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Outline of a Temporality-Based Approach to Iberian Borderlands' Cultural Heritage in Europe and South America

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Considering the Portuguese–Spanish border in the Guadiana River, as well as (with secondary relevance) the borderlands of Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina, this article aims to discuss some preliminary questions for the interpretation of border (in)tangible heritage in these territories from the point of view of Cultural Heritage Studies, Global History, and temporalities. A diachronic (historical) perspective is considered, as well as several topics that form part of temporality-based approaches to border dynamics, such as time perception of the different actors (insiders and outsiders, among them the states), individual and collective memories, and the use of cultural heritage as a potential resource for community-building in peripheral territories.

Keywords: Portuguese–Spanish border; Guadiana River; Uruguay River; global history; shared heritage; territory.

Setting the Stage

[Borders] often appear as lines on a map, claiming a physical presence. On the ground, however, they are constituted first and foremost by regimes of practice, established, over time, by a territory's administrative, political and economic authorities.

— Hurd et al. 2017, 1–2

Marking the end of the Thirty Years' War, the Peace of Westphalia (1648) was a turning point in the way states viewed the limits of their sovereignties and resulted in maps becoming relevant as representations of terri-

torial claims and disputes, as well as instruments of administration (Baud & Schendel 1997, 215; Brunet-Jailly 2005). The image of borders drawn on a map is one of the most intriguing topics for examining the differences between the emic and etic perceptions of bordering. To put it differently, the idea of borders as static and controllable elements in these documents contrasts with the dynamic interactions that take place on both sides of political boundaries. In this context, it has been postulated that borderlands can be seen as regions affected by bordering and, as such, can be interpreted

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as networks and systems of interaction that sometimes provoke clashes between states and local communities (see Baud & Schendel 1997).

Recent theoretical approaches to the social dimension of borders have focused on the role of local communities in the maintenance and transgression of bordering processes. With this, borders and bordering have become much more complex research topics than before, because the study of these phenomena has gone far beyond the spatial and political analysis that formed part of nationalistic agendas (for an overview, see Brunet-Jailly 2005). Consequently, new insights into social relations have provided different directions to the interpretation of historical processes. There is a gap between the narratives provided by states and local memories, even though the latter are not always homogenous and depend on the experiences of individuals or groups of people (e.g., a smuggler and a border guard) (cf. Elbel 2022).

The function, definition, and typology of borders were topics that took a front-row seat in nationalist agendas, as they circumscribe national narratives and differentiate between imagined communities of "us" and "them". However, new perspectives on territoriality, especially after the end of the Cold War and the fall of Soviet Union, influenced a new conception of state boundaries as "equally social, political and discursive constructs, not just static neutralized categories located between states" (Newman & Paasi 1998, 187). From a historical point of view, these limits were also imposed on the examination of the national history of early periods, even when these borders were inexistent. The existence of borders in the "global village" is something strongly questioned today because international flows and new forms of communication have created new boundaries that no longer coincide with territorial limits. In other words, borders are currently seen as socio-cultural (Rizo García & Romeu Aldaya 2006) more than political, and the old borders and 'borderlands' as the last footprint of nation-states. These perspectives focus on the role of local communities in the maintenance and transgression of bordering processes.

In this article, we first examine the way border interactions, as well as episodes of repression, have shaped identities and cultural landscapes along the world's oldest active border, that is, the boundary between Spain and Portugal. Tangible and intangible heritage stand out in this context as consequences of the way people interact with space over time, and how this interaction has determined their perception of the territory and alterity of neighbours and/or states. In this context, Sarah Green's concept of "borders as tidemarks" is a particularly insightful perspective on the influence of border territories on identities, self-perceptions and otherness, and cultural manifestations in permanent motion (see Green 2018; see Andersen 2024, this issue). We then go on to garner insights

on a temporality-based interpretation of borderlands in the Iberian Peninsula and its global extension into South America, while also discussing its usefulness to new theoretical directions for heritage enhancement in these territories.

It is noteworthy that border temporalities are often interpreted from five main points of view: firstly, the transformation in borders through the years; secondly, the perception of time, which can be divided into four categories or types of agents (those who cross the border, those who live there, those who visit these territories by leisure, and the state); thirdly, the role of memories in border practices and perceptions (see mainly Pfoser 2022 and Elbel 2022); fourthly, the question of mobility, especially in those situations where borders delimit levels of integration in civilizational models (cf. Leutloff-Grandits 2024, this issue); and lastly, the continuity of separations even after the dismantlement of borders (or "phantom borders": see von Hirschhausen et al. 2019). Thus, the study of temporalities can be seen as a promising and thoughtful research avenue.

However, scholarship often overlooks the Iberian Peninsula as a potential case study for the examination of border temporalities, usually focusing on the external borders of the EU. On the other hand, the study of temporalities is a topic that has not previously been included in the discussion of Iberian borders. For example, seminal works such as the highly cited papers of Baud and Schendel (1997) or Newman and Paasi (1998) do not mention these territories, which confirms that this part of Western Europe is still on the periphery of academic interests in borderlands studies.

It is hoped that this article can address this peripherality by taking a first step in the examination of the cultural heritage of the Iberian borders from the point of view of temporalities, primarily through a historical lens. In order to conduct this research, the authors selected several examples from Iberian and South American border contexts, especially those that allow us to understand the complexity of the cross-border relations and that can be useful to approach the question of temporalities. These borders initially emerged from the same historical processes in which the Hispanic kingdoms were involved. Nonetheless, a holistic perspective is indispensable in the examination of the complexity of cross-border interconnections and entanglements that take place in these territories, which include, for example, language (bilingualism and hybridization) and smuggling.

In the Iberian Peninsula, particularly in the Lower Guadiana Basin, the authors conducted archaeological fieldwork (cf. Albuquerque et al. 2020) as well as bibliographical and documental research in order to complement the systematization of heritage assets and to approach the construction of this border landscape

and interactions between both sides throughout the centuries. For the South American contexts, the authors did not conduct fieldwork but examined those cases comparable to the ones of the Iberian Peninsula, especially considering the “tidemarks” left by bordering processes and cultural heritage.

