

**200 YEARS A WOMAN, 1000 YEARS A MAN:  
THE CASE OF THE MARBURG MUMMY**

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**ABSTRACT**

For 200 years, in the Museum Anatomicum of the Philipps University of Marburg (Germany), an Andean mummy is exhibited that, since its arrival in the collection, has been inventoried as a woman. This gender attribution was made based mainly on her long hair. As a recent investigation has been able to reveal, this gender assignment is incorrect, which has been confirmed by studying the grave goods. In this article, it will be shown that this attribution to the female gender is a social and cultural construction, typical of the time when the mummy arrived in Marburg. The present analysis intends to deconstruct the previous assumptions, investigating the bioanthropological and archaeological evidences.

**KEYWORDS:** Gender, mummy, Arica culture, hair

**RESUMEN**

Desde hace 200 años, en el Museum Anatomicum de la Universidad Philipps de Marburg (Alemania), se exhibe una momia andina que, desde su llegada a la colección, ha estado inventariada como mujer. Esta atribución de género se hizo basándose, principalmente, en su larga cabellera. Según ha podido revelar una reciente investigación, esta asignación de género es incorrecta, lo que se ha podido confirmar mediante el estudio del ajuar funerario. En este artículo, se mostrará que esta atribución al género femenino es una construcción social y cultural, propia de la época en que la momia llegó a Marburg. El presente análisis pretende deconstruir las anteriores suposiciones, investigando la evidencia bioantropológica y arqueológica.

**PALABRAS CLAVES:** Género. Momia. Cultura Arica. Cabello

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## RESUMO

Desde há 200 anos que o Museum Anatomicum da Universidade Philipps de Marburg (Alemanha), exhibe uma múmia andina que, desde a sua chegada à coleção, foi inventariada como mulher. Esta atribuição de género foi feita com base, principalmente, na sua longa cabeleira. De acordo com aquilo que foi revelado numa investigação recente, esta atribuição de género está incorreta, o que foi confirmado pelo estudo do enxoval funerário. Este artigo irá mostrar que esta atribuição do género feminino é uma construção social e cultural própria da época em que a múmia chegou a Marburg. A presente análise pretende desconstruir as suposições anteriores, através da investigação bioantropológica e arqueológica.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Género. Múmia. Cultura Africana. Cabelo.

## INTRODUCTION

Over the last decades there have been increased efforts in gender studies to analyze gender and diversity related role models and to put the acquired skills into practice. In recent years many good publications have appeared on gender mainstreaming and the introduction of this strategy in organizations. They illuminate historical and political developments and deal with the results of women's and gender studies, the research on masculinity, and also on the construction of stereotypes in general. Clearly, the deconstruction of traditional role models and stereotypes is underway. However, it took, and still takes, a long time for change to penetrate normative Western assumptions. This concerns not only the daily interaction in scientific communities, but also becomes visible in the stereotypical penetration of scientific work, past and present. The question arises as to whether the observations made by scientists are their own current assumptions, and to what extent value concepts and internalized role models were projected onto scientific results. As Ardren (2007, p. 3) puts it: "It is also notoriously difficult for archaeologists to step aside from their own deeply embedded identities in order to see accurately those of the culture under investigation". The following example shows how traditional gender concepts determined the interpretation of archaeological evidence, and how established western traditional role models were transferred onto past societies. In the following, the process of gender ascription will be illustrated using the example of a decontextualized mummy from Ancient Peru that belongs to the Museum Anatomicum of the Philipps University at Marburg. In 2016 the mummy was reexamined, and the analysis revealed new and unexpected insights, making it one of the first studies to do so.

