

Archaeology and Memory of the Spanish Civil War

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Introduction

On July 17, 1936, several generals led a coup d'état against the democratically elected Spanish Republican Government. These generals were only partially successful. The resulting civil war lasted until 1939. The two opposing sides were the Spanish Republicans and the Nationalists. Both sides were aided unofficially by other European powers. This aid was unofficial because all the great powers of Europe signed the Non-intervention Agreement in August 2, 1936, just weeks after the beginning of the war. After almost three years of devastating fighting, in February of 1939, France and Britain recognized Francisco Franco as the leader of Spain with the signing of the Bérard-Jordana agreement. Less than a month later, the city of Madrid surrendered to Franco and on April 1, 1939, Franco announced the end of the war after the Spanish Republican Government surrendered. This would have been the end of most wars but for those living in Spain, this was only the beginning.

Francisco Franco was made head of state and government in November 1936 after the death of more prominent leaders of the General's Coup. Originally, Franco was the General of the Army of Africa in the Spanish zone of Morocco. After his elevation to head of the Nationalist forces, Franco led his forces to victory and became the head of the Spanish government. The new government was a dictatorship led exclusively by Franco from the end of the Civil War until his death on November 20, 1975. During this thirty-nine year dictatorship, Franco ruled with an iron hand. In 1939, while the other great powers were dealing with Hitler in Germany, Franco passed the Law of Political Responsibility. This law made opposition to the nationalist cause an offense that could result in the loss of property, rights, and in many cases, their life.¹ In addition, Franco

¹ Carlos Jerez Farrán and Samuel Amago, eds., *Unearthing Franco's Legacy: Mass Graves and the Recovery of Historical Memory in Spain* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), 36.

used every aspect of Spanish government to help oppress those who had resisted him. The Spanish government, or what was left at that time, was purged and collaborators were put in positions of authority. He then authorized centers where people could report their neighbors if they suspected that they might be a “red.” The term was used for Spanish Popular Front that made up the Republican government, because the majority were communists and socialists.

With the population under control, Franco and his associates began constructing their official history. Franco used his nearly forty years as Dictator to perpetuate his own version of history and memorialize those who fought for his cause.² In doing this, the regime obliterated official records, purged universities of suspected political dissidents, and barred access to historical archives.³ Families were separated and children were raised to believe they carried a defective gene that made their father an evil communist.⁴ In purging villages of political dissidents, over thirty thousand civilians were executed all around Spain. The above mentioned Law of Political Responsibility was only repealed April 13, 1945, but cases in progress did not stop until November 1966.

All over Spain important reconstruction work was undertaken with the political character of the new regime in mind. The Decree of 25 March 1939 established the *Regiones Devastadas* to reconstruct Spain in a way that benefitted the new regime.⁵ Even private ventures to reconstruct came under the jurisdiction of this agency.⁶ In this reconstruction, new streets were

² Carlos Jerez Farrán and Samuel Amago, eds., *Unearthing Franco's Legacy*, 7.

³ Carlos Jerez Farrán and Samuel Amago, eds., *Unearthing Franco's Legacy*, 3.

⁴ Layla Renshaw, *Exhuming Loss: Memory, Materiality, and Mass Graves of the Spanish Civil War* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast, 2011), 62.

⁵ Dacia Viejo-Rose, *Reconstructing Spain: Cultural Heritage and Memory After Civil War* (Portland, Oregon: Sussex Academic Press, 2011), 47.

⁶ Viejo-Rose, *Reconstructing Spain*, 48.

given names of Nationalist heroes, victories, and martyrs.⁷ In these ways the reconstruction was used to express the official history constructed by the regime. Franco's biggest monument to "those fallen for God and Spain" was *Valle de los Caidos*. This massive monument was built by enslaved Spanish Republicans and houses the remains of Jose Primo de Rivera and Franco, himself. The monument includes a five hundred foot cross that can be seen from over twenty miles away.