In practice, the idea that borders are “time written in space” (Kavanagh 2000) is particularly useful in the examination of a diachronic construction of borders and the associated time-space perceptions. For example, in the case of Iberia, the abolition of checkpoints had a significant impact on the daily lives of local people and those who were used to crossing the border for different purposes (tourism, shopping, etc.). Before the integration of Portugal and Spain into the Schengen Area, people faced either being unable to cross the border river or waiting between midnight and 8 a.m. to get the ferryboat from Ayamonte in Huelva to Vila Real de Santo António on the Portuguese side and back (Pintado & Barrenechea 1972, 33). If one travels between Faro in Portugal and Huelva in Spain now, for example, one can cross the Guadiana River without obstacle via the Guadiana International Bridge (built in 1991). The transit flows brought by Schengen were only interrupted during the COVID-19 pandemic when states closed their borders, bringing back practices of blocking people’s mobility (see Paasi et al. 2022) and raising several unexpected obstacles (e.g., between municipalities).

The bottom-up examination of border practices from the point of view of temporalities, as proposed in this special issue, constitutes an alternative view that considers personal and collective experiences in these territories. The Iberian Peninsula is of particular interest because more than seven centuries with few changes in territorial delimitations have left several traces on the landscape and configured a rich and diverse cultural heritage. The Guadiana River, the most meridional part of the Portuguese-Spanish border, stands out as a “water road” that has connected these regions with the Mediterranean and Atlantic commercial networks since at least the Iron Age (c. 9th century BC), which has resulted in the founding of important ports in Castro Marim, Portugal, and Ayamonte, Spain—and, at the end of the navigable section, in Mértola (Figure 1). In the first phases of the Christian kingdoms, the permeability of the river was a determinant for the construction of several defensive buildings along the riverbanks in order to protect commercial routes and, with its use as a delimitation, to prevent undesirable crossings.

Territorialities and social relations that took place here shaped the cultural landscape but, paradoxically, the shift towards a borderless

Europe provoked the disintegration of social relations and interactions. The most conspicuous example is how smugglers and border guards, respectively, developed strategies of survival and surveillance thanks to the existence of borders; both disappeared after the Schengen Agreement. Consequently, the Iberian case is like a history book written into the landscape that describes the evolution of bordering processes, meanings, and territorialities from the establishment of the Portuguese-Spanish border in 1297, within the organization of Christian territories, until the loss of its political relevance in the 1990s. Thus, the most outstanding feature of this border’s historical relevance and uniqueness is that it was conceived in the Middle Ages and was not influenced, as other borders, by the more recent perspectives of bordering. On the other hand, the history of the border between Portugal and Castile,¹ and later Portugal and Spain, has revolved around its physical and cartographic definition as well as its military and fiscal protection, adapting to the new realities imposed by the modern states, ever since its first configuration. In contrast, South American borders, as a result of the transfer of these boundaries to the colonial spheres of influence of the Iberian powers, were firstly

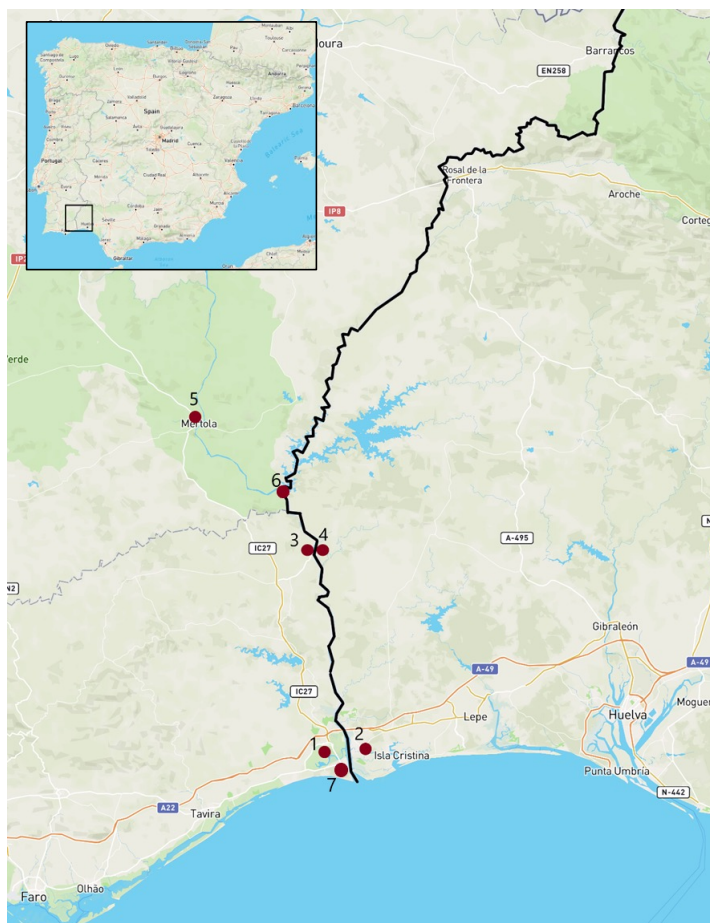


Figure 1: Portugal, Spain, and their border in the Lower Guadiana Basin, with the main cities mentioned in the text: 1. Castro Marim, 2. Ayamonte, 3. Alcoutim, 4. Sanlúcar de Guadiana, 5. Mértola, 6. Pomarão, 7. Vila Real de Santo António. Source: maps adapted from www.mapbox.com.

drawn on maps and then established and controlled as a result of the transfer of these boundaries to the colonial spheres of influence of the Iberian powers (Herzog 2015; Albuquerque & García Fernández 2022).