Although engendered archaeology has matured well beyond initial studies (GERO, CONKEY, 1991; ARDREN, 2007), there are many examples of traditional role models still being transferred onto the archaeological evidence. Even more important existing orthodox interpretations were never reconsidered. In the case of the Marburg Mummy, it was an examination in 2016 that revealed a complete reinterpretation of the findings. A rare occurrence but not an exception. Quite a lot of other archaeological findings experiencing a reevaluation can be enumerated. There is the case of the textile production in Late Horizon Inca culture, whose production for a long time were considered to be almost exclusively associated with women, and in particular with the highly ranked *aqllakuna* or “chosen women”. This view was established by the drawings of Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala (1615) and Baltasar Jaime Martínez de Compañón (1782–1785) showing women as main producers of textiles. But they weren't. Cathy Costin (1998, p. 137) identified a lower class of adult married men as another full-time specialists and Vuka Roussakis and Lucy Salazar (1999), and John Rowe (1999) described a group of men weavers called *cumbicamayoc* who produced very refined textiles, at state level, known as *cumbi* (MARTÍNEZ, 2005, p. 50), confirming observations on Andean textile production of the present, in which men also play a greater role (GRAVELLE LECOUNT, 1990/1993, p. 72; ZORN, 2004, p. 51). Until today, there are a great number of gender ascriptions in Central Andean iconography, which need to be reconsidered. Some of them are old-fashioned: for example, the Nasca motif of “pretty faces” is interpreted as the faces of women, although some vases show actors which are clearly characterized by pretty faces wearing the dress of men (CLADOS, 2001, p. 298), which could indicate the existence of multiple gender categories in Nasca society. In a similar way the use of wigs should be reconsidered as they can be documented for the cultures of Paracas and Ica-Chincha.

However, the case of the Marburg mummy goes beyond the examples mentioned above and shows a further stage of misinterpretation as a result of gender ascription. In this case, sexing human remains was not done by anthropological research, but by an assumption of bodily attributes ascribed to a certain sex, as being typical for that sex in the time of the ascription. The Marburg mummy which has been ascribed for 200 years as a woman was indeed 1000 years a man.

## THE CONTEXT OF EXCAVATION IN THE LATE XIX CENTURY IN SOUTH AMERICA (MAIN TEXT)

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Spanish lost their hegemony over South America. Independent states were forming. At the same time, Europe's and North-America's economies were thriving due to industrialization. The natural resources of South America quickly became sought after by European traders and merchants. It was the time when private collections were formed and big museums were created in Europe and North-America, e.g. the British Museum in London (founded in 1753), the Palais du Trocadero in Paris (1878), the Museum for Völkerkunde in Berlin (1880) and the Museum for Archaeology and Anthropology in Washington D.C. (1887). All these collections, as well as universities and their respective anthropological/anatomical departments, aimed to complete their collections with archaeological artifacts and also mummies from South America. As a commissioned work, a leisure time activity, or out of personal interest these museums, private collections and entrepreneurs became interested in artifacts from pre-Columbian cultures that could be obtained easily and in large quantity from the ancient cemeteries. The vicinity of these to the big thriving coastal towns in Western South America made their exploitation worthwhile and somewhat easy. Any documentation of the excavations and more specifically burial contexts was secondary, as shown by Reiss /Stübel (1887, Plate V), that excavated the pre-Columbian cemetery near the town of Ancón and classified their objects in categories - a practice that was already heavily criticized at that time (DORSEY, 1894, p. IV). Especially typical was the "triage-on-site practice": after a hole was dug into the ground, all burial bundles were evaluated on site, whether the bundles as a whole or (parts of) their content would be worth shipping or better discarded on site.

Specimens to be sent to the respective collections in Europe and Northern America had therefore to be in a very good state of preservation when excavated, to be exemplary for the site and/or culture or extraordinarily different - thus worth the effort of shipping. More information however is lost in most cases for the mummies in collections outside of Peru. A label, naming them "Mummy from Peru" is often the only inventory information that is preserved.

This *modus operandi* of appropriation of material culture from colonized places during the 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries was harshly criticized in recent years by archaeologist and historians of archaeology because these "discoverers" didn't consider the context in which these material cultures were associated (MORO-ABADÍA, 2006).

