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An Homage to the Ancestors

A study of the secondary use of ancient fortifications as burial grounds during the Late Iron Age on Gotland

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MA thesis 45 credits in archaeology
Spring term 2019
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Campus Gotland

Abstract

Bokor, L. M. 2019. *An Homage to the Ancestors. A study of the secondary use of ancient fortifications as burial grounds during the Late Iron Age on Gotland.*

Fortifications are a common type of ancient monument found throughout Scandinavia, and while the functions of forts are studied and debated quite heavily, the re-use of these structures is less known. On Gotland, there exist 84 ancient fortifications, of which approximately one-third have burials or registered graves within or in close proximity to their locations. This thesis identifies those locations where empirical evidence can be found to identify burials as a form of secondary use of fortifications. The case study of Gudings slott, in Eke Parish, is examined to exemplify the chronological extent of secondary use of an ancient fortification by continued burial rituals from the Late Iron Age through the early Middle Ages. Ancestral worship, memory theory, burial practices, and spatial analysis are utilized to explain why these sites may have been chosen for re-use as burial grounds during the Late Iron Age. The resulting interpretations reveal a unique combination of topographic location, ancestral connectivity, and social stressors as key factors in the secondary use of the examined sites. In addition, new possibilities for the study of Gotland's ancient fortification sites and suggestions for future research are put forward.

Keywords: *ancient fortifications, hill-forts, ring-forts, Iron Age, ancestral worship, memory, landscape*

Master thesis in Archaeology [45 hp]. Supervisor: Gustaf Svedjemo. Defended and passed 2019-09-09.

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Cover image of the fortification wall and a stone-setting from Gudings slott. *Photo by Lauren Marianne Bokor.*

Abstract

Bokor, L. M. 2019. *En Hyllning till Förfaderna. En studie av den sekundära användningen av fornborgar som gravplats genom yngre järnåldern på Gotland.*

Fornborgar är en vanlig typ av forntida monument som finns i hela Skandinavien, och även om borgarnas funktioner har studerats och diskuterats tämligen omfattande är återanvändningen av dessa strukturer mindre känd. På Gotland finns 84 fornborgar, varav ungefär en tredjedel har begravningar eller registrerade gravar inom eller i närheten av deras lokalisering. Denna uppsats identifierar de platser där empirska blägg finns för begravningar som en form av sekundär användning av borgar. Fallstudien av Gudings slott i Eke socken används för att exemplifiera den kronologiska omfattningen av sekundär användning av en fornborg som en plats för fostsatta begravningsritualer från yngre järnålder upp i tidig medeltid. Förfädersdyrkan, minnesteori, begravningsmetoder och rumslig analys används för att förklara varför dessa platser kan ha valts för återanvändning som gravplatser under yngre järnålder. De resulterande tolkningarna avslöjar en unik kombination av topografisk lokalisering, koppling till förfäder och sociala stressfaktorer som nyckelfaktor i den sekundära användningen av de undersökta platserna. Dessutom presenteras nya möjligheter för att studera Gotlands fornborgar och förslag till framtida forskning.

Ämnesord: *fornborgar, höjdborgar, ringborgar, järnålder, förfädersdyrkan, minne, landskap*

Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been possible without the help and guidance of my supervisor, Gustaf Svedjemo, and my unofficial co-supervisor, Dan Carlsson. I am extremely grateful to have been given the opportunity to participate in both the 2018 and 2019 field seasons of Gotland Archaeological Field School's excavation at *Gudings slott*, the catalyst for this research subject. I would also like to thank my classmates and friends Sara Downard, Austin Main, Barbora Žiačková and Anton Uvelius for proof-reading drafts, helping with editing and providing humour to a generally stressful process. Of course, I cannot forget about my parents George and Sherri Bokor who are always there for me when I need moral support and who encouraged me to follow my passion. Finally, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my late grandfather, George Michael Bokor, who fed me a healthy diet of history and archaeology books as a child and whom I miss dearly.

