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FOREWORD

Being Danish, I have always known the legends about the Jelling monument. After my first visit to the monument in the summer of 2010, the great impression Jelling made on me inspired the first ideas for my bachelor thesis topic. When I discovered that the site was being excavated as part of a new national project, I decided I wanted to delve beyond the legends alone. Two visits to the site and a lot of research later, this thesis was born. I want to thank several people for their help, without whom this thesis would not have been what it is. I would like to thank my thesis supervisor David Fontijn for his feedback, guidance, and many insights. I would like to thank Mads Jessen for getting me started with articles about Jelling and for communicating with me about the results of the excavation. I would like to thank Mads Holst for his opinions on the site, for answering my many questions, and for taking his time to discuss Jelling with me.

INTRODUCTION

In the centre of Denmark lies the town of Jelling where one of the country's most well known archaeological complexes is situated: Royal Jelling. It is a unique Viking Period site with a combination of heathen and Christian symbols, of which the burial mounds, church, and rune stones are still visible today. Its significance as an example of pagan and Christian Nordic culture placed it on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1994 (UNESCO World Heritage List 2010). All Danes are familiar with the complex that was the centre for the Jelling royal dynasty and houses the rune stone that is referred to as 'Denmark's birthstone'. As a historically significant site and an inspiration for romantic nationalism during the Second World War (Hvass 2011), Jelling has been the subject of the ever-complicated balance between legend and archaeological fact. In 2009, the National Museum launched the Jelling Project to shed light on these issues, revealing that the monument's composition is much more complicated than originally thought, and making it apparent that we must re-evaluate the meaning of the site.

This thesis undertakes a reconsideration of the monumental complex at Jelling by researching two questions: why did the Jelling dynasty choose this location for their royal monument and what was the purpose behind the construction of such a unique monument? As the latter often determines the former, the two will be examined simultaneously. For the first question, we can consider the possibility of a practical location in terms of defence or trading, or a cult location based on its identification with past settlements and/or monuments in the area. For the second question, options to bear in mind are the complex's function as a royal power centre, the legitimisation of the king's authority, or an ideological centre, a place symbolising the conversion to Christianity while maintaining the old religion.

Originally, this thesis intended to approach these questions by discussing Jelling as an example of cult continuity. In literature published prior to the recent excavations (see for example Dyggve 1955, Randsborg 2008) the consensus was that one of the burial mounds at the site had been built on top of an older mound, most likely from the Bronze Age. Therefore, at Jelling there may have been evidence for the re-use of an ancient burial landscape, possibly as an act of homage to the ancestors who lie there or to the spirituality of the place. This obviously has wide implications for the location and purpose of the Jelling monument. However, the recent research at Jelling indicates that there is little evidence to suggest that there was a Bronze Age burial mound underneath the Viking Period mound. Indeed, the dates of the various parts of the monument suggest that the entire complex was

built around the same time (see Chapter 1). Therefore the cult continuity approach was abandoned. However, my research did reveal great similarities between Jelling and other sites, both older and contemporary. Consequently, this thesis aims to achieve an understanding of the Jelling monument through a comparison of the complex to similar archaeological sites. I will do so in three parts. Chapter 1 consists of a brief outline of the history and the legend of the site, and an analysis of the features of the Jelling complex, based on the most recent discoveries. Chapter 2 explores how Jelling compares to contemporary settlements and the four known ring fortresses that Harald Bluetooth built. Lastly, Chapter 3 examines the archaeological composition of the area surrounding Jelling, and the composition of type-sites that resemble Jelling. Using the results of these investigations, I will answer the questions on why the Jelling dynasty built their monument on this location and what the purpose of the monument was. Through doing so, this thesis endeavours to understand the significance of the Jelling complex.

With regards to the archaeological periods discussed in this thesis, I will adhere to the Scandinavian chronology. When I speak of the Viking Period, I refer to the sub-division of the Iron Age. When I speak of the Iron Age, I refer to the whole of this age up to but not including the Viking Period. For an overview of the Scandinavian chronology, see Appendix I. Appendices II and III include maps of the sites mentioned in chapters 2 and 3 respectively.

CHAPTER 1 | The Jelling monument

The Jelling monument has been a source of fascination for centuries, reflected by the first excavations on the site being carried out as early as 1704 and 1821. These were resumed in 1861 by King Frederik VII and J.J.A. Worsaae (Jelling Project 2011; Hvass 2011). Since 1941, there have been several excavation teams, which have expanded the explorations from the burial mounds to the area surrounding the monument, leading to new discoveries (Hvass 2011). Since 2009 the National Museum Jelling Project, a joint effort by the National Museum, the universities of Aarhus and Copenhagen, and the Vejle Museum, has undertaken large-scale excavations of the monument and the surrounding area, combining the new discoveries with a re-evaluation of the previous archaeological research in Jelling (Holst *et al.* in press). The efforts of the project have resulted in the discovery of new elements at the monument, which in turn has led to new insights. Previously, it was thought that the site consisted of the North Mound and the South Mound, with in between them the rune stones and a wooden church. These are the features visible today, with the addition of a stone church (Figure 1). The burial chamber in the North Mound and the chamber under the church were also known to researchers. The recent excavations have shown that the notion of a Bronze Age burial mound beneath the North Mound must be abandoned (Holst *et al.* in press; Hvass 2011) and that Jelling was a much larger complex than what it is visible today. It was composed of a stone ship setting, which started just south of the South Mound and surrounded the other features with the North Mound at its centre, a rhombic-shaped wooden palisade enclosing the entire monument, and several houses standing parallel to the palisade fence (Figure 2). These features will be described further below after a discussion on the contextual history of the monument and the various theories about its composition.

Figure 1 Aerial view of the Jelling monument as it is visible today (after Google Maps 2012).

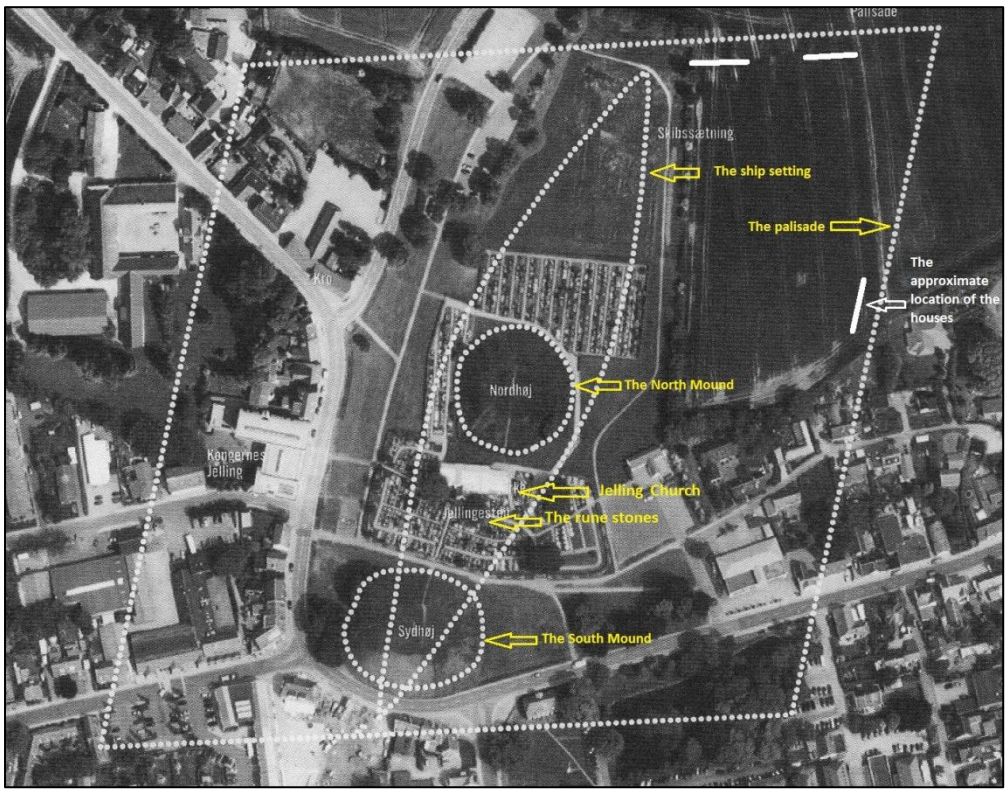

Figure 2 Aerial view of the Jelling complex with the visible features and the newly discovered features marked (after Hvass 2011, 59).

The Jelling dynasty

The construction of the Jelling monument marks the start of the royal lineage that is referred to as the Jelling dynasty. It began with the reign of King Gorm, who marks his presence at Jelling with the placement of the small rune stone (see below). It is unknown when King Gorm reigned; however, it can be inferred that it was later than 934 as historical sources document a Germanic attack against King Gnupa of Denmark in 934 (Randsborg 2008, 14). All we know for certain about Gorm the Elder is what is stated on the Jelling rune stones: that he was king, Harald was his son and Thyra was his wife (Jensen 2006b, 285). King Gorm erected his rune stone around 950 (Hvass 2011, 10) and King Harald was baptised in 965 (Holst *et al.* in press, 3). Thus, we can infer that Gorm died and left the kingdom to his son at some time during this span of 15 years. The transition of kingship from King Harald Bluetooth to his son, Sven Forkbeard, was less smooth. Around 986 Sven Forkbeard led a rebellion against his father, who was consequently exiled, and thus the rule of the Danish kingdom passed on to Sven Forkbeard (Roesdahl 1991, 140). King Sven was a powerful king, initiating a new onslaught of raids on England, and ending his reign with the conquest of England and Norway (Jensen 2006b, 287-288).

The Jelling monument was constructed at a time when the Danish kingdom was developing in several ways. The archaeology of settlements paints a landscape in which the villages were densely built and were becoming larger and more regulated, a development that had begun in the Iron Age (Jensen 2006b). The pronounced social hierarchy can be observed in the differences between settlements, and magnates' residences dominated the agricultural landscape (Jensen 2006b). As a backdrop to this social expansion was the greatest social change of all: the conversion from heathen belief to Christianity. The date of the conversion had always been placed at 965, when King Harald was baptised and claimed on his rune stone that he had converted Denmark to Christianity. However, recent excavations at Ribe Cathedral revealed Christian graves from the 8th century (Søvsø 2010), suggesting that the Christianisation of the Danes had been a long and ongoing process by the time of the Jelling dynasty. The catalyst of the official, royal conversion to Christianity is not known. A possible explanation can be found in the threat from the south, from the powerful German emperor Otto I, which probably played a role in Harald's conversion to Christianity (Jensen 2006b).

The interesting period in which the Jelling complex was built and the uncertainty surrounding the monument has given rise to much speculation. The North Mound contains a burial chamber, which has been disturbed in the past and the body removed. The

dedication of the small rune stone by Gorm to his wife Thyra led to theories that Thyra had been buried in the North Mound; for this reason the mound has always been referred to as 'Thyra's Mound' (Hvass 2011). On the other hand, many people have theorised that King Gorm was buried in the mound and moved to the burial chamber underneath the church by his son when he converted to Christianity (Figure 3) (Randsborg 2008). It is also possible that King Harald himself was buried underneath the church. It is unclear when Harald died, as he no longer appears in written sources after the 960s but his son Sven is not written about until the 990s (Randsborg 2008, 8). 'Harald – if in fact the man in the chamber grave under the church – would thus have been born around 935, be 25-30 years at the death of King Gorm, and about 30 at the acceptance of Christianity in the 960s' (Randsborg 2008, 8). The dates of the burial therefore do no argue against this theory. However, according to Adam of Bremen, writing in the 11th century, King Harald was buried in Roskilde (Randsborg 2008, 8). If the dates of the North Mound's burial chamber are correct (see below) then it is unlikely that Harald Bluetooth was buried in the North Mound, considering that the construction of the chamber in the mound coincides with Harald's baptism. Unfortunately, the identity of the person buried in the church will probably never be determined with certainty (Pedersen 2010).

