanish colonial history in North Morocco to help me understand Spanish memory work on the Rif. This research on archival practices among Spanish former inhabitants of the Northern Moroccan city of Al Hoceima is part of a larger research project on “Media of Co-operation. Digital Publics and Social Transformation in the Maghreb” and complements anthropological research on memory-scapes in the Rif (compare ter Laan 2022, ter Laan and Zillinger 2022). There, as part of this research, and together with a team of socio-informaticians (Holdermann et al 2020), the building of a MediaSpace has been financed, which is used by local inhabitants to run a library and to develop a digital documentation center on the history of the Rif. As part of these efforts, the group of activists running the MediaSpace not only promote a magazine published by the *Association of Former Spanish Residents of Alhucemas* but hold regular contact to some of its members via WhatsApp calls, Facebook and in person. My interlocutor in Madrid, Manuel Palomo Romero¹, is one of them, a former Spanish resident of Al Hoceima, co-founder of the *Association* and director of a small private museum on Spanish-Riffian history. His activities fold into initiatives in the Rif and in Spain that address the entangled history of the Rif for their respective communities, and who try to ‘naturalize’ a certain version of Riffian history for their own ends, at times differently, at times in accord with one another. This working paper is a first step to understand the archives, media productions and activities of different actors in the Rif, in Spain and the Riffian diaspora as elements of a transborder boundary infrastructure of memory work that traces, claims and un/remembers

¹ During this research, I have repeatedly faced the dilemma of building trustful relationships with people whose political opinions and perspectives on life I do not share. This dilemma appeared as well in considerations whether or not to pseudonymize. In this case, I have weighed concerns arguing for the convention of pseudonymizing in anthropological writing (to protect interlocutors from mutual recognition and state surveillance, to preserve bonds of intimacy in relationships that are initially formed with the intent of publishing about them, and to help the researcher to distance themselves from their interlocutors) and have decided against it for several reasons. First and foremost, I use his name as a sign of respect towards him as a person. Palomo explicitly told me to use his real name, as well as the real name of the museum. For him, using his real name serves as a means of validating his collection and of spreading it to a larger audience. I am aware of these hopes, and while I do not share his goals, I support open co-operation without consensus over colonial aphasia (Stoler 2011). Pseudonymization also obscures interlocutor knowledge and ownership, and further invisibilizes the anthropologist’s interpretative authority in their written text. Finally, pseudonymization stakes a researcher’s claim on “their” interlocutors — it serves to protect researcher-interlocutor relationships from other researchers active in the field. I hope these practices will be overcome, and in this case they also seem futile in the age of Google keyword search. (Compare also Weiss, McGranahan et al. 2021)

past forms of conviviality, surveillance, domination and resistance across space and social formations. Addressing the past in Spain, the Rif, and the Riffian Diaspora is a political activity of the present, claiming a complex, and violent Mediterranean history across social worlds, aligning publics by naturalizing a specific form of remembering, at times done differently, and at times in a similar fashion. While this project demands further multi-sited research, this working paper presents initial findings of my research among the former Spanish inhabitants of the Spanish protectorate in the Rif.

My Madrid interlocutor Palomo, as he is most often referred to by friends and acquaintances, was born in Alhucemas, a city the Spanish military had let construct on the Mediterranean shore of the now Moroccan Rif, in between Tetuan and Nador, and the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla. He is outgoing, generous to guests, and has restaged what I perceive as a Franco-Nationalist utopia of Spanish life in the Protectorate of Morocco in the museum housed in his basement. His archive of a lost past is one of many I will encounter in the upcoming months as I trace various interlocutors through their exhibitions and as they invite me into their archives. Palomo’s archive is meticulously organized, physically distributed over at least 5 sites and virtually present in many more. Through the collection he has assembled, he testifies to the foundational importance of Spanish colonialism to the Francoist dictatorship. The practices surrounding the collection in turn reveal the duress of Spanish colonialism in Morocco and in Spain. Located in the basement of a medical practice, the museum is usually largely inaccessible to the public. Its contents sometimes appear in a paper print-out exhibition, or in articles in a national newspaper. The archive documents and creates political and social alliances that re-inscribe former colonialists into a post-colonial Spanish present, and relates them to a lost home in Northern Morocco. These alliances may, at times, be uncomfortable to live, and also to study as an outsider. They question what it means to be a bystander, a social climber, and a person declaring good intentions in a system many different factions perceive as unjust.

Based on material from my 3-month ethnographic field research, archival work, from return visits and through the access interlocutors have gifted me to their digital and physical archives, I investigate archived life histories of Spanish ex-settler colonialists from Al Hoceima, Morocco. My research aims to understand how new publics are created and assembled in conflicting memory-scapes between Spain and Morocco. To that end, I explore the personal engagement of members of the self-proclaimed *Asociación de Antiguos Residentes de Alhucemas* (Association of Former Spanish Residents of Alhucemas) with Spain’s colonial past in (Northern) Morocco. Specifically, I seek to understand how this personal engagement manifests in their practices of collecting, storing, displaying, and circulating objects of memory from their archived life histories in Al-Hoceima, Morocco. By examining

these material aspects as well as their motivations and networks, I aim to contribute an additional perspective on the complex postcolonial relationship between Spain and Morocco that continues to be enacted in varying publics across the Mediterranean Sea.

The *Former Residents* are civilian settler colonialists that were born in Morocco in second or third generation and relocated to peninsular Spain or Melilla in the decades after Moroccan independence in 1956. Most left as early as 1958, when the Spanish military left and the Rif uprisings broke out, others in the 1960s, when a law of nationalization of commerce made Spanish businesses in Hoceima less profitable. A select few stayed longer than this. Many of these Spaniards periodically return to Hoceima for vacation and to visit friends. In private discussions, in public activities on social media, at exhibitions, reunions and in interactions with stakeholders of Spanish-Riffian history, these *Former Residents* articulated a variety of colonialist positions to explain their past and continued presence in the Rif. Among the positions I encountered were a cultural interest for the ‘Other’ neighbor of the past and the claim to be authorized to define the essence of that ‘Other’, an alleged brotherhood ‘on equal footing’ in a military-run colony, and a Spanish responsibility to be the ‘only protectors and salvagers’ of Spanish and Riffian heritage. Others saw themselves on a ‘civilizational mission’ gone wrong with Moroccan independence in 1956, and/or as the ‘Protectors of the disunited Riffian people’ that failed when ‘the Rif’ needed their protection most against the ‘new invader’, the Moroccan State, after independence. In the 1990s, some of the *Former Residents of Alhucemas* formed an association with the goal of re-establishing community bonds and fostering shared memories, also with their former “neighbors”, the Moroccan inhabitants of the city. Formerly up to 800 members of the *Association* had by the time of writing decreased to around 100 active members, who stayed in contact with each other through the association’s newspaper, various Facebook and WhatsApp groups, group journeys to the old homeland and through bi-annual reunions in northern and southern Spain. Age had influenced reunion dynamics: *Association* members were roughly between 65 and 90 years old, and younger generations did not continue their memory work in the *Association* framework. Members shared varying degrees of nostalgia, civic, financial and humanitarian engagement in Hoceima, and many of those I met engage in archival practices with the explicit goal of preserving ‘history that is about to be forgotten’ and ‘restituting’ this history both to their former and current contexts of home.

For this paper, I will focus on one specific of the several archives that members of the association have assembled. The *Museo MaPal de Villa Sanjurjo* –

*Alhucemas*², a museum founded in 1999 in a Madrid basement, is the lifetime work of a private collector, Manuel Palomo Romero. After 15 years of being on display, it is in the process of being dissolved and transferred to other archives. As is common among many Spanish men of his generation, the museum director is known to friends and acquaintances by his last (father’s) name only: Palomo. Palomo is a public persona — he has talked about the museum on a local Madrid TV station, the recording of which is available on YouTube (himatra 2007, July 30). He has given an interview to the national newspaper ABC (Villatoro 2017, July 17), the museum has a webpage including pictures of him and honorary guests, and it includes directions to its physical location. With internet-based search engines, it only takes the two keywords “museum” and “Alhucemas” for him to appear on the first page of search results. Palomo’s collection, his political positions and his family history are well-known among the *Former Residents*, and he discusses them comparatively openly in those circles. Unlike other *Association* members, Palomo is acutely aware that history production and daily life in Al Hoceima are heavily surveilled. He sees it as his responsibility to protect sources who live under Moroccan jurisdiction, but does not consider himself in need for protection from surveillance. I do not claim authority over his voice, and am grateful for the trust and access Palomo granted me. This working paper does not seek to validate Palomo’s agenda nor his configuration of history. Instead, it offers a critical analysis of an incoherent memory narrative that has made me feel uncomfortable, helpless and sad many times.

Palomo’s archive captures not only a breadth of colonialist justification narratives in his collection, but also the contradictions and emotional complexities of displacement from a childhood utopia, and of living under two connected authoritarian regimes — the peninsular Francoist and the Spanish colonial one. It also addresses unstable Spanish-Moroccan relations in not necessarily less violent postcolonial times. As a rather recently consolidated archive with its only manager still alive and engaged in making its contents circulate, Palomo’s museum and connected archive lend themselves to an ethnographic case study on archival practices. The different exhibitions Palomo has produced out of his archive aim to consolidate a specific version of Spanish benevolence and Moroccan injustice I will outline further in the coming sections. As different actors enter forms of co-operation on and around the archive, painful impasses come to surface, which characterize the multiple competing and overlapping memory scapes in and between Morocco and Spain. In Spain, imperialist narratives of history clash with colonial aphasia (Stoler 2011). Imperialist discourses also clash with post-independence Moroccan discourses of Spanish “poor-people-colonialism”, and with iconizations of the Riffian anti-

2 Palomo asked me to give the following explanation for its name: MaPal comes from Manuel Palomo, and was given to the museum by a befriended Catholic priest.

colonial resistance leader Abd-el Karim el Khattabi. Finally, remembering the foundational role of Spanish colonialism in the Rif for the Spanish Civil War and the Francoist dictatorship runs against what many of my interlocutors have termed a “collective memory block” — the collective/societal inability to access and discuss (traumatic) memories concerning the violent twentieth century in Spain.