Content

1 Introduction

1.1 Research Problem

During the Late Iron Age (400–1050 CE) in Scandinavia, it was not uncommon to bury the dead in already ancient monuments from the Bronze Age (1800-1100 BCE) and Early Iron Age (600 BCE–400 CE). One type of ancient monument in which Late Iron Age burials are found are fortifications, commonly referred to as hill-forts, which primarily date to the Early Iron Age. Despite the re-use of objects and monuments being common throughout the historical and archaeological record, the reason for this particular phenomenon has not yet been investigated in detail. Unlike other Late Iron Age burials found superimposed in Bronze Age cairns, burials in fortifications are seemingly unrelated to the original purpose of the monument, which has been primarily accepted to be of defensive value. The current positions on the original functions of fortifications complicate the relation of the connected superimposed graves to the pre-existing monuments due to the insecurity of meaning behind fortifications that would otherwise offer a more secure interpretation, such as that when studying the superimposition of graves on older grave monuments.

The function of some ancient fortifications as ritual spaces is gaining a growing number of proponents amongst scholars, but the difficulty in identifying a space as ritual or ceremonial is that these activities have left minimal, if any, traces in the archaeological record. Given the lack of existing evidence for functionality, it is reasonable to propose the question of whether or not people in the Late Iron Age had knowledge of the previous activities that occurred at a given site. This is challenging to ascertain through archaeological investigation. It is entirely possible that the societies who re-purposed these ancient monuments lacked any context for the original function and superimposed their own beliefs and customs onto these structures to give them an entirely new meaning during their period of re-use. In order to investigate the possible reasons for the re-use of ancient fortifications as burial sites during the Late Iron Age, a critical analysis of the existing empirical archaeological evidence as well as the current prevailing theories on the phenomena of site re-use and memory have been employed in this text.

Through the examination of the existing evidence of burials at Gotlandic fortification sites, the possibility is presented for exploring the secondary use of these structures several hundred years after their original construction. The evidence of re-use of ancient fortifications as burial locations necessitates an evaluation of the pattern for Late Iron Age use of these sites and why they may have had significance hundreds of years after they eroded into ruins.

1.2 Research Theory

The practice of re-use is commonly explained in association with the practices of ancestor veneration and memory transformation. The majority of research on these subjects has been conducted by Anders Andrén (2006; 2013; 2014), who has written extensively about ancestral worship, and Ann-Mari Hållans Stenholm (2006; 2012), who has paved the way in the study of memory theory. Whereas ancestor veneration is more relative to cosmological beliefs and rituals that culminate in material remains, memory theory primarily concerns the social-cultural relevance of the creation and transformation of memories; Hållans Stenholm further suggests that the custom of re-use is a ritual practice resulting in the physical manifestation of

remembrance through material culture. These concepts are profoundly relevant to burial practices that forge connections to the past, and establish rights to landscapes backwards through time. *Where* the rituals of ancestral worship and re-use take place is of particular importance and may justify the superimposition of burials at fortification sites.

1.3 Research Background

Of primary interest in this study is the possibility of subsequent generations in the Late Iron Age utilising established fortifications or their remaining ruins beyond their original purpose or functionality; a phenomenon that appears to have been overlooked by the scholars who have previously focused their research principally on the original construction and function of these structures.

There are approximately 1,500 documented ancient structures in Scandinavia that qualify as fortifications, of which 84 are registered on the Swedish island of Gotland (Andrén 2014; Runesson 2014; RAÄ 2019). On Gotland, the construction of ancient fortifications is generally, though not exclusively, dated to the Early Iron Age: more precisely, the Roman Iron Age (1–400 CE) and the Migration Period (400–600 CE). For over a century, the function of these structures has primarily been theorised to have been political in nature (Nordin 1881; Manneke 1983; Engström 1983a; Hegardt 1991b; Hedenstierna-Jonson 2009; Olausson 2009). However, more recently a growing number of scholars have put forward new hypotheses about the function of these sites as meeting places or ritual locations (Johansen 1997; Price 2002; Sanmark & Semple 2008; Bornfalk Back 2011; Andrén 2014). Since the publication of the latest comprehensive works (see Cassel 1998, Arnberg 2007, Bornfalk Back 2011, Runesson 2014, and Widegren Lundin 2016) on the subject of fortifications on Gotland, several excavations of such monuments have taken place around the island. The most recent findings indicate at ways in which proceeding societies re-used these structures: a relatively unexplored aspect of these fortifications.