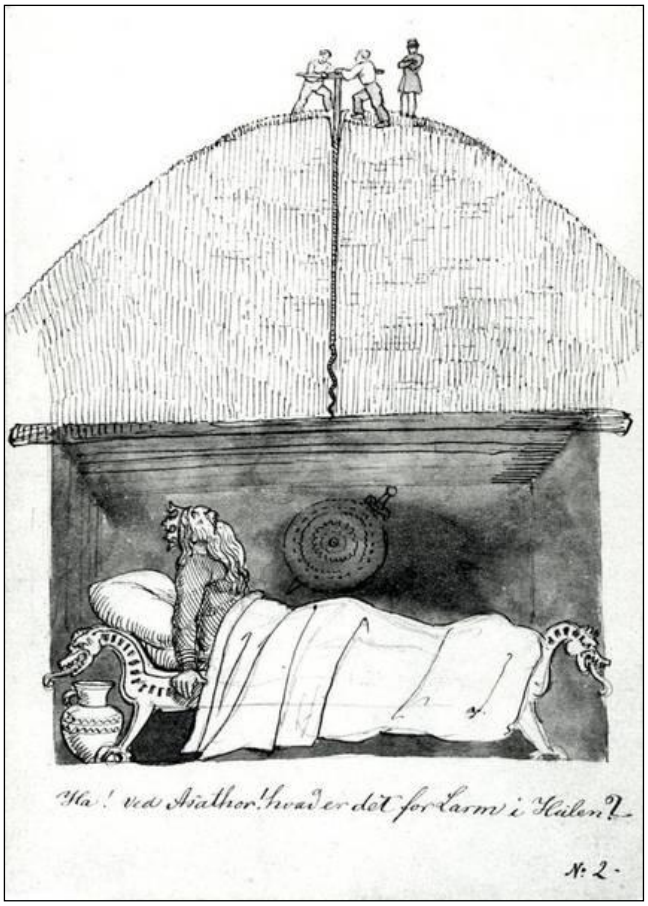

Figure 3 A drawing of the North Mound and King Gorm lying in his burial chamber. The text reads, 'Ha! By Asathor! What is that noise in the hollow?' (Jelling Project 2011).

The monument and its features

The rune stones

There are three known rune stones standing at Jelling, two of which are associated with the Jelling dynasty and monument. These two stones stand in between the South Mound and the church. The small rune stone was presumably erected by King Gorm and reads, "King Gorm made this monument in memory of Thrya, his wife, Denmark's adornment" (Hvass 2011, 76). The rune stone is from around AD 950 and it is the first time we find the word Denmark written on Danish soil, which is why it is often referred to as "Denmark's birth certificate" (Hvass 2011, 10). It stands in the position where it was placed around 1630, and its original location is unknown (Holst *et al.* in press, 3).

The larger rune stone was erected by King Harald and reads, "King Harald commanded this monument to be made in memory of Gorm, his father, and in memory of Thyra, his mother – that Harald who won the whole of Denmark for himself, and Norway and made the Danes Christian" (Hvass 2011, 76). Historical sources suggest that the stone was erected after Harald's baptism in 965 (Holst *et al.* in press, 3), certifying Denmark's conversion to Christianity. Deducing from the foundation stones the rune stone stands on, it is assumed to be standing in its original position (Holst *et al.* in press, 3; Hvass 2011, 40). The rune stone is made up of three sides: a text side and two picture sides, one of which depicts an animal in battle and the other portraying Northern Europe's oldest known depiction of Christ on the cross (Hvass 2011). The rune stone diverges from tradition by displaying the runic inscriptions horizontally, like a Latin manuscript, rather than vertically (Figure 4) (Hvass 2011, 12).

Figure 4 The text side of King Harald's rune stones. The runes were inscribed horizontally unlike traditional rune stones (Jelling Project 2012).

The mounds

There are two mounds at the Jelling site, the North Mound and the South Mound. The South Mound is 70m in diameter and stands 11m high; it does not contain a burial chamber. The mound was built in two phases, with a hiatus between the two phases long enough for a vegetation layer to form between the segments (Holst *et al.* in press). A dendrochronological date of a wooden scaffold from before the vegetation layer places the construction of the first phase of the mound after AD 963; the date of the second phase is unknown (Holst *et al.* in press).

The North Mound is slightly smaller than the South Mound, measuring 65m in diameter and 8m in height. This mound was also constructed in two phases. The first phase of the mound was covered with stones and an oak beam; this beam has been dated to AD 958/959 (Holst *et al.* in press). The first phase contains the famous burial chamber, which was 2.6m by 6.75m in plan with a ceiling height of 1.45m (Holst *et al.* in press). Dendrochronological analysis of the wood from the chamber places the felling of the tree between October AD 958 and April AD 959, so the chamber was most likely built in the winter of 958/959 (Hvass 2011). We know from descriptions made during the excavations in 1820 and 1821 that it was clear to the excavators that it was not the first time the chamber had been opened (Hvass 2011; Randsborg 2008). These excavations revealed that the roof had been broken into, the grave goods were spread throughout the chamber, and the buried person was absent (Hvass 2011, 28). The chamber had probably been built for a person of high status, indicated by the grave goods, which consisted of a small silver cup with animal decoration in Jelling style, purple silk, part of a gilded belt, and painted woodcarvings (Hvass 2011; Pedersen 2010).

The second phase of the mound consisted of a sod and wooden scaffolding structure. A forked beam found from this phase during the 1861 excavation has been dated to the winter of AD 964/965 (Holst *et al.* in press). Knud J. Krogh and Bodil Leth-Larsen (in Holst *et al.* in press, 4) have suggested that the beam was used for the re-opening of the chamber and therefore dates the disturbance to AD 964/965. On the other hand, Holst *et al.* (in press, 4) point out that the beam may have been a tool used for the construction of the mound and therefore that the date AD 964/965 refers to the construction of the second phase. If this is the case, the two phases of the construction of the mound followed each other closely (Holst *et al.* in press, 4).

The church

The church, which can be seen today standing in between the two mounds, is a tufa church from the late 11th or early 12th century (Holst *et al.* in press). Excavations beneath the church have revealed several buildings preceding the current church, which were originally interpreted as three phases of church building (Holst *et al.* in press; Randsborg 2008). However, Holst *et al.* (in press, 5), argue that one of these buildings architecturally closely resembles the hall buildings of Eastern Denmark and Sweden, and therefore that the sequence of buildings underneath the church represents a transformation from a residential or ceremonial hall into a church. Such a transition from hall building to church has been observed before in the Viking Period at Lisbjerg in Denmark (Holst *et al.* in press; Jessen 2012). Randsborg (2008, 9) has argued that the first wooden church, referred to above as a possible hall building, was bigger than the two mounds. This could suggest that it was intended to dominate the monument by being the largest of the features. There is no archaeological evidence for this, however, and it can be assumed that the earliest wooden churches were small and not equal in height to the mounds (Mads Jessen pers.comm. 2012).

As aforementioned, one of the preceding buildings contained a burial chamber where lay strewn parts of the skeleton of a man of 35 to 50 years old, who had most likely first been buried elsewhere (Pedersen 2010). Artefacts found in the chamber are datable to the early to mid 10th century and the chamber most likely belonged to an early stage of development, which preceded or was contemporary with the first buildings (Holst *et al.* in press). The artefacts are very similar in style and quality to the artefacts found in the burial mound chamber (Holst *et al.* in press; Pedersen 2010), supporting the theory that the same person who had been buried in the North Mound was reburied under the church.

The ship setting

In 2006, magnetometric investigations and subsequent excavations revealed seven large standing stones north of the North Mound arranged in a northwards pointing V-shape (Figure 5). The stones were not standing in their original position, but had been dug into the ground, probably to facilitate building or agriculture in a later period (Holst *et al.* in press; Hvass 2011). The stones were the same size as and were aligned with the axis of standing stones under the South Mound, which had been found during the 1941 excavation (Holst *et al.* in press; Hvass 2011). The formation of these two ends of the standing stones suggest that they were part of a 358m long and 80m wide ship setting (Hvass 2011). Ship settings composed of large standing stones, especially in association with mounds, were constructed

frequently in Viking Period Scandinavia (see Chapter 3), so the context is right for this interpretation of the stones. However, evidence of a ship setting between the two ends is vague, and therefore it cannot be excluded that the standing stones formed a different construction (Holst *et al.* in press, 6-7).

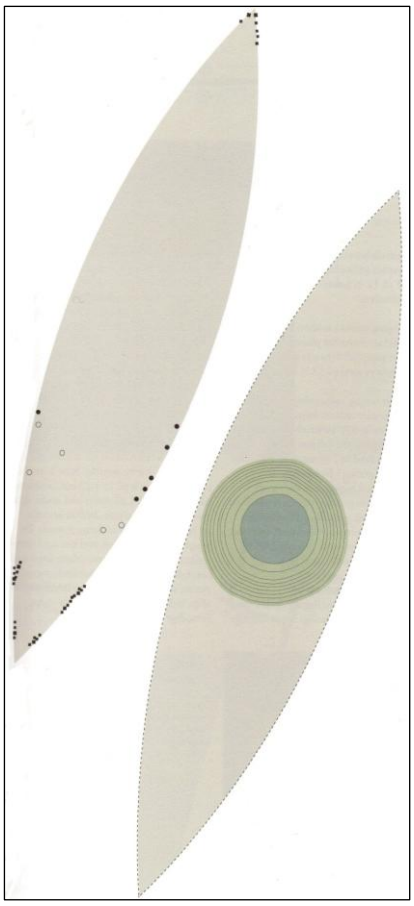

Figure 5 The ship setting with the stones that have been found marked in black and the probable contour of the ship marked by a dotted line. The right figure shows the location of the North Mound within the ship setting (Hvass 2011, 35).

The date of the possible ship setting is uncertain. However, ^{14}-C dating of wood from a posthole at the northern point gives a *terminus post quem* date of 538-660, 544-650 and 669-890 AD (2σ), and its relationship with the other elements of the monument places its probable construction in the first half of the 10th century, no later than AD 958/959 (Holst *et al.* in press, 7).

The palisade

The mounds, church, and ship setting are surrounded by a rhombic-shaped wooden palisade fence, which encloses an area of 12.5 hectares, with each of the four sides measuring about 360m long (Figure 6) (Hvass 2011). The north-eastern section of the palisade has been uncovered extensively, revealing a fence consisting of a palisade with support poles on either side, which were bound together with horizontal planks (Holst *et al.* in press; Hvass 2011) . The poles were dug 1.20m into the ground, which suggests a height of 3m, making it the sturdiest known palisade construction of its time in Denmark (Hvass 2011, 36). On the northern side, there was a 2m wide entrance in the palisade (Figure 8) (Hvass 2011). Two pieces of charcoal from the palisade dated with ^{14}C give *terminus post quem* dates for the fence between 685-878 and 780-985 (Holst *et al.* in press, 7).

Figure 6 Bird's eye view of the excavated terrain and the discovered constructions. Palisade – palisade; Trelleborghus – Trelleborg house; Økonomibygning – economy building; Udgravningsfelt – excavation area; Nordhøjen – North Mound; Kirke og runesten – church and rune stone (Jelling Project 2010).

The recent excavations have also revealed 11 certain houses and a few uncertain structures within the enclosure. Three of the houses, which are located in north-eastern section of the enclosed area, are identical in plan, size, and construction (Figure 7). They are

also architecturally similar to the Trelleborg-type houses found at the Late Viking Period ring fortresses Aggersborg, Fyrkat, and Trelleborg (Holst *et al.* in press; Hvass 2011). Fyrkat has been dated to AD 979 – 981 and Trelleborg was built around AD 980/981 (Hvass 2011). Holst *et al.* (in press, 8) point out that we must be careful with dating the Jelling houses to the same time as the fortress houses based only on the house type. If, however, we can use these dates as a guideline, it allows us to date the palisade approximately. The three houses stood parallel at a regular distance of half the length of the house to the palisade; this geometric positioning suggests the houses were contemporary with the palisade (Holst *et al.* in press; Hvass 2011). A building from the first half of the 11th century cuts into the palisade and therefore indicates that the palisade lost its function shortly after 1000 AD (Holst *et al.* in press, 9).