In this article we deal only with one of the oldest sections of the current border that separates the Iberian kingdoms: the Lower Guadiana Basin (Figure 1). We explain how borderness manifests in both tangible and intangible heritage, and how these bordering processes gave rise to distinctive cultural elements, or traces, that may and should be preserved and enhanced. Secondly, we present some topics for the study of how bordering processes in Iberia “travelled” the globe and were replicated overseas in the former Portuguese and Spanish colonies in South America (Figure 2). The cultural heritage associated with bordering can be viewed as representative of global processes of territorial delimitations on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. This feature can be seen as a potential topic for cooperation between South American and Iberian countries in terms of heritage research and interpretation (cf. Albuquerque et al. 2022; Albuquerque & García Fernández 2022).

The social, cultural, and political processes of border practices are relevant topics in this discussion because they can contextualize and explain how a rhizomatic narrative can be written and interpreted in space. A holistic examination of these borders allows us to identify their “life cycles” (Baud & Schendel 1997, 223–225) and their impact—e.g., on linguistic features and the local economy—as well as differences between “World time”, “State time”, and “Borderland time” (ibid., 236). It is then worth asking what the current role of borderlands and border communities in a borderless Europe is, and how it may be possible to use heritage enhancement to prevent population decline. The two first “times” mentioned above affect local communities, and several assets (e.g., hybrid languages, oral traditions) are on the brink of disappearing as a result, which can be related to the sense of being at a standstill, of not progressing, felt on the periphery (see similar cases in Leutloff-Grandits 2024, this issue). In other words, after the supposed opening of intra-European borders, the peripheral condition remains in those places and still affects local communities’ lives, which fits the concept of “phantom borders”, but without the economic advantages of bordering for the local people. That is,

these borders are “political demarcations or territorial divisions that structure space despite their subsequent institutional abolishment” (von Hirschhausen et al. 2019, 370) or, as in the Iberian case, despite their loss of geopolitical relevance. Consequently, insight into the past and present of these territories, and even into local memories, is crucial for understanding the uniqueness of border cultures and identities.

(Tide)marks and Traces of Border Practices and Perceptions

The interpretation of historical processes has taken different directions according to new understandings of social interactions, especially from the perspective of microhistory—that is, of local processes and dynamics, territorialities, and temporalities (cf. De Vries 2019). This kind of approach is thought-provoking because of the contrast between local (insiders’) and state (outsiders’) perceptions of borders, as it focuses on social and cultural practices over the ‘life cycles’ of borders (inter alia Baud & Schendel 1997; Pfoser 2022). In consequence, one may ask: how are national narratives consistent with local memories of borders and borderscapes?

This epistemological context paves the way for a thorough examination of local interactions and border identities. Considering that bordering is not exclusively led by states, but also by borderlanders, the study of local processes is essential for the interpretation of the ‘tidemarks’ revealed in the tangible and intangible heritage.



Figure 2: Brazil-Uruguay-Argentina borderlands and the main cities mentioned in the text: 1. Colonia Sacramento, 2. Montevideo, 3. Uruguiana-Paso de los Libres, 4. Chui-Chui. Source: maps adapted from www.mapbox.com.

Both types of cultural asset intersect in the twofold bordering perceptions of outsiders and insiders as marks of the way people perceive, feel, and live in their territory and with their neighbours. One may question whether this heritage—considering it as a collective inheritance—is representative of local or national identity, and may ask which of its elements prevail in the interpretation of these assets.

In the Lower Guadiana Basin, as in other similar cases, there are several remnants of border defence, surveillance, and hybridity. If one considers only the navigable section of the river, there remain at least five fortresses (Castro Marim, Ayamonte, Alcoutim, Sanlúcar de Guadiana, and Mértola: see Figure 1), as well as several surveillance structures such as watchtowers (*atalaias/atalayas* in Portuguese and Spanish, respectively), buildings (*casas*) spread out along the riverbanks that belonged to the *Guarda Fiscal* (a Portuguese border force, dissolved in 1993), and finally checkpoints, all of which are now in a state of severe degradation or in ruins (Figure 3). The obsolescence of these buildings reveals the changing nature of border practices, and how settlement patterns and territorialities can be conditioned by these processes. On the other hand, as stated above, the lower part of the Guadiana River served at different times as a communication route, a transitional space between different cultural areas, and even as a real border long before the expansion of the kingdoms of Castile and Portugal (Albuquerque et al. 2020).

In this context, archaeological sites are relevant for understanding the social, economic, and cultural dynamics of this region before its function as a borderland. One of the most relevant periods by far is the Iron Age, when the Guadiana Basin became an important part of the commercial routes that connected the Atlantic Ocean, the Mediterranean Sea, and the interior of the Peninsula. In the estuary of the Guadiana River, the Phoenicians founded Ayamonte at the end of the 9th century BC and abandoned it (possibly due

to sedimentation of the riverbed) approximately two centuries later, while Castro Marim—on the opposite side of the river—started to grow (for these sites see Marzoli & García Teyssandier 2019 and Arruda et al. 2017, respectively).

Upstream, Mértola stood out as an important port in regional and transregional contexts, thanks to its strategic location near the end of a roughly 70-kilometer-long navigable section and its mining resources. The ancient Anas River—as the Guadiana River was then known—and adjacent territories developed with the economic exploration of the river’s resources (fishing, navigation, salt, etc.), which explains the multicultural population of Mértola during the Iron Age and subsequent periods (García Fernández et al. 2019; Torres 2014). This feature allows us to interpret Mértola as a frontier: it controlled the arrival and departure of goods, especially towards the interior, and had been extremely well defended since Iron Age communities built a wall around the town to protect it from potential enemies. The importance of this town explains the construction of new walls throughout the centuries (Figure 4; cf. Labarthe et al. 2003; see also Duarte d’Armas’ depiction in 1509).