In the following analysis, I concentrate on the material aspects of Palomo’s archive. I ask why, how and what does Palomo collect, archive and circulate? Which value does he attribute to those objects inside the collection? I explore how objects circulate in and out of the archive, and try to follow how issues and issue publics emerge alongside the circulation of documents, objects and social relations. Section 1 situates Spanish cultures of remembering Alhucemas in a broader contested memory landscape. Section 2 offers analytical tools to grasp the archive: multi-directional memory (Rothberg 2009) and implicated subjects (Rothberg 2015) help to understand motivations and collecting practices. The theoretical notion of ‘boundary objects’ (Star and Griesemer 1989, Star 2010, Bowker and Star 2017) may grasp ways in which objects, symbols and social relationships circulate in graduated, and at the same time fragmenting, trans-border publics (Zillinger 2017). Section 3 introduces Palomo’s archive. In observing movements of circulation, I found three topics to be of special importance. The notion of *convivencia*, the importance of care and/or neglect of Spanish architectural heritage in Al Hoceima, and the, however vague, knowledge of past forms of surveillance and of the existence of military secrets surrounding the Protectorate era were negotiated through Palomo’s archive. Those topics appear to also feature prominently in relationships of co-operation between Palomo and other actors in the Spanish-Riffian landscape of memory work. In order to understand how Palomo’s practices of collecting, storing and circulating articulate relationships of co-operation across national borders in a murky set of power dynamics, we will follow these three threads of *convivencia*, architectural heritage and administrative secrets throughout the working paper.

Convivencia, heritage and secrets

The trope of *convivencia*, that is a peaceful co-existence/living together among Spanish and Riffians, figured prominently in every first meeting with new interlocutors. In daily life, however, the details of this relationship of co-operation remain obscure. It may refer to hierarchical relationships with household staff, in later years to friendships with Riffian children whose parents worked for the Spanish administration or the few Riffian merchants in the center of town, or allude to a more general ideal without own experiences of Spanish-Riffian conviviality. On a broader ideological level, *convivencia* refers to a presumed, mutually enriching conviviality between Muslims, Christians and Jews in medieval Spain under Muslim rule — up

until the Christian *conquistadores* persecuted and expelled non-Christian inhabitants (Soifer 2009). Obscuring the Inquisition and persecution of non-Christian minorities since 1492, *convivencia* as a trope was first introduced in 1948 as foundational myth of Spanish historical identity. In Francoist propaganda, the Spanish nation sought to re-establish this glory by ‘re-inviting’ the ‘historically Andalusian’ Northern Morocco back into the Empire through military invasion (Calderwood 2018). *Convivencia* was subsequently employed to justify Spanish settler colonialism in Morocco (Wolf 2009). The notion of *convivencia* has long since been complicated (eg. Aziza 1994, Boum 2012).

Colonial-era architectural heritage in Hoceima is also contested, through destruction as well as through decay. For example, signs of Spanish colonialism such as schools and the two Spanish cinemas, but also as rallying points for opposition movements to the Moroccan government, the *makhzen*, in post-independence years. Their decay and destruction presents an instance of what Bruno Latour has coined iconoclasm: in the setting of layered regimes of oppression, the buildings carried many significances and strong symbolic values which came to the fore through tearing them down or letting them fall apart (cf. Latour 2002). In the complex relation with the Moroccan government, the buildings and infrastructures from colonial times can also be employed to implicitly refer to a pre-independence Riffian polity distinct from the Moroccan State, which to some extent autonomously chose its political alliances. The destruction of these buildings, instead of advancing a unified post-independence memory identity in the post-colony, arguably further fragments memory publics and strengthens ties between Moroccan opposition movements and former Spanish colonizers (see also Harrison 2012). On the other hand, to let contentious heritage decay, or to keep it out of reach, are strategies of the local population and government institutions to contest enduring forms of Spanish domination in the Rif. An example for this would be the Hoceima Catholic Church that had several structural damage for years and could only recently afford renovations due to Spanish donations. The church nowadays caters mainly to West and Central African immigrants, is run under the administration of the Spanish archdiocese in Tanger, and it is heavily surveilled by Moroccan Police and Secret Police forces. Other examples would be the Spanish-era façades on the current and former market square, or the Christian cemetery in Hoceima I will discuss further in Section 3. The *Former Residents*, as well as Spanish military interest groups in the Spanish enclave of Melilla, try to enlist allies from various backgrounds to oppose this neglect. Their efforts tie into a long history of upheld Spanish presence in the area, notoriously on the various islands and rocks at the Moroccan sea shore that until this day are kept, maintained and equipped with military personnel under the military jurisdiction of Melilla. In Al Hoceima, the most geographically central architectural

preservation of Spanish–Riffian power networks is the Colegio Melchior Jovellanos, a Spanish Foreign Ministry–funded private high school in Al Hoceima which takes care to conserve the former Spanish General’s mansion it has rented from the Moroccan State as its premises. While these efforts may be read to serve revisionist politics pursued by different Spanish groups of actors, they are endorsed by some Riffian activities in their attempts to re-write a local history against the (post-colonial) state. Palomo’s archive attempts to contribute to the production and preservation of administrative residues, or (shared) constitutive administrative secrets of the Spanish military and colonial administration in Morocco. As we will see below, the documents he deems bureaucratically relevant have become media of co-operation between him and Spanish bureaucratic officials. Their role and relevance in repositories outside of his museum, however, appear unclear to him and me.

I argue that Palomo’s archive most directly expresses an attempt to re-inscribe himself and his neighbors in a landscape that is no longer his, and a need to represent himself as part of a network of benevolent colonizers that were not so different from the subjects they ruled. The archive also demonstrates how individual and collective memories of Spanish colonialism and the Francoist dictatorship are inextricably linked together. This working paper argues that by means of his archival work, Palomo engages with an emerging, if never fully realized boundary infrastructure of memory work that provides issues for take up and connects publics around them. Not only *convivencia*, heritage and administrative secrets thereby act as categories of boundary objects – robust enough to be identifiable across sites, but plastic enough to be adaptable to specific needs, interests and requirements (cf. Star and Griesemer 1989) – but so does the archive itself. The working of a boundary infrastructure across borders and positionalities needs to be explored in further papers and demands further multi-sited research to understand which extent connections are realized, between whom, and where they fail.

2. Situating Spanish remembrance of Alhucemas in contested landscapes

The city of Al Hoceima on the Mediterranean shore of Morocco has been a highly symbolic place for much of the past 200 years. At the same time — through remittances and illicit drug trade — allegedly one of the wealthiest and at the same time most marginalized places in current-day Morocco (Aziza 2019, Mouna 2015), Hoceima has recently been a key site of political uprisings against government, monarchy and inequality in 2011, 2016 and 2019. Previously, its inhabitants have faced an uprising or civil war against Moroccan government troops in 1958/59 and endured the so-called Years of Lead, of widespread government oppression and torture, from the 1960s to 1980s. Al Hoceima’s notoriety as a rebellious place goes back to anticolonial resistance — against the Spanish in

1859–60, the French until 1906, and again against the Spanish until the Spanish colonial army could finally, with the widespread employment of mustard gas and aided by years of drought and famine, establish territorial sovereignty in 1925 (compare eg. Balfour 2002; Kunz and Müller 1990; Raha, Charqui and El Hamdaoui 2005).

Hoceima’s symbolic value has never fit inside a simple narrative. The leader of the short-lived anti-colonial Rif Republic, Abdelkrim El Khattabi, had studied in Spain. Like many other influential figures of the local population, he at first assumed Spanish rule as potentially beneficial for economic development and social progress in the Rif. Therefore, his efforts to lead an army against Sultan Youssef bin Hassan were supported by the Spanish colonial army at least during the beginning of his campaign. As Abdelkrim’s war efforts shifted towards establishing a Rif Republic independent of colonial rule, Spanish support of Abdelkrim’s forces ended. This support, however, had already enabled Abdelkrim and his followers to fight the invading Spanish armed forces during the Rif War 1916–1925. Through a combination of effective leadership and soldiers’ motivation, knowledge of the terrain and aided by Spanish strategies to pay off presumably ‘pacified’ groups of fighters that subsequently joined Abdelkrim’s forces, the Riffian army had already become tactically and equipment-wise superior to much of what the Spanish forces had to offer (Balfour 2002, Velasco de Castro 2019). Exiled to Cairo after his capitulation to the Spanish in 1926, legend has it the life and work of Abdelkrim influenced Che Guevara, the anti-colonial fighters in the Algerian War, and others. For their part, the Spanish military suffered one of its most embarrassing defeats in military history against Abdelkrim’s forces in proximity to Hoceima. It also claimed one of its greatest recent military successes in finally subduing this anti-colonial army through the widespread, and for all parties devastating use of German- and Spanish-produced toxic mustard gas and through one of the first modern joint military operations in its landing on the Alhucemas shore. This *desembarco de Alhucemas* to date is the only prominent reminder of a complicated and brutal Spanish–Moroccan colonial history in Spanish mainstream discourse, while most parts of the sixty-year history of Spanish colonial rule in Morocco (and analogously also its history of colonial rule in the Western Sahara and Equatorial Guinea) has been virtually erased from public memory. According to oral history and narrative accounts developed shortly after the Rif War, Spain’s declared aim to civilize the Rif was greeted with mockery at the sight of peninsular Spanish underdevelopment in European comparison, famines, low-quality, faulty and inadequate military equipment and low morale among the underpaid and badly trained soldiers (Al Tuma 2018, Barea 1986[1943]). The Rif War that followed Morocco’s independence in 1958/1959 is subject to many conspiracy theories Among Moroccan and Spanish Hoceimis that suggest French and Spanish involvement, as well as the Moroccan Istiqlal

party and the Moroccan government agitating the 1958/59 revolts. To what degree the violent confrontation was one between Riffians and Morocco, as opposed to a multi-faction struggle for power in the capital, remains debated. Agendas of different warring factions seems to have involved Riffian expectations of forming an independent state after independence from Spain, but also claims for representation in and access to Moroccan government structures, as well as demands for education, infrastructure development and the inclusion of Spanish and Tarifit as administrative and official languages (Aziza 2019, Karrouche 2017, Nahhass and Bendella 2022, Ybarra Enríquez de la Orden 1997).

