



Workshop

**Perspectives
on the Materiality
of City Walls
in Chinese and European
History**

- **KU Leuven** ●
- **Room 02.08 MSI 1** ●
- **Erasmusplein 2** ●
- **April 26-27 2024** ●

Abstract book



European Research Council





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Workshop Programme

26/04

13:00 Opening Remarks Prof. Hilde De Weerd

13:15 Keynote Prof. Laura McAtackney: *Materializing the Evolving Divisions of Conflict and Peace: The Peace Walls of Belfast, Northern Ireland.*

14:30 Coffee

Panel 1: URBAN MEMORY- chair: L. McAtackney

14:45 Yue Zhang: *Balancing Progress and Heritage Preservation: Reassessing the Demolition of Beijing's Ancient City Wall in the Context of Modern Urban Development.*

15:15 Eva Žile: *City Walls as Urban Heritage – The Case of Šton*

15:45 Discussion

16:15 Coffee

16:30 Jiayao Jiang: *Transformation of Urban Memory: Porta Maggiore of the Aurelian Wall in Rome*

17:00 Hannibal Caleb Taubes: *A Walled-up-wife in China? Notes on a City-founding Mythos in Medieval Eurasia*

17:30 Discussion

18:00 End of Session

27/04

Panel 2: MATERIALITIES OF CITY WALLS- chair: I. Stojević

9:00 Lianyu Jin: *Exploring Local Involvements in Ancient Capitals: A Case Study of the Production and Supply of Nanjing City Wall Bricks*

9:30 Iva Stojević: *Materiality and Construction: Exploring the Extraordinary and the Mundane in the Layers of Yangzhou's City Walls*

10:00 Discussion

10:30 Coffee

10:45 Oliver Creighton: *'Castles of Communities'? A Case Study of City Wall Heritage and the Making of Urban Identities in England*

11:15 Zhaoxiang Mu: *The Wall-Gate Complex: Integrating the Natural and Built Environment at Jiumenkou*

11:45 Discussion

12:15 Lunch

Panel 3: WALLS AND PERIPHERIES- chair: T. Zaneri

13:30 Yuanlin Hao: *Equally Significant as Han and Tang: New Discoveries in the Study of Qing Dynasty City Sites in Xinjiang*

14:00 Cai Yuqing, Ding Yu, Jie Liu: *Archaeological Insights into the Mountain Fortress Defense System in the Context of the Song-Mongolian War: A Case Study of Diaoyu City*

14:30 Discussion

15:00 Coffee

15:15 Mingshuai Li: *Guards on the Periphery of Walled Cities: Rediscovering the Watchtower and Signal Networks of Qing Cities*

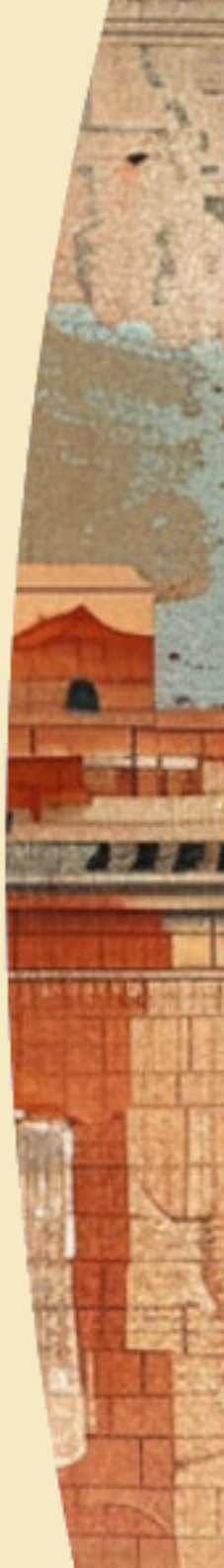
15:45 Taylor Zaneri: *Wall-building in Medieval Tuscany: Lucca and Grosseto Compared*

16:15 Discussion

16:45 Coffee

17:00 Concluding Remarks

18:00 End of Workshop





Perspectives on the Materiality of City Walls in Chinese and European History

● **Keynote** ●

Laura McAtackney
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Materializing the Evolving Divisions of Conflict and Peace: The Peace Walls of Belfast, Northern Ireland.