Franco's regime was also interested in archaeology but in a way that helped legitimize the regime. Archaeology under Franco was concentrated on presenting a vision of a unified Iberian Past.⁸ The archaeological surveys done during Franco's long regime mainly focused on Roman remains and thus reinforced Franco's message of a unified Spain. This theory of a unified Spain helped him to repress Basque and Catalan languages in favor of Castilian (Spanish) and keeping all provinces united under his regime. One of Franco's greatest propaganda efforts was centered on the return of the Dama de Elche from the Louvre Museum in Vichy France. Spanish archeologists today favor archaeology from the Roman Period or before and Spanish Legislation only considers remains over one hundred years old to be "archaeological."⁹

After Franco's death in 1975, as stipulated by Franco before his death, the exiled royal family was brought back to Spain and Juan Carlos became king. The country slowly started making progress in setting up a constitutional monarchy with King Juan Carlos I at its head. Franco's Nationalist party was converted into the Popular party and dominated the government for many years following Franco's death. During this time the Popular party financially

⁷ Viejo-Rose, *Reconstructing Spain*, 59.

⁸ Viejo-Rose, *Reconstructing Spain*, 72.

⁹ Guillermo Molina-Burguera, "Managing Conflict: The Management and Interpretation of Spanish Civil War Sites," *Conservation & Management of Archaeological Sites* 12, no. 1 (March 2010), 40.

supported efforts to maintain the graves of soldiers loyal to Franco including the Fascist Blue Division that fought with Germany on the Eastern Front during World War II. Less than two years after Franco's death they passed the 1977 Amnesty Law which granted amnesty to all acts of political violence committed during the civil war and the entire Franco Regime.¹⁰ It was not until the tenth anniversary of Juan Carlos's coronation that the king added onto an existing memorial for heroes of the 1808 War of Independence that any recognition was given to *all* those who fought in the Spanish Civil War.¹¹

Overall, the first years after Franco's death have been referred to as belonging to the Pact of Silence or Oblivion. Many people in Spain worried that stirring up issues related to Civil War would bring about another. This is because the conditions in Spain were almost identical to those at the beginning of the war: new democracy was only in its formative years after a long period of dictatorship. People feared that speaking out would have dire consequences for the course of history in Spain once again. The Popular party was once again behind some of this fear because they insisted that "re-opening old wounds" would jeopardize the Spanish Democracy.¹² In other words, the official history created by Franco was accepted for the sake of peace.¹³

However, as time passed subsequent generations that were not directly affected by Franco's regime began to question the official story. Prior to 2000, Republican repression had only received attention in scholarly works and memoirs.¹⁴ The break in 2000 has been characterized as a memory boom or explosion that brought studies about Republicans to the

¹⁰ Carolyn P. Boyd, "The Politics of History and Memory in Democratic Spain," *Annals of the American Academy of Political & Social Science* 617 (May 2008), 135.

¹¹ Paloma Aguilar and Carsten Humlebæk, "Collective Memory and National Identity in the Spanish Democracy: The Legacies of Francoism and the Civil War," *History & Memory* 14, no. 1/2 (Autumn 2002), 126.

¹² Boyd, *Politics of History and Memory*, 143.

¹³ Jerez Farrán and Amago, eds., *Unearthing Franco's Legacy*, 135.

¹⁴ Renshaw, *Exhuming Loss*, 26.

forefront of public attention.¹⁵ This explosion of interest was in part because of the highly publicized exhumations and the passing of the Law of Historical Memory.

On November 20, 2002, on the twenty-seventh anniversary of Franco's death, the Cortes Generales passed a declaration that condemned the Franco Regime.¹⁶ This law paved the way for The Law of Historical Memory. On September 10, 2004 a committee was set up to find a solution to the problem of historical memory and on July 28, 2006 released a draft of the proposed Law of Historical Memory. The law was greeted on all sides by protest; some said it was too lenient and other too harsh. A revised version of this law was passed on December 26, 2007. The Law of Historical Memory was an unprecedented piece of legislation that allowed individuals to choose and remember for themselves. In addition it was the first time a nation was voluntarily re-examining their past.

The first question about this law is what is meant by "historical memory?" The text of the law says, "public powers can implement public policies addressing the knowledge of our history and the nurture of democratic memory."¹⁷ Though still vague the law has been interpreted to mean a more inclusive history of the Spanish Civil War and the Franco regime. However, this memory campaign is a *de facto* republican memory campaign, which has been criticized since its formation.¹⁸ President José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, the man who is responsible for the law, is the grandson of a murdered republican and all groups using the law to conduct research and surveys are mainly interested in the repressed Republicans.¹⁹ Supporters of the law state that the

¹⁵ Renshaw, *Exhuming Loss*, 20. & Boyd, *Politics of History and Memory*, 142.