Figure 7 One of the buildings found during the recent excavations. It is almost identical to the houses found at the ring fortresses (Jelling Project 2010).

The geometry of the monument

The individual features of the Jelling site are impressive, but it is the relationship between them that makes it a unique monument. The North Mound and its burial chamber lie at the exact centre and intersection of the palisade enclosure and the ship setting (Figure 8) (Holst *et al.* in press). The large rune stone stands in the exact centre between the North and the South Mound. Furthermore, the measurements of the monument are striking. 'The distances between the [houses] and the palisade are around 11.5 metres, 59.5 metres and 118-119 metres. These measurements are all divisible by approximately 11.5-12 metres, as are the total side length of the palisade and the length of the assumed ship setting' (Holst *et al.* in

press, 13). In addition, the sides of the palisade and the ship setting measure 358-360m. These are significant measurements as contemporary settlements and fortresses with Trelleborg houses appear also to have been built according to a 60m rule (Holst *et al.* in press) (see Chapter 2).

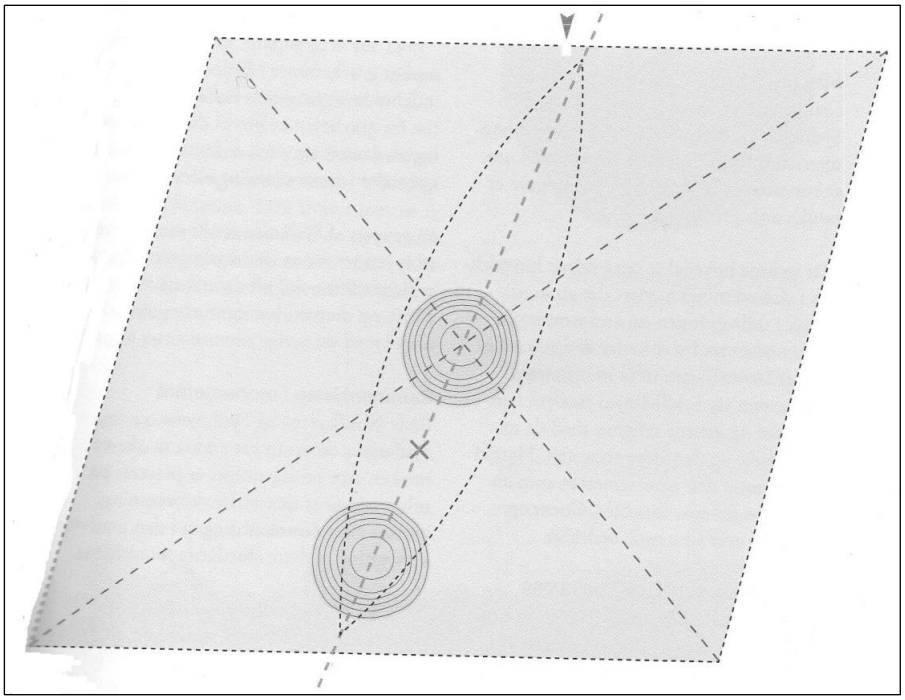

Figure 8 The position of the possible ship setting, palisade, entrance to the palisade (indicated by the arrow), burial mounds, and the large rune stone (marked by the X) in relation to each other (Hvass 2011, 39).

Chronology of the complex

Holst *et al.* (in press) define three chronological horizons for the Jelling complex. The first horizon, which dates to the first half of the 10th century until 958/959, comprises the possible ship setting, the small rune stone, the North Mound, and possibly the burial. The second includes the palisade, the Trelleborg houses, the economy building, the large rune stone, the South Mound, and an extension of the North Mound or an intrusion into the burial chamber. It is possible that one of the wooden buildings underneath the church was built during this phase. Lastly, the third horizon consists of the later elements of the complex, that is the buildings from 11th century onwards. Holst *et al.* (in press, 12) argue for a decline in political importance of Jelling from the 11th century. This is reflected by the houses beings built without the earlier monumental aspect and now complying more with average architectural standards in Jutland villages.

CHAPTER 2 | Contemporary fortresses and settlements

Jelling can be associated with four ring fortresses and several settlements or farm complexes from the Late Viking Period based on layout and house types. The similarity between these sites and Jelling means that an examination of the composition and purpose of them can help to gain insight into the Jelling complex itself. Likewise, the differences can further our understanding of the monument. This chapter will focus on three aspects of these contemporary structures: purpose and location of the fortresses, geometric organisation, and the house types. By comparing the findings to what we know about Jelling, it may be possible to draw conclusions about the Jelling monument's location, what the geometric organisation of the complex means, and what the significance of the Trelleborg house type at Jelling is.

Harald's military designs

The four ring fortresses lie spread across Denmark and are the only known royal fortifications from Viking Period Scandinavia (Roesdahl 1991). Aggersborg lies in north Jutland, on the Limfjord; Fyrkat lies in northeast Jutland close to the Mariager Fjord; Nonnebakken lies in the centre of the island of Funen; and Trelleborg lies on the west coast of Zealand. Nonnebakken is no longer visible due to later construction on the site, but we know of its existence from the discovery of Viking coins and jewellery from around the year AD 980, a sixteenth century engraving of the ring-work, and excavations that revealed a circular rampart the size of Fyrkat (Roesdahl 1986, 211).

The fortresses are all presumed to be from around AD 980, associating them with King Harald's reign (Roesdahl 1991, 136). Trelleborg and Fyrkat are dated based on dendrochronology, supported by the dates of artefacts found at the sites. Nonnebakken is dated based on two coin hoards and jewellery, and Aggersborg is dated mostly on basis of it relationship with Fyrkat, and the fortress group (Roesdahl 1986, 215). We can deduce from the remains that the fortresses were used only for a short period. None of the buildings were repaired, and posts dug down in the earth would not have survived much longer than 30 years in the Danish climate without being repaired (Roesdahl 1986, 215). The fortresses were therefore abandoned not more 20 years after the rebellion against King Harald around AD 986.

Much has been written on the subject of the purpose of the fortresses. In the years following the excavations of the ring fortresses, the consensus was that they were a winter

camp or assembly point for military operations, perhaps for the launch of the Viking raids on England by King Sven Forkbeard and his men (see Nørlund 1948). However, the opinion has changed in later years in review of the location of the fortresses and the finds at the sites. The number of artefacts at the fortresses is limited, and only at Trelleborg some evidence for military activities have been found (Holst *et al.* in press, 14). Furthermore, the artefacts found at Trelleborg have proven that the fortress was inhabited by women, children, and craftsmen as well as warriors (Roesdahl 1991, 139). We must be careful in applying this theory to the other fortresses based on similarity alone, but if Trelleborg's layout made it suitable as a settlement, Aggersborg, Fyrkat, and Nonnebakken may have had the same composition of inhabitants.

The locations of the ring fortresses suggest that they may not have been built for more than domestic purposes. Roesdahl (1991, 139) argues that their location gave them command of the inland rather than the coast. This is supported by Tage Christiansen (1981, 222), who notes that Trelleborg was built next to a marsh, which was inaccessible by sea. Furthermore, that the dendrochronological dating of Trelleborg places it before the first recorded attacks of Sven Forkbeard on England (Christiansen 1981, 222). Trelleborg was therefore possibly constructed for the command of Zealand rather than the sea, an argument applicable to Nonnebakken, which was located in the centre of Funen. In comparison, Aggersborg was built en route on the north-south road that ran through Jutland at the time, giving it an ideal location for control and tolls over the passage (Roesdahl 1991, 140). Therefore, taking the inland locations into consideration, Roesdahl (1986; 1991) argues that the fortresses were built to keep the population in check and control a country close to revolution. Around 980 Denmark was experiencing political and economic problems, including a shortage of silver, defeat by the German emperor at Danevirke in 974, and the loss of rule over Norway (Roesdahl 1991, 191). However, Roesdahl (1986, 1991) also points out that Aggersborg lies on the Limfjord, which was the safest shipping route at the time, and was situated close to a strait that led to Norway. She therefore contradicts her own argument by stating that 'Aggersborg may well have had additional function: a base for the re-conquest of Norway or renewed influence or raids there' (Roesdahl 1986, 226). Aggersborg's location implies more than a domestic function. Additionally, Fyrkat is also situated close to a fjord, indicating it was constructed on a strategic location with respect to trade and transport. The location and dates of the ring fortresses and the artefacts found at the sites dismiss the theory that they were intended as military camps. However, it is unlikely that fortresses of this magnitude, built at a time of a decrease in regional power for

Denmark, were constructed solely for domestic purposes. Unfortunately the lack of artefacts means we cannot deduce the function from the finds, but it is further evidence that the fortresses were occupied for a short duration (Holst *et al.* in press, 14). If Trelleborg, Aggersborg, Nonnebakken, and Fyrkat had reached the potential they were probably intended for by King Harald, they would have been used for a multitude of purposes, including living quarters for warriors and ordinary people, craft production, trade (domestic and international) and regional control.

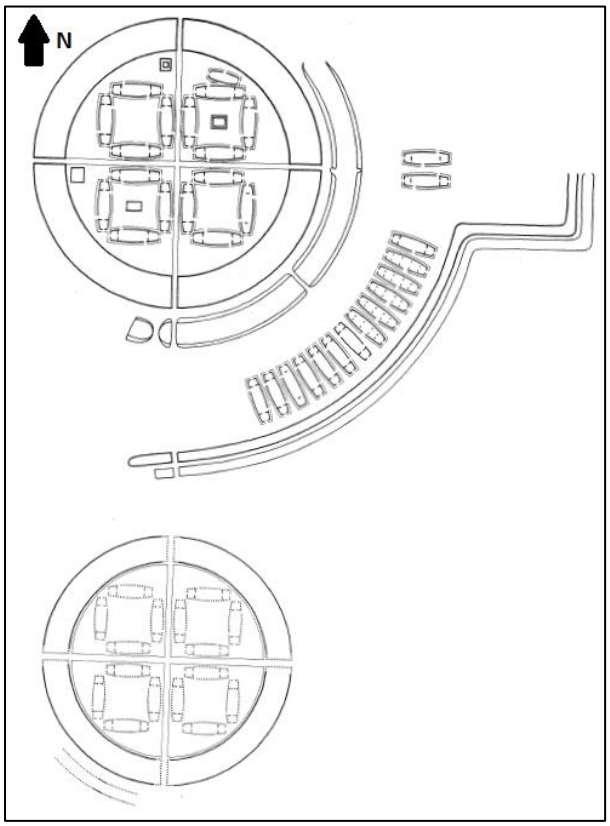

Figure 9 Trelleborg (above) and Nonnebakken (below) drawn 1:3000. No houses have been found at Nonnebakken, but their probable location is represented by dotted lines (after Olsen 1962, 7).