Separation walls constructed during civil conflicts, which are usually designed to keep antagonistic near-neighbours apart, have often overlooked material realities that evolve over extended periods of time. This lecture will argue that they must be understood as materialized and changing entities that have the potential to take on many forms and meanings that both reinforce their original role and have other, unintended, impacts. Due to their monumental nature, walls can appear to be solid, static points, fixed in the environment but in reality they are evolving entities that have many contested meanings. While they can continue to be barriers, they increasingly take on other identities, including mirrors of micro-communities' self-identity.

In Belfast, Northern Ireland, so called 'peace-walls' have been erected, formally and informally, over many decades and have a semi-official status and existence. They were erected by various public bodies since the late 1960s but they infrequently appear on official maps and are governed by few rules and regulations. Indeed, it is much easier to erect these separation barriers than to take them down and famously they are the only manifestation of the conflict (colloquially known as the Troubles) that has been added to in the post-conflict context. Over the half century that peace walls have existed in Belfast, they have taken on a number of intentional and unintentional roles. This includes physical separation between antagonistic communities but over time they have also allowed for the funnelling of violence to specific locales. They have created zones of dereliction and exacerbated poverty as well as potential sites of so-called 'dark tourism'. Fundamentally, their long-term existence has ensured that people who live geographically closely together have very little understanding or interaction with each other over generations. This has resulted in the creation of separate memory cultures that are individually, if differently, manifest victim complexes that have become more problematic as 'peace' stagnated.

The lecture will end by considering what is the potential future of these walls, which are considered an embarrassing anachronism by government officials but are naturalized as a comforting backdrop to communities who are used to their solid security. In the post-Brexit context they increasingly appear to be here to stay.

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Balancing Progress and Heritage Preservation: Reassessing the Demolition of Beijing's Ancient City Wall in the Context of Modern Urban Development

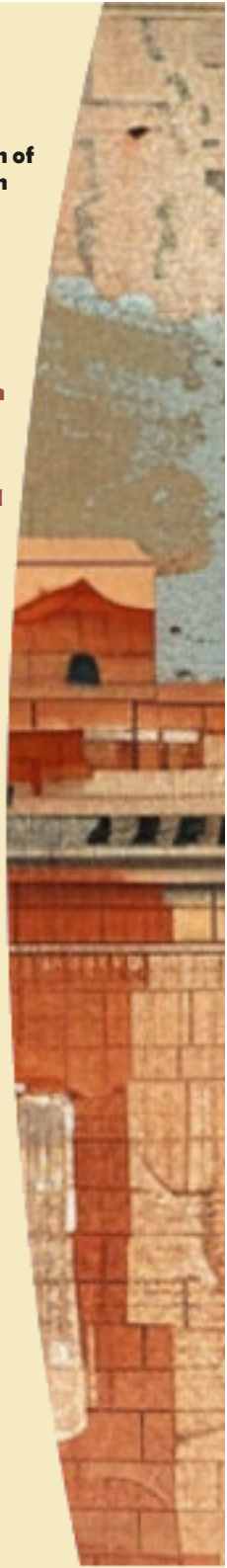
There was once an ancient city wall in the center of Beijing. It had a history stretching back several centuries. As times changed, the issue of preserving or demolishing this wall became controversial. Liang Sicheng, a master of architecture, firmly opposed the demolition of the wall, predicting, "In 50 years, history will prove that you are wrong, and I am right." However, the inner and outer walls of Beijing were completely demolished in the 1950s. Today, many experts are working to restore this ancient architectural heritage. Fifty years later, this paper looks back at this historic decision and reflects on how it profoundly affected Beijing's development. The paper points out that in the pursuit of development, Beijing has sacrificed a great deal of historical heritage of global significance, of which the Great Wall is a prime example. In the context of today's pursuit of high-quality economic development, while physical reconstruction of the wall is impractical, this paper proposes the use of modern technological methods such as digitization to reshape the culture of the city wall and restore its historical appearance. This not only pays tribute to the past, but also provides a means of preserving cultural heritage for the future.