¹⁶ Jerez Farrán and Amago, eds., *Unearthing Franco's Legacy*, 330.

¹⁷ José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, *Aberrant Impunity Law*, 2007, <http://www.derechos.org/nizkor/espana/doc/lmheng.html>, Explanations of Reasons.

¹⁸ Renshaw, *Exhuming Loss*, 20.

¹⁹ Jerez Farrán and Amago, eds., *Unearthing Franco's Legacy*, 308.

Franco regime honored only the fallen Nationalists and the new research corrects the official history constructed by Franco.

Exhumations

Archaeologically, the Memory Law has some provisions for location and identification of victims but the main force behind the excavations has been grassroots organizations formed by non-government organizations and relatives of the deceased. Articles 11 through 14 deal exclusively with the location and identification of victims and essentially postpone firm plans for helping the excavations.²⁰ By the time that this law was passed by the Cortes Generales, exhumations and excavations had already been underway for several years. It is these exhumations and excavations that brought the absence of Republican history into the public eye.

Exhumations of mass graves in Spain were initially organized and funded by relatives of the deceased and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs).²¹ In some ways these categories overlap as some of the most active NGOs were started as independent attempts to locate family. The two major groups that are involved in the exhumations are the Asociación para la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica, (ARMH) and Foro por la Memoria, (Foro). The ARMH is the most active and was initially started by Emilio Silva Barrera and Santiago Macías. Emilio Silva was looking for the remains of his grandfather, also named Emilio Silva. Santiago Macías was the oral historian of the town where Silva's grandfather was extra judicially killed and buried. The ARMH initially began exhuming graves for family members and tried to keep the

²⁰ Rodríguez Zapatero, *Aberrant Impunity Law*, Articles 11-14.

²¹ Jerez Farrán and Amago, eds., *Unearthing Franco's Legacy*, 318.

issue from becoming politicized but failed to do so.²² Foro's goal with the exhumation is to use the remains to pursue political ends, namely the revitalization of the communist party.

The exhumations are done by volunteers, including professional archeologist, forensic pathologists and oral historians, among others. The professional volunteers have sparked interest in the students and today, many university professors include their students in the exhumations and help make connections with universities. The support of the universities helps with the process through storage and field and lab work. Through this participation by experts and universities, the exhumations are conferred with scientific legitimacy.²³ The exhumations are still in progress and have a waiting list of relatives asking for their help in exhuming their loved ones.

The methods of ARMH in the exhumations have been shaped by the various experts volunteering on their site and the purpose of the exhumations. The first thing that is done before any ground is broken is to collect oral histories and testimony from community members. This information is used to as ante mortem data to help identify the bodies once they have been exhumed and help reconstruct the exact sequence of events around their death.²⁴ With ARMH this phase also helps involve the community in the exhumation by helping them talk about events that they have not spoken of in nearly seventy years.²⁵ The topsoil is removed with a backhoe and then the archeologists move in with picks and shovels.²⁶ The bodies and objects are left in situ as each stratigraphic layer of soil is removed.²⁷ The archeologists then use context clues to hypothesize how the bodies arrived in the grave, such as hands being above the head if they were

²² Jerez Farrán and Amago, eds., *Unearthing Franco's Legacy*, 329.

²³ Jerez Farrán and Amago, eds., *Unearthing Franco's Legacy*, 136.

²⁴ Renshaw, *Exhuming Loss*, 92.

²⁵ Renshaw, *Exhuming Loss*, 128.

²⁶ Mike Elkin, "Opening Franco's Graves," *Archaeology* 59, no. 5 (February 2006), 39.

²⁷ Renshaw, *Exhuming Loss*, 186.

dragged into the grave after death.²⁸ The crews use metal detectors to find bullet fragments around the bodies.²⁹ After the bodies are completely revealed are they taken from the site for examination by forensic pathologists that test and identify the bones, if possible.