1.4 Research Methods

For the development of this research, I have primarily drawn from the work of Kerstin Cassel (1998) for her extensive investigation into the subject of Gotland's ancient fortifications. The research methods used are based on the parameters established by Cassel in her dissertation *Från Grav till Gård* where she introduces the subject of fortification re-use as burial grounds during the Late Iron Age (1998: 153f). By using this section of her work as the basis for my investigation together with the current digital geographic information available, I was able to vastly expand upon her initial findings and relate the new findings to the current archaeological research.

The opportunity to excavate an ancient fortification, known as *Gudings slott*, in south-eastern Gotland during the summer of 2018 provided a unique experience to investigate one of these ancient structures first hand. While the initial aim of the excavation was to find evidence for the original construction and function of the fortification, after investation of graves located at the site, it became evident that there was more information available for the secondary use of the site as a Viking Age (800–1050 CE) burial ground. Further, during the research into Gotland's ancient fortifications, it became clear that *Gudings slott* was not the only site where superimposed graves are found. This revelation became the basis for the work presented in this text.

In order to evaluate the phenomenon presented in this work, numerous factors and methods have been considered, including the available theoretical research, empirical evidence from excavations, and spatial analysis of both fortifications and site re-use. Using the available spatial data provided by the Central Board of National Antiquities, *Riksantikvarieämbetet*

(RAÄ) database for archaeological sites and monuments, *Fornminnesregistret* (FMIS), and excavation reports, I created a dataset of ancient fortifications on Gotland that have evidence of burials or registered graves directly inside, on or within close proximity (100 meters being the distance chosen for this research, based on Cassel's previous research).

The fortifications used in the analysis are those listed as "*fornborg"* (en. "ancient fortification") by the RAÄ and include those of uncertain classification (i.e. "*fornborg?*"). On Gotland, there are 84 registered ancient fortifications, represented in the spatial data as polygons, points, and lines. To compile the list of these sites, I performed multiple spatial queries to find the instances where registered ancient grave monuments intersected with either the forts themselves or the 100-meter buffers. In addition to the spatial analysis, it was necessary to comb through the descriptions of each fortification in FMIS to find mentions of located human remains and graves otherwise unregistered. The resulting list of 27 sites represents approximately one-third of Gotland's registered ancient fortifications.

1.5 Research Aim

With the establishment of an apparent phenomenon of burials located at a significant amount of fortification sites, the predominant question then becomes: why? The re-purposing of objects and monuments in conjunction with burial customs in ancient Scandinavia leads to questions surrounding societal beliefs and past affiliations with ancestral practices. Research on this topic requires an in-depth review of the existing monuments and documented evidence of their use and re-use for burial purposes. By examining the empirical evidence from the sites under investigation that have been excavated, together with consideration of the spatial distribution of these sites, the current theoretical framework of the function of ancient fortifications, ancestral relationships, and memory transformation, this thesis attempts to analyse why these monuments appealed to later mortuary practice and what their re-use meant to the secondary users.

2 Theoretical foundations: Secondary use of ancient monuments

2.1 A history of secondary use

The paramount practice of discussion in this thesis is site re-use. It should be noted that the terms "re-use" and "secondary use" are used interchangeably in this text. Secondary use is not meant to imply that the object or monument has been used in only two ways, for there could have been numerous phases of re-use leading up to the described "secondary" use. The study of re-use has gained recent traction within the discipline of Scandinavian archaeology, with a focus on burial mounds and settlements, but to a lesser extent, other monuments such as ancient fortifications. Secondary use is widespread throughout human history; however, it is often mitigated to a mere mention within archaeological reports where the primary function of a monument or object is the main subject of investigation.

The question of why ancient remains were significant to Late Iron Age society must be requires a specific approach. By examining the chronology, location and type of re-use associated with the remains, it might be possible to theorise as to their meaning for the societies that proceeded them. Re-use often places a particular significance on the object or monument related to the secondary user's perception of the object or monument based on said secondary user's cosmological beliefs and societal experiences during the period of re-use. It is crucial to bear in mind that the people being discussed did not define themselves in terms of finite societies and chronologies as we do (Bradley 2002: 52). The conception of time during the Late Iron Age in Scandinavia was dependent on human action and experience (Svanberg 2003: 136) rather than an arbitrary quantitative chronology. People had knowledge and conceptions of the past that shaped their present and affected how they perceived their future.