Eva Žile
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City Walls as Urban Heritage – The Case of Šton

The construction of the Šton fortification complex, a medieval town on the isthmus of the Pelješac peninsula, began in 1333 as one of the largest and most important projects of the Dubrovnik Republic. Its development over four centuries was carried out according to contemporary concepts of military architecture and testifies to the importance of Šton as an economic and cultural center of the Dubrovnik Republic. Having lost its original function, the complex underwent various deliberate destructions in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

At the start of the 21st century, a new perception of the value of the Šton complex emerged, mainly as a result of scientific research. This was followed by the beginning of its systematic renovation, which was (and still is) possible thanks to the enormous financial possibilities created by the rapid development of tourism. The Šton fortification complex represents one of the most significant and the most demanding tasks of the contemporary monument protection of the wider area. The overview of the works on the Šton fortifications provides an opportunity to discuss the transformation of the perception of the city walls as urban heritage. Finally, it highlights the importance of their (proper) renovation for the local community and its identity.





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Transformation of Urban Memory: Porta Maggiore of the Aurelian wall in Rome

The research examines the Aurelian Wall in Rome, with a particular focus on the Porta Maggiore section - a significant gateway first monumentalized by Emperor Claudius in 52 AD and later incorporated into the Aurelian Wall in 272 AD. Historically, Porta Maggiore served as a central entrance to Rome, overseeing the convergence of eight aqueducts and functioning as a crucial node in the distribution of water within the city.

Using an urban morphology approach, this study reveals the complexity of the transformation of the city along its borders. From being a crucial point of access, the Porta Maggiore was transformed into a defensive area that was barricaded and inhabited in the Middle Ages, and then became a central traffic junction in the 20th century. Today, the former city boundary is located within the expanded city, making it an isolated symbol of the past.

The aim of the research is to demonstrate that the rich material evidence can be a source of confusion in the legibility and interpretation of the heritage, and that there is a discontinuity in the urban memory. The transformation of the built environment is a reflection of the diverse social interactions, encompassing politics, religion and secular life, in the vicinity of the city wall. The research also raises questions for the current situation: What is the right approach to the demonstration of such rich stratification and materiality? What role do these large structures play when they have already lost their function and context? The materiality of this site offers a rich multilayered history, but at the same time, it poses challenges to heritage interpretation and management.

Hannibal Caleb Taubes
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A Walled-Up-Wife in China? Notes on a City-Founding Mythos in Medieval Eurasia

This paper examines Chinese, Tibetan, and Central Asian city-founding legends in which invisible forces attempt to prevent the construction of city walls and are defeated when the walls are mapped onto the body of a deity. Often violent and intensely gendered, these legends understand the creation of city walls as the physical and discursive imposition of a masculine spatio-political order over a chthonic realm that is dangerous but powerfully fertile, symbolically female. While scholars have examined these legends in the context of individual cities and the origin narrative of the medieval Tibetan state, no one, to my knowledge, has juxtaposed these stories as arguably the most widespread Eurasian myth about the symbolic meaning and sacred origin of city walls and urban space. I first trace these legends to their earliest known examples in fourth-century CE Chinese texts, and then briefly present some of the better-attested examples, primarily the city-founding narratives of Balkh, Lhasa, and Beijing. I then examine these themes as they appear in the folktales of a single northern Chinese county, showing how the material existence of city walls is shaped by complex understandings of natural and supernatural forces beneath the earth and their capacity to influence human affairs.

