

## A City and its Ramparts

**Veranstalter:** Prague City Archives; Institute of History of Academy of Science of the Czech Republic; Faculty of Humanities of the Charles University; Historical Institute of the J. E. Purkyně University, Ústí nad Labem  
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**Bericht von:** Zora Damová, Ondřej Zich, Prague City Archives

This two-day conference „A City and its Ramparts“ was dedicated to the history, development and significance of city walls. Walls made of wood, rocks or brick, accompanied by ditches and defensive towers, were built to defend citizens of the city, but they also created borders of cities as well as they limited movement of people in and out of the city. The main topic of this gathering was the role of fortifications in the history of cities and its political impact and effect on everyday life of people who lived in and around cities.

The conference was opened by JIŘÍ PEŠEK (Prague) whose conceptual report about the development of Prague's walls over time raised questions concerning the evolution of defensive walls in general. New scientific results of the archaeological researches in Prague were presented by the archaeologists ZDENĚK DRAGOUN, JAROSLAV PODLIŠKA, PETR STAREC (Prague) and other researches of the Czech National heritage institute. They interpreted the archaeological researches focused on the fortification of the Old Town of Prague, nowadays mostly hidden in foundations of newer buildings, and the fortification of the New Town of Prague which has been preserved to present days.

JARMILA ČIHÁKOVÁ (Prague) described the walls of the Lesser Town of Prague. The archaeological overviews in Prague were supplemented by VÁCLAV KOLAŘÍK (Brno) who summarized the development of fortifications in the Moravian city of Brno. BRIGITTE HUBER (Munich) talked about the fortification of the city of Munich, from its first stone wall to its modernization, and its elimination. She also touched the question of archaeological preservation of these walls, as parts of it have been preserved thanks to the

effort of the citizens of Munich in the 19th century.

SÉBASTIEN ROSSIGNOL (Newfoundland) investigated the connection between the legal city foundation and the construction of city walls. On the example of Polish cities, he demonstrated that walls weren't mentioned in documents which captured the foundation of the cities, although later records related the building of the wall with the act of the city's foundation.

MARKUS JANSEN (Cologne) studied the relationship between cities and their lords which was demonstrated on the example of the riot of the citizens of Cologne against the Archbishop of Cologne, where the city wall played a significant part in this dispute. Cologne's archbishop Philip I. (1130 – 1191) was even buried in tomb decorated by the fortification of Cologne.

SARAH HADRY (Munich) spoke about the connection between symbols of the city gates on the official seal and the actual existence of those walls in the time of the seals origin.

HELGE WEINGÄRTNER (Nuremberg) talked about systems of city administration in Nuremberg in the 15th and 16th century, when each city quarter was solely responsible for their part of the wall.

JIŘÍ SMRŽ (Prague) spoke about the grounds of privilege of Emperor Carl IV for crossbowmen in Prague, who had the right to live and work on the Prague walls as long as they took care of them.

The range of the subject was proved by talks on the specific role of fortifications. CARL CHRISTIAN WAHRMANN (Wiesbaden) pointed out that the control of access at city gates sometimes has been used as prevention against contagious diseases like the plague.

FRANTIŠEK IŠAS (Prague) speech focused on city gates as well. He studied schedules of times in which the gates at Prague's walls were opened and studied the fee called „závěrné“ which was collected when the gates closed for the night.

In the next speech, two employees of the Jewish museum in Prague, PAVEL KOCMAN (Prague) and DANIEL POLAKOVIČ (Prague), illustrated the position of Jews in Czech cities as well as their participation in

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the construction of city walls and their defence.

The main interest of the conference was the construction of fortifications and their modernization caused by advancement of siege engines and the need of protection against these engines. ELENA TADDEI (Innsbruck) talked about the fortification of the city of Ferrara in the 14th and 15th century. Ercole I. d'Este, duke of Ferrara, and his son Alfonso, were the first sovereigns who modernized the town walls of Ferrara and even designed plans for the modification on their own.