## THE “PERUVIAN” MARBURG MUMMY

Already founded in 1527, the Philipps University of Marburg is one of Germany's oldest universities. It is now a public university of the state of Hesse. It is the home to one of Germany's most traditional medical faculties, and thus the university comprises as well, a Museum Anatomicum with an abundant collection. Among the specimens exhibited in the permanent collection there is a pre-Columbian mummy (inventory no. 1315.1.2.). Like many of its kind in other collections of that time, this mummy is presented as a partially naked individual in its showcase, as it was bereft of the burial bundle and part of its clothes. As mentioned above, this may have been done already at the excavation site, when it was evaluated for being worthy of the shipment to Europe. But unlike other mummies from South America collected at that time, this inventory information indicates the year of acquisition by the Anatomical Institute, the excavation site it was taken from, and even mentions the accompanying burial artifacts (Entry in the Chronicles of the Marburg University, financial year 1892/93, translation from German by the authors):

The Anatomical Institute received as a gift from the physiologist Rudolph Eduard Külz, who worked for the University of Marburg, a well preserved female mummy from Arica, along with a number of items that have been found with the mummy: a good quantity of larger and smaller clay pots, various other household items, yarn, fabric, spindles, several pelican eggs as well as some peculiar objects that are called “ojos de gentiles”.

Those artifacts can be found in the display compartment beneath the one containing the mummy. Mummy and artifacts are displayed together, assuming that they once belonged to the same burial context. Unfortunately, also typical of that time, there are no supporting documents that give any proof of this information given in the inventory. Likewise, the mummy's presumed provenance, Arica, in what is today Northern Chile, may be based on hearsay from the time it had entered the collection, or it might be based on information given by the collector - the source remains unknown. The donor, Physiologist Külz, however does not seem to have travelled to South America himself, but as a well-connected person in Marburg, member and sponsor of a huge variety of institutions, he may have had a contact person that facilitated the acquisition of mummy and burial artifacts, especially the donation of the former enriched anatomical collection. As of this time, no documentation concerning his purchase has been found in the museum's or university's archives.

Even though the information on the mummy is scarce, it arouses the interest of its visitors, and in 2013, again that of researchers. Then, in cooperation with the German Mummy Project, that mummy was loaned to the United States and was shown in the “Mummies of the World” exhibition in several museums in the US between February and March 2013. For that occasion, the mummy was radiocarbon dated, to 2 sigma cal AD 996-1147.<sup>6</sup> However further research was not undertaken and the mummy was sent back to Marburg. The museum, aiming for more information on the individual, entered research cooperation in 2016 with the IECIM in Madrid (the Spanish Institution for Scientific Studies on Mummies) whose results gave the individual’s identity an interesting turn.

Firstly, a detailed macroscopical investigation of the well-preserved mummy was undertaken. As typical for South American mummies, the deceased individual had been placed in a squatted position and the body tied up with rope, whose impressions are still visible on the individual’s skin. The hands were placed on top of each other in front of the chest. Textile clothes, a large cloth covering its shoulders (MBT2)<sup>7</sup>, a loincloth (MBT4) and a belt-bag (MBT1) were added, before it was placed in the burial bundle. The skin of the individual is overall very well preserved, with the exception of the face, where the decomposition had advanced, and today, on the right side, the forehead and the zygomatic bone are visible. That latter bone is decoloured in green, as is most of the face, indicating that a metallic object, probably made of copper, had once been placed here. That could have been a mask, as Scattolin et al. (2010) showed for different burials in the Andean region (see also HORTA, 2015, p. 174, for the Arica culture especially). In contact with water, stemming from humidity, decomposition, or other unknown sources, the metal corroded and left traces on the skin or the bone in the area where the skin was already missing. Overall on the skin, no traces of artificial mummification were found, as is usual for most mummies from Western South America (BEGEROCK, 2016, p. 233). If any methods were applied or not, the mummification itself was finally completed, when the individual was already in its burial bundle as is testified by the impressions on the individual’s skin, as textiles/ropes cannot leave any traces once the mummification is complete. The most remarkable feature of the mummy is its long head-hair which is very well preserved. As a hairstyle during his life or as part of the funeral preparations, it was braided into several strands that in turn were braided into each other, giving it a coherent style that even survived

<sup>6</sup> The mummy was radiocarbon dated 996-1147 cal AD (mams 15174, 555+- 33 BP, calibrated with oxcal 4.3.2 and the ShCal dataset, 2 sigma).