During the Roman period, Mértola (known then as Myrtilis) was also a relevant political centre. It was integrated into the Roman world early on and was crucial for Rome’s expansion into the interior of the Iberian Peninsula. The fact that we know coins were produced here is also telling, as were the discoveries of statues and several antiques described by the 16th century author André de Resende (see Albuquerque & Mateos-Orozco 2022). Myrtilis, as well as its territory, was still important during subsequent periods, as can be seen from the outstanding archaeological remains identified in this small town (cf. Lopes 2021), dating approximately until the end of the Muslim occupation. It should be noted that after this occupation, traffic on the Guadiana River reduced drastically. The river’s use as a border in the section between Castro Marim/Ayamonte



Figure 3. Abandoned checkpoint in Vila Verde de Ficalho (Alentejo, Portugal), near Rosal de la Frontera (Spain). Source: authors’ own photo.



Figure 4: Mértola. Source: authors’ own photo.

and Pomarão (Portugal) paved the way for several disputes between locals (and even governments) about fishing rights and port taxes (e.g., Freitas 2019; Baquero Moreno 2003). Consequently, there is an evident difference between the defence of commercial routes and the defence of the sovereignties’ limits, in terms of the marks in the landscape.

As stated above, the Portuguese–Spanish border was created in 1297 within the organization of Christian territories (cf. Herzog 2015). Besides the use of rivers as delimiters—the Guadiana was no exception—the border was enforced through several settlements which were founded or reoccupied and given privileges in order to inhibit population flows. These flows consisted both of outflows from conflictive and economically poor territories and flows between the two sides of the river (to prevent enemies crossing). It is possible to explain the existence of small towns opposite each other along the Portuguese–Spanish border (e.g., Castro Marim/Ayamonte and Alcoutim/Sanlúcar de Guadiana), as well as borderland fortifications, from this perspective, in addition to the various interactions that took place between the two sides. State actions were the determinant for organizing the territory but, according to the “border paradox” (cf. van der Vleuten & Feys 2016), people draw different and unofficial mental maps and create time-space relations that are different from those conceived by states. In other words, the communities that shared those territories—and a sense of remoteness as peripheries of national jurisdictions—often created different ways of living bordering processes, independently from interstate relations.

Sanlúcar de Guadiana and Alcoutim are telling examples of this paradox. The examination of several documents written between the 15th and 18th centuries reveals that participation in local ceremonies was not incompatible with episodes of raids (Carriazo Rubio 1998; Cosme & Varandas 2010: 76-90; Hernández-Ramírez & Brito



Figure 5. Alcoutim and Sanlúcar de Guadiana viewed from the fortress of San Marcos (Sanlúcar de Guadiana, Spain). Source: authors’ own photo.

2022). Notwithstanding, at least two centuries of (often coercive) control by the two Iberian states between the 18th and the 20th centuries shaped separate identities, ways of life, and a perception of “otherness” (see Hernández-Ramírez & Brito 2022). For example, the modern Portuguese monopoly on fishing rights has resulted in the importance of fish in Alcoutim’s traditional cuisine and its absence in Sanlúcar (ibid.). Alcoutim–Sanlúcar could thus be a “phantom border” that leaves local communities at a standstill in a (state) time that no longer exists, for the sake of cross-border commercial flows. However, a “smuggling festival” is organized annually, with the bridge providing a connection between the communities on both sides of the river and recalling the times when smugglers crossed the Guadiana before the Schengen Agreement (cf. Albuquerque et al. 2022). In addition, the data provided by Hernández-Ramírez and Brito show that border crossing was a social phenomenon, with doctors and even priests working on both sides of the river, unlike, say, farmers (2022, 80–81). The physical proximity (about 200 meters) of the two towns (see Figure 5) is, however, inconsequential, and both still represent the existence of two different countries (along with their respective differences in time zones: Portugal is in GMT and Spain in CET), two different languages, and separate identities that live “back-to-back”, as Hernández-Ramírez and Brito state in the title of their article (2022). As a result, they cannot be considered as a single unit of analysis, a point that has been made recently (Albuquerque & García Fernández 2022; for this question, see also the works of Asiwaju, as quoted in Baud & van Schendel 1997, 216).

Back at the river’s mouth, Vila Real de Santo António was founded in 1774 on the opposite bank of the river from Ayamonte, and not far from Castro Marim (Figure 1), near a former fishing village called Arenilha.² The latter was destroyed by rising sea levels and is now submerged (cf. Oliveira [1908] 1997, 71–72; Cavaco 1995; 1997). The new village of Vila Real de Santo António followed an Enlightenment-type urbanism, with a Hypodamic town plan (for an overview, see Correia 1997) designed to control smuggling, protect the state’s territory and resource exploitation rights on the border, facilitate industrial activities there (mostly related to fishing), and show opulence (Cavaco 1997, 29–30; cf. Pessanha 2021). One of the most interesting features of this landmark town is the way it attracted, immediately after its founding, people from the Portuguese Algarve and other villages, as well as from the Spanish provinces of Catalonia, Galicia, and Andalusia, among others (Cavaco 1997, 31–34). Consequently, Vila Real de Santo António is a visible trace of a new self-perception of the sovereignty of the state, which was also reflected in cartographic production (cf. Albuquerque & García Fernández 2022). Moreover, in this period, Castro Marim lost its geostrategic relevance (Correia [1908] 1997, 78), while Vila Real de Santo António was rising in prominence as an industrial port.

Later, mining activities attracted foreign investment from France (1854–1859; 1968–1984) and England (1859–1968)—as well as people—to the region (Custódio 2013). Although its construction was not aimed at cross-border relations, the São Domingos copper mine, along with the fluvial port of Pomarão and the 18 kilometer-long railway that connected both sites, constituted an ephemeral—and the only—mark of industrialization within the rural Portuguese hinterland of the Guadiana River. Pomarão is a small village located at the very end of the section of the Guadiana that separates Portugal and Spain (Figure 1) and was a busy shipping port that communicated with Vila Real de Santo António and from there with other destinations (Barreiro, near Lisbon, and England). However, this village is currently a cogent example of a settlement’s obsolescence in a regional and national context. As James Manson described it in 1865, “until 1859 only the rhythmic and monotonous sound of the oars of a barge could be heard. Today the waters of the Guadiana are agitated by the movement of hundreds of sailing ships and the propellers of steamboats [...]” (Manson 1865, 9, translated by the authors). In fact, the structures visible today are tangible traces of the passage of the industrial times and temporalities in this region, and they have become part of the local memory. This landscape has again become a silent testimony of rurality (Figure 6). Currently, only 25 people live in Pomarão, which reflects the problem of depopulation and the lack of opportunities found there.