Perhaps the most visible evidence of the past exists with the monuments left in the landscape by preceding societies. During the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age, the Scandinavian peoples began placing grave monuments along roads and at the entrances of waterways to signify their presence and establish their right to the land. These monuments were meant to be seen by residents and outsiders alike. Christopher Tilley (1994) explains how the landscape played a pivotal role in formulating symbolic connections to common routes, a custom that had evolved already during the Mesolithic Period (7500-4000 BCE). Unlike the less notable footprints left behind by early hunters and gatherers, the paths created while herding animals across seasonal routes led to repeated use of the greater landscape. He notes that as people and livestock ventured from fixed locations, their repeated travel routes led to recognisable landmarks with symbolic markers, monuments, or reference points that served as familiar places to rest, to tell stories, or to carry out reoccurring activities (Tilley 1994: 207). While Tilley focused on behaviours that occurred during the Mesolithic and Neolithic (4000-700 BCE) periods, his generalisations about connecting newer generations to past generations continue through all proceeding time periods. Further, many monuments were purposefully constructed to last into the future (Bradley 2002: 82). Tilley generalises that cultural markings such as tombs "visibly brought the presence of the ancestral past to consciousness" (1994: 202). Subsequent generations or societies would have seen these monuments in the landscape and would have recognised them as belonging to previous generations, or in some cases, to a mythological past (Hageman & Hill 2016: 54). The concept of time played a crucial role in the

ancestral cult as burial monuments present in the landscape offered a direct connection between the past, present and future (Svanberg 2003: 136). These monuments remaining in the landscape were chosen and adopted by those later groups of people, and were used or re-purposed in various ways depending on how they were perceived.

The concepts of re-use and redefining the past in Late Iron Age Scandinavia requires an examination of mortuary practices and the social biography established through burial rituals during the same time period. Discussion revolving around ancestral worship and mortuary practices suggests that Iron Age societies engaged in sophisticated traditions and carefully orchestrated mnemonic rituals as a way of remembering and memorialising the dead. Activities such as erecting monuments, grave construction, the manipulation of the deceased's remains, or hoarding artefacts would have enabled social remembering through material culture. The actions connecting mortuary practice to social memory focus on the production, evolution, and placement artefacts over time. Conceptually, the decorative adornment of heirlooms, their bodily placement, and the stories of their production and procurement should have a social biography (Lund & Arwill-Nordbladh 2016: 416f; Jones 2007: 80ff). Not only were artefacts re-used, but they could also be modelled after artefacts from past time periods, both literally (e.g. using an old brooch as a basis for a mould) and figuratively (e.g. mimicking the style of an old brooch), exemplifying a connection to styles and forms of the past (see Andrén 2013: 278). The re-use or purposeful reproduction of artefacts supports the existence of social memory through generations.

Naturally, social memory would not have been limited to physical objects. The placement of architectural monuments in relation to existing monuments, and their proximity to both similar and not so similar structures at other localities, served as material culture acting upon the present, invoking both reflections of the past, and thoughts to the future (Lund & Arwill-Nordbladh 2016: 416f; Jones 2007: 80ff). Despite regional variation in the ways in which monuments were adopted by proceeding societies, a number of commonalities can be perceived in Scandinavia more generally during this period.

On Gotland, there is a rich history of secondary use of ancient monuments during the Late Iron Age. One prominent example is the deposition of Viking Age silver and coins found in "giants graves" (sv. *kämpgravar*) - a type of stone-building foundation common during the Roman Iron Age (1–400 CE) and Migration Period (400–600 CE). Deposits of silver or silver hoards from the Viking Age found in stone-building foundations have been confirmed on seven occasions on Gotland (Stenberger 1958: 19) and are hypothesized to belong to an ancestral cult where their deposition could have acted as a type of sacrifice to the ancestors (Svedjemo 2014: 115). Where silver hoards are found in both earlier and contemporary graves, and other ritual contexts, primarily on the Swedish mainland, Torun Zachrisson proposes that this practice strengthened the ties between the depositor and the ancestors buried at that location, as well as to the landscape (Zachrisson 1998: 120; Svedjemo 2014: 115). Since Viking Age silver deposits are so abundant, particularly on Gotland, and can demonstrate multiple layers of deposition (see Carlsson & Karn 2014), it does not seem likely that they were ever meant to be retrieved (Dan Carlsson 2019, personal communication 2019-04-25). The type of site re-use represented by deposits of silver, like all forms of secondary use mentioned in this text, is an intentional act with a specific outcome or meaning.