<sup>7</sup> Nomenclature: MBT= Mummy Marburg Textile; MBW= Mummy Marburg Wood; MBC= Mummy Marburg Ceramic; MBM= Mummy Marburg Miscellany.

crude excavation methods and transport to Europe in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. These first macroscopic observations facilitated the determination of the individual as an adult, of about 25-35 years, with male attributes. That sex determination was not only done via indicators of the head, but also very clearly confirmed by the preserved outer sexual organs. The subsequent thorough anthropological investigation with the help of a CT-scan, done in Marburg 2019, confirmed the individual to be of that age and most importantly to be definitely male (LOYNES, 2019, unpublished report).

## **200 YEARS A WOMAN**

This mummy is the only one in the Museum Anatomicum. The possibility, that another South American mummy had once been in the collection and is now replaced by the present one, seems unlikely, as the objects still presented with the mummy, in the showcase underneath, are exactly the ones described in the inventory from 1892/93 (cited above), of which the textiles and those that remained on the mummy indicate an origin from the region of Chile's North (MARTÍNEZ, 2019). Thus it seems more probable, that since the mummy had entered the Collection of Marburg's Museum Anatomicum 200 years ago, it was kept as being female, though the individual was actually male, for all of his life and death - about 1000 years already.

This "mislabelling" of the individual in the museum surprises for several reasons: in the late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries "Peruvian Mummies" were added to collections in Europe and North-America to complement them as "specimen copies" of cultural praxis in South America. One could assume that investigating the newly arrived specimen in the collection was of interest to the scientists using that type of collection in general for study. However, no anthropological investigations seem to have been carried out so far, as there are no records on previous investigations and the sex being so easily determinable. Furthermore, the mummy had been "cleaned" at some point. Even though it had been bereft of most of its textiles, some still stuck tightly to the mummy's skin, which was maybe caused by decomposition fluids. Any flaying rests of textiles were carefully cut away, but the loincloth, covering the genital area and the bag-belt were left. This cleaning could have taken place at the site of excavation, as described above, but maybe that was carried out in Marburg, in order to make the specimen more "presentable" inside its showcase in the Museum Anatomicum. Was the loincloth therefore left, where it was, in order to hinder any shocking

effects among visitors? Or for the respect of the individual? No matter where the cleaning had been carried out, it would have been an opportunity to determine the individual's sex.

Another opportunity to check it was in 2012, when the preparations for the loan for the exhibition "Mummies of the World" began and the mummy received its current support, which was formed adopting the mummy's pelvic shape. But again, the individual remained with its loincloth in place, no anthropological investigation was done and the individual kept its ascription as fixed in the inventory book, thus as being female.

As of today, it is not yet very clear, how the specimen was originally obtained by Professor Külz in 1892/93. As he most probably had not travelled to South America himself, his way of purchasing it is unknown. In general, it is quite unstudied how "ordering a mummy" was undertaken in that time. This is better studied for the compilation of skull collections (STOECKER et al. 2013), where collectors had acquaintances, they could ask to get specimens from certain areas and even catalogues to order from existed. For mummies the acquisition methods may have been similar<sup>8</sup>, thus leading to the possibility of the mummy being already offered as a female to the interested buyer(s)<sup>9</sup> and then came to Prof. Külz with that label, which was never doubted until recently.

Looking back at the list of objects that are supposed to have belonged to the mummy, they, as well, seem to have been ascribed to the gender the mummy was given: "[...] a good quantity of larger and smaller clay pots, **various other household items, yarn, fabric, spindles**, several pelican eggs" (Chronicles of the University of Marburg, financial year of 1892/93, emphasis by the authors). Already that original "compilation" of these objects seems a bit strange, to have pelican eggs among items needed for needlework, though it is not specified which objects are "household items". Until 2018 the old interpretation of the objects was kept and not doubted, as is stated on the object label on the wall behind the mummy: "[...] *In the wider find context there are undecorated clay pots and tools for textile processing as well as leftovers of fruits, seed pods, corn cobs and nuts, as*

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<sup>8</sup> A comparable case was stated in the mummy collection of the Reiss-Engelhorn-Museen in Mannheim, Germany, that had a mummy from South-America in their collection. Mummy M2 was once bought by the collector via a catalogue by the Auction house Ward. In order to complete his already existing collection of South American mummies, mostly from Peru, the collector ordered that specimen as stemming from Mexico, thus enriching the variety in his private collection. However modern research has shown that this mummy came from Ancient Peru as well (Rosendahl et al., 2010, p. 353).