Downstream, Puerto de la Laja had the same function and, like Pomarão, represents an interesting trace of industrialization in the territories surrounding the Lower Guadiana Basin. It was a port built by the French company Saint-Gobain in order to export the minerals from Las Herrerías and Cabeza del Pasto by river. The small village was densely populated until 1967 and was abandoned for good in 1998. Again, this is a case of industrial heritage that constitutes what Reinhart Koselleck called “layers of time” (Barndt 2010). The existence of these villages was not sustainable,



Figure 6: Pomarão. Source: authors’ own photo.

but these traces can be used for touristic and local development purposes as, for example, São Domingos has been (inter alia, Sardinha & Craveiro 2018).

Besides these elements, the territorial organization and landscape, as they are influenced by local ways of life, are examples of borders as spaces of transition, convergence, and shared cultural expressions, but also divergences. There is no doubt that Portuguese and Spanish administrative structures differ. However, the connection between municipalities and villages in each country gave way to similar scenarios in the context of the historical processes of borderlands. These structures determined, furthermore, the evolution of these countries, especially after the integration of Portugal and Spain into the Schengen Area (cf. Márquez Domínguez et al. 2017). For example, in the so-called *raya seca* (dry line/border) north of the Guadiana and Chanza rivers, the main municipalities (Aroche in Spain and Serpa in Portugal) are located a few kilometers away from the borderline, while small settlements are scattered near areas of resource exploitation, some of them considered ‘no man’s lands’.

This distribution can also be related to continuities in terms of ecological unities and their economic exploitation. This is the case of the pastures (*dehesa* in Spanish, *montado* in Portuguese), a typical Iberian landscape shaped by traditional livestock exploitation, which is complemented by the use of other resources from forestry, hunting, and agriculture. The *Dehesa de la Contienda* is a paradigmatic example of this, as it has been a pastureland shared by the border communities of Moura (Portugal), Aroche, and Encinasola since the Middle Ages. Its use is regulated by an agreement signed in 1542 (Ramos y Orcajo 1891; Carmona Ruiz 1998). The cross-border interactions that have developed around these transnational territories, though not always peaceful, have generated an interesting tangible and intangible heritage (Bernardes et al. 2015) that can be studied and promoted.

From a bottom-up perspective, the vernacular architecture is one of the most interesting features of borderlanders’ daily lives. The architectural traditions, not to mention the construction traditions, from Southern Spain and Portugal are perfectly distinguishable in the territory, despite the inevitable mutual influences in border settlements. Some influences are restricted to details and particular elements. In this case, despite the importance of architectural types, the ways that a house is lived in and its internal space is conceived leave a mark in *longue durée* models (cf. Gómez Martínez 2017; Rosado 2022).

Other assets, such as agricultural buildings (pigsties, windmills, etc.), religious buildings (chapels, hermitages, etc.), and several structures for daily activities (water sources, wells, troughs, etc.) present similarities due to the specificity of their use. Furthermore, the military

architecture obviously goes beyond large fortifications and includes numerous defensive elements and checkpoints in a dense and dynamic border network (Pérez Macías & Carriazo Rubio 2005); these recall the life of these regions before Schengen and are an interesting part of local memories. Checkpoints, then, are a layer of bordering in the cultural landscape (Elbel 2022).

The historicity and the heritage values of the Portuguese–Spanish border are replicated on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean—that is, in the limits between the former territories of the Spanish and Portuguese colonies. This is precisely what confers a global character to the Iberian borders and bordering processes in Europe and South America. These borders would later be disputed by the emergent South American republics for most of the 19th century. The borders between Brazil and two of its neighbouring countries, Argentina and Uruguay, can be highlighted as paradigmatic examples of the implementation of cross-border strategies oriented towards local development (Magri Díaz 2016).

Maps and descriptions of these borderlands are critical for understanding the changing nature of border relations and socio-spatial identities over centuries of interactions, especially those that take place between local communities (not to mention state relations). These interactions also have a significant impact on the construction of cultural landscapes. Iberian bordering processes crossed the ocean and were negotiated overseas. These processes occurred for the first time at the end of the 15th century (Treaty of Tordesillas) and had a critical turning point at the middle of the 18th century (Treaties of Madrid, 1750, and San Ildefonso, 1777) with the help of scientific cartography. Hence, changes in territoriality in Brazil and its neighbouring countries were crucial for the development of unique cultural expressions—both tangible and intangible—within their borders. One of these features is the “Portuñol” spoken in different parts of South America, especially near the border between Uruguay and Brazil, which is a consequence of the interactions fostered by bordering negotiations (Sturza 2019; Albertoni 2019).³ Border cities were also disputed and were controlled in some periods by Spain and in others by Portugal, leaving several traces in architecture and even ways of life.

Again, the most visible and known elements are defensive facilities, some of them coeval with their Iberian counterparts. It is noteworthy that several fortified settlements were built in territories that had not been delimited at that time. This is the case for the Colonia del Sacramento (designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1995: World Heritage Centre 1995) and Montevideo (both in Uruguay), where there is an interesting confluence of architectural, urbanistic, and artistic features that are a paradoxical consequence of sometimes-conflicting interactions between the

colonial powers (e.g., Luque Azcona 2007). Moreover, other buildings are true border bastions, like the fortresses of Santa Teresa, San Miguel, and Santa Tecla in Uruguay (Otero & Álvarez Massini 2016). The Jesuitic Missions of the Guarani can be added to this list because they are distributed along the borders of Paraguay, Argentina, and Brazil, and left behind tangible traces of territorialization and territorialities of the Iberian states in the South American interior, as well as traces of conflicts arising from border demarcations throughout the 18th century (Maeder & Gutiérrez 2009). Their historical, artistic, and landscape value, as well as their uniqueness as transnational cultural assets, led to their enlistment as World Heritage sites (World Heritage Centre 1984). These buildings carry meanings and memories of a transition between territorialities and time perceptions. They represent the way outsiders impose new obstacles on resident communities, new forms of organization, and new rules for movement into and within territories. Now, these elements are part of a process of resignification.