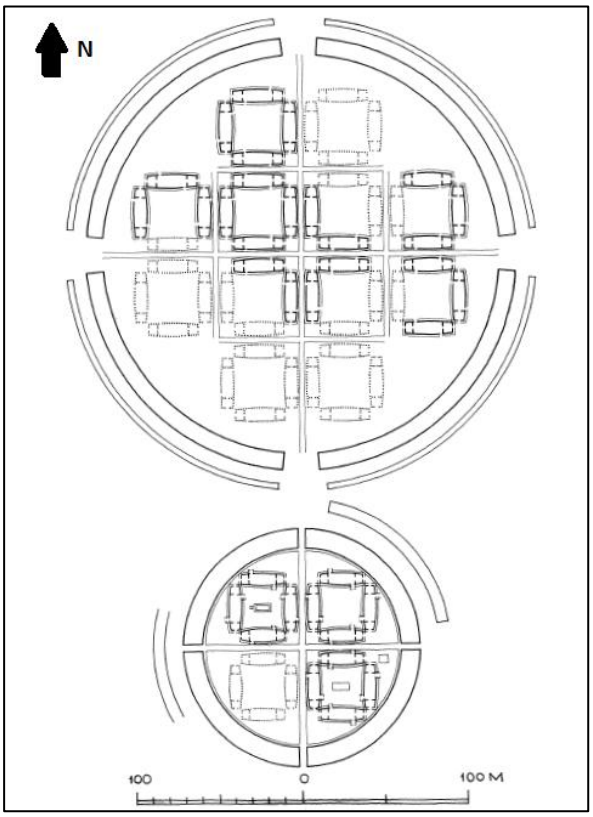

Figure 10 Aggersborg (above) and Fyrkat (below) drawn 1:3000. Dotted lines represent unexcavated house plans (after Olsen 1962, 6).

Geometric organisation

The fortresses

The four fortresses have the same layout: a circular rampart made of earth and turf with sloping outer surfaces, surrounded by a ditch (Figure 9 and Figure 10). They have four gateways, situated at the points of the compass, which are linked by two timber-paved streets crossing at the centre of the fort. Around the inside of the fort runs another street. In each

quadrant of the fortress, separated by the streets, lay large, uniform buildings arranged in a quadrangle (Roesdahl 1991, 136). Jelling is not a ring fortress nor does it have its houses arranged spatially in this way. Instead, its defensive structure consists of a palisade and its houses are situated within this palisade, more akin to a fortified settlement. However, it does resemble the fortresses in its geometric organisation. As mentioned in chapter 1, the fortresses follow a strict measurement layout with a basic unit of 60m: Fyrkat and Nonnebakken measure 120m in diameter and Aggersborg 240m. In comparison, Jelling measures approximately 360m. The other construction assigned to Harald Bluetooth, Trelleborg, differs with a diameter of 136m and the addition of an outer fortification (Holst *et al.* in press; Roesdahl 1991).

Another construction worthy of mention is not a fortress, but has been associated with King Harald's great works due to its date, quality, and short period of use. Ten kilometres south of Jelling lies a bridge across Ravning Enge in the Vejle Valley (Hvass 2011). It measures 760m long, diverges from an exactly straight line at most by 5cm, and was raised high enough to offer a safe passage across the valley even during the winter floods (Hvass 2011). Dendrochronology dates the bridge to the 980s, but the lack of use-wear and reparations on the wood indicates it was used for less than 10 years (Hvass 2011). The bridge suggests that there was a well-functioning road network in this region and that there was a need for safe passage in the Jelling area (Hvass 2011).

The rural settlements

The organisation of space according to specific measurements is also visible in the contemporary rural settlements in Jutland, where parcels are divided into one of three size categories: 20m, 40m, or 60m (Jessen 2012, 121). Interestingly, at two settlements where Trelleborg-type houses have also been found, Vorbasse and Omgård, the parcel sizes follow the 60m rule like at the fortresses. At Vorbasse, the largest parcels at the late 10th/early 11th century part of the village measure around 119m (Holst *et al.* in press), and at Omgård three farmsteads measure 120m (Jessen 2012, 121). This specific parcellation continues to be used after King Harald's reign, evidenced by Hollenæs, a farm from the second half of the 11th century, where the fences marking the parcel are set out at 120m apart from each other (Jessen 2012, 122).

The Trelleborg house type

The houses found at Jelling have been identified as the Trelleborg house type based on their similarity to the 16 houses found at the Trelleborg ring fortress. This house type has also been identified at Aggersborg (48 houses), Fyrkat (16 houses), and several settlements. No houses have been found at Nonnebakken, but it is likely that if Nonnebakken had houses, they were of the Trelleborg type, considering that this house type has been found less than 20km away from the site of the fortress (see below).

The houses found at the ring fortresses all have straight gables and curved long walls with a line of inclining, supporting posts running along the outside. The buildings are organised in a ¼ division, with the main room covering $^{2}/_{4}$ of the length and the small rooms at each end each covering ¼ of the length (Holst *et al.* in press, 8). A variation on this type is the addition of small entrance annexes, which were placed in a diagonal arrangement against the long walls (Figure 11). This addition has only been found at Jelling, Fyrkat, and, with less certainty, Trelleborg (Holst pers.comm. 2012).

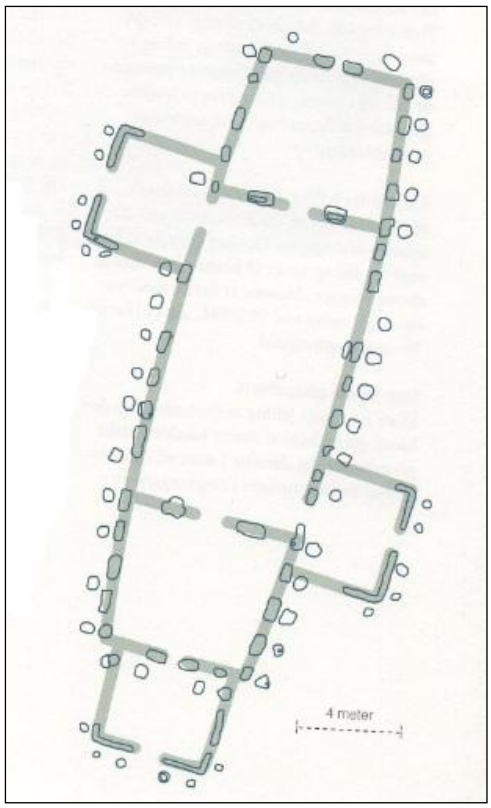

Figure 11 Ground plan of one of the Trelleborg type houses found at Jelling. The small entrance annexes in a diagonal arrangement and the extra annex at the end of the building are clearly visible (Hvass 2011, 37).

The houses at Jelling vary from the others in plan in that they have another annex attached to the end of the building, creating another room (Figure 11). They are also 3-4m shorter than the houses at the fortresses and do not have the same division. However, if the annexes are included, the length is 27.5m and then the same division is apparent (Holst *et al.* in press, 8). This could indicate that the Jelling houses represent an early Trelleborg-type house and are therefore older than 980/981, which would place them during the early part of Harald's reign (Hvass 2011, 38). The typology of the houses thus suggests that Jelling was constructed earlier than the fortresses; however, dendrochronological dates do not exclude the one or the other possibility (Holst *et al.* in press, 16).

The Trelleborg-type house has also been recognised in the house plans found at agrarian settlements Vorbasse and Omgård. Vorbasse lies in central Jutland, approximately 33km from Jelling, and Omgård in west Jutland, approximately 96km from Jelling. The extensive excavations at Vorbasse have allowed researchers to reconstruct the development of a settlement from the first century AD to 1100, including the expansion of the settlement, represented by growth of the farms, in the 3rd, 7th, and 10th centuries (Randsborg 2008). Thurston (2001) describes the layout of these two settlements: the Late Viking Period saw the extension of Vorbasse by three farm complexes, of which each included a large main building of the Trelleborg-type. Omgård was one large estate, which was fortified with a high bank, ditch, and palisade. The guardhouse is identical in plan to the guardhouses at the gateways at Trelleborg and Fyrkat, and inside the estate lie houses of the Trelleborg type (Thurston 2001). The fortification of Omgård suggests it may have been a notable settlement.

At Vorbasse and Omgård, the farm complexes consisted of a main building (the dwelling house), workshops or storage barns, and storehouses. At Vorbasse, all three farms had similar use of space, with the large farm consisting of 14.6% living and 85.3% storage and workshop space, and the two smaller farms 27% and 14.8% living to 73% and 85.2% storage and workshop space (Thurston 2001). This same division is visible at Omgård with 15% living to 85% storage and workshop space. These similarities could indicate that the settlements were planned (Thurston 2001, 127), and certainly point to a standardisation of spatial organisation within the farms. Neither Jelling nor the fortresses show evidence for stables like at these rural settlements. However, one building at Jelling (number 4) differs from the Trelleborg-type longhouses and is architecturally similar to the stables or barns, the so-called economy buildings, at the agrarian settlements (Holst *et al.* in press, 9).

The Trelleborg house type has also been identified at Avnslev Overby, a farm complex dating to around AD 1000, which lies close to the modern town of Nyborg, less than 20km from the Nonnebakken ring fortress. The farm complex consisted of three buildings, of which the main building is a Trelleborg house (Figure 12), measuring 20.5m long by 6m wide (Henriksen 2003, 21).

Interestingly, the Trelleborg house type has not only been found in Denmark. In Scania, the southernmost province of Sweden, many houses of the Trelleborg type have been found. At the Viking Period settlement in Tygelsjö two halls have been identified as a Trelleborg type (Aspeborg 2008, 27). Excavations near the modern town of Kävlinge revealed one house that differed in layout to the others and has also been identified as a Trelleborg type although it does show some differences (Olsson 2003, 15-16). Aspeborg (2008, 27) notes that the Scanian Trelleborg houses are younger than the Danish ones and were undoubtedly inspired by them. Various literature (see for example Jensen 1982; Roesdahl 1992) states that Scania belonged to the Danish kingdom during this period. This suggests that the standardisation of house type initiated during the Jelling dynasty may have extended across the Danish kingdom.

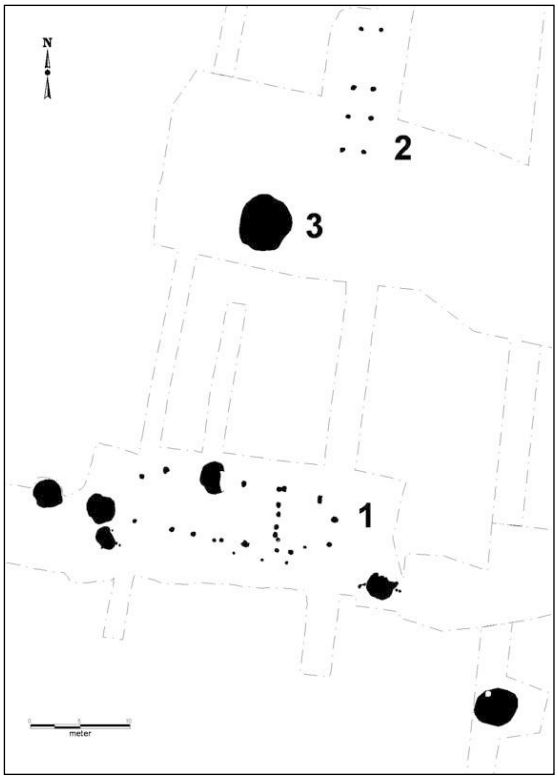

Figure 12 Avnslev Overby with the main building in the south (1) (Henriksen 2003, 20). Note the similarity to the houses found at Jelling.

A comparison

Returning to the chronological horizons outlined in chapter 1, it can be argued that the Jelling complex began as a monument similar to many others in the Viking Period, but that King Harald adapted it for new purposes when he took over. Studying the location of the complex gives us some to clues to what this purpose might have been. Jelling lies in the centre of the country close to the north-south road, with near equal long distances to the other important centres of the time (Randsborg 2008). East of Jelling are narrow, easy to defend valleys, which lead to the Vejle Fjord (Randsborg 2008). From a practical perspective these aspects mean that the Jelling's location was ideal for control over trade and passage through the area and hegemony in the area. The presence of a impressive bridge, which provided access to Jelling during the whole year, indicates that the complex had an important function in the region. Jelling and Aggersborg together could manage the north-south road in Jutland, Nonnebakken controlled Funen, and Trelleborg had influence over Zealand. Fyrkat is the anomaly in the list as the second ring fortress in North Jutland and twice as small as Aggersborg. However, if Aggersborg functioned as a centre for international trade and expeditions to Norway, then Fyrkat perhaps served a more domestic purpose. Consequently, Jelling and the four ring fortresses formed an interlinked network of important centres across the country with Jelling at the midpoint.