A variety of actors has declared Moroccan-Spanish history as a forgotten one that needs to be re-awakened. Among them are heterogeneous and in many ways mutually opposed actors such as decolonial and democracy activists, right-wing ideologues and colonial veterans. Hoceima in particular is not uncharted terrain: a broad spectrum of political and social scientists has covered the Rif protests from border studies, social movement and transnationalist perspectives (eg. Chapi 2021, García and Touhtou 2021, Jebnoun 2020, Schwarz 2022, Vacchiano and Afailal 2021). Historical production about Abdelkrim El Khattabi and the Rif Republic, anticolonial resistance, colonial warfare and the development of Riffian society under Spanish colonial rule exists plentifully (eg. Aziza 1994, Balfour 2002, de Madariaga 2014, Martín Corrales 1995 and 1999, Velasco de Castro 2019). Anthropologists have also been sighted: after the handbook published by chief colonial administrator Emilio Blanco de Izaga and the ethnographies on the Aït Waryaghar tribes by David Montgomery Hart and Ursula Hart, in recent years Rabat-based Badiha Nahhass and Mimoun Aziza have worked on the role of memory associations, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and ecological conservation work as memory preservation (Aziza 2019a and 2019b, Nahhass 2021 and 2022, Nahhass and Bendella 2022). Amsterdam-based Norah Karrouche has published on memory activism among Rif emigrant youth (Karrouche 2017), Barcelona-based Yolanda Aixelà-Cabré works on memory and identity in the Rif (Aixelà-Cabré 2019 and 2022) and Madrid-based Juan Ignacio Castián Maestro is preparing research on colonial nostalgia among Riffians (Castián Maestro 2022). The Cologne-Siegen research project, of which my research is part, investigates Digital Publics and Societal Transformations in the Maghreb, with Nina ter Laan focussing on Riffian artistic practices of memory (ter Laan 2022, ter Laan and Zillinger 2022). From angles of artistic memory activism, Tarek el Idrissi has produced the documentaries *Arrhash* (2008) about the Spanish colonial era, and *Breaking the Silence* (2015) about the 1958/59 events. Both movies circulate among Moroccan memory activists (Aziza 2019b) as well as among my interlocutors. Filmmaker Adrian Schindler is currently working on the three-part movie series *Tetuan, Tetuán, Tetwan* that explores colonial duress in Spain and Morocco (first part published in 2021).

Understanding complex entanglements between Spain and the Rif, and the broader Northern Morocco, it is crucial to not only take dynamics of memory and political alliances in current-day Hoceima into account, but also to understand the origins, styles of operating and ways of framing the respective Other. This framing happened on both sides of the Spanish Civil War 1936–39 and during the Fascist dictatorship under General Francisco Franco in Spain from 1939–1978. The Civil War, Francoist dictatorship and colonial self-image live on in Spain, in collective memory and culture as well as in electoral politics, and so does the complicated relationship with its neighboring population of Morocco. Both in Spain and in Morocco, memory work on the violent periods of time and their high death-toll is contested. Archives have been destroyed, weeded out or kept closed. Bodies have been hidden, people have been disappeared, and pressure has been continuously placed on those who attempt to question the prevailing narratives of ‘true history’. With the Truth and Reconciliation Commission created in Morocco in 2004, and laws passed in Spain on Historical Memory in 2007 and on Democratic Memory in 2022, memory work has an, albeit still very much contested, legal framework to operate. It still does so mostly inside the respective national borders. My thesis will contribute to those stances that have pushed for thinking Riffian memories of colonialism and Spanish memories of Civil War and dictatorship part of a landscape of multidirectional memory (Rothberg 2015) in order to understand war and dictatorship in peninsular Spain and postcolonial violence in Morocco (Balfour 2002; Jensen 2002, 2005; de Madariaga 1998, 1992, 2014; Martín Corrales 1992, 1994, 2002, 2007).

A note on terminology

Among my interlocutors and in a broader discursive space on memory work between Spain and Morocco, three names circulate to describe the interlocutors’ old home. The current name Al Hoceima is its postcolonial name of unclear origin, attributed to old Arabic or Tamazight words. Villa Sanjurjo was chosen as post-Civil War name for the Spanish-built city to honor General Sanjurjo y Sacanell – the commander in charge of the disembarkment of Alhucemas, later High Commissioner of the Protectorate of Morocco and a key leader not only in the 1936 coup d’état, but also in a previous attempt to overthrow the government in 1932 (Casanova, Villares and Suárez 2007). The name Alhucemas is favored by most of my interlocutors and came into being as pre-Civil War Spanish name for the Spanish-built city and the small island off the coast of the city that Spain conquered from the Portuguese in the fifteenth century. This name may originate from a type of lavender that grows on the coastal Riffian landscape. Among the Spanish I met, Alhucemas is the most commonly used. The usage of Villa Sanjurjo was enforced by Francoist authorities in the 1940s and is used by some military veterans and their children, but has not fully perpetrated colloquial use — neither among *Association* members nor in the little Spanish public dis-

course that exists surrounding this colonial episode. Presumably, the iconized ‘disembarkment of Alhucemas’ 1925, which was already an established phrase pre-Civil War, prevented ‘Villa Sanjurjo’ from catching on. Its short form “Villa” is still used by some rural Riffians (Aixelà Cabré 2022). I speak of the *Association* when those whose perspectives I am attempting to represent act in official capacity, of *Former Residents* when I refer to individuals I have met through the *Association*, and of Spanish Alhucemis when individuals distance themselves from the *Association*.

3. Tools for Analysis: Memory work – Implication – Boundary objects

Palomo’s memory work occurs in a broader field of tensions surrounding twentieth century Spanish history. Since the early 2000s, modes of memorializing the Spanish Civil War and Francoist dictatorship have continuously been re-evaluated by scholars and activists alike (Davis 2005, Rubin 2018). With the passing of a first law on Historical Memory in 2007, the post-transition ‘Pact of Silence’ and its narrative of collective victimhood across Republican–Nationalist borders was called into question (Boyd 2008). Local memory initiatives have since focused on forensic archaeology to trace victims of the Civil War and to rehabilitate their stigmatized families (Itturiaga 2019). Many of these initiatives were modeled after memory activism and calls for transitional justice in the Global South. Movements in the former Spanish colonies of Argentina and Guatemala in particular served as role models, two fields that due to their own national histories were acutely aware of the intersections of colonialism and military dictatorships (Rubin 2018). Spanish memory activism has by and large refused to include the importance and duress of Spanish colonialism enabling and continued by the Franco regime. Exhumatory work as centerpiece of forensic archaeological work in Spain so far does not include Moroccan soldiers who died in the Civil War, and memory activism does not involve histories of Falangist and Republican persecution of Spanish or Riffian/Moroccan/Sahraoui Protectorate and colonial residents (compare Al Tuma 2018). Memory work in Spain is a comparatively recent field in a heavily polarized environment, and no consensus has been formed around considering the Francoist government and the Spanish colonial endeavor as regimes of injustice. Activism and scholarship in both fields are strong and often act in frames of competing notions of victimhood, and new issue publics have congregated around this Spanish so-called *memoria histórica*.

The *Former Residents* and the Museo MaPal do not enter the field of *memoria histórica* with claims to be recognized as victims. Instead, their complex narratives of responsibility, experiences of expulsion and *convivencia* exemplify what Michael Rothberg (2009) has coined multidirectional memory: they make heterogeneous configurations of the past present — they create memory, they focus on individual life stories,

embed them in specific accounts of socio-cultural realities surrounding them, and draw identity from it. The memory they create is multidirectional in Rothberg’s sense because it is diasporic memory, and because it fosters co-operation between different localities as well as between different national and local memory discourses. With the *Former Residents* distributed all across Spain, Palomo rallies a geographically dispersed collective around his collection. In its official discourse, the *Association* refers to a previously existing and lost village life to foster bonds among its members. In fact, apart from some pre-existing friendships and family relations, most bonds among the members have only come into being with the establishment of the *Association* in the 1990s. Their shared memory work, especially around the tropes of *convivencia* and architectural heritage I mentioned in the introduction, as well as practices of sharing nostalgia, has produced the *Association* as community of practice (Bowker and Star 2017, Zillinger 2017). Configurations of memory stemming from *Association* circles are put to work in the *Residents’* old hometown of Al Hoceima, as well as in different cities in Spain. They are embedded in settings of Moroccan political activism, diplomacy, Spanish historical work and military commemorations. The memory work is multidirectional, too, in the political settings it remembers: Palomo’s archive and museum implicitly and explicitly compare life as a settler colonialist to socio-economic conditions in the metropolis. They describe the community’s roots in the birthplace of the Spanish Civil War while being spared most of its gruesome long *durée*, and address shared experiences of poverty and post-independence violence with their Riffian neighbors.

In order to fully understand the workings and duress of colonialism in Spain and Northern Morocco, it is necessary to complicate positionalities beyond binary differentiations into victims and perpetrators. Outside of clear demarcations of both categories, Rothberg (2019) has introduced the concept of implicated subjects:

Implicated subjects occupy positions aligned with power and privilege without being themselves direct agents of harm; they contribute to, inhabit, inherit, or benefit from regimes of domination but do not originate or control such regimes. An implicated subject is neither a victim nor a perpetrator, but rather a participant in histories and social formations that generate the positions of victim and perpetrator, and yet in which most people do not occupy such clear-cut roles. Less “actively” involved than perpetrators, implicated subjects do not fit the mold of the “passive” bystander, either. Although indirect or belated, their actions and inactions help produce and reproduce the positions of victims and perpetrators. In other words, implicated subjects help propagate the legacies of historical violence and prop up the structures of inequality that mar the present. (Rothberg 2019:1)

Implication occurs as events of injustice unfold, and it also occurs in later generations faced to deal with the duress of these injustices (Stoler 2016). It impacts individual as well as collective memory, leads to questions of responsibility, guilt and agency, and to a spectrum of possible ways to deal with it — forget? obscure? address? justify? fight? make up for it? Acknowledging one's own degree of implication is difficult and painful, and takes a lasting influence on individual conceptions of identity. As a German raised in the guilt- and responsibility-focused German collective memory on the National Socialist dictatorship and its legacies of organized killings, but also in the national aphasia concerning Germany's colonial history (also, but not exclusively in Morocco); and brought up largely in ignorance of the role the Catholic Church³ I belong to has played in Spanish legacies of violence, as well as in ignorance of the entanglements between the National Socialist and the Francoist regimes, I have been forcefully reminded of my own implication more than once throughout this research.