Border landscapes consequently have several vestiges of historical construction of territories and territorialities, as well as of their avatars. Some of them are obviously recognizable, while others, like ways of life and practices, are not so self-evident. Both these types of features represent the nature of these territories and the paradoxes of cross-border relations as highly fluid and dynamic. Local initiatives and strategies are frequently superimposed on state actions in these remote locations (Rodríguez Miranda 2010; Benedetti 2014). Over the course of the last 200 years, towns have grown on or near these borders and have developed into hubs of active contact, regardless of the political conditions that led to their inception.

Similar conditions can be found on the Portuguese–Spanish border, but in this instance the “twin cities” that concentrate most of the economic activity—Vila Real de Santo António/Ayamonte and Valença do Minho/Tui (see, respectively, Lois & Carballo 2015; Márquez Domínguez 2010–2012)—are situated on the estuaries of two significant rivers and are close to the coast. In South America, Urugaiana (Brazil)/Paso de los Libres (Argentina), and Artigas (Uruguay)/Quaraí (Brazil), for example (cf. Carneiro 2019), are currently linked by international bridges. However, other towns, like Rivera/Santana do Livramento, Chuy/Chuí, and Aceguá/Aceguá are located on “dry boundary lines” along the current limits of Uruguay and Brazil. In these cases, an avenue runs parallel to the international borders (Figure 2) (see Clemente Batalla & Hernández Nilson 2019). These “binational agglomerations” (Benedetti 2014, 36) are distinguished primarily by their commercial dynamism, which contrasts with their peripheral position and reduced economic potential.

The similarities between the processes and cultural expressions on both sides of the Atlantic can be part of

a stimulating avenue of research for the examination of temporalities in borderlands and bordering (for global history, see Albuquerque & García Fernández 2022). Bordering processes led not only to the construction of defence facilities, unique landscapes, and similar phenomena, but also to the development of hybrid languages (see next section).

Heritage, Borderscapes, and Timescapes in the Interpretation of Borderlands

The cases mentioned above lead to the conclusion that bordering, rebordering, and debordering operations leave a variety of traces, as did human settlement prior to these processes. This makes their interpretation more complex and stimulating. There are several types of traces left by centuries of cultural interaction on territories that correspond to political borders today, and which are accessible through archaeology. Their study can shed some light on the cycles of human occupation in these territories, especially on when natural elements such as navigable rivers (like the Guadiana, or the Minho/Miño River at the northern end of the Spanish-Portuguese border, or the Uruguay River in the South American case) were used as border markers. Archaeology can provide a multi-temporal and layer-based interpretation of a settlement in its regional and international context (Mértola and Castro Marim, for example, are notable examples of sites that were occupied for commercial purposes during the Iron Age and Roman era). This is essential for understanding the Guadiana River as a centre and a waterway that connected this region to the global networks of the Mediterranean and the Atlantic in antiquity (Albuquerque & García Fernández 2022). In addition, archaeological examination is critical for a better, though not always complete, understanding of how people in the past experienced that landscape before and after its use as border.

On the other hand, a thorough examination of medieval and modern documents can provide information about the microhistories of border contexts and pave the way for the characterization of the social and cultural relations that usually take place in different border contexts, as well as that of the processes that take place in Iberia and South America.

Anthropology has also contributed to the understanding of local perceptions of borders (see Hernández-Ramírez & Brito, 2022). For example, the so-called *povos promiscuos* ('promiscuous villages') and *coutos mistos* (effectively, microstates) in northern Portugal and southern Galicia (Spain) are telling examples of the chameleon-like relations and identities in border territories, as well as of the problems faced by authorities in trying to control local fluxes and illegal activities. In these small villages, the same house could have two doors, one in Spain and the other in Portugal, which

prevented the intervention of local authorities. The 'others' were, in this case, law agents, and people created a particular and unique sense of belonging to a hybrid system more than to a particular country (Kavanagh 2000; Sidaway 2002). This undefined situation ended with the Treaty of Boundaries signed in Lisbon (1864), whereafter the border was slightly displaced some hundred meters north and the villages were integrated into Portuguese territory. However, this action did not prevent smuggling in these communities and did not affect local complicities.

Cross-border interactions and interconnections were also determining factors in the formation of hybrid languages or dialects, such as Oliventine Portuguese (Olivenza, Spain), Mirandese (Miranda do Douro, north-eastern Portugal), *Barranquenho* (Barrancos, southern Portugal), and *Portuñol* (Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina). The first three are on the brink of disappearing because of abandonment and ageing population issues (i.e., fewer living people speak these dialects). On the other hand, scholars are trying to include *Portuñol* in the World Heritage List, but there are several political and cultural obstacles to doing so, such as the identification of "authentic" (vernacular) *Portuñol* when it is almost entirely restricted to spontaneous speech and has no defined rules (Barrios 2018; Sturza 2019; Albertoni 2019). Notwithstanding, the mixed parentage between the Portuguese and Spanish languages in these territories can be interpreted in a scholarly way as an intangible trace of interwoven histories promoted by the avatars of bordering processes in Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina (for example, Spanish territories that were later integrated into Portuguese territory and vice versa) or even of the aforementioned Jesuit missions (Lipski 2017).