The findings from these exhumations are wide ranging but some overarching themes apply. The causes of death in these mass graves were gunshots. In addition, the state of fractures found on limbs suggests that the deceased sustained bodily injury before they were killed, most likely during their brief incarceration before being executed.³⁰ In some situations, such as the exhumations attended by Layla Renshaw, author of *Exhuming Loss*, there were beer bottle caps found scattered among the spent bullet casings. Monegal suggested the close groupings of these two types of objects could have been from the shooters drinking when they executed the men.³¹ In addition, identifying the bones based on objects and clothing proved difficult because at some point the bodies were robbed by the executioners.

As of July 14, 2008, a total of one hundred seventy-one burials were exhumed; comprising a total of four thousand fifty-four bodies.³² The graves range in size from single burials to some containing as many as one thousand five hundred burials.³³ This wide range comes from the differing methods of execution. Some men were taken on *paseos* or walks where they were walked a short distance from the jail or village and shot. Famous examples include Federico Garcia Lorca, the Spanish Civil War's first and most important martyr. The bodies were simply pushed into a ditch alongside the road and buried. On the other hand, large-scale

²⁸ Renshaw, *Exhuming Loss*, 151.

²⁹ Elkin, "Opening Franco's Graves," 40.

³⁰ Renshaw, *Exhuming Loss*, 154.

³¹ Renshaw, *Exhuming Loss*, 155.

³² Jerez Farrán and Amago, eds., *Unearthing Franco's Legacy*, 4.

³³ Jerez Farrán and Amago, eds., *Unearthing Franco's Legacy*, 307.

massacres also took place, such as the Massacre at the bullring at Badajoz in 1936.³⁴ In addition, some spaces were found to have been used multiple times. In the exhumation at Villamayor de los Montes in Burgos one location was found to be composed of forty-six skeletons which were spatially separated into two groups, one consisting of twenty-one skeletons and the other twenty-six skeletons.³⁵

These exhumations have had the greatest impact on the historical memory of Spain. This is mainly because of the methods and results of the exhumations. In ARMH's initial investigation they conduct oral interviews with relatives and community members about the grave and who lies within. In conducting these interviews, the ARMH volunteers are not only discussing a terrible event but they are discussing it with either members of the deceased families, or relatives of those who perpetrated the crimes, though contemporaries of those in the grave are increasingly rare given the time elapsed. In addition these stories have often never been told. Grandchildren know only the bare essentials about their grandfathers in the graves. The shame and guilt associated with having a "red" father, uncle, brother, husband or relative in general kept families from talking to each other, much less children who might slip and reveal something about the family to outsiders.³⁶ Children of the deceased, instead remember the feelings that their surviving family members exhibited. Renshaw proposes the term Post-memory for this phenomenon, drawn from studies of Holocaust survivors' children.³⁷ Grave objects and photos with the remains help ARMH bridge the gaps of silence imposed by Franco.³⁸

³⁴ Francisco Ferrándiz, "The Return of Civil War Ghosts: The Ethnography of Exhumations in Contemporary Spain," *Anthropology Today* 22, no. 3 (June 1, 2006), 8.

³⁵ L. Rios, et.al., "Identification Process in Mass Graves from the Spanish Civil War I," *FORENSIC SCIENCE INTERNATIONAL* 199, no. 1-3 (June 15, 2010), 28.

³⁶ Renshaw, *Exhuming Loss*, 75.

³⁷ Renshaw, *Exhuming Loss*, 32.

³⁸ Renshaw, *Exhuming Loss*, 148 & 180-181.

In addition ARMH tried to materialize the bodies to prevent them from sparking political debate centered on the past political affiliations of the deceased.³⁹ The process of identifying individual skeletons as people helped materialize the bodies further by giving an individual identity outside the collective identity that resulted in their execution. This individualization helps families connect with the deceased. Some NGOs criticized ARMH for this decision because it does not speak to the larger picture of Francoist repression of Spanish Republicans.⁴⁰ However it is for this reason that many families request that ARMH direct the exhumations. In addition, ARMH relies heavily on volunteered information including information from perpetrators. ARMH had used the testimonies from a grave digger who was over 100 years old to locate graves as well as anonymous letters from perpetrators. The independent nature of ARMH gives people reassurance that their families' past political affiliations will not be brought to light and harm the family again. Fear was still an issue when Renshaw wrote her book, and for this reason she uses fake names for informants.⁴¹ As time and media publicity around the exhumations grows however, people are slowly feeling more comfortable talking.⁴² On the other hand, Basque country and Catalonia have readily accepted exhumations and new memory because of their history of resisting Franco.⁴³ The interest in the exhumation of mass graves stems from the duty to remember and find closure.