My work focuses on a category of implicated subjects who could be classified as silent bystanders. My interlocutors, now aged, grew up in the relative freedom of being colonial masters and comparatively far away of the heart of the totalitarian Franco-regime. Nonetheless, their life in positions of power in a secluded colonial 'utopia' also included class differentiations among each other, and constant political surveillance and threatened persecution by the local Falange military authorities. As adults, my interlocutors witnessed two transitions: the transition to Moroccan independence 1956 and the transition to Spanish democracy from 1978 onwards. As Rothberg acknowledges, memory and implication are produced individually as well as collectively. Observing the *Former Residents* as community of implication (Lehrer 2020) is insofar helpful as it grasps the *Association* framework as an intimate space in which members can talk about their own implication and also consolidate joint narratives and silences about how these narratives interact. For purposes of critical analysis, however, it is crucial to go beyond notions of stable mnemonic communities. Individual life stories and the individual's embeddedness in a socio-political and family historical contexts form his or her implication, and this implication is debated and individually reconfigured then in a group setting. That debate catalyzes around objects, which, among others, Palomo's archive offers to the *Former Residents*.

I understand 'object' here not as atomic material thing, but as compound of things which are embedded in a network of practices. As elaborated on later, Palomo even made himself into an object of his archive. His archive also serves as repository and center of accountability (Rottenburg 2002 in Zillinger 2015,

Star 2010): He collected, repositated and kept track of a social network he co-created and he could leverage, if need be, he justified Spanish occupation and obscured accountability for a Spanish failure to protect their ex-colonial subjects in a time of need 1958, he accounted for his own social ascent and for his work in uniting and (re-)imagining a community in diaspora. Palomo's archive addresses different publics through media and narratives tailored to these publics. It addresses publics, not audiences, because it interjects in ongoing debates among and between those publics, and because his exhibitions and initiatives in Hoceima help to foster ties between participating individuals who use the objects Palomo offered for their own agendas. Following Zillinger (2017), the publics he addresses are graduated depending on the level of secrecy he attributed the objects in question, the recognition he sought, and the degree of direct impact he hoped to achieve. They are also fragmented in terms of geography, social class, political leanings, religion and implication, and usually do not openly display their own agendas as they cooperate without consensus over what Riffian history may be put to use for.

Originally applied to disputes over museum objects between professional and amateur researchers, Star and Griesemer have pioneered the term 'boundary object' to discuss objects, artifacts, documents, human remains, or concepts around which different groups of stakeholders cooperate in disagreement over their meaning and use (Star and Griesemer 1989, see Star 2010 for an abstraction of the concept). Boundary objects rely on communities of practice surrounding them and negotiating their meaning and use (Bowker and Star 2017). They need to be robust enough to congregate a public around it — an undeniable architectural trace, or a concept such as *Convivencia* that is invoked to account for forms of conversations and co-operation —, and vague enough to allow for their use and re-interpretation by different groups in disagreement. They also need to be transportable, and circulatable between debating factions. In the case of *convivencia*, architectural heritage and administrative secrets, this happens through storytelling and Facebook posts, through circulating pictures and other means and media that can be used to make these topos accountable, picturable, and — to use a notion of Garfinkel — tell-a-story-aboutable (vgl. Thielmann 2012).

Palomo not only tries to circulate boundary objects crafted in a historical and contemporary Spanish colonialist discourse to forge networks, but also tries to install himself as obligatory passage point between nodes of memory. The narratives he promotes along with the archival work fit neither dominant Spanish nor Riffian or Moroccan memory discourses. They also do not necessarily fit his archival material. Palomo's archive is a heterogenous repository of material objects that gain value for Palomo through the past and future hopes they point to, and through the value they gain through circulating them to various destinations. As we will see in section 4, the archive itself is silently and openly contested, as are the parts he has

³ The Francoist dictatorship in Spain has been termed National-Catholic for its reliance on church structures for legitimation, ideology, education and persecution of political prisoners, compare eg. Álvarez Bolado (1976), Hernández de Miguel (2019), Pérez-Agote (2003), Sánchez Jiménez (2000).

made travel to Melilla, Al Hoceima and other places. The circulating elements in turn enable further forms of co-operation without consensus in current-day Al Hoceima politics, and, to a lesser extent, in Spanish memory discourses. Arguably at the core of most contestations, which I will elaborate on, lie colonial power dynamics.

Colonial power dynamics still surge and are immediately contested from different sides: The lack of interest many *Association* members display for their Riffian counterparts' current-day lived reality and perspectives, their refusal to learn Tarifit or Arabic, and essentialist notions of an allegedly enduring Riffian pre-modernity coupled with an unwillingness to see Spanish economic, educational and infrastructural divestment of the region as reasons for current-day struggles, exist alongside shared experiences of drought, environmental crises, displacement and harassment by Spanish and Moroccan security forces. In this paper I argue that the crafting of boundary objects through collecting, archiving, and exhibiting, and the claims to 'restitute history to the Rif' form part of strategies of several of the *Former Residents* to deal with their 'implication' in histories of colonial and post-colonial violence. Palomo's archive stands here for a broader practice among *Association* members. In my eyes, the Museo MaPal and other initiatives, however, fall short of actually acknowledging their own implication. Theorizing the archives, its elements and the memory work around it as boundary objects enables us to explore how the last Spanish colonizers of Alhucemas continue to act within a complex assemblage of democracy activists, secret police, historians, old neighbors and new strategic alliances in the highly surveilled and violently contested political reality of Hoceima.

The archival objects, narratives, and social relationships that amount to an emerging, however fragile, boundary infrastructure of memory work are articulated in more than one network of producing histories and futures. Speaking with Bowker and Star (2017), Palomo works towards (co-)creating this boundary infrastructure with different groups of actors: a structure that connects different social worlds of memory work, in which items created in one place can circulate to another and are reshaped in due course. Following Bowker and Star, prerequisites for such a boundary infrastructure are a shared landscape of information – in this case the Spanish-Riffian past as it is invoked by various Spanish and Riffian actors –, that is used to account for a graduated membership in geographical and discursive spaces. This membership also entails demarcating those who do not belong to this group – those who have never engaged in the co-production of history and/or memory in Hoceima, or those who are refusing to co-operate accordingly. The boundary infrastructure then describes the paths, processes and locations in which different actors co-operate along the boundary objects of *convivencia*, architectural heritage and administrative/military secrets without consensus over their interpretation.

Actors involved in this infrastructure share a goal of standardization, in this case the consolidation of a historical discourse (Bowker and Star 2017, Star 2010). To which degree these boundary objects serve as categories of co-operation in a wider boundary infrastructure outside of Palomo's radius of action remains to be explored in an upcoming paper.

4. Palomo's archive

We enter Palomo's museum through a narrow staircase to the basement inside a medical practice. A big Real Madrid flag hangs over the lintel, most of the wall space is covered in framed pictures, and an aerial photograph of the Hoceima port and Quemada beach dating back to the early 1990s greets the down-walker. The basement itself smells damp. Drawing cabinets, files, figurines, fishing gear, pictures, documents and Real Madrid memorabilia are stacked, sorted, filed, boxed, hung, aligned and displayed everywhere. Passing through family photographs and pictures of Palomo shaking hands with dignitaries – the Moroccan king, the conservative Madrid president, the president of Real Madrid, the former mayor of Al Hoceima and several others – the visitor enters the *Museo MaPal de Alhucemas – Villa Sanjurjo*. A large Real Madrid flag is pinned over two cabinet doors and a closet holding Palomo's collection of military uniforms leads the way along a large coffee table on the path towards the desk. The glass vitrine inserted in that coffee table displays Spanish Legion bracelets and a miniature Legion hat, Spanish flags and Legion coats of arms on souvenirs, a tile fridge magnet ornamented in Andalusian/Moroccan style, a wooden boat model, an ornamented hookah, and a sticker reading "Proud to be Spanish and Catholic".

As you walk below another lintel decorated in colorful "oriental" woodcuts, a big desk with two flags on top (Spanish and Moroccan) awaits the visitor. Behind the desk, you see black-and-white photographs of Palomo's family and hear about their importance as founding fathers of Alhucemas. One of the rooms down here now houses what remains of the former museum, Palomo explains. All of the basement used to belong to the museum, but as he grows older and death approaches, "it is time to restitute history to its owners". The history of how Alhucemas came into being as a city "built out of nowhere", where nobody, or perhaps nobody worthy of Spanish historical record [my addition], lived, forms part of this set of history that shall be transported to Al Hoceima. And so does Spanish-Riffian *convivencia*. Sensitive objects or those that are of military importance are not planned to travel to Hoceima, but to several Spanish military institutions. Displayed in his basement museum now we see only items with personal meaning to him and copies of those objects and documents he had transferred to other places. (Excerpt from my field notes of the first visit to the Museo MaPal in Spring 2022)".



Picture 1: The National Catholic coffee table.
Photo by Martin Zillinger

Making the archive

Palomo started collecting when he had already left Morocco, and expanded his collection fast. He began by collecting ‘authentic Moroccan’ material culture on travels to his old home: tea sets, ceramics, slippers, the occasional figurine, clothing, bags and baskets, jewelry and furniture. These in his telling rather anonymous items seemed to have been meant for private use or as tourist souvenirs, and represented his vision of generic ‘Moroccan culture’. He assembled these together with highly personalized Spanish items, and those that reflected bureaucratic capture and technological modernity: identification documents of high-ranking Spanish officials and Moroccans in their service, personal military items related to the Spanish Legion instrumental to the colonization of the Rif⁴ and to Le-

⁴ The Spanish Foreign Legion is a military body founded in the early 20th century as colonial army, which continues to be active. Recruitment was originally geared towards foreigners, marginalized members of Spanish society and criminals. Its members were subject to stricter hierarchies and internal codes of conduct than other elements of the Spanish Armed Forces, and the unit was soon considered elite and desirable to join. Often employed as storm troops, a Legion myth of bravery, risk and masculinity evolved, and the unit was granted leeway with regards to looting, rapes and other forms of violence perpetrated in the course of the colonial missions. The Legion is considered integral to the Spanish colonization of the Rif, Ifni and the Western Sahara, and as vehicle for Franco’s ascent to power (Balfour 2002, Jensen 2002). Their myth continues to be commemorated and reiterated, among others, in the yearly Catholic processions on Maundy Thursday in Málaga (see also Driessen 2013).

gion general and subsequent dictator Franco, such as medals, weapons, books and magazines, photo albums, and telephones. The archive also contained Christian religious depictions, figurines of the *Reyes Católicos*, figurines of Virgin Mary and rosaries with Spanish flags or Spanish embroidery, stickers with National Catholic slogans and Real Madrid fan items⁵ – the belief systems and heroes he grew up with. Another iteration of the *convivencia* trope than the one previously discussed also runs through his archive. This version focuses on the violent confrontation between ‘Moors’ and ‘Christians’, a theme which is common and ritually enacted in some aspects of Spanish culture.⁶

Through collecting, Palomo also narrated his personal life story (Bal 2019), and kept items immediately referring to this story in his basement when organizing the transfer of most other objects. His personal life story objects could be grouped as following. *Childhood-related items* include toys, fishing gear and pictures of the harbor, the workers’ quarters and coast. Some documents refer to *social status and his situatedness in a network of power* such as certificates, medals and awards awarded to him, pictures of him with high-ranking political figures and/or with numerous family members, gifts and flags on a presidential desk, and his visitors’ book. A subcategory of these could be *items of class rigidity and fluidity* — pictures of the main commercial road in the wealthy part of town, where his comparatively poor family lived above a shop, pictures of the workers’ quarters they (were) moved to in an infrastructure rehaul project in the 1940s, boxing and fascination for the Legion as lower-class connotated occupations, and his work in the association as way to overcome rigid class boundaries. *Items about the Rif War* such as photo albums show the Spanish air force, artillery and the weaponry of Abdelkrim’s troops, pictures of the *desembarco*, print publications with clear Falangist undertones, printed out scans of an album of Moroccan soldiers in a specific Spanish military unit who were wounded in the Spanish Civil War, the seal of Abdelkrim el Khattabi and the seal a Spanish general used to communicate with him. Finally, *items related to the Asociación de Antiguos Residentes de Alhucemas* comprise membership lists, pictures, all published *Heraldos* and print publications written by other *Former Residents*.