Panel 2: MATERIALITIES OF CITY WALLS- chair: I. Stojić

Lianyu Jin

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Nanjing City Wall Protection and Management Center

Exploring Local Involvements in Ancient Capitals: A Case Study of the Production and Supply of Nanjing City Wall Bricks

The construction of ancient Chinese capitals as important national projects relied not only on the mature central management system, but also on the contributions of local grassroots organizations within the empire. Research on the involvement of local grassroots organizations in the process of capital construction provides a more comprehensive perspective for ancient infrastructure studies.

Beginning with the production and supply of bricks for the city wall in Nanjing during the early Ming Dynasty, this paper explores the profound impact of material production, transportation, and management on grassroots organizations in the construction of the capital. Through the example of brick material production, it examines how capital construction facilitated integration at both the regional and imperial levels and influenced the management models of local grassroots organizations. In addition, through the analysis of materials such as gazetteers and genealogies, the paper examines the impact of brick material production on the local brick industry, further exploring the impact of central capital construction on the everyday lives of people in the rural region.

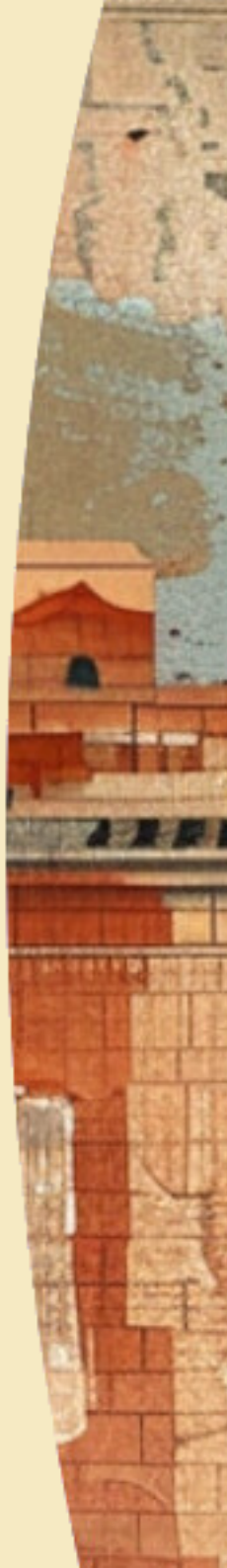
Iva Stojić

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KU Leuven

Materiality and Construction: Exploring the Extraordinary and the Mundane in the Layers of Yangzhou's City Walls

This paper examines archaeological documentation and historical narratives of the city walls of Yangzhou to discuss the material politics of construction and infrastructure. Infrastructures such as city walls are constantly exposed to natural disasters, violent events such as wars and rebellions, sabotage, corrosion, etc., while at the same time requiring constant repair and maintenance as well as the use and reuse of materials. This changing materiality of city walls is what Rosemary A. Joyce refers to as traces of action, which are collected and recorded in the stratified landscapes that archaeologists study. The city walls of Yangzhou have been the subject of archaeological research since the 1970s. These excavations have revealed the remains of a city that has been built, destroyed, and rebuilt over more than two millennia, with material assemblages that have been shaped by human actors (craftsmen, governments, etc.) and non-human factors (durability of materials, environmental factors, etc.). The aim of this paper is to analyze the archaeological and historical record of the Yangzhou City Wall and its features to discuss the materiality and transformation of infrastructure by observing cycles of construction, repair, and disuse. By observing the stratigraphy, materials, and structures at Yangzhou, this paper aims to create a timeline of how this city wall was constructed. It then discusses how these processes shaped time and space in Yangzhou.