Another pattern of re-use common on Gotland and throughout Scandinavia during the Iron Age is the practice of interring cremation burials inside Bronze Age mounds and cairns. This practice may may also relate to the form and appearance of Iron Age mounds and cairns, that are reminiscent of their larger Bronze Age counterparts (Parker Pearson 2000: 126). Monumental Bronze Age mounds and cairns contained burials suggested to be from an elite group who lived during a period of time revered by people who potentially perceived themselves as the descendants of that elite group. Carrying out burial customs similar to the former elite may have legitimized positions through affiliation or lineages with an aristocratic past. Similarly, burial cairns and stone ship-settings dating from both the Bronze and Viking Ages are presumed to support the idea of ritual continuity or reverence to a mythical past

(Artelius 2004; Widholm 2006; Andren 2013: 269-271). The same notion may be applied to the internment or placement of burials within, or superimposed upon, ancient mortuary monuments. As is discussed in Chapter 4, Late Iron Age burials can also be found located at non-funerary monuments, such as in and around ancient fortification sites from the Bronze and Early Iron Ages. Of interest in the current chapter, is the purpose of secondary use and what it could have meant to the secondary users.

2.2 The past within the past: theoretical interpretations of secondary use

There are two ways in which the concept of the past during the Late Iron Age has been interpreted by archaeologists: ancestral worship and memory theory. Being that both of these notions are intangible, evidence of secondary use of ancient monuments is paramount in understanding how these interpretations function. Undoubtedly, ancestral worship took place during the Late Iron Age in the form of ritual activities and cultic practices, which can be interpreted to a certain extent from literary sources as well as through archaeology. Ancestors played an integral part in society, as they established the foundation of common identities for their descendants (Murray 2016: 147), and therefore they most likely would have been treated with admiration and respect. Although related to ritualistic practices, memory theory is rather based on the way in which the ancestors were used to connect generations in a social context (Hållans Stenholm 2012). Both ancestral worship and memory theory are based on the common identities which strengthen the bonds between communities and the bonds connecting them to their inhabited landscape backwards through time, often manifesting through mortuary practices. These connections have strong implications to explain why later generations returned to ancient fortification sites to inter the deceased.

2.2.1 Ancestral worship

Ancestors played a key role in Scandinavian Iron Age society, though the worship of ancestors does not necessarily equate to a religious ideology, as the relationship between the living and the ancestors forms just a single facet of a broader cosmology seeking to connect and strengthen the relationship of the group through a common origin (Hageman & Hill 2016: 3). Ancestral worship would have taken place most certainly at burial grounds where ritual activities would transpire (Brink 2013: 39). Stefan Brink defines places where cultic activities occurred as "sacral landscapes" (Brink 1997: 431; Fabech and Näsman: 2013: 54). In the Stone and Bronze Ages in Scandinavia, ritual activities were performed in natural places, such as groves and stony outcrops, but there was a shift during the middle of the first millennium CE to constructed places (Fabech & Näsman 2013: 85). These sites could function as "gateways to the spiritual world and sometimes communication with ancestors" (Fabech & Näsman 2013: 65f). Tracing these ritual activities is, however, a difficult task owing to the lack of physical evidence such practices leave behind.

Archaeology has a limited scope in viewing the nuances of ritualistic behaviour, and therefore, much of what we know of the intangible aspects of ritual activities comes from textual sources, including eye witness accounts, sagas, and law codes. The degree to which textual sources are considered valid varies greatly between disciplines. Many textual sources are problematic in that they do not offer a contemporary internal telling of history, but they are widely used to support claims of behaviors or events in the past and reinforce notions of Scandinavian ritual otherwise incorporeal.