But not every city wall in the late Middle Ages was as modern as the fortification in Ferrara, as KLARA KACZMAREK-LÖW (Weißenburg) pointed out. She talked about the town walls of the Polish cities Wrocław and Zgorzelec.

The fortification of another Polish city, Toruń, was described by BOGUSŁAW DYBAŚ (Vienna): Heinrich Stroband (1548–1609), the mayor of Toruń in the 16th century, considered the Flemish fortification type for the town walls of his city and created a fortification system with ramparts and an advanced defence system which should protect the city against military attacks.

WŁODZIMIERZ ZIENTARA (Toruń) spoke about the descriptions of the walls of the Polish cities in written sources from the 17th century. With these descriptions, which were written by travellers like students or merchants, Zientara recounted how students, businessmen, and women perceived and thought about the fortifications.

CHRISTOPH SONNLECHNER (Vienna) focused on the city walls of Vienna after the first Turkish siege of the city in 1529. He also mentioned difficulties connected with its construction, mostly concerning disputes between citizens and a sovereign and the necessity of clearing the suburbs.

MARKUS JEITLER (Vienna) compared the modern fortification of Prague and Vienna, and pointed out differences in the construction of the walls, as Prague's fortification was modernized later than the town walls of Vienna.

Concentrating on the details of the city walls of Prague based on the documents

of the Governor fortifications' commission, JAN HASIL (Prague) and PAVLA HASILOVÁ (Prague) presented the results of their research.

Afterwards, LUKÁŠ SLÁMA (Ústí nad Labem) illustrated the life of Jan van der Croon (1600–1665), a Dutch soldier during the Thirty Years' War, who later devoted himself to help to improve the Bohemian fortifications.

ISTÁN NÉMETH (Budapest) examined the situation at the east frontier of the Habsburg Empire in the middle of the 16th century, when the Ottoman Empire expanded to the west and took control of many Hungarian cities, which developed a need for a new defence system. This fortification was built around regal cities such as Győr, Komárno or Nové Zámky, which were on the border between the Habsburg Empire and the Ottoman Empire. Subsequently, the rights of the citizens in these border towns were modified as they had to accommodate soldiers. Because of that, trading with western cities became more difficult in these border towns.

MICHAL DUCHOŇ (Bratislava) focused on the modernization of the fortification of Bratislava after it became the central city of the province. He also mentioned three smaller cities, Modra, Pezinok and Svätý Jur, which became free regal cities in the 17th century and therefore had to build up fortifications around their towns.

In the Bohemian territory, the fortification was built mostly against possible attacks from Prussian military forces. JIŘÍ HOFMAN (Terezín) presented the Terezín fortress in his speech. The fortress was built at the end of the 18th century. His research looked into the origin of the soldiers who built the fortress as well as into the impact of this construction on the landscape. The history of the fortress in the Moravian city Olomouc till the end of the 18th century was examined by JIŘÍ BOROVSKEÝ (Prague). The citizens of Olomouc themselves promoted and demanded the construction of a massive fortification to regain their once lost prestige and to re-establish their city as a centre of the Moravian region.

MICHAEL VIKTORÍK (Olomouc) followed up with details about the city of Olomouc in

the following 19th century. The fortification of the city entailed a lot of limitations for its citizens and prevented the city from growing. This issue was illustrated by other papers as well: the city walls divided the city from its surroundings, and their construction often meant destruction of the houses built in its vicinity; whole villages were relocated, nearby monasteries were demolished.

Meanwhile, city walls have lost their function as ramparts and demarcations for cities, emphasized MARCIN GRULKOWSKI (Warsaw) in his speech about the old town walls of Gdańsk. This Hanseatic city had grown so fast that its walls soon ended up in the centre of the city and because of that lost their defensive importance. Already in the 14th century, the parts of the old city wall as well as the watchtowers were rented to be used as a workspace or as an accommodation. Fortifications met a similar fate in modern times as it was shown in the presentation on recreational and business use of the Prague walls in the first half of the 19th century, presented by MARTINA MAŘÍKOVÁ (Prague).