There has been some resistance to the exhumations. Originally the resistance stemmed from fear on the part of the family. More modern resistance has many different bases. The Popular Party is a descendant of Franco's Nationalist government and as such they do not want

³⁹ Renshaw, *Exhuming Loss*, 32.

⁴⁰ Renshaw, *Exhuming Loss*, 85.

⁴¹ Renshaw, *Exhuming Loss*, 44.

⁴² Elkin, "Opening Franco's Graves," 41.

⁴³ Renshaw, *Exhuming Loss*, 128.

any exhumations to be done unless they benefit the official history imposed by Franco before his death. Other types of resistance come from families of the deceased. Most people were indoctrinated to hate and fear their relative and due to this, they want no part in exhuming their bodies. This reason behind resistance to the exhumations is currently in decline as the exhumations are shared publically throughout Spain. Another more interesting case comes from the search for Federico Garcia Lorca's body. Lorca's family refused to excavate the site because Lorca's body has more political importance lost.

Battlefield Archaeology

The other major interest of archeologists in the Spanish Civil War is the battlefield surveys and conservation being done. One of the most promising lines of inquiry for modern conflict archaeology addresses the complexities of entire landscapes altered by war.⁴⁴ In Spain today there are many examples of how the Civil War changed the face of Spain, especially during the war itself and in the period of reconstruction that followed immediately after. Recent projects related to battle sites are the results of grassroots associations and municipalities.⁴⁵ This is especially true with the conservation of sites. Two articles, "Managing Conflict" and "Archaeology of the Civil War in Spain" discuss the two sides of battlefield archaeology in Spain. The article, "Archaeology of the Civil War in Spain," details the findings of two Civil War sites, namely the Battle of Madrid and a labor camp. In "Managing Conflict" the conservation of the defensive structures at Villargordo del Cabriel is discussed in relation to how the site could help show the whole history of Spain during the conflict. This article is also revealing in the problems that archeologists working on Spanish Civil War remains face.

⁴⁴ Alfredo González-Ruibal, "From the Battlefield to the Labour Camp: Archaeology of Civil War and Dictatorship in Spain," *Antiquity* no. 86 (2012), <http://antiquity.ac.uk/ant/086/ant0860456.html>, 456.

⁴⁵ Molina-Burguera, "Managing Conflict," 42.

The Battle of Madrid is one of the most famous battles of the Spanish Civil War, primarily because of the involvement of the first International Brigades. The survey consisted of locating the trench lines for both the Republican and Nationalist sides and sampling them to determine the materiality of life in the trenches.⁴⁶ The archeologists were able to find both trenches and their samples have proven to be quite rich in material. The first and most revealing find was the scattered bullet casings found on both sides.

In the Republican trenches, the archeologists were surprised to find cartridges of different calibers from half a dozen countries.⁴⁷ In addition, some of the cartridges were from World War I surpluses.⁴⁸ There was a strict recycling policy on fired casings, so casings were rare. Some of the cartridges found were 0.303, (produced in 1916), 1870s Remington and Vetterli Vitali rifle ammunition, and five spent cartridges and a magazine from a Mosin Nagant.⁴⁹ These various cartridges were fired from guns produced in various countries including Austria and Britain, both of which had signed the Non-Intervention Agreement in 1936.⁵⁰ One of the ways to account for the ammunition is the presence of the International Brigades, including men from both countries. The obsolete and mix-matched equipment is even attested to by John Sommerfield and Tom Wintringham, with Wintringham naming the various types of guns in the machine gun groups and remarking that the planes being used were from 1915.⁵¹ In addition, both of these men were British volunteers in the International Brigades.

On the other hand in the Nationalist trenches there were two types of cartridges found, 7mm, shot by Spanish Mausers and Hotchkiss machine guns, and 7.92mm, shot by German

⁴⁶ González-Ruibal, "From the Battlefield to the Labour Camp," 457.