The best-known description of a funerary ritual comes from the Arabic traveller Ibn Fadlan's telling of a Viking ship funeral along the banks of the Volga river in Russia. His account details the ritual ceremonies of drinking, sexual activity, and sacrifice leading up to the cremation itself. The mortuary performance is described in detail, down to the clothing made

for the esteemed man, and the types of perishable goods meant to sustain him while he transferred to the next world (Parker Pearson 2000: 1ff). Whilst the description indeed reflects the material culture found in excavations of prestigious burials from this time period, it also depicts the many actions which cannot be ascertained by material remains. It is clear, however, that the events he witnessed shocked and puzzled him, as he did not grow up nor adhere to the beliefs of the people about whom he was writing.

Other descriptive sources include the sagas, written by the Icelandic author Snorri Sturluson in the thirteenth century. The tales on which Sturluson's sagas were based were passed down through oral tradition, and although he was considered to be an upstanding historian, it is unknown to what extent Sturluson changed or enhanced his source material. One thing that is evident is that collective memory persists through the generations and though it degrades over time, it is highly probable that the basic ideas behind stories largely remain the same. For example, *Egils saga* describes the rituals performed by Egil to prevent his deceased grandfather's spirit from becoming restless: a trope repeated in several of the Icelandic sagas. The tale suggests to the reader that during the tenth and eleventh centuries, ghosts were perceived to be a real issue and that there were specific ritual performances one could make to ease a strong spirit (Kanerva 2013). *Egils saga* provides insight into the relationship or attitude concerning the interaction between the living and the dead. The story suggests that the relationships between the living and the dead were significant and related to the relationships between the living and the living and that there were certain circumstances which deemed ritual activities appropriate.

A further resource that provides a different insight are historic law codes. The *Guta lag*, the Law of the Gotlanders, written down in the early medieval period, is a record of the laws enforced on Gotland at the time, and is generally considered to be historically accurate (Peel 2009). This law code is a particularly relevant source because it specifically relates to the region that this text is concerned with and is not exceedingly temporally removed from the time period in question. In the fourth chapter of the *Guta lag*, it is stated that "[n]o one may pray to either groves or howes or heathen gods, nor to holy places or ancient sites" (Peel 2009: 9). This excerpt suggests to the reader that pre-Christian rituals were still performed at pagan sites, after the Christianisation of Gotland, to such an extent that the practice needed to be outlawed. One can presume that a significant portion of these rituals must have revolved around ancestral worship based on the inclusion of 'ancient sites' and 'howes' (derived from the Old Norse *haugr* meaning 'mound' in reference to burial places) (Brink 2013: 43). Therefore, the law provides near contemporary evidence that rituals took place not only at burial mounds and natural settings, but also other ancient monuments.

While most of the ritual activities that would have taken place at burial monuments leave little trace in the archaeological record, burials themselves are a form of ritual practice that do leave behind a physical representation of ritual (Fabech & Näsman 2013: 65). Tilley affirms ancestral remains entombed throughout the topography act as physical symbols that lend ancestral power to later generations (Tilley 1994: 205). The textual sources enrich one's understanding of the archaeology by providing clues to the actions and purposes behind tangible objects and monuments. Through the rituals and relationships described in textual sources, it may be suggested that the later generations practicing ancestral worship at these sites would use the ancestral power of ancient monuments to establish their own power, connections, and rights to the land.

2.2.2 Memory theory

The concept of memory, and the role it played during prehistory, appeared in archaeological research during the 1980's as part of a critique of the chronologically-oriented studies from the mid-century, that focused on organising artefacts and monuments within the constrictive bounds of the time period in which they were constructed (Andrén 2013). The discipline had not previously considered the significance of ancient monuments existing in the landscape not

just during the period of construction, through each succeeding time period through to the present (Burström 1989). In this way, a multi-temporal approach to the chronology of ancient monuments must be used when it comes to the study of secondary usage of monuments.