The importance of Jelling was possibly expressed in the introduction of a strict layout to the monument. The palisade was built around the ship setting so that the North Mound lies at the exact centre, and the large stone was raised in the centre between the two mounds. The entire complex is approximately 360m, with all four sides of the palisade and the possible ship setting measuring circa 360m long. Furthermore, 'the distances between the buildings and the palisade are around 11.5 m, 59.5 m and 118-119 m. These measures are all divisible by approximately 11.5-12 m, likewise the total side length of the palisade and the length of the assumed ship setting' (Holst *et al.* in press, 12-13). It is hard to deduce what the significance of this is though. The distance between the buildings and the palisade are dividable by approximately the same number, but it is not an exact or consistent number nor is the distance the same for all of the buildings. This layout may merely have been the logical result from positioning the buildings in alignment with the palisade and with sufficient manoeuvring room between them. Therefore, we should careful in incorporating the

building measurements in analysing the spatial organisation of the monument. Perhaps the discovery of more buildings will shed light on this matter.

On the contrary, the layout and measurements of the other features of the complex point with certainty to a conscious choice of construction method when we compare it to the ring fortresses and the rural settlements. Jelling, Fyrkat, Aggersborg, and Nonnebakken follow a strict geometric organisation with a basic unit of 60m; Jelling being the largest, and Fyrkat and Nonnebakken the smallest. Only Trelleborg diverges from this rule; however, it does have the same layout as the other fortresses and therefore imitates the same model. This cross-country 60m rule of thumb not only implies a conscious standardisation of Harald's five large constructions, but also reflects enormous labour investment in a short time-span. At Jelling and the fortresses, this spatial organisation points towards the presence of a central authority, but the significance of the use of the 60m measurement at the rural settlements is harder to pinpoint. It may suggest that King Harald was behind the systematic parcellation of land in villages, or that the settlements mirrored the constructions at nearby Jelling. There is no evidence for the one or the other, and other reasons are equally likely. However, it does indicate that the principles of geometric organisation were important in the latter part of the 10th century in Denmark, perhaps not only to royal constructions, but in society as a whole.

We can trace the roots of the spatial organisation of land back further than Harald's reign. Jessen (2012, 122) suggests that the definition of land use expressed in specific measurements may have its roots in the Roman Iron Age around AD 400, and can certainly be recognised by the Germanic Iron Age. Following on from this, it can be argued that it becomes important again in the Viking Period during the reign of the Jelling dynasty. It is not clear whether King Harald initiated this standardisation or copied its traditional use in rural settlements for his constructions. What is apparent is that he expanded its use dramatically by building several fortresses and Jelling according to exact geometric measurements. Strict spatial organisation of settlements then appears to remain significant in the later Viking Period and early Middle Ages, demonstrated by the later settlements, which can be associated with the fortresses and Jelling based on house type.

Standardisation is also observable in the second half of the 10th century in the houses built in settlements and Harald's structures. The slight differences between the houses could suggest that the Trelleborg house was first built in Jelling; this would correspond with the dates of Jelling and the fortresses. Its use was continued into the 11th century in Denmark and Scania at sites such as Avnsev Overby and Tygelsjö. It remains to

be shown where the origins of the Trelleborg-type house lie. Aspeborg (2008, 27) argues that the houses were based on 9th century Saxon aristocratic farms in England, which were originally found in north Germany. If the Trelleborg house had its origin as an aristocratic farm building, it is consistent with a theory shared by many that this house type represents the living quarters of wealthy farmers (Aspeborg 2008; Henriksen 2003; Roesdahl 1986). However, it is unclear to me where this theory originates from. The literature quoting it does not expand on why the Trelleborg house type is thought to have belonged to wealthy farmers. To deduce this, a comparison of this house type, impressive structure as it is, with houses from other settlements from this period would be necessary. Additionally, an understanding of the settlements where the Trelleborg house type has been identified would help shed light on this matter. For example, do the farmsteads themselves or the settlements as a whole show evidence for wealthy inhabitants? One way to infer this could be from the findings of metal artefacts at the sites, as high quality metal artefacts are 'a characteristic component of the East Danish central places from the Late Iron Age and Viking Period, and...[have] been interpretatively linked to the essential prestigious and ritualised gift giving in the alliance and person based power of the kings and magnates of the halls' (Holst *et al.* in press, 20). However, it is questionable to what extent we can apply this theory to West Danish settlements and to the period of the Jelling dynasty. For example, the Jelling complex can clearly be connected to an elite, namely the royal dynasty, yet no such artefacts have been found there (Holst *et al.* in press, 20). It is therefore clear that, as of yet, we have no solid claim to link the Trelleborg house-types to an aristocratic class or wealthy farmers. What is apparent is that the architecture of the buildings at Jelling does include features of east Danish aristocratic hall buildings, but in combination with features visible at houses found at rural settlements (Holst *et al.* in press, 18). It is also noteworthy that King Harald chose to build these houses at Jelling and his fortresses. Consequently, the theory associating these houses with wealthy farmers perhaps does not need to be dismissed. It can be argued that through constructing houses combining high status and agrarian influences at the monumental complex of Jelling, Harald introduced attractive living quarters to west Denmark. These were subsequently taken into use by large settlements such as Vorbasse and notable settlements such as Omgård.

In addition to the use of architectural rural elements, the Jelling complex also shows evidence for an economy building comparable to ones found at rural settlements, which is lacking at the fortresses. This may suggest that Jelling served a greater economic purpose than the fortresses did. The Jelling complex also differs from the ring fortresses in that it

does not have defensive structures such as a moat and wall or the compact structure of the buildings present at the fortresses (Holst *et al.* in press, 14). Jelling had a palisade, but with a total length of approximately 1425m, it was not easily defended, and furthermore, there is no direct evidence for military activities at Jelling (Holst *et al.* in press, 14). It can therefore be argued that the presence of a palisade and the same measurements as at the fortresses reflect the use of military influences in the construction of Jelling, rather than the military nature of the complex.

Recapitulating, an examination of the fortresses and settlements contemporary with Jelling provides us with clues for an understanding of the monument itself. The location of the ring fortresses suggests that Jelling formed part of a wider network of impressive structures designed, in part, for regional control, with Jelling functioning as the centrepiece. The structures present at Jelling indicate that the complex had military influences, but served a greater economic purpose than the fortresses. Furthermore, we can deduce from the spread of Trelleborg house-types in the Danish kingdom and the use of specific geometric measurements in the construction of Jelling, the settlements, and the ring fortresses that standardisation and spatial organisation were important in Late Viking Period society.

CHAPTER 3 | Beyond time and location

A comparison between Jelling and the contemporary constructions gives insight into the location and significance of the Jelling complex, but a further understanding may be gained from examining past sites and sites similar to Jelling in other ways. In reviewing Jelling's location, the idea of cult continuity must be abandoned due to lack of evidence for previous on-site cult activity, but we can study it in respect to two other theories based on the archaeological composition of Jelling's landscape. Firstly, that the complex's location was based on the past importance of the area. Secondly, that Jelling is an example of cult continuity from monuments in the wider area rather than from on-site cult activity. Additionally, Jelling's features can be compared to what I term type-sites. These are sites I have categorised by their inclusion of specific elements, for example a ship setting in association with a mound or a church placed next to a burial mound. Some of these type-sites are contemporary with and others are older than Jelling, but all can further our understanding of the complex. I aim to do so by examining their composition and applying our knowledge about these sites to the Jelling monument.

The archaeological composition of the surrounding landscape

The Jelling area

Jelling lies at a central point in the country, close to Vejle Fjord. It is situated on a moraine plateau, on a soil of sand and clay (Christiansen 1999). It is surrounded by several waterways: Kidde Stream and Omme River to the west, Hørup Stream to the north, Fårup Lake to the south, and Grejs River to the east, which flows into the Vejle Fjord (Figure 13). Surprisingly for such a large centre, there is little archaeological evidence of a settlement on the Jelling site before the complex itself was built, despite extensive excavations in the monument area and 30ha north of the complex (Holst *et al.* in press). There is some evidence for activity at Jelling in the Iron Age; a building and equestrian grave from AD 100 – 200, and a 50m long house from AD 250 – 340 with a burial place, which contained among others a rich woman's grave (Hvass 2011, 21-22). Approximately 1km south of the mounds there has been a settlement comprising a few houses from about 100 BC onwards, and over the following 1000 years the houses slowly moved closer to the mounds (Hvass 2011, 22).

The area surrounding Jelling appears to have been more intensively inhabited over the centuries. Folmer Christiansen (1999) undertook a survey of the sites close to Jelling in

order to research if the roots of Jelling can be found in the Iron Age. The majority of the sites can be found south of Jelling, between the site and Fårup Lake, and belong to the Iron Age, with a greater part dating to the early Roman Iron Age. The history of this area spans 1500 years and begins in the early Iron Age, when there were a few houses, but no villages yet. In the last two centuries BC villages appear, which later move around in the landscape in the well-documented Iron Age pattern of wandering farms. Gradually the farms move eastward and become more permanent. Due to the large number of finds, the early Roman Iron Age is well documented in this area, and three tiers of settlements can be identified: wealthy chieftain farm complexes, villages, and singular farms (Christiansen 1999, 217-218). This transition fits into the overall pattern of settlement development in Jutland, where systematic parcellation increased from the 3rd century onwards, with organisation of land into villages and singular farms, which disappeared during the Viking Period when big farmsteads dominated the area (Jessen 2012, 120-121).

Christiansen (1999, 218) argues that the Jelling area was likely an important place in the historic period due to its location at a cross-section of land traffic, and it is possible that this is why the wealthy chieftain farm complexes of the Iron Age were situated here as well. He continues, arguing that this influence extended into the Viking Period, which is why Jelling became so important, but that there is not enough evidence from the period between the Roman Iron Age and King Harald's reign to discern whether this area had a continuously important central role in the landscape.

Beyond Jelling

As mentioned in the introduction, important centres, especially those also used as a burial place, are often built on the location of previous large sites or burials. The archaeological remains found thus far at Jelling suggest that there were no previous cult sites here that might suggest that Harald constructed the complex here owing to an identification with the history of the site. However, this is not to say that we should rule out the possibility; merely that we may have to look further in the surrounding landscape for this evidence. A brief survey of the region can give an indication of whether the Jelling monument was built on a location surrounded by a rich archaeological past and therefore constructed there.

Figure 13 shows a representation of the protected archaeological monuments in the area surrounding Jelling. It is not a complete overview of all archaeological sites in the region, but does include all of the known mounds and stone settings in the area, which are elements of significance to the Jelling complex. It is therefore not be used as an exact

recording of all the finds in the vicinity of Jelling, but rather a global representation of the archaeological richness of the area. For an interactive version of the map and detailed descriptions of each find, see the website of the Danish Agency for Culture (www.kulturarv.dk/fundogfortidsminder/).