⁴⁷ González-Ruibal, "From the Battlefield to the Labour Camp," 458.

⁴⁸ González-Ruibal, "From the Battlefield to the Labour Camp," 458.

⁴⁹ González-Ruibal, "From the Battlefield to the Labour Camp," 458

⁵⁰ González-Ruibal, "From the Battlefield to the Labour Camp," 458.

⁵¹ Tom Wintringham, *English Captain* (London: Penguin Books, 1941), 38-39 & 50.

Mausers and Maxim machine guns.⁵² Over Fifty-one percent were manufactured between 1936 and 1938, with only one cartridge being from World War I surplus.⁵³ The archeologists were also able to determine that the Nationalists were firing more than they were being fired on based on their shells found in the trench, as there was no recycling policy in the Nationalist trenches.⁵⁴ The Spanish and German Mausers show the presence of Spanish and German military personnel because both were government issue for the army.⁵⁵ This new archaeological evidence contradicts Francoist propaganda from after the war which states that there “was not a single foreign man or gun in General Franco’s Army during the first months of the war.”⁵⁶

In addition to cartridges and shells, archeologists also found clothing, civilian items, and specific styles of structures. On both sides, civilian items were found throughout the trenches. Mattress springs, key holes, and hinges are the remains of civilian items like mattresses and doors that Republican and Nationalist soldiers used to make the trenches more comfortable and safe.⁵⁷ In addition, the team also found boots and clothing that were standard army issue, which helps support the hypothesis that the Nationalist side was composed of troops, not volunteers. Some of the clothing and equipment found was Italian Military issue which brings in yet another foreign army on the side of the Nationalists.⁵⁸ This is also supported by the design and structure of the Nationalist defenses. The strongholds were built according to standards for structures built

⁵² González-Ruibal, “From the Battlefield to the Labour Camp,” 461.

⁵³ González-Ruibal, “From the Battlefield to the Labour Camp,” 461.

⁵⁴ González-Ruibal, “From the Battlefield to the Labour Camp,” 460.

⁵⁵ González-Ruibal, “From the Battlefield to the Labour Camp,” 460.

⁵⁶ *The International Brigades : Foreign Assistants of the Spanish Reds*, (Madrid: Spanish Office of Information, 1948), 16.

⁵⁷ González-Ruibal, “From the Battlefield to the Labour Camp,” 460.

⁵⁸ González-Ruibal, “From the Battlefield to the Labour Camp,” 462.

during the Moroccan Colonial wars.⁵⁹ This is not surprising since the Army of Africa was present during the Siege of Madrid, as were Moroccan conscripts.

Obviously the archaeological records of battle sites have much to teach the public, but now the question of how to conserve these sites comes into the discussion. The battle sites in Madrid have received some conservation either intentionally or unintentionally from the Franco regime, interesting since they never captured the city by force. The article “Managing Conflict” shows the conservation of the defenses of Villargordo del Cabriel. The building, structures, and remains of the Spanish Civil War and the Franco regime have hardly been explored according to Gonzalez-Ruibal and for that reason, those sites that have been investigated have to be conserved and interpreted to help construct a more full historical picture of these periods.⁶⁰ The legal roadblocks to having these sites preserved have already been discussed, namely the Spanish legislation on remains over one hundred years old and the widespread dislike of any post-roman remains in general.⁶¹

The Defenses at Villargordo del Cabriel are located on the main route between Madrid and Valencia. During the civil war, the defenses were built to protect the route between the capital and its harbor in Valencia because it was the only way to communicate between these two cities. The fortifications in Villargordo del Cabriel consist of shooting trenches and bunkers around a location where a single bridge and crossing point.⁶² In total, there were eight complexes in the area but the team selected two, Camino de Minglanilla Trench and the crossing point of the Camino de Peña Blanca and Huerta la Carpia Trenches. These two were chosen for their

⁵⁹ González-Ruibal, “From the Battlefield to the Labour Camp,” 460.

⁶⁰ Molina-Burguera, “Managing Conflict,” 40.

⁶¹ Molina-Burguera, “Managing Conflict,” 40.