The popular image of this language crossover, however, is not always so enthusiastic, which can be a springboard for further discussion on the construction of memories around these phenomena. *Portuñol*, for some reason, is often used as a pejorative term, a symbol of cultural symbiosis or a distortion of national standard languages, as it is spoken by uninstructed individuals (Barrios 2018 provides an insightful perspective). Furthermore, disputes about who has the right to propose and receive material benefit from it have arisen as a result of the guidelines established by UNESCO's directives. Only speakers of *Portuñol* as their mother tongue are allowed to conduct these activities, and locals are not interested in doing so. Moreover, it is challenging to identify the most authentic form of *Portuñol* because, as mentioned above, it has no fixed rules (Albertoni 2021).

The cultural heritage of borderlands represents a myriad of local perceptions on bordering, as well as memories of the past and perceptions of time. Borders are also made of memories, as Alena Pfofer recently stated in regard to the Russian-Estonian borderland (Pfofer 2022). It is undeniable that social and cultural

interactions and practices in borderlands are inextricably linked to state intervention, but the state is not the only entity that sets the agenda and it is not the only heritage-maker. From a bottom-up perspective, there are several traces of the social processes that take place in these territories and configure different meanings of border life (gastronomy, architecture, language, etc.). The examination and interpretation of this cultural heritage does not need to defend the existence of cultural continuity, lifelong separations or complicities, or even linear times within historical narratives. However, it can promote a multi-scale analysis of territorialities and temporalities with a focus on the local perspectives.

Notwithstanding, one may ask which assets can be enhanced in these contexts. As is well known, more prominence is given to defensive structures that recall long or short periods of conflictive or mistrustful relationships between states (cf. Albuquerque 2023). There are several examples along the Portuguese–Spanish border that could illustrate the diversity of local perceptions and memories about social and cultural interactions. For example, people often recall smuggling, as well as border-crossings in search of towels and cotton bed sheets (for Spanish visitors to Portugal) or sweets (Portuguese visitors to Spain). It is worth noting that several border villages, thanks to this situation, were bustling marketplaces, in contrast to their surroundings. Now, especially in the rural interior, they are living traces of an outdated internally bordered Europe. People no longer need to stop or wait to cross the border, but the locals seem to have a different perception of time—that is, they still live in a borderland (time) that is no longer there and that has no geopolitical relevance in the global (time) context, in contrast to coastal areas and big cities.

These statements can lead to the issue of a temporality-based heritage interpretation. In 1957, Freeman Tilden outlined six principles of heritage interpretation that

can be useful for a discussion about border heritage assets, three of which are especially relevant. The first (I) postulates that “interpretation that does not somehow relate what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile” (Tilden 1977, 9). The second of these three (IV) defends that the “chief aim of interpretation is not instruction, but provocation” (Tilden 1977, 9). Lastly, the third (V) is related to the way heritage should be presented: “Interpretation should aim to present a whole rather than a part and must address itself to the whole man rather than any phase” (Tilden 1977, 9). All of these are means to discuss a topic that is critical for our understanding of bordering processes and heritage, namely the authenticity of both assets and experiences from the point of view of cultural tourism. In other words, one may ask what the tourist may be looking for when visiting a borderland and what the locals can offer them.

As Gelbman and Timothy stated, as “landscapes of memory”, “borderlines embody human reflections of socio-political values and attract visitors fascinated by the limits themselves or what lies across them” (2010, 240). The images of rupture or interface that characterize ‘state time’ perceptions often dominate discourses and, consequently, expectations regarding border-crossings or being present in places where they are prohibited. The contrast between the perception of time by an outsider and the viewpoint of locals may be a key element in future research on temporalities. Nonetheless, the idea of crossing the border in an intra-European borderland can be somewhat of a staged authenticity (cf. MacCannell 1973), which is particularly interesting in the Iberian Peninsula because of the use of GMT in Portugal and CET in Spain—a feature that is explored in a novel way by Limitezero, a company that promotes zip line trips between Sanlúcar de Guadiana in Spain and Alcoutim in Portugal (Figure 7). If one starts this roughly 30-second trip at 4 p.m., one arrives at the other end at 3 p.m.

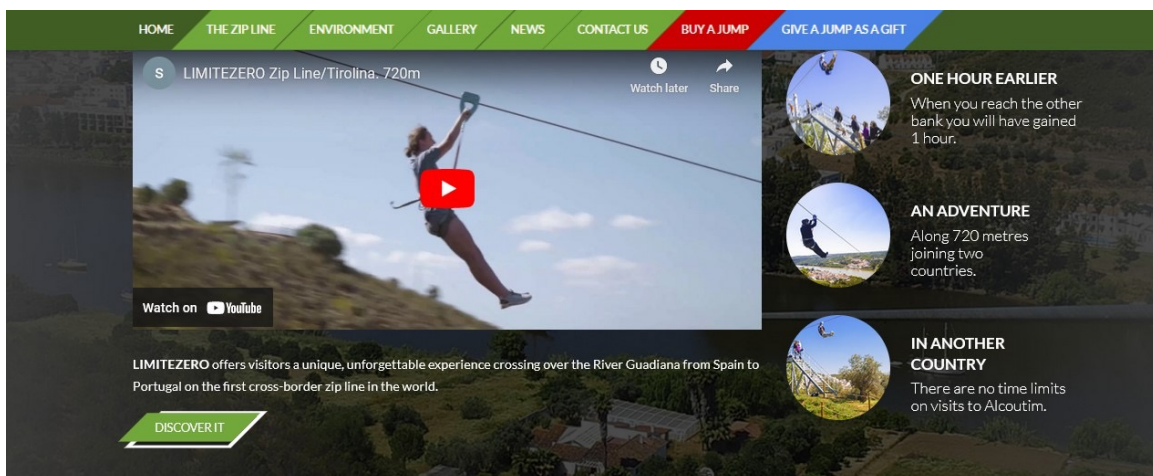


Figure 7: Screenshot of Limitezero publicity for their “cross-border zip line”. Source: www.limitezero.com/en/.

