



## 3rd floor – TIME

### The Taming of Time

***People use calendars to measure long periods of time. They orientate themselves according to the stars and the moon. Calendars have been around for many thousands of years.***

***With their help, people knew when animals were passing by again on their migration and could plan their hunts. Or determine when they had to sow their crops. Rulers tried to exercise their power with calendars and control the time of their subjects.***

***Do you recognise the two scales on the stone calendar from the Aztecs (behind your back)? One shows the working year, the other the year with the festivals.***

#### **Planning the future**

Calendars are one of the most important cultural inventions of all. With their help, we humans not only gain a sense of history, but we can also order earthly life in time, bring events into a relationship with each other and, above all, plan the future.

Calendars determine, for example, when the repayment of a debt or the completion of a duty is due, but they also divide time according to rulership: On most days of the week, for example, our time 'belongs' to the employer, while Sundays and public holidays have long belonged 'to the church', while Saturdays and holidays are available to citizens for purely private use.

#### **Calendars are a means of power**

Whoever controls the calendar controls the time of society. It is therefore no coincidence that political upheavals are also repeatedly reflected in struggles over the 'right' calendar. For example, the introduction of the Gregorian calendar, which is valid today, was the subject of bitter disputes from the 16th to the 20th century. It was only introduced in China in 1949. New rulers not infrequently try to cement their position by introducing a new calendar - for example at the beginning of the modern era with the new Revolutionary Calendar of 1793 or in Josef Stalin's efforts to reform the calendar.

#### **An invention thousands of years old**

Calendars have existed in their basic form for many thousands of years. Early hunter societies tried to use them to determine the time for animal migrations, while agricultural societies tried to determine the right time for sowing and harvesting. The length of the year is determined by the rotation of the earth around the sun, the month by the movement of the moon around the earth. The stone calendar shown here originates from the Aztecs settled in Mexico and was used by them until the time of the Spanish conquest in the 16th century. Its special feature is that it combines two different lengths of year.

A 'working year', which has 365 days like ours, but is divided into 18 'months', whereby a festival was celebrated at the end of each 'month'. In addition, there is another year, which is only 260 days long and is determined by a fixed rhythm of cultic and ritual acts.

This ritual calendar was used for divination, for example. The rhythm of the year, formed by the combination of both calendars, repeats itself only every 52 years.