He acquired the objects over several decades, and by his being involved with different group, actions and institutions — by forming part of different communities of practice. Some objects were gifts: figurines to build scenes in the upstairs storefront, where Palomo curated temporal exhibitions on local or national festivities

⁵ For discussions on the role of soccer and especially Real Madrid during the Franco regime, see eg. González Calleja (2014), Quiroga Fernández de Soto (2014) and Viuda-Serrano (2013).

⁶ For discussions of the festival, see for example Kottmann (2011, 2016) and Santamarina Campos (2008). For material reminders, see depictions of St. Jacob slaying ‘the Moor’ in several Spanish churches, such as in the Iglesia Castrense de Madrid.

every month, a jar of Alhucemas lavender seeds a friend brought him from Cuba, or Moroccan tea. Others he bought through collectors' networks online. For some items, people who knew he was collecting approached him for safeguarding, as was the case with the personal archive of a Spanish general active in the Rif War. Palomo kept binders with pictures of objects important to him that he owned once or would like to own — to some extent, he archives his archival hopes and potentials. Archival bureaucracy forms another substantial part of his Madrid collection: he held inventory regularly, kept binders with pictures of all memory objects he circulated and records of their current (assumed) location, and documented his past curatorial work. Recurrent classification efforts (re-)organized the various items and elements, be it in the ways he curated the showcase in the street above the basement, the meticulous sorting and reorganizing within the archive, or in replicating and sorting media of accountability for his own and the archive's importance for visitors, e.g., by putting signed contracts and photographic documentation of social networks on display. He owned historical costumes, and printed his name on many images that circulate out of his archive. Mainly he marked those images and objects that were of personal importance to him: those that refer to the port, the workers' quarters, and the socially marginal, yet heroized Legion he grew up alongside. In a way, Palomo made himself into an object of a specific version of historical memory by signing these pictures. He also did this through a dense hanging of pictures of himself smiling and embracing diplomats and high-ranking militaries, and shaking hands with King Mohammed VI. and Spanish politicians, through exhibiting these pictures and mentions of him in articles and text messages in association circles and the *Heraldo* magazine.

What I understand as his archive in fact is a multi-sited set of collections tied together by the control Palomo has exerted over their assemblage, storage, categorization, handling, and circulation. The archive itself can be read as repository: a heterogeneous assortment of things that bear complementary, contradictory and confusing messages (Star 2010). Palomo re-articulates objects along certain sets of values, circulates these sub-collections, and keeps copies of what he has circulated in an iterative process over which he has control. Currently, his collection entails the material collection in his basement and a storefront display, a set of inventory lists about parts of his collections elsewhere that is also stored in his basement, but also many subcollections in other places. One group of objects he has handed to the Museo de Aire in Madrid for safeguarding, another convolute is currently at the Archivo Intermedio Militar in Melilla, several boxes, furniture and mannequins are currently to be found somewhere in the municipality in Hoceima, ready to supply a planned, but highly contested history museum there, a picture exhibition is installed permanently in the Christian cemetery in Hoceima, and Palomo sets up temporary picture exhibitions at reunions of the *Former Residents of Alhucemas*. By displaying these representa-

tions of Spanish–Riffian history, Palomo attempts to create a memory infrastructure and narrative backdrop for the graduated publics that form around the *Former Residents of Alhucemas in Spain*. These classification efforts, as well as the creation, continuation and circulation of an archival infrastructure and his role in it already point towards his efforts to access and shape a continuously evolving boundary infrastructure his memory work is part of (Bowker and Star 2017).

Values, boundary objects and publics

For Palomo, collecting and archiving practices serve several functions: through collecting, he reunites himself and other Spanish Alhucemis that have been dispersed after Moroccan independence, he (re-)imagines and facilitates a close-knit community that transcends class and national boundaries between Spain and the Rif; and he re-roots himself, others, and his old home environment in a place he has socially, but perhaps not emotionally arrived in. Palomo attributes different sets of values to different parts of his collection.



Picture 2: Palomo shows his museum to a Moroccan contact in Al Hoceima via WhatsApp video call. Photo by Martin Zillinger

The objects he keeps in his basement serve as indices to capture the loss of a home and Palomo's current distance from seawater, an element that has provided subsistence, leisure and connection to the world for him. The archive also works as repository for belief systems, adhering to which helped him be an inconspicuous citizen in the heavily surveilled authoritarian and post-authoritarian Spain: Catholicism, Spanish Nationalism, and admiration for rank and nobility. He mobilizes the objects in his repository to articulate narratives about patriotism, and the possibility to transcend class boundaries through hard work and generosity — Spanish and Moroccan flags stand side by side next to pictures of him with politicians of both countries, rosaries and other devotionalia are illuminated by electric Real Madrid fan lamps, his fishing gear is stored below certificates and cups of honor for memory work. For Alhucemas-born and broader Spanish audiences, he creates a nostalgic ac-

count of peaceful and prosperous life in the colony. In his collection, he does not spell out why this assumed peaceful and prosperous life in the Spanish 1950s was exceptional: this proclaimed utopia happened at a moment in time when life in the metropolis was economically hard and marked by violence and sociopolitical repression in the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War. Palomo uses his archive as proof that Alhucemas was indeed constructed by the Spanish – and he is eager to circulate the archive as bearer of this message to Hoceima and beyond. To a small and limited intimate audience invited to his basement, he specifies this argument: In his account, Hoceima was not conquered from Moroccans, but created out of nothing, and is therefore inherently Spanish. He uses this localized iteration of the city's construction as proof not only of his own rootedness on Moroccan soil, but also to uphold the political claim to Spanish involvement in Hoceima. As this narrative of the founding of the city circulates and is discussed both in terms of architectural heritage and of *convivencia*, it also meets, at times, fierce contestations. The pictures of the harbor, boxing and other insignia alongside his interactions with high-status people again form a narrative he circulates more widely. For him, they serve as documentation of his lower-class background he shares with Riffian neighbors, and as proof of the possibility to elevate his status in a prestige economy of mediators between Morocco and Spain and in clearly stratified communities.

In recent years, the feeling of loss has manifested yet again. It has done so with the rapid economic upheaval of Spain since its entry into the European Union and the class mobility that has come with this economic upturn, with a new Spanish government willing to uncover open wounds of the dictatorship – a cause of concern and anger for Palomo –, and it has done so through biological age. At the time of writing, since ceremony that accompanied the donation of his collection to the city of Al Hoceima, Palomo had not travelled to Morocco nor hear news about what happened to his collection. At the time we met, his group of friends in the majority was aged and immobile to travel back to their old homeland. Visitors only rarely find their way into his museum now, and during the height of the pandemic his family banned him from spending as much time there as he usually did. He passed on the presidency of the *Association* a few years ago, and since then contacts died down, in many instances literally. Death was often mentioned in passing among the *Former Residents*, and its prospects also motivated Palomo to donate his collection to Al Hoceima.

Convivencia

The term *convivencia*, the harmonious living together between Riffians and Spanish pre- and post-independence, has been the first phrase nearly all my interlocutors used as I introduced my research topic, and a key narrative Palomo hoped to integrate in the collective historical consciousness through the donation

of parts of his collection to the city. In Facebook posts and statements about politics in current-day Hoceima, this narrative is sometimes also taken up among Riffians (my own field research, see also eg. Aixelà-Cabré 2022 and Castián Maestro 2022). Palomo's collection, and the places parts of it circulate to, employ this narrative, but the objects included themselves complicate the term. Among some members of the *Association*, the trope of *convivencia* is used to secure their being remembered in Hoceima after death. Others use it to justify the continued Spanish military presence on the islands off the shore of Hoceima. Some use it to avoid critical interrogations of colonial guilt, while others mobilize *convivencia* to prove precisely this guilt and responsibility to their fellow ex-settlers. In interaction with Riffian members of a (potentially) shared infrastructure of memory work, some jointly argue for a Riffian Mediterranean / 'Berber' / 'Andalucian' identity separate from a Moroccan one, and derive political demands from this claim. Interpretations of *convivencia* are not stable, and depend on the configuration of the public in question and expectations of surveillance in that precise moment – arguing for a distinct Mediterranean identity through *convivencia* may be followed by opposition to the ongoing Spanish occupation of the Nekor islands. *Convivencia* thus circulates across graduated and variously fragmented publics, is discussed in interaction between members of a shared landscape of memory, specified differently in each public, and contested among actors.

Among Palomo's favorite objects in the museum are his visitor's book, gifts from visitors, his certificates, medals and awards. Of those, he values the ones most highly that for him indicate relations on eye-level and appreciation of his work as self-proclaimed steward of Spanish-Riffian history: Personal WhatsApp messages and conversations he remembers through gifts. He seeks (graduated) publicity for these statements of recognition — he has sent private correspondence to kings and politicians to have the *Association's* work recognized, he invites dignitaries to public Association events, and was himself invited to political and diplomatic receptions where he networked around Alhucemas memory topics. Documentation of this wider public he circulates to more private publics – Palomo forwards messages directed to him to Alhucemas memory WhatsApp groups, retells these stories at reunions, and exhibits physical records of them in the *Heraldo* and in exhibitions. In his accounts, it is not the circulation nor the public, but the one-to-one interaction with outsiders who recognize his contribution to the Alhucemas memory landscape that makes the moment and its memory object valuable. The most compact form of this recognition is the visitors' book. This 200-page DIN A4 book bound in red leather has a designated place on central display in the archive and in the standardized tour he gives through the basement. Palomo takes the book as proof of interest in his life's work by the Spanish military, Moroccan and Spanish officials and diplomats and the occasional researcher, proof of class ascent, of a responsibility to



Picture 3: the Visitor's book, framed by awards, certificates and preparations for the next exhibition in the upstairs showcase.
Photo by Martin Zillinger

society fulfilled well, and a broad network of strategic friendships.