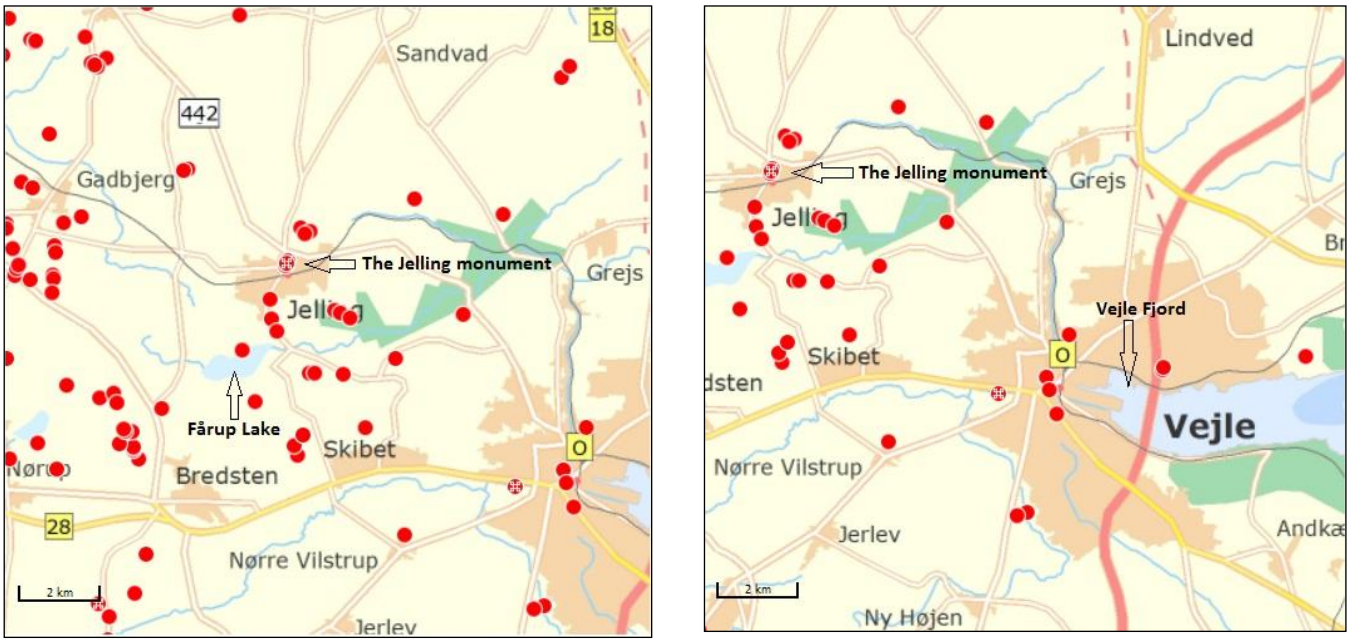

Figure 13a & 13b The protected monuments surrounding Jelling (2km scale) (after Kultur Arv 2009).

Protected monument and point of interest (designated by the Danish Agency for Culture)

Protected monument

Figure 15 The protected monuments surrounding Jelling and Silkeborg (10km scale) (after Kultur Arv 2009).

Figure 14 The protected monuments surrounding Silkeborg (2km scale) (Kultur Arv 2009).

Figure 13 indicates that there are many archaeological monuments close to Jelling. However, in judging whether it is a significantly high number, it is necessary to regard it in relation to the rest of the country. This is especially important when we consider that Denmark is a country rich in archaeological remains, with 85.000 known burial mounds (Jensen 2006a). When we view the area at a larger scale, it is clear that the region 60km to the northeast, around the city of Silkeborg where the Tollund man was found, there is a much higher proportion of monuments (Figure 15 and Figure 14) than at the Jelling area. Therefore, I argue that the Jelling monument is not located in a relatively archaeologically dense region.

Type-sites and their composition

As aforementioned, type-sites can further our knowledge about the Jelling complex by applying what we know about them to Jelling. The categories of sites discussed below are by no means a complete list of all the types of archaeological sites existing in Denmark, but rather sites that show similarities to specific elements of the Jelling complex. The importance these sites may have for an examination of Jelling was discovered during my survey of the density of archaeological sites in the Jelling area. It became clear that although there are not relatively many sites in the vicinity of Jelling, Denmark does not lack for sites that show interesting parallels to the monument.

From burial mound to church

An interesting site, which I came across when researching the area surrounding Jelling, lies approximately 17km southwest of Jelling at the town of Randbøl. Here stand Randbøl Church, Kong Rans Høj (King Rans' Mound), and the Firehøje (the Four Mounds). Rich in information shared on the internet and lacking in actual evidence, it is unclear what the story of the mounds truly is. Legend has it that there was a battle between the kings Ran and Amled, or the King of Lundenæs, in the Kings' Valley, now Gødding Forest, during which King Ran and many of his men many died (Hærvejen 2010; Worsaae 1841). King Ran was buried in the large burial mound that stands in the graveyard of Randbøl Church, and his men were buried in the four burial mounds close by, from where many of the mounds that stand in the vicinity can be seen (Hærvejen 2010; Worsaae 1841). All that is archaeologically known about the history of the site is from the excavations carried out by J.J.A. Worsaae on King Rans' Mound. They revealed many artefacts, including flint arrowheads, a bronze double button, and several urns, one of which was a very large one, covered by a stone tablet

and containing burned human bones, a decorated bronze pincette, and a small bronze knife (Worsaae 1841). The church was built around the year 1100 next to the mound, and Randbøl parish was, according to legend, named after King Ran (Randbøl Sogns Lokalarkiv og Egnsmuseet 2010). Lack of historical sources and archaeological evidence means it is hard to confirm the legend. The artefacts found in the large burial mound suggest that it dates from the Bronze Age, but it is unlikely that the knowledge of who was buried there survived millennia. The source of the legend is unknown; however, if it stems from the Middle Ages, it is noteworthy that the parish and church were named after the legend of a fallen Bronze Age king buried in a heathen tradition. It is only speculation to say that the church was built consciously beside the burial place of a local king and his men, but it is intriguing that the church was built next to and its graveyard around an existing burial mound.

Another site where burial mound and church come together is Gamla Uppsala in Sweden. This is an impressive site with three large burial mounds and the Uppsala cathedral, all still visible today (Figure 16). The mounds date from the fifth and sixth centuries AD, which suggests that the Swedish kings of the Ynglinga family mentioned in historical sources to be buried in Uppsala were most likely buried in the Gamla Uppsala mounds (Stenberger 1962). The burial of kings in large mounds, the large settlement, and evidence of craft production indicate that Gamla Uppsala was an important and central place in the Iron Age with the presence of an elite; however, it is unclear whether it was a cult place or urban settlement (Ljungkvist 2000). There is some evidence of a king's farm and hall building used from the 5th to the 10th centuries AD, and in the Middle Ages it grew to be the largest settlement in the Uppland (Ljungkvist 2000), with the construction of the first church in 1160 (Stenberger 1962).

Figure 16 Gamla Uppsala church and burial mounds (Uppsala Kommun 2012).

Research on the continuity between pre-Christian cult places and churches, and the question of cult place continuity remains a much-debated topic in Scandinavian archaeology (Jensen 2006b). Renewed research on the subject has been spurred on by finds at sites such as Vittene in Sweden, where excavations revealed on one location a Middle Bronze Age grave, pre-Roman Iron Age urn graves, six large burial mounds, ten stone settings and a stone ship setting from the Viking Period, and 11th century Christian burials (Artelius 2004). Jensen (2006b, 499) argues that churches used existing cult places in the landscape and an association with these locations 'as an expression of power continuity, which reflects the aristocracy's monopolisation of the religious cult'.

Monumental ship settings

A noteworthy site near Jelling is the Klebæk Mound or the Bække monument. This monument is composed of two Bronze Age burial mounds and a stone ship setting that starts at the foot of the smallest of the mounds, lying on the highest point in the area (Figure 17) (Vestergaard 2007). One of the largest stones in the setting has a runic inscription, which has been dated to around AD 960 – 970, placing the ship setting in the Viking Period (Vestergaard 2007, 150).

The combination of a stone ship setting with a burial mound is not unique to Bække and Jelling. Already in the Neolithic, there are graves aligned with stones in the shape of a ship, but it is first in the Bronze Age that there are what we term *ship settings* (Vestergaard 2007, 148). Other than the ship settings from the Bronze Age, the most date from the 6th through to the end of the 10th centuries AD; they are dated based on the grave found within them or the typology of the setting (Vestergaard 2007, 148). The Bække ship setting measures 45m long and thereby belongs to the category Vestergaard terms monumental ship settings (ship settings of 40m or longer). Vestergaard notes that around half of the monumental ship settings in Scandinavia lie in Denmark and Scania, and that the Danish Viking Period monumental ship settings characteristically stand in association with mounds (often Bronze Age ones). He also notes that most of the Danish and Swedish monumental ship settings are located close to a main road and close to water, and lie on naturally higher ground, probably with the intention to be highly visible in the landscape (Vestergaard 2007, 151-152). This is also the case at Jelling, where the monument lies close to the north-south road and is surrounded by waterways. The addition of a rune stone to the ship setting and burial mound complex at Jelling and Bække can also be observed at other sites in Scandinavia. At Bække and Glavendrup on Funen, the rune stones are not in their original

location, but the complex does point to a connection between the stone and the ship settings; the Tryggevælde stone on Zealand was raised in combination with a ship setting and a mound; and at Anundshög in Sweden two ship settings lie at the bottom of a burial mound with a rune stone standing 50m further away (Vestergaard 2007).

Figure 17 The Bække Bronze Age burial mound and Viking Period ship setting (Kultur Arv 2012).

Vestergaard (2007, 145) remarks that there is no consensus on the function of ship settings; the theories range from them functioning as a burial place or a cenotaph to them being a symbolic representation of the long tradition of ship burials in Scandinavia. What is clear, Vestergaard argues, is that most ship settings are located near to or in connection with burial places or cult places. There is also some evidence that ship settings are connected with power centres, for example at Lejre and Glavendrup in Denmark and Farlöv in Sweden, and furthermore, the placing of a ship setting was a monumental task that could not have been accomplished by someone without authority (Vestergaard 2007, 155-156). He argues that ship settings probably served several functions, including the legitimisation of the authority and power status of the person who built the ship setting (Vestergaard 2007, 173-174).

From hall building to church

The excavations at Jelling revealed a possible hall building beneath the wooden church, which immediately led to speculations about parallels to Lisbjerg. Here excavations revealed that the current 12th century stone church of Lisbjerg was preceded by an early wooden church, under which lie the traces of older buildings (Jeppesen and Madsen 1997). The church was surrounded by a large fence enclosure and farm buildings, and was built around 1100, either within the enclosure after the main building was demolished or after the whole farm was demolished (Jeppesen and Madsen 1997). The time span of demolition and

construction is very narrow, suggesting that there was a connection between the farm and the first church (Jeppesen and Madsen 1997). Considering the size and the location of the farm, it can be argued that the farm was a magnate's residence where the owner had an important role in building the church (Jeppesen 2004). Lisbjerg is situated close to the north-south road of the Viking Period and excavators have found a 2km long moat, which ran along the road leading to Lisbjerg, indicating it was an important settlement (Jeppesen 2004). With less certainty than at Jelling and Lisbjerg, the church at Vester Starup in west Jutland may be interpreted as part of the same pattern. A wooden structure beneath the church resembling in orientation the houses from contemporary rural settlements suggests that the transition from hall buildings to church was a wider phenomenon in Viking Period Scandinavia (Jessen 2012).

Aristocratic cult sites

Lars Jørgensen (2009) undertook an analysis of pre-Christian cult sites in Scandinavia, where large central places appear to have had a function as a centre for pre-Christian religion. The sites have in common an elite residence with a settlement in association with or on the location of a cult place, indicated by sacrifices, offerings, and depositions. The many examples of magnate's residences lying in connection to cult buildings, such as at Gudme in Denmark and Helgö in Sweden, indicate that the elite was in control of religion already in the first millennium AD (Jørgensen 2009). In this period cult and aristocracy were closely connected, whereas around the Viking Period economy started to play a larger role in these settlements (Jørgensen 2009).

Aristocratic sites with a cult role from the 6th and 7th centuries AD have been found at Järrestad in Sweden and at Tissø, Lejre, and Toftegård on Zealand, of which Tissø and Lejre continued to function as such sites in the 11th century (Jørgensen 2009). The earliest aristocratic sites in western Denmark are Lisbjerg and Jelling. This difference in development between east and west may be due to differences in ownership of land and other social aspects (Jørgensen 2009, 338). If we draw a parallel to the wealthy elite residences of the Iron Age in the Jelling area, it can be argued that aristocratic settlements existed in west Denmark in the Iron Age. Hereafter they disappear, and then reappear again in the Viking Period with an added religious function, perhaps influenced by the pre-Christian cult residences in east Denmark and Sweden.

