




THE ARCHAEOLOGY CENTRE PRESENTS

EXPLORING MONUMENTAL WALLS, SOVEREIGNTY, AND VALUES IN PHARAONIC EGYPT

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Large walling projects are among the most visible features in the archaeological record. However, enclosure walls remain relatively under-theorized relative to other monumental buildings. In an attempt to move beyond simple explanations that analyse walls solely as defensive features or symbols, I link monumental walls to notions of sovereign power and action-oriented theories of value(s). Using examples from Pharaonic Egypt, I argue that monumental enclosure walls were attempts to define and realize particular social totalities, whether these were a temple complex, a royal tomb or an urban centre. If all efforts at border-making are also an exercise in power, walls have the potential to illuminate some of the goals and values of those ordering their construction. By analysing changes and continuities related to which structures required the protection of a monumental enclosure wall over time, it is possible to shed light on the fluid priorities of the most important political actors in Pharaonic society. Yet the very presence of a wall implies potential dissent and alternative practices— otherwise a wall's construction would not have been deemed necessary.

Friday, April 12, 2024 at 3:00 PM
19 Ursula Franklin Street, Room AP140