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**‘Castles of Communities?’
A Case Study of City Wall Heritage and the Making of Urban Identities in England**

While archaeological studies of town and city walls have sometimes examined these fortifications as discrete features, abstracted from their historic urban contexts, this paper seeks to explore some of the ways in which urban defenses were not only intimately bound up with the form of the townscape, but also closely linked to the creation of historic urban identities and ideologies. Through a case study of the evidence from England, with particular emphasis on medieval remains, the paper will highlight the diversity of walled heritage through examples and case studies ranging from large urban centers to small towns and even enclosed villages. Many of these places present an image of urban defense that contrasts sharply with the familiar view of walled heritage proudly displayed by medieval 'gem' cities such as Canterbury, Conwy and York. While city walls were and are celebrated as symbols of communal identity and collective pride, many city walls embodied the ambitions of elite sectors and other stakeholders in urban society. Walls were also fundamentally used to exclude as well as include populations and could be socially divisive features within urban landscapes. As such, their heritage is often contested, and their preservation, protection, and presentation present unusually complex ethical and practical challenges.

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Wall-Gate Complex: Integrating the Natural and Built Environment at Jiumenkou

The paper examines the architectural characteristics and historical development of the Water Gate of the Great Wall, and the historical role of the ancient architectural concept of "Integrating the Wall and the Gate" to promote the integration and unity of diverse cultures for the development and consolidation of a single national civilization. The Jiumenkou Great Wall was first built in the Northern Qi Dynasty, and it was destroyed in the early years of the Ming Dynasty. During the Guangxu period of the late Qing Dynasty, the Great Wall was on the verge of collapse, and it later disappeared from the historical records. It was not until the 1980s that the archaeological excavation of the Jiumenkou Great Wall brought it to light.

The overall architectural structure of the Jiumenkou Water Gate Bridge consists of constructing a side platform on both the south and north sides of the Jiujiang River, with a gate tower built on the platform. There are eight shuttle-shaped piers between the side platforms, forming a nine-span bridge. Parapets and battlements are built on the bridge, and nine water gates are built at the bottom. To reduce water erosion and to protect the bridge's foundation, giant strip stones are placed on the riverbed. Both ends of the Water Gate Bridge are connected to the mountain wall. Thus, mountain, water, city and bridge were seamlessly integrated.

From the existing walls and lookout towers of the Jiumenkou Great Wall, it can be inferred that the wall of the Jiumenkou Water Gate Bridge is a brick wall built directly on stone foundations. The lower part of the wall is built on strip stones, and the upper part is covered with green bricks up to the parapet. The surface of the wall is paved with green bricks and lime, and the interior is filled with loess and stones.

The repair of the wall depended on local materials and years of recruiting soldiers and artisans. Sun Chengzong also had refugees serve as soldiers to repair the wall. The ruins surrounding the Jiumenkou Great Wall, such as the quarry on the western mountain of Langdong Gou in Xigoutun, Diaoyushi Village, Fanjia Town, indicate where the material for the Great Wall was gathered.

Panel 3: WALLS AND PERIPHERIES- chair: T. Zaneri

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Equally Significant as Han and Tang: New Discoveries in the Study of Qing Dynasty City Sites in Xinjiang

Xinjiang, located on China's western frontier and at the crossroads of Asia and Europe, has city wall remnants dating back to the Warring States period (770BC-220BC). It further witnessed a boom of city constructions in the Han(206BC-220), Tang (618-907), and Qing (1644-1912) dynasties respectively. However, current archaeological excavations predominantly focus on the Han and Tang periods, neglecting the Qing dynasty. This is due to the conventional inclination in Chinese archaeology towards earlier periods, as well as the abundance of historical sources concerning Qing dynasty cities. Additionally, Qing dynasty city remains are mostly located within modern urban area, which causes more challenges compared to Han and Tang sites in the rural area. Furthermore, the ground-level nature of Qing dynasty city wall remnants reduces the necessity for archaeological excavation. Nevertheless, recent systematic archaeological surveys, explorations, and small-scale excavations conducted by our team confirm 249 Qing dynasty city sites in Xinjiang, significantly more than the 82 sites documented by the Third National Cultural Relics Survey. An analysis of the database exposes the diverse types, varying sizes, and distinct forms of Qing city sites, most of which were established by the court for military and logistical purposes, and effectively consolidated the rule in Xinjiang.