The book reveals two different publics the museum creates around the notion of *convivencia*, both connected through Palomo's desire to not forget his past and to ensure it (and he) will not be forgotten. Especially in its early entries, the book documents how the museum forges a community of former Spanish Alhucemis over the joint practice of not forgetting. Former (exclusively Spanish) residents travel from remote parts of Spain to see the museum, so its message. A fragmented public is reassembled as community through the *Association* and the museum. This public is fragmented in terms of place of residence as much as in terms of political leanings, class and hierarchical positions, religious beliefs and presence or absence of past political persecution. The archive's character as iterative repository is verbalized in many book entries: it is not about actively remembering certain versions of history, but instead seen as a resource that can be mobilized so as to not forget. Up to this point, entries focus on the conviviality of Spanish colonialists. From the early 2000s onwards, the visitors' book begins to archive less *Old Resident* visits and increasingly displays museum interactions with State institutions – representatives of official publics, that is politicians, security forces, diplomats and aristocracy, historians and museum curators sign and are captured in photographs glued into the book. Palomo has sent letters to

Spanish and Moroccan diplomats and politicians alike, and has repeatedly attended representative publics in his self-claimed official function as representative of Spanish Alhucemis. This claim to be an/the official representative of a Spanish history of Alhucemas he makes accountable in this book. Official visits are additionally set in value through picture documentation of the visitors shaking hands with Palomo, or smiling with Palomo, in the museum or at *Association* reunions. Palomo thereby attempts to re-value Spanish settler colonialism in Alhucemas in a wider public as opposed to only in those circles directly or indirectly implicated. His outreach attempts beyond the visitors' book, however, are silently contested — through not answering, through contracts that remain unsigned, or when communication between Palomo and a specific bureaucratic post dries up and interest wanes after the person fulfilling this post has changed.

While Palomo has been awarded Spanish and Moroccan royal recognition for his restorative work, his archive has not circulated further to the wider public. The medal awarded to him by King Mohammed VI. for his efforts to restore the Al Hoceima (Christian) cemetery is its own boundary object in *Association* circles. When Palomo handed over presidential functions inside the *Association*, a debate ensued over ownership of the medal. Was this a sign of royal recognition that was a personalized award to Palomo, a recognition of the *Association's* memory work as a whole, or an index of the attempt to appease Spanish memory actors

so they would stop writing Rif identity as separatist? Is it a sign of recognition of the Association's activities that attempt to right (and justify) Spanish wrongs during colonialism? Is it therefore redemption for remorse through memory work? Does the medal need to be transferred to the next president of the Association? Should it be replicated (in Spain, where in that line of argument the medal was not an official document, but an ornament freely replicable – refusing to accept Moroccan authority over Spanish Alhucemis) and free to be worn by any association member, or at least by those who financially or by force of muscle contributed to restoring the cemetery?

Riffian voices and perspectives on *convivencia* are rare in the visitor's book. Even though this is never mentioned explicitly, over time it gets clear that those that are present come from families that collaborated with the Protectorate government. One visit's note by Riffian politicians emphasizes the museum's importance as place to remember history that is silenced in both nation states. Memorabilia of Abdelkrim el Khat-tabi in the collection — boundary objects between the Association and Riffian memory activists — become an index of shared ties in opposition to the Moroccan State, and indices of a shared and complex history of Spanish-Riffian collaboration. The note also foregrounds shared experiences of poverty and dispersing effects of globalization — it recognizes Spanish-Riffian *convivencia* as boundary object. In their written statements, visitors express surprise at seeing such detailed accounts of their history in a Madrid basement, and stress the need and desire to re-establish closer Riffian-Spanish ties.⁷ Palomo's archive and museum, arguably used by him as means to root individual and political enduring Spanish colonial claims in Hoceima, are used by others as heritage of anti-colonial resistance and Riffian military success – co-operation without consensus.

Material Heritage

As the material heritage in Palomo's archive provides media for co-operation, so do parts of Spanish architectural heritage in Al Hoceima as they are represented in Palomo's archive and in exhibitions they are used for. Spanish architectural remains in the city take over different functions for Spaniard and Riffians – they act as indices of history, as source of touristic income and serve practical uses. As indices of history, they connect to the different notions of *convivencia* – justification or refusal of Spanish military presence in the Rif, varying degrees of emphasis on a justified Riffian political autonomy or a distinct Mediterranean or even proto-Spanish identity. Spanish built heritage

features in oppositional discourses to the government underinvestment into education in Hoceima, and also in opposition to a perceived growing and increasingly fundamentalist Islamism. Signs of Spanish colonialism such as schools and the two Spanish cinemas not only served as 'rare' places for public education and liberal freedoms that are gradually disappearing, but are also commemorated as rallying points for opposition movements to the Moroccan government, the *makhzen*, in post-independence years. Formerly colonized and former colonialists both employ these perspectives. Colonial epistemologies, however, continue to inform Association member attitudes. In most cases, foreign funding for Islamist movements and reasons for their attractiveness were conflated with an essentialist view on 'the Riffian character', preservation of old buildings was linked to notions of civilization. Most interlocutors were not willing or able to engage in a change of perspective to assume Riffian perceptions of Spanish built heritage or its destruction in Hoceima. This outright refusal to assume perspectives outside standardized Association discourses in this regard, and notable agitation in some cases, surprised me and merits further investigation.

Among actors predominantly in Hoceima, the conservation of Spanish heritage, however, is put into question. Visible markers of this dispute are the destruction of some emblematic Spanish buildings in the post-independence, and the decay of others – through earthquakes or through lack of renovation after processes of erosion. Another marker is the hindrance of access to those buildings, as is the case with the closed-off Christian cemetery in Hoceima or with the closed-off and surveilled former residence of the *Bacha*, the highest Moroccan collaborator with the Spanish Protectorate governor. Decay and destruction presents an instance of what Bruno Latour has coined iconoclasm: in the setting of layered regimes of oppression, the buildings carried many significances and strong symbolic values which came to the fore through tearing them down or letting them fall apart (cf. Brus, Knecht and Zillinger 2020, Latour 2002). Among the last entries in the visitors' book are pictures of museum items wrapped in bubble wrap, including furniture and a mannequin, with a framed picture of Palomo shaking the Moroccan King Mohammed VI's hand standing on top of the packed items. The pictures document the transfer of the 'civilian' part of his collection to the mayor's office in Hoceima by military personnel deployed at the Museum of Aeronautics and Aerospace on the Cuatro Vientos air-force base. Palomo expects the collection to form the center of a permanent exhibition at the planned local museum of Riffian history. This museum has been conceived under the previous mayor Mohamed Boudra, and has been allocated the former mansion of the *Bacha* in the center of town. Construction work on the building has been ongoing since before the pandemic, and it is unclear when and if the museum will open at all (see Nahhass 2022). Ann Stoler's observations that archives function as "sites of the expectant and conjured — about dreams of comforting futures

⁷ A second form of *convivencia* Palomo does not label this way, and which the archive's objects tell, is shared peaceful life between Republicans and Falangists, between people from different regions of Spain that were culturally and linguistically apart. Both forms of *convivencia* are contested: the Spanish-Riffian one receives criticism from Riffian voices, the Nationalist utopia narrative from family members of those that were persecuted by the Falange.

and forebodings of future failures” (Stoler 2010:1) manifests in this network of invisibilized archives boxed up in other archives, waiting to negotiate Spanish-Riffian heritage in a wider public. Palomo’s archive has travelled to Hoceima and was used to forge co-operation with different actors on site. At the point of writing, the archive, however, was stored presumably indefinitely in an inaccessible room, the planned renovation of the residence was not continuing and its future was unclear – the archive had reached an end node of the boundary infrastructure and was taken out of circulation.

Through a second travel movement, *convivencia* and built heritage continue to be in circulation as the museum addresses a different intimate public in Hoceima: those who are granted entry to the closed-off Christian cemetery. Scenically located next to the wastewater treatment plant, the cemetery overlooks the beach on which the Spanish military landed on in the memorialized desembarco de Alhucemas in 1925 Alhucemas (and from where the successive toxic gas bombardment began). It has been closed to the public since the last official burial there in the late 1990s. On it, one or two generations of family members lay at rest, as do occasional soldiers. In recent years, mainly Spanish visitors entered the graveyard – *Former Residents*, teachers of the Spanish school in Hoceima, those connected to the Spanish consulate in Nador and military personnel stationed in Melilla, as well as members of Spanish heritage organizations active in the Rif (eg. the Melilla chapter associated with UNESCO). The cemetery addresses and congregates a public that is hidden in a literal way – access to the graveyard is restricted, by appointment only and reliant on someone having the caretaker’s phone number. It is a Christian site, and therefore also subject to State surveillance to prohibit proselytization of Christianity on its grounds – effectively making access to it for Muslim citizens difficult. The cemetery also points towards Spanish hidden administrative influence – maintenance of the grounds is financed by the Spanish consulate in Nador, as is the cemetery caretaker. A large white memorial towers over the graves honoring the Spanish Legion. After earthquakes in 2004 and 2016 destroyed many of the graves – also causing deaths, widespread homelessness and loss of existences to Moroccans and immigrants living in the region, as well as catalyzing waves of anti-government protests (Aarab 2019) – Palomo co-organized restoration work of the graveyard together with high-ranking military officers stationed in Melilla. A central point of this restoration work was to repair the memorial to the Spanish Legion. The white cross towering over the cemetery and the wider hillside had fallen, and was re-erected in the course of the restoration.