A comparison

The survey Folmer Christiansen undertook is a good example of how examining the history of the area surrounding Jelling can help us gain an understanding of the monument's location and importance. Christiansen's research shows that the area south of Jelling was intensively inhabited during the Iron Age, a landscape consisting of singular farms, villages, and wealthy chieftain residences. Christiansen (1999) argues that these residences are situated in this region because of its important location for land traffic and that this central position is in part the reason for Jelling's importance in the Viking Period. His argument is valid when we consider the composition of the landscape in this area. The Iron Age settlements and Jelling are located in a central position in the country, in an area surrounded by waterways, on higher ground, and close to a fjord leading to the sea. However, to use the wealthy Iron Age complexes as a model for understanding the location of the Jelling complex, further research into the Iron Age is necessary. For example, is the number of chieftain residences situated in this area high when compared to other areas in Denmark at the time? Is there evidence at these residences to suggest that this area had a greater importance than other regions? Researching such questions is necessary for a comparison between the Iron Age and Viking Period in this area. However, Christiansen's research does make it clear that examining the past significance of a region can help to understand the later importance of the region.

In examining Jelling's location, it is possible to rule out the possibility that the complex was constructed on this site due to a continuous identification with past cult activity in the area. Comparing the number of monuments in the Jelling area with that to the northeast, around Silkeborg, it is apparent that there are many more mounds and stone settings in the latter area. These are the types of monuments which would have been a visible reminder of the past cult importance of the region. Therefore, the Jelling dynasty did not choose a location based on an identification with the richness of the cult activity in the area.

The significance of the Jelling complex can be examined by understanding its individual elements. This can be accomplished by applying what we know about such elements at other sites to Jelling. Jelling shows close parallels to other monumental ship setting sites; in location (close to a main road and waterways) and in its association with a burial mound. It is noteworthy that most of the ship settings are built around the same time as the renewed construction of burial mounds in the 10th century, and simultaneous with the rise of Christianity in Europe (Vestergaard 2007, 170). Vestergaard (2007, 171-173) therefore

argues that that we can see the raising of ship settings as a mark of faith, as a rediscovery of earlier practices, and legitimisation through the retention of the past and cultural identity. He argues that they might possibly have functioned as a symbol against the cross (Vestergaard 2007, 173). This might explain why the South Mound partially destroys the ship setting, a heathen symbol. On the other hand, if Harald Bluetooth wished to reject the heathen past, he would arguably have had the ship setting removed and not constructed the palisade geometrically according to it. Therefore, if the stone ship setting was originally intended as a symbol against Christianity, King Harald thereafter incorporated it into his Christian-heathen monument. This incorporation can therefore possibly be seen as the legitimisation of his conversion to Christianity. It is difficult to determine to what extent Vestergaard's other theory about ship settings, that they were intended as a symbol of the power of an authority figure, is valid. The construction of monumental ship settings was a great task, but could have been accomplished by a group in a collective, co-ordinated effort. However, there is evidence at various sites, including Jelling, to suggest that ship settings be associated with the elite. Furthermore, they appear to be a physical representation of ship graves, a symbol literally set in stone. Therefore it can be argued that, just as ship graves were not reserved for just anyone (Jensen 2006b, 363), ship settings were constructed by a select group. If this is the case, the ship setting at Jelling is another symbol of royal power, possibly built by King Gorm, and then maintained by King Harald.

The ship setting and burial mound is not the only interesting combination at Jelling. King Harald's construction of a church next to a burial mound also calls for questions about what this combination of heathen and Christian belief can mean. The occurrence of the two in the same space is not a unique phenomenon. At Randbøl and Gamla Uppsala, the two elements are also present in an apparent association with each other. If the legends of these two places are correct, then the churches were built on locations of demonstrative authority, and show parallels to other sites with continuity from pagan burial to Christian symbols. Artelius (2004, 104) argues that in the 9th and 10th century, burial ritual always 'reflected a religious duality': the traditional heathen cult and the constant influence from Christianity. This duality is observable at Jelling too, where a pagan burial mound stands with a Christian burial place. It is, however, perhaps not accurate to describe it as a duality as this implies that the two elements stand in opposition of each other. It is rather the incorporation of symbols from two different faiths. At Randbøl and Gamla Uppsala this incorporation represents cult continuity, but at Jelling it occurs within one generation. However, we can apply to all three

sites the idea that the harmonisation of burial mound and church reflects the legitimisation of the church builder's faith and authority.

The development of the church at Jelling appears to be part of a wider phenomenon observable in Denmark, that of the development from hall building to church. Jessen (2012, 67) argues that the construction of large hall buildings in west Scandinavia was a means of expression of social power, it being the power centre of 'the sacral king', and furthermore, that the labour investment needed to build such a house displayed the importance of the resident. Following on from this, if the sequence of buildings beneath the church at Jelling indeed represents a transition from residential or ceremonial hall building to church, it implies a transition from elite power, displayed by a hall building, to religious function. Therefore, it can be argued that the construction of a church at Jelling (and Lisbjerg) was a continuation of the demonstration of power by a central elite, merely in a different religious form. This is a continuation of the aristocratic cult sites we see from the Iron Age onwards. At these large central places magnate residences lie in association with cult places, suggesting that the aristocracy was responsible for the maintenance of religion. Arguably, Jelling was also an aristocratic cult site where the conversion to Christianity sparked a new form of cult site in association with a central settlement.

Reviewing these results, it is evident that a survey beyond the time period of the Jelling dynasty and beyond the monument's region can further our understanding of the complex. Its location was not based on an identification with the past monuments in the area, but perhaps due to the importance of the region, expressed in the presence of wealthy farm complexes already in the Iron Age. A brief look at the type-sites demonstrates that both these sites and the Jelling complex include different combinations of elements that reflect the legitimisation of authority and conversion to a new faith. Furthermore, the incorporation of cult and residence is a phenomenon we see developing across Scandinavia in the form of aristocratic cult sites and hall-*cum*-churches from the Iron Age onwards.

DISCUSSION

At Jelling, the rune stones give evidence for a royal dynasty situated at an important site, which played a role in the conversion to Christianity. We do not know if it was a place of significance before Gorm's reign, and the dates of the structures point to Jelling losing its function not long after Harald's reign ended. The time span of Jelling was therefore short, but the monumentality of the complex implies that it was of great significance during this period. What the significance of Jelling actually was is not mentioned in historical sources; therefore, we attempt to deduce it from the features of the monument, assembling a puzzle from the archaeological pieces we have. One of the key findings from the recent investigations into the monument is that the entire complex is more or less contemporary, with the three chronological horizons observed by Holst *et al.* (in press). We cannot ascertain who was responsible for the first horizon of construction, but it is clear that King Gorm raised the small rune stone. This suggests that King Gorm also ordered the construction of the stone ship setting and the North Mound as his own burial monument. This theory fits into the pattern of the many complexes consisting of a ship setting, rune stone and mound raised during this period. It is mere conjecture, however, and it will doubtless remain a mystery who was buried in the North Mound.

The second horizon was almost certainly initiated by King Harald, as historical sources document his baptism in 965. If we align the dates, it can be argued that Harald Bluetooth raised the South Mound and the large rune stone around the time of his conversion to Christianity. The archaeological evidence does not deny the legend that Harald reburied his father underneath the church after his baptism, as the second phase of the North Mound and the possible early wooden church can be ascribed to this period too. Harald also expanded the monument with the addition of the palisade and the houses. Holst *et al.* (in press, 11-12) argue that this signals a change in the definition of the complex. The first horizon appears to emphasise burial and monumental elements, possibly reflecting the pre-Christian cult and referring to past monuments, with the complex forming part of an open landscape. In contrast, during the second horizon, the settlement aspect is dominant and the monument becomes restricted with the addition of a large palisade. Although the ship setting is partly destroyed by the South Mound, it is also incorporated into the complex by the construction of a palisade with the same side lengths as the possible stone ship. The continuity of the monument therefore remains, now expressed in 'organizational principles' (Holst *et al.* in press, 12).

There thus seems to be a slight shift in the composition of the monument. Deducing the initial intention behind the monument and its location is difficult as we know even less about this phase and King Gorm than we do about the second phase and King Harald. As aforementioned, it is possible that Jelling was originally intended as a burial monument for King Gorm and a symbol of his royal power. Reviewing Vestergaard's (2007) study on ship settings, it can be argued that the North Mound and the monumental stone ship setting were built according to a wider visible pattern: close to a main road and waterways and at a high point in the landscape. Subsequently, Harald Bluetooth builds on the Jelling monument, expanding on the old features and introducing new ones. This phase is the most interesting for a reconsideration of the Jelling complex because it is the discovery of this expansion that called for a re-analysis of the monument. The first phase can be understood as a cult monument, not unlike those visible at Glavendrup or Anundshög, except that we know for certain that Jelling was a royal construction. However, the development of the monument during the second phase means that the complex must have been intended as more than a cult monument. Understanding Jelling can therefore be approached by reviewing why King Harald maintained this place as the centre of the Jelling dynasty, and what significance of the monument was now that it had been expanded. This thesis has moved towards this by analysing the location and purpose of the Jelling complex.

An analysis of Jelling and the ring fortresses makes it evident that the five constructions formed part of a network across the kingdom. However, the lack of evidence for military activities at Jelling and the differences the complex shows to the fortresses indicates that Jelling had less of a domestic control function than the fortresses. Considering its position in regards to trade, access, and regional dominance, Jelling's location may have been chosen so that King Harald's monument could serve as a central place. Furthermore, there is some evidence to suggest that this area had elite importance since the Iron Age. However, this begs the question: was the monument originally constructed here because it was the ideal location for a central place or as initially merely as a cult place as I suggested above? Consequently, did Harald Bluetooth expand the Jelling monument during his reign because it had a central position for his kingdom or because he was building on the significance of the site as a royal monument? I argue that the former is a likely scenario, but that it does not dismiss the latter theory. I discounted the possibility of cult continuity on the grounds of no former on site cult-activity and relatively low past cult activity in the area. Mads Holst (pers.comm. 2012) theorises that this lack of previous activity on the site is the reason why the Jelling monument was built there; the Jelling dynasty intended to establish

something new on a new location. This could explain why such as important cult monument was initially constructed on a location with no connection to the past. However, once the complex develops under Harald's kingship, there was already an established monument there. Therefore, although the developments at Jelling occur within a very short time span, Harald's expansion of the monument can be considered as the continuous use of an important monument. Consequently, if we theoretically treat Jelling as a cult continuity site, it may further our understanding of the complex.

A lot of research has been done on the subject of site continuity, and there are varying theories on what the significance of this phenomenon is. Bradley (2002, 8) argues that 'prehistoric societies maintained close links with the places where past events had happened and with forms of architecture and material culture which had been inherited from antiquity.' The latter is especially applicable to the Viking Period, when people built burial mounds identical to those already present in the landscape from the Bronze Age. It was thus a deliberate acknowledgement of the existence of the past in the landscape. Later this acknowledgement takes on a different form with the conversion to Christianity; then we see the placement of churches or Christian graveyards on older cult sites, such as at Vittene. Lisa Larsson (2005, 110-111) argues in a discussion on site continuity that when a monument is re-used different sets of choices apply: respect the old, establish something new on top of the old, or disturb the old. If we apply this to the ideas about Jelling I outlined above, it can be argued that at the commencement of the first phase of the complex, something new is established on a new location, where after the second phase represents respect of the old by incorporating ancient symbols into a new monument.