Anders Andrén stresses the importance that not all memories are one in the same; they can be genealogical, recalling the more recent past, and they can also be mythological, recalling the more distant past (2013:269). The means through which different forms of memory are created and transferred is a multi-faceted process. Traditionally, the concept of memory has been allocated to oral traditions such as story-telling; however, oral culture is not a single-faceted practice as it often relies on the surrounding physical representations of culture (Andrén 2013: 269). In Ann-Mari Hållans Stenholm's dissertation (2012), she explains memory theory as a way for people to connect to past societies or past generations through a social context. According to her, memories in the social context are established through past communities, their locations, their rituals, and their beliefs (Hållans Stenholm 2012). This socio-cultural perspective proposes that memory is represented in the form of material culture, including landscape, which is perceived to be a more visible and durable way of remembering the past (Hållans Stenholm 2012: 240). Andrén also proposes that material culture cannot be separated from the act of remembrance as it often serves as a conduit for memory (2013: 279). Physical evidence, including burial monuments and personal artefacts discovered on Gotland and other regions of Scandinavia, supports this concept as shall be discussed shortly.

The Scandinavian landscape provides a multi-layered surface whereby traces of material culture are woven throughout its core. While it may be challenging to ascertain the oral history passed along from generation to generation, examination of artefacts and structural evidence paint a story of not only material culture, but oral culture used to link people to the past. As stated by Anders Andrén (2013: 279), "the importance of objects shows that material culture was an important vehicle for remembering. Oral culture never existed on its own, but was embedded in references to objects, images, monuments, and places". The study of memory theory corroborates this notion as research pertaining to ancient burials, common rituals, and mortuary acts define ideas about past customs and religious or spiritual traditions carried out over time.

While connections to our own collective past often provide self-awareness and cultural meaning, Hållans Stenholm (2012: 240) claims that constructing the past through social memory and formalisation also provides a meaningful context that legitimises the present. This legitimisation is most necessary when it relates to establishing ownership of a landscape through ancestral connections. It is clear that physical location plays an important role in contextualising memories and maintaining social space and order (Hållans Stenholm 2012: 240): this will be a prominent part of the discussion in Chapter 5, as it pertains to the re-use of ancient fortifications.

Use and re-use with regard to monuments such as burial mounds and settlements in numerous locations, including places outside of Sweden, imply that the practice was a creative way to ritually recognise ancestors and preserve the past (Hållans Stenholm 2012). Once established for spiritual worship, stone monuments, and the landscapes surrounding them, have served numerous purposes over time. While historical monuments such as those mentioned in the preceding section epitomize the utility of material culture, oral culture supporting their use and reinterpretation of their meaning throughout time cannot be ignored. Settlements located within close proximity to mythical places of worship in Scandinavia, are thought to have provided a way to connect people to a location's history and to their ancestral heritage, as well as to strengthen personal positions within the social structure (Lund & Arwill-Nordbladh 2016: 421). These connections to the past that bond people to places they inhabit or use do not belong only to the past, but continue to be true today.

Hållans Stenholm uses the term "memory mania" to describe the Viking Age in the Mälaren Valley of mainland Sweden, when the culture of that time period initiated a strong desire within people to not only preserve their ancestral origins but to establish their genealogy and hereditary titles through dwellings and burial sites (2012: 245). This is expressed through their habitation

and burial customs, including the superimposition on graves spanning several generations during the Migration Period, which contributed to the historically rooted practice and the Viking Age memory culture (Hållans Stenholm 2012). In this way, grave styles and their placement within the earth are believed to have played an important role in establishing territorial property, family, and household rights that extended well into the future. In later centuries, burial mounds served to establish proof of land rights (Zachrisson 1994; Andrén 2013: 272).

As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, graves were not the only structures modelled after Bronze Age monuments: for instance, homes were built and re-built for centuries based on the same construction many times over. This duplication practice is particularly obvious with ritual buildings proven to have been replicated in the same fashion as many as eight times over in preservation of their Old Norse customs and beliefs (Larsson & Lenntorp 2004: 43; Andrén 2013: 272). The continued use or copied style of older monuments physically and symbolically represented rememberance of the past.

Another way of connecting with the past involved placing newer graves and homesteads within the proximity of existing graves or older foundations. In these cases, newer elements were introduced into the later structures (Hållans Stenholm 2006, 2012; Pedersen 2006; Thäte 2007; Andrén 2013: 273). In a similar manner of re-use, ancient barrows in Scandinavia contain cremation and inhumation graves spanning through the Early and Late Bronze Age through to the Roman Iron Age and the Viking Age (Pedersen 2006; Thäte 2007; Andrén 2013: 273). When the large mounds from the Migration and Vendel Periods were not being used successively, they functioned as sites for Viking Age inhumation graves, which were placed along the structure's exterior (Bratt 2008: 62-97; Pedersen 2006; Andrén 2013: 273). The proximity to the older monuments in these cases creates a spatial connection between the ancestral structures and the people re-using them.