For Palomo, as for many other Spanish Alhucemis, after moving away the cemetery ceased to be a crucial place of remembrance of and connection to dead loved ones. After leaving Alhucemas, his cousins and he put substantial time, effort and money into exhuming the



Picture 4: The Al Hoceima Christian cemetery before its restoration. Photo by Manuel Palomo Romero



Picture 5: The Legion memorial on the Hoceima cemetery in June 2022. Photo by Carla Tiefenbacher

remains of their relatives, to have them transported to Spain and reburied in their family's hometown in order for them to be close by and accessible. Palomo has worked to redefine the cemetery as a memorial to Spanish colonial presence, convivencia and a utopian past, and would like to see it included in what he sees as evolving boundary infrastructure of memory work between Moroccans, Riffians and Spaniards across the Mediterranean. The restoration work was part of this memorialization, and representations of it travelled to Melilla, where they were documented in local newspaper reports, and to the *Association* as documented in the *Heraldo*. In the caretaker's house, Palomo has also set up an exhibition of mostly black and white photographs showing Spanish colonial life in Alhucemas, tagged with "Museo MaPal de Alhucemas Villa Sanjurjo. De Manuel Palomo Romero". The pictures are clustered in 'Alhucemas cemetery', 'construction of the village', 'emblematic buildings', 'city village', 'islands and peninsulas', 'beaches in proximity', 'postal stamps', 'construction of the harbor', 'tourist boats', 'shops, businesses and trade', 'parties and events in Alhucemas', 'disembarkment of Alhucemas', and 'Quemado beach'. With these subsections, he articulates staples of *Old Resident* nostalgia: Alhucemas as rural metropolis, as place of leisure and wealth, and as open-minded towards outsiders. The objects themselves contest his claims to truth, forgotten-ness of history and coherence. Among the exhibition photos, two contradictions illustrate the shortcomings of multidirectional memory in *Former Resident* memory practices. Their resolution would only work through investigating *Former Resident* implication in past and current life in Hoceima, and it is telling that they are not interrogated.

The 'parties and events' section links to a common discourse among *Former Residents*: Alhucemas as model Nationalist city in which regional festivities could be celebrated together in harmony among unified Spaniards (Burgos and Simón 2022, Bengochea Tirado 2022).⁸ "We taught the Riffians how to celebrate" not only expresses ignorance of a culture that excluded the new colonizers for good reason and colonial superiority, but is also contested by the image Palomo chose for this section: a poster, written in Arabic script, referring to the Islamic calendar, and depicting fishermen dressed in jellaba, advertises a New Year's festivity. The curatorial setup emphasizes Spanish construction work and frontier spirit in alleged no-man's-land, while also pointing towards a centuries-old history of, until today continuing, Spanish occupation of the islands in swimming distance to the depicted beaches. Military aerial photography captioned as the first Spanish tent settlements

on the shore of Alhucemas are hung next pictures of the Nekor Islands / Islotes de Alhucemas captioned as "under Spanish rule since the sixteenth century". Both forms of *convivencia* are contested: the Spanish-Riffian one receives criticism from Riffian voices, the Nationalist utopia narrative from family members of those that were persecuted by the Falange. From the selection of images alone, a question comes to mind: why did it take the Spanish military such effort, so much time, and so many deaths on both sides to conquer an uninhabited piece of land in walking distance from islands that had been in Spanish possession for centuries?

Palomo also exhibits change: the 'businesses' section shows a bar, a pharmacy and a hardware store that do not exist anymore. His pictures of the Quemado beach, the beach directly below the city center where youth and social life took place, show an early Protectorate-era with small stalls, and the post-independence beach housing a large hotel. Together, the pictures indicate an established lament about the economic situation in Al Hoceima considering tourism development to be destroying idyllic nature. Tourism, however, is not considered as source of income in an economy perceived to have un-developed since independence. Underdevelopment of schools, industry, and infrastructure under Spanish rule in the Rif, and the factors that led to the economically dire post-independence situation in Al Hoceima, namely the Years of Lead and lack of knowledge transfer (Aziza 2019b), are not discussed in Palomo's archive nor among *Former Residents*.

Given such presumably idyllic life, a next question to the repository would be: Why did you leave Alhucemas? The archives did not reveal indices for answering this question to me. As a painful memory, only in conversations did answers surge. Spanish displacement occurred for several reasons. Merchant families cited mainly economic concerns under Moroccan nationalization laws, but these laws were introduced only in the 1960s, and most merchant families also left in 1958/59. Another reason cited was that when the (Spanish) military left, customers stayed away and life became hard. Next to these economic reasons, some Spaniards openly talk about the 1958/59 frontline that enclosed Hoceima. Spanish residents were not targeted, but they witnessed the lack of Spanish support and protection for their Riffian 'brothers'. Unlike in the early years, in which housing was strictly segregated by class and nationality, in the final Protectorate years *convivencia* between Spanish and Riffians did increase in the workers' quarters and also in town — despite curfews for Riffian citizens and their exclusions from social events. In the protests against Riffian exclusion from post-independence structures of power, which were violently beaten down through forced disappearances, torture, and perhaps the use of toxic gases (Aziza 2019b), the Spanish 'protector' failed to protect, and the narrative of benevolent colonialism crumbled. One interlocutor also explicitly framed it as realizing colonialism in action for the first time when he saw the open violence their parental generation had caused. A key moment some

⁸ This hints towards a form of *convivencia* Palomo does not label this way, but which is widespread in *Association* discourse: an alleged shared peaceful life between Republicans and Falangists, between people from different regions of Spain that were culturally and linguistically apart. Cultural regionalism as it was enacted in Alhucemas needs to be explored in future work.

remember is seeing the Moroccan army disembark on the Hoceïma beaches while the infantry attacks Alhucemas over land — the replication of the 1925 Spanish move and famous painting by propagandist painter Mariano Bertuchi now added sensory and emotional data of the horrors of war to the heroic event in Spanish history. “The Moroccans [that is, the non-Riffian Moroccan government *makhzen*, or more broadly ‘the strangers from the South’] finished what we started”, several interlocutors analyzed.

Unlike the part of his archive that travelled to Hoceïma and appeared to have reached an end node of the infrastructure of Spanish-Riffian memory work boxed up in an office storage space, the exhibition on the Alhucemas cemetery continues to address publics and stay in circulation. Access to the exhibition and the graveyard as a whole is difficult for non-Christians and non-members of the shared memory work infrastructure — it addresses an intimate public at best. As a picture exhibition with no text barring the section headings, its narratives remain plastic enough to be interpreted differently by different actors. In Palomo’s interpretation and in spatial relation to the Legion memorial and the difficulties to access it, the exhibition continues the specific claims to Spanish colonial duress outlined in the subsection on *convivencia*. The access difficulties, and the material prominence of the Legion memorial behind closed walls, point towards the last category of boundary objects in Palomo’s archive.

Administrative/Military Secrets and Surveillance

‘What the Spanish started’, that is, Spanish military history in the Rif, also remains a boundary object in the co-operation between *Former Residents*, Riffians and their publics. One example of co-operation in this regard are the various ways the Riffian military leader Abdelkrim el Khattabi is invoked among Spanish Alhucemis, Riffian and Moroccan inhabitants — as co-laborator who turned on his Spanish nurturers, as heroic leader of the Republic of the Rif, or as officer who failed to unite a disparate group of warriors? Contested history production among Association members and involved Spanish parties is also concerned with the Spanish Legion honored on the cemetery — are they criminals and morally dubious subjects fighting for the salvation of the Catholic Spanish nation? Perpetrators of war crimes and social outcasts? A military elite cadre with a long tradition? Hiding the Legion memorial from public sight may also be connected to the nature of violence Legion soldiers committed against civilian populations — Riffian and Spanish, although in Morocco Riffians surely were disproportionately more targeted. With humiliations and torture, plundering and sexualized violence among their common behavioral repertoire (Balfour 2002), falling victim to Legionaries continues to be marked with shame and cases remain widely unknown. A few interlocutors shared parts of their encounters with Legionaries with me, and shame and immoral behavior appeared in traces in each conversation. Memories to

the Legion appear in physical form — as memorabilia, representations of the Easter celebrations in Málaga, in uniform remains, family pictures or in the graveyard. Of these physical representations, I have only seen the family pictures been interpreted in complex and contradictory manners. In others, a heroic interpretation dominated. It remains an open question to me whether Legion memories can be conceptualized as another end node to the infrastructure of memory work, or whether it requires more trust and longer encounters to go into depth here.

Another historically guarded secret, the usage of toxic gases by the Spanish forces in 1925 and presumably by the Moroccan army in 1958/59, has been discussed comparatively more broadly in the Riffian context (Aziza 2019b, Karrouche 2017, Kunz and Müller 1990; Raha, Charqui and El Hamdaoui 2005), has circulating media representations and is discussed among intimate publics that share membership in the memory work infrastructure and beyond. I have heard two specifications of the issue of concern “toxic gas” be discussed. One aims for political recognition of past colonial injustices through reparations and official apologies by the Spanish State. The other aims at improving health provision in Northern Morocco, and explains high cancer rates throughout the Region with toxic gas residue and epigenetics. In Spain I witnessed open confrontation about its historical truth or inaccuracy in academic circles, and denial by many vocal proponents of *convivencia* among the *Former Residents*. Norah Karrouche (2017) describes a culture of taboo and silence surrounding these issues among Riffians and Riffian diasporas which is also noticeable among *Former Residents*. Among left-leaning Spanish Alhucemis and Moroccan memory activists, the movie *Arrhash* (2008) by Riffian-Spanish filmmaker Tarek El Idrissi addressing the usage of toxic gas in the Rif in 1925 circulates and is discussed. In Palomo’s archive, these topics are rendered nearly invisible. And yet, they surge. ‘Emblematic buildings’ in the cemetery exhibition include Legion and Air Force installations in Alhucemas still in tent form, which hints towards the pictures to have been taken in the late 1920s. Palomo described a clash he had with a young Moroccan, who confronted him about his implication as Spanish national and colonial settler of Alhucemas in the usage of toxic gas. This clash happened at a conference connected to the transferral of the Museo MaPal. In the many heated discussions surrounding Spanish toxic gas I have participated in (observed and at times incited), the issue was not actively framed as shameful. Instead, it was perceived to be a matter of uncovering the truth or of fake leftist propaganda. Riffian contacts elaborated on the pains through which Spanish military actors had gone to obscure the usage of toxic gas — by collecting nearly all shells of such bombs from the battlefield — and presented some overlooked ones. Spanish contacts referred to academic publications that proved or disproved its usage. Layers of conflict arose concerning *convivencia* and military secrets that had ceased to be secret. An open confrontation about a tabooed topic was held in an intimate

public with some degree of shared goals – the reframing of official discourses on Spanish–Riffian history, and the confrontation happened in a key site of a shared memory infrastructure stretching from Madrid to Hoceima – at the conference accompanying the archive transfer. In an institutionalized expression of circulating an issue previously considered secret, the government-funded exhibition “Memorias sanitarias. De Annual a Alhucemas” at the Royal Academy of Spanish Medicine in early summer 2022 referred to archives of the Spanish Armed Forces Medical Corps and explicitly acknowledged the usage of toxic gas in the Rif War.