<sup>9</sup> It is unknown how many intermediaries were involved in the "mummy trade" in that time period.

well as the remains of a fabric bag". That additional interpretation of some objects as "weaving tools" may have been deduced from known "weaving baskets" of the Chancay culture (Central Coast, Peru, AD 1200 - 1500), containing needles for weaving and different textile works, among them spindle whirls. As recent studies did show and this will as well, the gender ascription of social activities is in most cases only assumed, but not analyzed in detail nor proven (FALCÓ MARTÍ, 2003, p. 45-46; GERO, CONKEY, 1991, p. 4-5). But typically for the 19<sup>th</sup> century, sex determined gender specific sets of fixed tasks, especially in those social strata, that were able to purchase a mummy in that time, the nobility and middle-class. Here, females were not only asked to especially look after themselves, to become pretty decorative tokens of any household, but they also took on domestic chores, whereas males had representative functions outside, worked in business, politics, and alike. Female tasks, no matter the women being rich or poor, comprised the care of children, household management and needlework.

## 1000 YEARS A MAN

In 2018, all associated artifacts for the mummy were investigated (MARTÍNEZ ET AL., 2020) (figures 1 and 2). Around the man's hip and still *in situ*, there is a bag-belt that contains remnants of some organic element, possibly coca leaves. This cloth item was only common in the second half of the Late Intermediate Period (around AD 1200 - 1470) in the area, where the individual was presumably buried, Arica, but also in the extreme South of Peru, in the cultures of Arica and Chiribaya. The individual's shoulders once were covered with a tunic (*unku*), again typical for the Arica culture, and were worn by men and women, regardless of their age. The aforementioned loincloth was made out of a reused little square textile to contain and transport coca leaves (*inkuña*), to which two laces for tying were added. It bears a rich iconography, typical for the San Miguel-Pocoma Phase (AD 1250 - 1450) of the Arica culture (HORTA, AGÜERO, 2009). Furthermore, two combs (MBW13/14) were given to the individual. Those and the clothing seem the most personal items given to the deceased by the burying community. During that investigation, it was also possible to determine the separate textile offerings as two small ceremonial coca bags (*chuspas*, MBT5-6), and two *inkuñas* (MBT7-8), , typical for the Late Intermediate Period in what is today Northern Chile/Southern Peru (AD 1000 - 1470) (HORTA, AGÜERO, 2000; MARTÍNEZ ET AL., 2020, p. 124). The largest group of burial artifacts given to the man are nineteen ceramic vessels (MBC1-19). Most of them are miniatures of "gourds", again stemming from

the Arica culture, agreeing with the time and area, the individual is supposed to come from<sup>10</sup>. Some of these containers still held sweetcorn kernels and cobs. Also one real gourd was given to the deceased. As the archaeological record from pre-Columbian cultures indicates, especially in that area, NONE of the aforementioned objects are typical for a male or female.

The same is true for “weaving tools”, in this case two spindles with remains of a cotton thread that are found in graves of both sexes. The archaeological record did show that weaving and spinning were performed by men and women alike in pre-Columbian times (MARTÍNEZ, 2005, pp. 57-73). The thorough investigation of especially the objects in Marburg labelled as household items or weaving tools in the 19<sup>th</sup> or 21<sup>st</sup> century respectively, did however show the professional occupation the individual may have had in life, as fisherman or in more general terms that of an individual with an occupation valuable in a fishing community. Firstly, especially the kind of spindles (MBM4a, b) present here, was quite a common burial gift in the Arica culture, for male burials. According to Horta, this object may have been used by fishermen to spin cotton threads later knotted into fishing lines (2015, p. 363). Still today, the longer one of the two spindles has remnants of pink cotton thread on it, which is rolled up at the junction of the stick with the whorl. Any (further) yarn, mentioned in the inventory book, is missing today.