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Archaeological Insights into the Defensive System of Mountain Fortresses in the Context of the Song-Mongolian War: The Case of Diaoyu City

To counter the Mongol invasion, Sichuan Governor Yu Jie built a unique defense system of mountain fortresses with the river as the line and the mountain as the point. Embodying the cultural connotation and wisdom of defending the enemy with a natural landscape city, Diaoyu City, as the last city fortress of the Southern Song Dynasty to fight against the Yuan Dynasty, restrained the skillful Mongol army with its ingenious layout of inner and outer double walls. Based on the archaeological report of Diaoyu City, this paper analyzes the layout and organization of the city gate, the city wall and associated buildings (mansion, drainage holes, tunnels), and the city defense facilities (wells, roads, wharves), as well as the construction technology and construction process. It uses the remains of the mountain-ringed wall and the southern city wall as examples, since those sites were subjects of frequent excavations excavated. This paper also compares the historical dimension with the military city defense technology of the same period. It explores the unique city defense ideas and values of the mountain fortress defense system represented by Diaoyu City.

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Tianjin University

Guards on the Periphery of Walled Cities: Rediscovering the Watchtower and Signal Networks of Qing Cities

This paper draws on the analysis of 196 historical maps and 506 local gazetteers from Qing China, which reveal networks of watchtowers located on the outskirts of cities and connected to the city walls. The watchtowers communicated by signal fires with the troops stationed in the city and received rapid assistance. Due to urban expansion, the majority of these watchtowers have disappeared, leading to a current lack of systematic understanding of the signal network connecting the cities and their hinterlands in Qing China.

What did these towers look like? What were their management systems and signal transmission methods? How were the watchtowers distributed outside and connected to the city walls?

By combining the aforementioned visual and written sources and high-tech archaeological fieldwork, this study offers a new perspective for the urban defense research in Qing China. No less than 452 potential watchtower locations outside walled cities were identified in diverse environments (deserts, mountains, plains) in Gansu, Xinjiang, Ningxia, Qinghai and Shanxi. However, faced with the extensive target range and complex topographies, traditional archaeological survey methods proved ineffective for in-depth investigations. The use of UAV (drones) for low-altitude remote sensing surveys revealed 24 watchtower sites around walled cities such as Barkol (巴里坤, Xinjiang), Xining (西宁, Qinghai) and Jiayuguan (嘉峪关, Gansu). These case studies make it possible to categorize layout types and propose reconstruction hypotheses of the signal network of Chinese cities.

Wall-building in Medieval Tuscany: Lucca and Grosseto Compared

During the 10th to early 12th centuries, castles and fortified towns became more prevalent throughout northern and central Italy; this represents a process that is commonly known as *incastellamento* (Toubert 1973). Wall building was undoubtedly the product of many factors – demographic increases, economic growth, and sociopolitical developments – and this paper will investigate how these different factors influenced this process in medieval Tuscany. It will compare wall-building in two modern Tuscan provinces: Lucca and Grosseto from 1000 to 1500. Post-1000, these two areas underwent diverse sociopolitical and economic trajectories, making them the ideal comparison by which to explore wall construction activities.

Lucca was characterized by urban development spurred by the emergence of the communal government, while Grosseto was under signorial jurisdiction. As regards economic development, historians agree that a commercial economy in Lucca began to emerge from the mid-12th century on. Lucca became an important center, and the city began to have closer political and economic ties to its hinterland. Conversely Grosseto did not have similar urban centers that spurred the same kind of developments, and the rise of a commercial economy is thought to have occurred later and slower.

Using a combination of published archaeological reports combined with published historical studies of walled cities and towns, this paper will examine wall construction from approximately 1000 to 1500 in these two regions, investigating differences in the 1) density, 2) the area enclosed by the wall, and 3) frequency of wall building. This will provide insight as to if the diverse sociopolitical situations – i.e. communal vs signorial governance – along with the distinct economic trajectories of these two regions, contributed to differences in wall building.





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