Common life in the Hradec Králové city fortress in the 19th century was illustrated by JOSEF ŠRÁMEK (Hradec Králové) and VOJTĚCH KESSLER (Prague).

The decline of city walls' value and their slowly disposal was explained by YAIR MINTZKER (Princeton). He examined most common thoughts and opinions why the walls were destroyed. He emphasized the political function of the city gates and its importance for police control of the citizens. In his opinion, this need of control and supervision was the reason why the walls in Central Europe weren't demolished until the end of the 18th century.

Most of the city walls were completely destroyed and are therefore hardly noticeable in present days. MILAN ŠIMŮNEK (Prague) used photography as a source for modern reconstruction of city walls. He reconstructed the Prague city gates, no longer existing, constructions in the form of 3D models which he presented in the evening program of the conference.

Finally, financial aspects of building city walls, such as the lack of material or labour force, were discussed by the speakers. An-

other aspect that was discussed was the conservation and maintenance of city walls. The question of how the money for building these walls was obtained was another aspect that rose discussion between the speakers. WOLFGANG WÜST (Erlangen-Nuremberg) focused on just this question of the maintenance of city walls and talked about a consumption tax called „ungelt“ which was used for this matter.

Walls around cities were built to protect citizens against enemies, they established boarders, and its gates became means of control for both visitors and citizens. During the conference, lots of topics were introduced and discussed. The conference and the contributions to the topic „A City and its Ramparts“ made it clear that city walls were only as powerful and stable as the citizens defending them.

### Conference Overview:

#### *Welcoming Address:*

Petr Jiša (Prague), Martin Holý (Prague), Jiří Pešek (Prague), Michaela Hrubá (Ústí nad Labem)

#### *Introduction:*

Jiří Pešek (Prague)

#### *Panel 1:*

Moderation: Michaela Hrubá

Zdeněk Dragoun (Prague) / Jaroslav Podliska (Prague) / Petr Starec (Prague): Die Befestigung der Prager Altstadt. Gegenwärtiger Erkenntnisstand und Perspektiven der Forschung

Vladimír Gut (Prague) / Petr Starec (Prague) / Ladislav Valtr (Prague) / Jan Zavřel (Prague): Die Befestigung der Prager Neustadt. Gegenwärtiger Erkenntnisstand und Perspektiven der Forschung

#### *Panel 2:*

Moderation: Václav Ledvinka (Prague)

Jarmila Čiháková (Prague): Die frühgotische Befestigung der königlichen Stadt auf der heutigen Prager Kleinseite

Václav Kolařík (Brno) / David Merta (Brno) / Marek Peška (Brno) / Antonín Zúbek (Brno): Die Brünnner Stadtmauern im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert. Aufbau, Gestalt und Kontexte

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der Befestigung einer mährischen königlichen Stadt

Sébastien Rossignol (Newfoundland): Die mittelalterliche Wahrnehmung der Stadtbefestigungen. Beispiele polnischer Städte aus historischer Perspektive

Marcin Grulkowski (Warszawa): Mittelalterliche Wehranlagen der Danziger Rechtstadt. Der Verlust ihrer militärischen Bedeutung in der Neuzeit

*Panel 3:*

Moderation: Bogusław Dybaś

Markus Jansen (Köln): Die Stadtmauer als Medium der Stadtherrschaft und Stadthoheit: das Beispiel Köln

Helge Weingärtner (Nürnberg): Die letzte Erweiterung der Stadt Nürnberg im 14. Jahrhundert und deren Zusammenhang mit der Verwaltungsorganisation der Stadt

Sarah Hadry (München): Mauer-Bilder: Architekturdarstellungen auf mittelalterlichen bayerischen Städtiesiegeln

Wolfgang Wüst (Erlangen- Nürnberg): Sicherheit durch Alkohol? Zur Finanzierung städtischer Mauerringe und Toranlagen durch das Um(n)geld