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<sup>10</sup> Examples of ceramics from the Arica culture, Late Intermediate Period, among them similar to those of the Marburg Mummy: <https://issuu.com/dirac/docs/guia-de-sala-chile-antes-de-chile/13>. Examples of ceramics of the non-decorated type, Arica culture, Late Intermediate Period, in Uribe (1999, p. 219, Figura 7). Example of "gourd" or decorated "coconut" container, Arica culture, Late Intermediate Period see <http://chileprecolombino.cl/coleccion/ recipiente-policromo-coquito/>



**FIGURES 1 AND 2:** Marburg mummy's associated artifacts. Another big group of burial artifacts are wooden harpoon heads (MBW1-4), which formerly were interpreted as “weaving tools” (HORTA, 2015, p. 144) (figure 3).



**FIGURE 3:** Formerly interpreted as weaving tools, these wooden objects are harpoon shafts.

Today, the stone knife at the top is lost, but in two cases the leather strap, once holding them in place, is still preserved<sup>11</sup>. Hunting with a harpoon enables catching bigger prey, like sea lions or whales, thus suggesting it was a rather male occupation, as Ponce et

<sup>11</sup> MBW1-4 Examples of harpoon heads from the Arica culture, Late Intermediate Period, see <http://www.precolombino.cl/exposiciones/exposiciones-temporales/los-changos-y-sus-ancestros/vivir/la-conquista-del-mar/>

al. (2008, pp. 104-105) did show for Argentinean communities. In conformity with the interpretation of these burial artifacts belonging to a fisherman is also the basket made of plant fibre (*capacho*, MBW15), which served not to hold household items, nor the today missing yarn or any tools for needlework, as is proven already by his unusual form. Being a common burial artifact, it is in most cases, like the one here, a miniature replica of a basket used to transport objects on the back of people, on long-distance routes that linked the coast with the interior valleys of the Andean regions (HORTA, 2015, p. 146). Another tool, probably used in fishing too, is MBM5, a round object, made of a cork-like material and painted in red. Uses as a vessel stopper or as "dice" of a "forgotten pre-Hispanic game" were discussed, but as those objects, made of wood, painted red and of a standardized size, were found quite often as burial goods, Horta suggests a use as floats for fishing lines (HORTA, 2015, pp.145 and 438), which supports the authors' theory on the individual's occupation during his lifetime. The object most determining the origin of the mummified individual as coming from a fishing community is the rather peculiar stick, painted with red stripes, a three-mastered raft replica *en miniature* (MBW16), (HORTA, 2015, p. 119)<sup>12</sup>.

Burial items in general, were tokens chosen by the burying community for the deceased. They may have been used by the individual during his/her lifetime, may represent its social status in life or the status the society has wished the individual to obtain later in life or death. His tools indicate his origin in a fishing community but if he himself was involved in fishing remains unclear. His status was elevated as the textile and coca offerings indicate. The community he once lived in had access to long distance trade, thus obtaining objects made with camelid fibre. Maybe sea products were the trading token they could offer in return.

The concluded high status of the individual becomes even more important to discuss, as the recent CT-scan (done in Marburg 2019) did reveal, that the man had died after being stabbed with a knife-like object in the back (LOYNES, 2019, unpublished report). But moreover, as this study was able to demonstrate gender and sex were defined in this burial – and misinterpreted or simply not observed when the mummy was excavated centuries later, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century AD.