In the case of historical secrets concerning the Legion, we see how their shame-marked nature impedes their circulation. While they can be discussed in intimate and hidden publics, their wider debate was obstructed by a cult of Legion heroism, regimes of shame furthered by religiously conservative Spanish and Riffian societies, and strong state-mandated surveillance concerning historical ‘truths’. Circulation of this issue stopped. In this instance, multidirectional Spanish–Riffian memory becomes selective memory instead, and as a manner of (avoidance of) dealing with implication, representations of the boundary object ‘Legion’ are both restored and locked away. The issue of concern ‘toxic gas’ was considered less shameful, and confrontations and negotiations about it happen in a broader boundary infrastructure outside Palomo’s archive. The publics these negotiations happen in continue to be graduated: in the Riffian context more than in the Spanish one, they still occur in hidden and intimate publics under constant awareness of analogue and digital state surveillance. In the Spanish context, the embodied memory of state surveillance — through history production and state-supported heroism as much as through experiencing the consequences of not adhering to state norms — shapes practices surrounding boundary objects more than ongoing practices of surveillance.

Surveillance

In Palomo’s archive, this twofold embodied experience of surveillance manifests in the practices surrounding military objects. Palomo’s relation to the Legion, as represented through military memorabilia in his collection, is unstable — while he attributes to them strategic importance for Spanish military intelligence and seeks contact to military officials and military archives, they do not form part of his identity as water-, childhood- and family related items do. He grew up in spatial and emotional proximity to the socially outcast yet glorified Legion soldiers stationed in Alhucemas and continues to express this admiration through his collection. Palomo is not alone with these contradictions: in many accounts of members of the association, their chosen founding myth — Alhucemas as peaceful utopia founded by the Spanish in former no-man’s-land, thanks to the Legion — clash with lived experiences of Legion behavior towards Spanish and Riffian society and family accounts of the Spanish Civil War and atrocities committed there by Franco’s forces. Riffian experiences, perspectives and memorializations

have no place in Palomo’s collection, and nor do critical Spanish ones. This is noteworthy because it does and does not reflect conversation culture among *Old Residents*: three archives I know of actively collect dissenting Spanish and even Riffian voices, and nuanced discussions to which extent *convivencia* did and could exist is possible in these circles. I noticed, however, that critiques of Francoism and changes of perspective concerning Spanish colonial roles did take place only with close friends, in settings difficult to overhear and in many cases only when I explicitly asked for it. Although this state-mandated surveillance of speech in public ended with the Spanish transition from dictatorship to constitutional monarchy from 1978 onwards, memories of surveilled public space and social relationships of surveillance were still inscribed in many of my interlocutors.

Another expression of inscribed surveillance would be Palomo’s approach towards Riffian collaborators. He is aware that Riffian families who collaborated with Spanish authorities have been persecuted, and he assumes this persecution continues. For Palomo, the justification of colonial occupation goes hand in hand with a sense of responsibility towards the former colonial subjects/Riffian citizens. Feelings of responsibility motivated the partition of the military parts of the collection: he feels the need to give back forgotten history to the Riffian population of Hoceima, but also wants to protect those Riffian families mentioned as collaborators of the Spanish in his archival materials, as well as preserve perhaps relevant information about Spanish methods of warfare from ‘the Moro enemy’. He has arranged for those objects with assumed or potential military relevance to be in military institutions — some at the Museo del Aire in Madrid, others in the Archivo Intermedio Militar in Melilla. Thereby, Palomo has graduated those publics he deems trustworthy enough to handle military media. The objects he entrusted to other archivists he sees protected by the Spanish apparatus of military bureaucracy. Researchers need to be physically present in the archive and engage with his materials under military surveillance there. Those objects he considers too sensitive to give away because they contain personal identifications he safeguards himself, and discloses them only to intimate publics for brief periods of time. He also kept trophies: a copy of the treaty of pacification of Morocco between Spain and France, and items Abdelkrim el Khattabi reportedly used on his military campaigns, such as a telephone and a seal. Palomo lent military documentation to external archives, but he never donated or gifted them. Unlike the objects described before, their value is realized through their potential — potential financial value in times of crisis, as potential indeces of weak ties and strategic alliances to Secret Service personnel and military circles, but also potential damage the object can cause if it is allowed to surface between Palomo as protector, Riffian and *makhzen* actors who are opposed to colonial-era collaborators, and current Spanish political actors that are perceived as lamentably indifferent towards Spanish–Moroccan fates and relations.

Conclusion

Through exploring archival practices surrounding the *Museo MaPal Villa Sanjurjo – Alhucemas*, this working paper set out to understand how transborder publics are created and assembled in conflicting memory-scapes. Manuel Palomo Romero's museum and archive acts as repository for his life story, as well as for narratives about loss, displacement and peaceful life in an isolated colonial world. Palomo framed this lost home in accordance with Franco–Nationalist ideals: as practices of *convivencia* between people from different sections of a unified Spain, with no (visible) political dissent, a strong presence of the Catholic Church, clear hierarchies of class and prosperous *convivencia* between a dominant military and civilians. I argue that the museum and its curator are actors in a memory-scape that is distributed between different locales in Spain and Al Hoceima, and whose Spanish and Riffian members co-operate without consensus over issues of history production and memories of a Spanish–Riffian past. Actors' agendas and power positions (historical and contemporary) diverge, and their shared goal arguably is a consolidation of a memory discourse so far not supported by either nation state. Their co-operation serves to position themselves in a domestic political discourse.

Co-operation rallies around physical manifestations of memory – memory objects – that can be grouped along three issues of concern: Spanish–Riffian *convivencia*, built heritage in the cityscape of contemporary Al Hoceima, and administrative/military secrets. *Convivencia* allows different actors to articulate Euro–Mediterranean identities distinct from national Moroccan ones, or to justify ideas of benevolent colonialism. Work around architectural heritage in Hoceima puts *convivencia* into value, and professionalizes memory activities. Sharing and contesting military secrets appears to be the most emotionally loaded category. It strengthens the cohesion of the community of remembrance through sharing and debating painful history. This category also reveals when transfer of representations fails due to shame in the case of Legion memories or due to a lack of a shared information in the case of the usage of toxic gas in 1925. In these moments the break down of a fragile boundary infrastructure of memory becomes visible – an infrastructure connecting actors across place, time and positions of power. Most importantly, this infrastructure allows for physical representations of memories to travel – it allows for boundary objects, symbols and social relationships to circulate (Star and Griesemer 1989, Star 2010, Bowker and Star 2017).

Through his archive and the related work in the *Association of Former Residents of Alhucemas*, Palomo uncovers, re-aligns and ties together publics that are fragmented in terms of geography, social class, political leanings, religion, and implication in colonial and post-colonial injustices. These fragmented publics that congregate around each of the boundary objects, contested as the categories of *convivencia*, heritage

and secrets are, are carefully graduated depending on the level of secrecy he attributes to the objects in question, the kind of recognition he seeks, and the degree of direct impact he hopes to achieve – within and for a wider, intimate public or hidden public (Zillinger 2017). The archive was aimed at a wider public, spoke to and received different intimate ones, and is contested in hidden publics: among his family, and among the institutions he has attempted to circulate it to – military archives in Spain and the municipality of Al Hoceima. *Convivencia* derives from a wider public narrative, is consolidated in the intimate public of the *Association*, travels to Hoceima and from Hoceima to Spain along social relationships, and is contested among those with historically lesser degrees of power in the respective relationships. As visible expressions of *convivencia* and collaboration, Spanish material heritage is in theory accessible to a wider public, but it requires travels to Hoceima or access to its representations as these circulate along the fragile boundary infrastructure of memory work. Finally, military and historical secrets concerning the use of violence and toxic gases against civilians are contested between activist historians and military and government actors of both, Spain and Morocco, between *Former Residents* and young Riffians, and through Moroccan claims for reparations by the government of Spain, also on inter-state level. Palomo's archive also holds artifacts on Riffian resistance against Spanish colonialism, symbolized by memorabilia belonging to Abdelkrim Al Khattabi. He observes this history contested between different Riffian factions, and sees his role to protect it from falling into hands not aligned with the Spanish.

Palomo and his archive can clearly contribute to an understanding of Spanish and Riffian histories as joint and multidirectional (Rothberg 2009), and along the trajectories of its circulation and the practices that unfold around it, one can observe the lasting impact of these entangled histories in current-day Riffian politics. As becomes visible in the categories of *convivencia*, heritage and military secrets, he and most of the *Former Residents* fail to acknowledge their own implications in upholding both the unjust colonial and Falangist regimes. The archival practices and their related exhibitions offer insights into how to manage inconspicuous life under two interwoven authoritarian regimes. The emotional dimensions of this boundary infrastructure became visible whenever conversations stopped during my fieldwork, when the perspectives of the historical Other could not be assumed, and involuntary bodily reactions set it accompanied the re-telling of history. Further work will need to elaborate on embodied experiences of surveillance, guilt, responsibility, victimhood and other forms of implication.

Palomo co-created the boundary infrastructure related to his collection, but it is not the only infrastructure along which *convivencia*, Spanish material heritage and administrative secrets travel. Online memory communities with very different angles, degrees of

implication and political goals articulate a Spanish colonial past and a Moroccan post/colonial present. One medium through which wider Spanish and Rifian publics cooperate about this past and present is film – Tarek El Idrissi's *Arrhash* is one example, Driss Deiback's *Los Perdedores* (2006) another one cited by a number of interlocutors in Spain and Hoceima. This working paper can provide only an additional, so far underrepresented perspective to a larger body of work on Rifian memory-scapes. Further research needs to explore the interactions between Rifian and Spanish memory infrastructures, and expand on the graduated and fragmented publics that converge around the boundary objects of *convivencia*, material heritage and military/administrative secrets. Further work will also investigate contradictions, contestations, and omissions these narratives and practices of co-operation, outlined in this paper, involve. Its focus will be placed on exploring competing and shared notions of victimhood, the relations between collecting and witnessing potentially traumatic events, and forms of transborder co-operation and publics around the entangled histories of life on both shores of the Mediterranean.

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