*Panel 4:*

Moderation: Włodzimierz Zientara

Elena Taddei (Innsbruck): „molto se deleta de fabricare e fare disegni“: Ercole I. d’Este als Bauherr und Initiator der Stadtmauern von Ferrara

Klara Kaczmarek-Löw (Weißenburg): Politische und konfessionelle Programme der Stadtbefestigungen in Breslau und Görlitz um 1500

Bogusław Dybaś (Wien): Zwischen Mauer und Bastionen. Probleme und Herausforderungen der Modernisierung der städtischen Fortifikationen in der Frühen Neuzeit am Beispiel Thorns

Carl Christian Wahrmann (Wiesbaden): *Pestis ante portas*: befestigte Ostseestädte und ihre Bedrohung durch die letzte Pest (1708-1713)

Milan Šimůnek (Prag): Virtual reconstruction of the 19th century Prague gates and city

walls

*Panel 5:*

Moderation: Jiří Pešek

Christoph Sonnlechner (Wien): Der Wiener Festungsbau im 16. Jahrhundert: Akteure, Ressourcen, Topografie

Markus Jeitler (Wien): Die frühneuzeitliche Stadtbefestigungen von Wien und Prag im Vergleich

*1. Diskussionsbeitrag:*

Lukáš Sláma (Ústí nad Labem): Jan de La Croon: der Prager Kommandant und der Bau der Barockbefestigung

Jan Hasil (Prague) / Pavla Hasilová (Prague): Die Wege zum Alltagsleben der Prager Barockbefestigung

*2. Diskussionsbeitrag:*

Jiří Smrž (Prague): Die Prager Schützen und die Stadtmauern: Betrieb und Instandhaltung der Neustädter Mauern

*Panel 6:*

Moderation: Yair Mintzker

Pavel Kocman (Prague) / Daniel Polakovič (Prague): Juden in den Mauern, Juden auf den Mauern, Juden vor den Toren. Die Beziehung der jüdischen Bevölkerung in den böhmischen Ländern zur Stadtbefestigung im Mittelalter und in der Frühen Neuzeit

István Németh (Budapest): Befestigte Städte – Festungsstädte in Ungarn (16.–17. Jahrhundert)

Michal Duchoň (Bratislava): „Wenn der Herr nicht die Stadt behütet, so wacht der Wächter umsonst.“ Befestigungen im Leben der Städte in der Westslowakei nach der Schlacht bei Mohács

Brigitte Huber (München): Mauern, Tore, Bastionen. München und seine Befestigungen

*Panel 7:*

Moderation: Olga Fejtová (Prague)

Włodzimierz Zientara (Toruń): Die Stadtmauer als Determinante der wahren Zivilisation. Die Wahrnehmung der polnischen Städte durch fremde Reisende im 17. und 18.

### Jahrhundert

Jiří Borovský (Prague): Der Aufbau der Olmützer Festung in den Jahren 1742-1757 und die Bewohner der Stadt

#### 3. Diskussionsbeitrag:

František Iša (Prague): Die Öffnung und Schließung der Prager Tore in den 30er Jahren des 18. Jahrhunderts

#### 4. Diskussionsbeitrag:

Jiří Hofman (Terezín): Der Festungsbau von Theresienstadt

#### Panel 8:

Moderation: Christoph Sonnlechner

Yair Mintzker (Princeton): Die Entfestigung der Städte Mitteleuropas 1689–1866: ein Überblick

Martina Maříková (Prague): Das Leben auf den Prager Mauern in der Friedenszeit (von der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts bis 1860)

Michael Viktořík (Olomouc): Die Festungsstadt Olmütz im 19. Jahrhundert

#### 5. Diskussionsbeitrag:

Vojtěch Kessler (Prague) /Josef Šrámek (Hradec Králové): Die Stadt in der Klausur. Das Festungskapitel in der Geschichte von Königgrätz

#### Conclusion

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