A similar approach can be used to deduce the purpose of the Jelling complex. The comparison with the contemporary constructions has demonstrated that Jelling shows a combination of military and economic features. Aside from the individual similarities there is also a wider pattern visible: the use of a geometric organisation and the presence of the Trelleborg house-type. Holst *et al.* (in press, 15-16) argue that that the architectural similarities between Jelling and the ring fortresses may indicate a political link between the constructions, but on the other hand may reflect a standardised building mode which provided a more efficient construction process, rather than a functional connection between the sites. This may indeed have been the reason behind the use of the specific geometric measurements. However, a standardised construction type and process also implies a central authority that implements it. Therefore, the strict spatial organisation does indicate a political

connection between the sites. With regard to the initiation of this geometric design, the dates of the second phase of Jelling and the dendrochronological dates of the fortresses do not exclude any of three possibilities. One, that the Jelling monument mimicked the design and military nature of the fortresses. Two, that the geometric organisation used at Jelling was carried over in the construction of the fortresses with an added emphasis on the military aspect. Three, that Harald initiated a specific organisation of space simultaneously in all of his constructions across the country.

The chronology of initiation aside, the standardised use of geometric measurements served a purpose beyond a construction mode. It can be argued that the strict spatial organisation of Jelling and the ring fortresses functioned as a demonstration of strength towards the people. In a study on monumentality in the Bronze Age Near East and Aegean, Bretschneider *et al.* (2007, 1) point out that public buildings reflect the investment of resources and symbolise a social order, and the monumentality of the public buildings helped to improve social cohesions and legitimated a particular societal system. If we apply this to the context the fortresses were built in, it can be argued that King Harald wished to improve social cohesion and order at a time when Denmark was experiencing political and economic problems. The rural settlements contemporaneous with Jelling also display a geometric organisation with a basic unit of 60m. Therefore, we can view them as further evidence for the importance of spatial organisation in the Viking Period. Jessen (2012, 124) argues that stability and social status go hand in hand, a trend that is already visible in the early Iron Age in the systematic parcellation of land according to specific measurements. Thus, it can be argued that by organising the settlement in this way, the magnate responsible for the development of a settlement demonstrated his status. Therefore, by constructing the fortresses and Jelling according to geometric measurements, King Harald was building on a longer tradition of expressing power through systematic construction.

Standardisation in Harald's kingdom is also observable in the construction of the Trelleborg-type house at Jelling, the ring fortresses, and the rural settlements. There is not enough evidence to associate this house type with aristocratic farms. However, its combination of aristocratic and agrarian elements and its construction at Royal Jelling may have led to its use in large settlements. Its use at Jelling and the ring fortresses also demonstrates the importance of standardisation in Harald Bluetooth's reign. Furthermore, the typology of the Trelleborg house-type at Jelling gives us further clues to the purpose of the Jelling complex. King Harald emulates magnate residences through the use of aristocratic architecture, making Jelling an elite settlement. However, he also incorporates rural elements

in his house construction, indicating that the complex also had an economic purpose. This is supported by the possible existence of an economy building at Jelling. The development of the monument in this direction is in line with Jørgensen's (2009, 331) observation that economy begins to play a larger role in central places in the Viking Period than it did in the Iron Age. Thus, it can be argued that the houses were intended to both fulfil an aristocratic function at a royal settlement and an economic function at a central place.

Looking beyond only a comparison with the contemporary constructions, it is evident that we must consider the cult elements present at Jelling. The presence of mounds, rune stones, a possible ship setting, and a church indicates that the ritual aspect of the complex played a large role in the monumentality of Jelling. These are all features we can observe at other sites, but usually as a combination of two or three elements. At Jelling, all of these features are present and were constructed within a short time span. The analysis of the type-sites leads to two theories about the significance of these features individually and collectively at Jelling. One, the monument is a demonstration of the authority of the Jelling dynasty. This is indicated by the construction of a monumental ship setting and mound, the monument's likeness to an aristocratic cult place, and the social status displayed by the hall-*cum*-church. Two, the monument was intended to legitimise the Danish kingdom's conversion to Christianity. This is visible in the incorporation of the monumental ship setting into the new phase of the complex, the construction of a church next to the mound, and the development of a traditional hall building into a church. The two purposes are not mutually exclusive, however, and in fact they facilitate each other. Returning to the discussion on cult continuity, it can be argued that older cult symbols were incorporated into the Jelling complex in order to strengthen the position of the king and legitimise the transition to a new religion. Jørgensen (2009, 351) argues that the organisation of pre-Christian cult must have formed an essential part of people's lives and that when Christianity was introduced 'it would therefore have been necessary to demonstrate cultic continuity at the absolutely central places to obtain the acceptance of the population' and 'this demonstration of continuity was probably necessary to legitimise the position of both the ruling class and Christianity with the population'. The Jelling complex was thereby a symbol of the Jelling dynasty's power and of the kingdom's new faith. It is unclear, however, to what extent King Harald displayed an identification with the past in order to legitimise his rule and facilitate the conversion, and to what extent it was a expression of his own identification with the past. The transition to Christianity in Viking Period Denmark has a 'grey area'. This is reflected by for example the transition from traditional hall building to church, where it is

unclear when the hall ceased functioning as a centre for pagan ritual and commenced functioning as a centre for Christian religion. Furthermore, sites such as Jelling illustrate that we can no longer separate cult symbols into heathen or Christian. Subsequently, it can be argued that Harald Bluetooth included old and new cult elements into his monument not only as an exhibition of authority and legitimisation, but as part of a wider tradition in Denmark where the overlap between the two religions was a logical side effect of the conversion.

Combining the results of my comparison of Jelling to the contemporary constructions and to the types-sites, it is evident that at Jelling we find a union of authority, economy, and religion. This is not a new phenomenon, however; the central places of the Iron Age exhibit this same amalgamation, with a stronger development of the economic role in the Viking Period. The Jelling dynasty was therefore rooting its complex in a long tradition of uniting cult and power. It was probably a conscious effort by King Gorm and thereafter King Harald to solidify their rule of the Danish kingdom by anchoring it in tradition. Additionally, I argue that it indicates that cult and power were interconnected components of Viking Period society.

Finally, this research illustrates that our understanding of an archaeological site can be furthered by analysing its similarities and differences to other sites, and by applying our knowledge about comparable sites to it. Furthermore, the Viking Period is designated as a sub-division of the Iron Age, but the development of society must not be seen as separate from previous periods. To comprehend the ideology and traditions of the Viking Period we must look to some degree towards the past. Therefore, research on this part of Scandinavian history would benefit from further studies on the Iron Age as a whole.

CONCLUSION

The Jelling monument has always been considered one of Denmark's most remarkable archaeological sites, and the recent discoveries by the Jelling Project reveal that it truly is a unique site. The complexity of the site means that it is hard to determine the true intention behind the monument. However, through examining its features and comparing it to contemporary constructions and type-sites, this thesis endeavoured a re-consideration of the Jelling complex by understanding its location and purpose.

To address these aspects, I will return to the chronological horizons, which reflect the shift the complex itself experiences. The first phase of the monument marks the construction of a cult place and a royal centre. It is constructed in a location with no significant past, and therefore breaks from the common pattern of cult continuity. This was probably a conscious choice; the Jelling dynasty established a new and unique cult place and thus chose a novel location. In addition, the location reflects Jelling's function as a centre in the kingdom; it is near to the north-south road and to several waterways, and it is located midpoint of the country. The purpose of the monument is then quickly expanded during the second phase as societal conditions change, and Jelling becomes an amalgamation of elements. King Harald continues the use of this location, probably due to its central position in the country and his identification with the previous use of the monument. The complex now reflects the combination of military, economic, and religious influences. These elements are integrated by combining the existing cult symbols and the new features in an impressive geometrically organised whole. By harmonising pagan and Christian cult during the transition to Christianity, King Harald legitimised the kingdom's conversion to the new faith. Furthermore, the monument served as a display of the authority of the royal dynasty. By the time Jelling lost its importance in the 11th century, it had become the union of multiple components, reflecting the complexity of Viking Period society at this time. Ultimately the greatest impression this re-consideration of the monumental complex leaves, is that Jelling is unique, yet the result of a long tradition stemming from at least as far back as the Iron Age, when cult and power went hand in hand.

ABSTRACT

The archaeological site Jelling in Denmark is a Viking Period monumental complex constructed by King Gorm and his son King Harald. Recent excavations here have shown that the traditional theories about this monument need to be re-evaluated. This thesis endeavours a reconsideration of the site by studying why the monument was built on this location and what the purpose of the monument was. Through comparing Jelling to contemporary ring fortresses and settlements, surveying the archaeological composition of the area surrounding the monument, and analysing type-sites that shows parallels to Jelling, this thesis aims to further our understanding of the monumental complex.

The results of the investigations reveal that Jelling's location was probably chosen for several reasons. When King Gorm constructed the first phase of the monument, he chose a new location, purposely building it on a site with no past cult activity. He did, however, position Jelling in an ideal area for a central place in the kingdom. When King Harald expanded the monument during the second phase, he continued the use of this site probably due to an identification with the location, and its positioning in the centre of the country. The research also indicates that the Jelling complex possibly served more than one purpose. Along with the ring fortresses it formed part of a network for regional control, but shows more of an economic than military influence. Jelling is also an example of an aristocratic cult place, where the union of old and new religious symbols legitimised the conversion to Christianity. Finally, it served as a demonstration of the strength of the monarchy, illustrated by the standardisation of spatial organisation and the presence of authoritative cult symbols. In conclusion, the reconsideration of the Jelling complex indicates that the monument was constructed according to a long tradition of uniting cult and power in a central place.

SAMENVATTING

De archeologische site Jelling in Denemarken is een monumentaal complex Jelling uit de Viking Periode, gebouwd door Koning Gorm en zijn zoon Koning Harald. Recente opgravingen hier wijzen erop dat het noodzakelijk is om de traditionele theorieën over deze site te herevalueren. Deze scriptie tracht een heroverweging van de site te maken door het bestuderen van waarom het monument gebouwd werd op deze locatie en wat het doel van het monument was. Door Jelling te vergelijken met de gelijktijdige ringforten en nederzettingen, de archeologische samenstelling van de omgeving te onderzoeken en 'type-sites' die vergelijkbaar zijn met Jelling te analyseren, werkt deze scriptie toe naar een beter inzicht in het monument.

Uit de resultaten van dit onderzoek blijkt dat Jellings locatie waarschijnlijk gekozen werd om verschillende redenen. Toen Koning Gorm de eerste fase van het monument bouwde, koos hij voor een nieuwe locatie met als doel het op een site met geen verleden cultus activiteit te plaatsen.. Hij positioneerde echter Jelling ook in een ideaal gebied voor een centrale plaats in het koninkrijk. Toen Koning Harald het monument uitbreidde in de tweede fase, zette hij het gebruik van deze site door, waarschijnlijk omdat hij identificeerde met de locatie van het monument en hij ook een centraal punt in het land wilde gebruiken. Dit onderzoek geeft ook aan dat het Jelling complex meer dan één functie had. Samen met de ringforten maakte het deel uit van een netwerk van regionale controle, maar toont het wel meer economische invloed dan militaire invloed. Jelling is ook een voorbeeld van een aristocratische cultus plaats, waar de vereniging van oude en nieuwe religieuze symbolen de bekering tot het christendom legitimeerde. Ten slotte diende het monument als een demonstratie van de kracht van de monarchie, geïllustreerd door de standaardisering van de ruimtelijke organisatie en de aanwezigheid van machtige cultus symbolen. Concluderend, de heroverweging van het Jelling complex geeft aan dat het monument werd gebouwd volgens een lange traditie van het verenigen van cultus en macht in een centrale plaats.

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APPENDIX I | Chronology of Scandinavia (after Hvass and Storgaard 1993)

Age	Period	Years
Iron Age	Viking Period	AD 750 – AD 1050
	Germanic Iron Age	AD 400 – AD 750
	Roman Iron Age	0 – AD 400
	Pre-Roman Iron Age	500 BC – 0
Bronze Age	Late Bronze Age	1000 BC – 500 BC
	Early Bronze Age	1700 BC – 1000 BC