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<sup>12</sup> As an example of a three-mastered raft with the characteristic decoration in transverse stripes of red paint.  
<http://chileprecolombino.cl/arte/piezas-selectas/la-balsa-de-tres-palos/> last accessed 15.05.2020

## CLOTHES MAKE THE MAN- AND IN THIS CASE HIS HAIR!

In many contributions on engendered archaeology the term "gender" is used to describe the concept of social, socially constructed (thus, dominantly positioned) side of the sex of a person, in contrast on their biological sex and sexual desire or the sexuality of life. The binary view or system of sex/gender is a cultural construct and this term was firstly used by Gayle Rubin in 1975, where she describe this system like a set of agreements for which the society transforms the biological sexuality in products of the human activity (GÓMEZ SUÁREZ, 2009). The conceptual differentiation enables the study of social processes that influence gender roles, construct gender identities and gender relations and thus act as arrangement schemes for gender-specific structuring and hierarchization of everyday life (VON BARGEN/ BLICKHÄUSER, 2009, p. 12). A likely explanation for that sex and gender ascription might be due to the mummy's most prominent feature well preserved until today, which is its abundant hair, pleated in such an elaborate way (Figure 4).



**FIGURE 4:** The mummy's most prominent feature is the elaborate hairstyle.

When the specimen was excavated in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was a time when Latin America's middle and upper class were dominated and thus highly influenced by Europe and especially its fashion trends. As well, the mummy was purchased by a European, for the European audience. Therefore, without any anthropological determination, it may have been

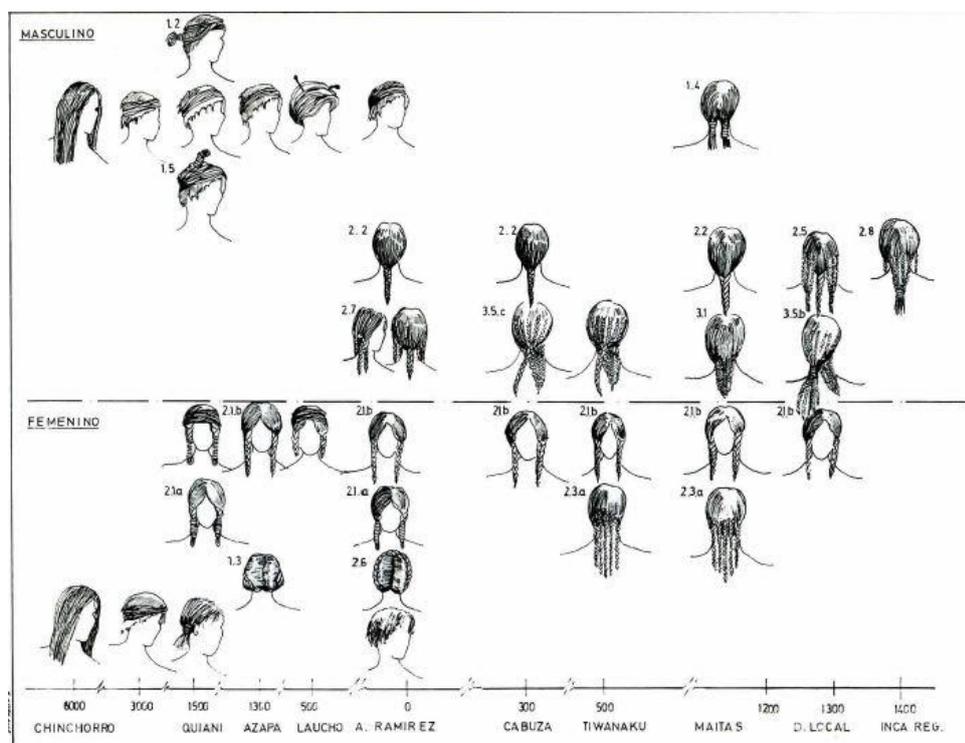
interpreted according to its “outer features”, by European cultural conceptions, where long, elaborately braided hair was typical for women. Such attributions are social markers that each culture decides to give (MARTÍN, 2006, p. 45). Braids and long hair in that time actually had only recently changed from being formerly typical for men to being a characteristic for women in most part of the world. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a braid, no matter if in its natural form or as a wig, still was an attribute to indicate the status of a man, especially as socially elevated figure. In the French Revolution, braids were cut off, as they were now regarded as symbols for the former, now old society with its very definite social distinction that was fought for to disappear. In Prussia however the male long braided tail survived longer, until 1807, when it was abolished, as being hindering in war encounters. “To cut the old braid off” became a slogan for getting rid of outdated customs, practices and (social/political) beliefs. Goethe, as well as enlightened fellows of his time, already wore their (natural) hair open, the “cool head of the Enlightenment” rejected wigs and “ballast” such as tightly woven braids. Now, the braid and its more abundant forms of pleating long hair became an only female attribute. When the mummy was inventoried in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, previous perceptions of the braid remained unconsidered and –as it seems so far- the outer attribute marked the determination of the individual’s sex (Figure 5).



