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Mummy
Ansprüche

until the coming of the Europeans in the 1520s. In ancient Egypt, the mummies, equipped with all the necessities for the after-life, remained in their tombs, perhaps visited at intervals by members of their families who might come to feast with them or to make offerings. Peruvian mummies by contrast had an altogether livelier after-life. Preserved in caves or on high mountains, wrapped in their gaily coloured blankets made of cotton or alpaca wool, they would be taken out by their descendants on special occasions, paraded through the streets, and for a time brought back, almost as returning VIPs, into a society of which they were still very much a part. There they had a continuing, and significant, role to play in the affairs of state. First, in Jago Cooper's words, they established the credentials of the ruling class: *x Herkunft Legitimation*

To have your distinguished ancestor with you at the table during an important meeting was to proclaim your lineage and your ancestry: descent from them by direct bloodline was the basis of your own claim to power. You were heir not just to that person, but to their wisdom, power and authority. That continuing connection to ancestral knowledge was a fundamental building block of elites within the Inca Empire, where leaders would consult their ancestors directly as they made important political decisions.

x Herkunft
The role of the mummies thus went far beyond merely demonstrating the status of their descendants. Sitting among the living, their experience and judgement could be invoked. Jago Cooper describes how they also added, by their very presence, a quite different understanding of the dimension of time:

For us, when our ancestors die they are in the past and our descendants are in the future. For the Inca and many cultures of the Americas, the thinking was – and often still is – fundamentally different. For them all time is together: the present, future and past exist concurrently, are always running in parallel, and it is possible, with skill, or sometimes in a trance, to move between the

gleichzeitigkeit

different times, and to draw on the insights that all three can offer. The mummy bundles of the ancestors would be brought into the room to contribute the wisdom of the past to the conversation. But also in the room, and part of the debate, would be the spirits of descendants not yet born. They too would help shape political decisions, in which they had such a large stake. *give form to*

It is as though the bodies of Gladstone and Disraeli were occasionally brought out to sit round the Cabinet table in London, to remind ministers of both the weight of history and the claims of the future. Bringing the mummy bundles from the tomb to the council chamber gave uniquely physical expression to a compelling political idea – one best articulated not by a scholar of Peruvian history, but by the eighteenth-century political theorist Edmund Burke, in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*: 'Society is ... a partnership in every virtue, and in all perfection. As the ends of such a partnership cannot be obtained in many generations, it becomes a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born.' Burke's idea would have resonated as strongly with pre-Reformation Europeans as with pre-Columbian Peruvians.

Ansprüche
x Tugend
Ziele
Zwecke

It is therefore all the more surprising that this Peruvian practice of close contact with the bodies of the dead so deeply disconcerted the Spaniards when they encountered it. The Roman Catholic Mass is still celebrated every day over the physical remains of the dead. Every altar – even a portable altar-stone – should contain within it the relics of a saint, ideally of a martyr who died bearing witness to the faith. In the presence of (part of) the body of a saint the Mass will be said, and beside that physical body part worshippers will stand in prayer before God. In the Catholic church saints long dead are asked to help with every aspect of daily life, and to intercede with God for mercy on the souls of the departed. Sometimes their preserved bodies are still carried in procession,

surprised
worried