

The Great Wall of China: The World's Greatest Boundary Monument !

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Key words: History; Great Wall of China; ancient Chinese surveyors; Boundary monuments

SUMMARY

ABSTRACT It is said that the Great Wall of China is the only manmade structure on Earth which is visible from space (not from the Moon?!). The only natural feature similarly identifiable from the outer reaches past our atmospheric zone has been named as Australia's Great Barrier Reef. This natural wonder of the sea is continuous while the Great Wall of China is actually made up of a series of castellated walls mainly erected along ridge lines causing major variations in the levels of its trafficable upper surface. Some of the barriers built are not formed from stone but from rammed earth mounds. The purpose for these walls was primarily to facilitate protection from hostile adjoining tribes and marauding hordes of enemy armies intent on looting and pillaging the coffers of its neighbouring wealthier Chinese Dynasty of the time. As the need for larger numbers of military troops became required to defeat the stronger opponents, which may sometimes have formed alliances, the more astute provincial rulers saw a similar advantage in the unification of the disparate Chinese Provinces particularly during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). In fact the earlier sections of the Great Wall(s) were constructed to delineate the territorial areas of separately governed principalities thus representing some of the most ancient continuous boundary monuments of substance still surviving to this day. This paper will investigate which portions of The Great Wall(s) of China were mainly erected as boundary demarcations and the others put up as protection as well as attempting to highlight early techniques and equipment used by the Chinese surveyors of antiquity hopefully supplemented by some translated texts and historic art.