**FIGURE 5:** Newspaper adverts at the time of the mummy’s shipment to Europe do show women as leading figures for hair tonics<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> To the right: *El Comercio*, 16.3.1891, p: 6. To the left: <https://observandoelparaiso.wordpress.com/2018/01/03/el-vigor-del-cabello-del-dr-ayer-p141/>

However, in the time the individual had lived and died, around 1000 AD especially the styling of his abundant hair served as a marker for the male sex. As Arriaza et al. (1986, p. 365, Plate2) were able to demonstrate in their study of hair styles on mummies from that region, the way the braids are pleated and connected to each other, were typical for a male individual (Figure 6).



**FIGURE 6:** The Marburg Mummy bears hairstyle 3.5c (ARRIAZA ET AL., 1986, p. 365, Plate2).

Such a “normed” way to wear one’s hair, does not only imply a marking of sex, well visible to others, but comes presumably with a set of markers for the individual’s social status, stage of life and the occasion for which it was worn. Here, the individual is from a burial context, as are all other mummies from Arriaza et al.’s study. A daily life hairstyle might therefore be “invisible” to the archaeological record, as are personal preferences and occasions.

Interestingly, the first cutting of hair already received special attention. As Spanish chroniclers reported, the moment an Inca’s hair was cut for the first time, was of utmost importance and the very occasion for a big feast: “*Rutuchico* is the ceremony when a child reaches the age of one year, from *rutuni*, to cut or shear. It receives the name which it

retains until the *Huarachicu* if a boy, and until the *Quicu-chicuy*, if a girl. They then receive the names they retain until death. At the *Rutuchicu* the child was “shorn” (SARMIENTO, 1907[1572], p. 48, citing MOLINA, 1943 [ca. 1575], p. 53). That ritual must not have been performed only among the upper-class Inca, but most probably stems from older traditions. And even in “remote areas”, if seen from the Incan capital Cuzco, it may have been performed. The occasion is still of importance today. Among the Quichua-speaking Indigenous communities of Central and Northern Ecuador for example, a boy’s hair is cut for the first time at the age a boy goes off to school. That late first cutting of the hair shall give it strength and therefore make the boy a strong man. Girl’s hair does not receive that attention. And still today the young man’s hair is remarkably thicker than the girl’s of the same age. This, the indigenous Ecuadorians explain, is due to the late cutting of the hair of the boys.

## **DISCUSSION**

The case of the Marburg mummy confirms, once again, that the determination of biological sex and an appropriate contextualization of the burial and the objects associated with the individual are fundamental for a correct interpretation regarding the role that the individual could have had in society which belonged. A similar deduction occurred in the case of the mummy of Cerro El Plomo, in Santiago of Chile, when it was discovered in 1954 and considered, in the first instance, as an “Inca princess” because of its long hair and complex braided hairstyle, but that, later from the bioanthropological analysis of Grete Mostny, it was determined as a male infant (MOSTNY, 1957-1959). In this context, gender archeology helps us analyze, from another perspective, this type of decontextualized findings. The erroneous identification of the Marburg mummy, as female, has been the product of what Grasseni calls expert vision, “one learns to see culturally” (GRASSENI, 2011, p. 23). That is, we learn from what is usually taken for granted in our society, without thinking whether it is true or not. For this reason, the western societies of the 19th century did not question, at any time, that a mummy with long, braided hair could be something other than a woman. After 200 years of erroneous attribution of gender, the true identity of the mummy was revealed thanks to a simple action: lifting a textile piece to be able to examine, directly, the pelvic area. The CT scan images definitively confirmed that the mummy in question was not a woman, as had long been assumed, but rather a man.

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