However, as stressed in this article, bordering processes, or the 'life cycles' of territorial limits, have left different marks on the physical and/or cultural landscape. Intra-European Schengen borders are no exception, and, in the case of the Iberian Peninsula, there are various old vestiges that concomitantly materialize conflicting or mistrustful interactions between governments, as well as complicities between local communities, facilitated by these territorial delimitations. Which one of these features could prevail as a touristic attraction? It is not an easy task to, on the one hand, promote knowledge of the complex history of border contexts that have had several manifestations of hostility and, on the other hand, convey a message characterized by proximity and mutual influences reflected mostly in intangible heritage.

It would then be necessary to balance perceptions of the past with expectations for the future or, in other words, to overcome incompatibilities between the contrast desired by the tourist in peripheral areas and the daily lives of local people (see Butler 2006). It is important to remember that "the transformation of a border into a 'museumified' space converts it into an area of memory" (Gelbman & Timothy 2010, 255; cf. Albuquerque 2023) that can be examined and preserved. But societies are permanently changing and cannot be intentionally stuck in the past. Similarly, local identities cannot be subject to a commercial interest that would inevitably affect their authenticity. However, these communities, as well as their memories, are on the cusp of disappearing, as are the traces of their long-term cultural interactions. Thus, one of the main questions in heritage enhancement is in how it is possible to follow the idea of 'safeguarding without freezing' defended by UNESCO when the potential defenders and beneficiaries are leaving these territories for big cities and capitals. On the other hand, it is equally critical to consider what message might be conveyed regarding borderscapes and local memories, territorialities, and temporalities.

Concluding Remarks

My village is called Villanueva, but it should be called Villamuerta, because it is a dead village. I have heard that in the past it had boom times, but today it is in decline. The young people have been leaving and the village has become almost empty (authors' translation).

— José María Vaz de Soto, *El infierno y la brisa*
(quoted by Pintado and Barrenechea 1972)

The examination of border temporalities is often focused on territories where the borders separate countries and civilizational/developmental models or, to put it differently, mark East–West or North–South dichotomies on both sides. These extreme situations are far more interesting in these territories than in the Iberian Peninsula or even South America, since the latter shared territories do not have such evident

differences between them, and borders only separate legal systems. In the latter cases, both territories can be considered as peripheries of the respective countries and, consequently, they share the same conditions of marginality and underdevelopment. That is why the issue of mobility (and hence the perception of time by those who cross the borders) is not so relevant in this discussion, except for the understanding of the impact of the 'Schengen effect' on local communities in the Iberian case, and the way they were excluded and became more isolated after the abolition of border controls and the improvement of road networks that connected big cities.

For example, at the start of the 1970s, Antonio Pintado and Eduardo Barrenechea undertook a sort of 'time travel' along the boundaries of Portugal and Spain, and they described border communities as examples of a 'living past' or people stuck in time without participating in the development of coastal territories or other big towns. Fifty years ago, as the text above describes, there were few viable options and people were forced to migrate. This loss of population continues, as illustrated by recent studies on demography (Naranjo Gómez et al. 2021), which is a symptom of the obsolescence of these villages in regional, national, and global contexts. This situation drastically affects the knowledge and preservation of local memories. The examination of the perception of time by those who live on borders, or near a border is, in this context, an interesting avenue for research. Outside these territories, the future seems brighter and more promising, which contrasts with the obsolescence of the present and the absence of future perspectives for locals.

From the point of view of memories and so-called memory sites (Nora 1989; Elbel 2022), the historical or diachronic perspective is crucial in the study of borders that were defined between the 13th (in the Iberian Peninsula) and 19th (in South America) centuries. Recent tangible heritage—such as checkpoints and border-crossing markers—is still "young" enough to be sufficiently valued, and other assets are too "old" to be remembered in the local narratives. The former can have symbolic and cultural meaning for locals (or some of them), while the latter have left a considerable imprint on the historical/cultural landscape (in the form of villages, fortresses, etc.) as expressions of interstate relations or changes in dominion (e.g., in South America).⁴ From the perspective of linguistics, beyond official mixed dialects such as *Barranquenho* and *Português Oliventino*, there are several expressions that are being studied and compiled in an 'oral corpus' (see the Frontespo project) of the Iberian Peninsula, as they will otherwise disappear on the death of the local people who still speak it. Language can be seen as an intangible mark of formerly unofficial social relationships and shared identities in a dynamic that was lost with the Schengen Agreement. On the other side of the Atlantic, as shown above, several groups

are trying to enhance and preserve *Portuñol* as a symbol of a shared past and, consequently, a shared future. However, the greatest problems lie in two issues specifically: authenticity and the groups or individuals that set the agenda.

Nevertheless, research on the past and the historicity of borders can shed some light on the long-term coexistence, and ensuing interpretation, of heritage formed by centuries of interactions, interconnections, and mutual influences. Historians, archaeologists, anthropologists, geographers, etc., can all be helpful in the construction of narratives about a rich past that, if used as a local economic resource, can partially overcome the lack of hope for the future in rural, peripheral, marginal, and depressed areas.

Endnotes

- 1 The Christian Kingdom of Castile was created between the 9th and 10th centuries in the context of the so-called Reconquest (Reconquista in Spanish and Portuguese). For an overview, see Ortega Cervigón 2015.
- 2 This place name is mentioned in Duarte d'Armas's depiction of Castro Marim in 1509.
- 3 In Portugal and Spain, *Portuñol* refers to a grammatically incorrect way of speaking Spanish or Portuguese. On the other hand, it is considered a language, though unofficial, in Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina.
- 4 An interesting case study which has not been examined here in detail is Olivenza/Olivença. It was a Portuguese town in several periods (1297–1657, 1668–1801) and is still claimed by several sectors of Portuguese society. The Treaty of Lisboa (1864) determined that it should be Portuguese but it is still in Spanish territory. As in several cities on the border between Brazil and Uruguay (e.g., Montevideo), there are mixed expressions of both cultures in the architecture of public and religious buildings. In Olivenza, for example, people can have dual citizenship, and the former Portuguese street names coexist with the Spanish ones as a reminder of a rich hybrid inheritance.

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