⁶² Molina-Burguera, “Managing Conflict,” 45.

close proximity and preservation.⁶³ The site is an example of military architecture from the civil war period and provides enormous historical value for the local populations, who helped build the structures, and Spain in general, for its addition to the official history of the war.⁶⁴

The legal situation for this site in particular is difficult to understand because it falls under the laws of the autonomous province of Valencia. This is the normal procedure in Spain and only if the province does not have provisions for the sites do the national laws apply. The preservation of sites such as this one, are undertaken to show the “whole spectra of this conflictive period and to facilitate discussion.”⁶⁵ The aims of this project are to maintain the sites and remains so that they can be a life-long learning tool to those who visit and see the remains. Additionally, for sites like Villargordo del Cabriel, the sites are maintained to protect the cultural and natural landscapes, which helps the local towns develop sustainable tourism that helps the local economy and the national history.⁶⁶ In the acknowledgement section of the article, Molina-Burguera thanks the Town Hall of Villargordo del Cabriel for their protection and development of the site.

Labor Camp Archaeology

The last type of site investigated by archeologists in Spain is labor camps. These labor camps were used to house Spanish Republicans, both soldier and civilian. The men in the camps were used to rebuild the Spain of Franco after the war and these camps were the last home of many of the soldiers and civilians who opposed Franco. At the excavations in these sites, the most common finds were tins cans, with ninety percent of them being from tuna or sardines.

⁶³ Molina-Burguera, “Managing Conflict,” 46.

⁶⁴ Molina-Burguera, “Managing Conflict,” 50.

⁶⁵ Molina-Burguera, “Managing Conflict,” 43.

⁶⁶ Molina-Burguera, “Managing Conflict,” 47.

These cans represent a large part of the diet of men living in the camps. The general summary of meals at the camps included no meat, other than the fish from the cans, which were shared between two men. The cans of fish were supplemented by bread and a thin watery soup.⁶⁷ There were some materials to relieve boredom including inkwells and domino pieces, but over all life was short in these camps either because of the forced labor or executions.⁶⁸ The bodies being exhumed by ARMH include men from these labor camps.

Conclusions

Overall the archaeology of the Spanish Civil War varies according to the type of remains. The mass exhumations being carried out by ARMH received huge amounts of media attention and for this reason are more well-known and receive more support and research. These exhumations also have the biggest impact on the historical memory of Spain because they receive so much attention. The battle sites, defenses, and labor camps received almost no attention in comparison to the exhumations. Most of the support for these sites comes not from the national government but from the local governments and grassroots associations that have a vested interest in the site, whether that interest is historical, economical, or personal. The new interest in Spain's past owes much of its support from the exhumations and the work of ARMH. Their efforts to find families and get the communities to talk about past events are the reason that the government finally passed the Memory Law, as it is now known. However, this new memory campaign is not about giving the entire story but adding the story of defeated and murdered Republicans to the official story. Emilio Silva refused the request of Nationalist families to have

⁶⁷ González-Ruibal, "From the Battlefield to the Labour Camp," 466.

⁶⁸ González-Ruibal, "From the Battlefield to the Labour Camp," 467.

ARMH exhume their loved ones.⁶⁹ Likewise, Spanish Civil War battle sites where the Nationalist side won were commemorated during Franco and under the Memory Law have to be decided on by local populations, as to whether or not the plaques and monuments should be removed or altered.

This issue of an official and inclusive history in Spain is still very divisive. The excavations and exhumations have been compared to other post-dictatorship democracies in Argentina and Chile and even the Holocaust. However, the main difference between Spain and these other cases is that Spain is not seeking to punish the guilty. In most of these cases, the families and communities know the names and families of the perpetrators and only in rare cases are they still alive. The difference is that Spain is trying to heal an old wound that has refused to heal. The excavations and exhumations are helping to heal these old wounds by bringing the Spanish Republicans back into the history of Spain. As Spanish Historian Javier Tussell says, “In Spain there is willingness for amnesty, not amnesia.”⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Boyd, *Politics of History and Memory*, 240.

⁷⁰ Omar G. Encarnación, “Pinochet’s Revenge: Spain Revisits Its Civil War,” *World Policy Journal* 24, no. 4 (Winter 2007), 48.

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