Burial monuments were not the only monuments where later graves were superimposed. The aforementioned house foundations are typically found in settlement sites that were sustained and occupied over successive centuries, from the Early Iron Age through the Medieval Period (Nilsson 2011). Excavations at the abandoned farmstead site Fjäle, in Ala parish on Gotland, show that the site is exemplary of long-term inhabitancy, yielding evidence of occupation from 100 -1360 CE (Carlsson 2003: 27). In certain cases, the house remains at farmstead sites were re-used by later generations during the Iron and Middle Ages as the location for not only their own houses, but also graves (Hållans Stenholm 2012). More specifically, this custom was a way of preserving memory and promoting memory transfer, and was a conscious decision to preserve the past while serving a purpose in the present (Hållans Stenholm 2012). This practice is evidenced on Gotland at a site in Gammelgarn parish (RAÄ Gammelgarn 462, 463), where house constructions from the Bronze-Early Iron Ages are overlapped by Viking Age graves (Langhammer 2011). There seems to be evidence of burials constructed over house foundations at a few fortifications sites as well, which will be analysed further in Chapter 5.

Another form of memory transfer discussed by a number of scholars relates to depictions on runestones (Andrén 2000, 2013; Sawyer 2000; Hållans Stenholm 2012). This practice not only helped to preserve memory culture, but also serves as a chronological reference within the field of study. For instance, thousands of runestones evident in the landscape across Scandinavia, though primarily on the Swedish mainland, demonstrate the importance of memorialising the dead through the stone inscriptions. These inscriptions depict stories of life, or death, and relationships during late Viking Age. Memories commemorating the past were declared through these monuments as many were commissioned with inscriptions recognizing those who had passed and the circumstances surrounding their death. The runestones also contained inscriptions that identified those who chose to honour and memorialize the departed. Serving as timeless markers in the landscape, these runestones provide chronological history of past lives, relationships, land rights, and customs established among the living and the dead (Andrén 2000, 2013: 267; Sawyer 2000,).

Hållans Stenholm (2006) provides specific details of genealogical inscriptions found on runestones during the Viking Age. Her demonstrative example is of a runic inscription from Eastern Central Sweden from the Viking Age, that tells the history of one family through several generations. The engraving shares chronological details of their names, their unions, their relations, their tragedies, their deaths, and their inheritance (2006: 341). These details provide physical evidence confirming the significance of social memory in the context of cultural norms. Additionally, while recognizing family lineages through the lives of the deceased, the engraving served as a declaration of land rights for the surviving relative. It appears evident that runestones were meant to be permanent memorials, which many still are, and they demonstrate how society remembered as well as who they remembered.

The discussion of memory theory would not be complete without addressing the aspect of forgetting. Within the context of site re-use, the concept of forgetting may have been associated with a conscious decision to forget the past rather than to preserve it. According to Andrén, the notion of forgetting the past would have been carried out in the same way as people chose to remember the past (2013: 279). He means that the material culture remains the same, though the intentions behind it is different, for instance, the act of placing new graves overtop of existing graves may have represented intentions to refashion the future or begin anew (Andrén 2013: 279). Hållans Stenholm also suggests the re-use or superimposition of monuments may reflect intentions of forgetting (through 'disassociation') or remembering (through 'association'), depending on the context of the re-use (2012: 244). She suggests that 'association' implies feelings of kinship and similarity, whereas 'disassociation' implies feelings of dissimilarity (Hållans Stenholm 2012: 244). This dialectic nature of re-use demonstrates the complexity of interpretation, though Hållans Stenholm argues that the continued use of a site should be interpreted as association (Hållans Stenholm 2012: 244).

The concepts of ancestral worship and memory theory, and their application in archaeological studies, play a key role in the interpretation of site re-use. By analysing the type and length of continuation of secondary use, it is probable to put forth theoretical interpretations of the purposes of the re-use, whether it be to honour the ancestors or to reinforce rights to ancestral lands.

2.3 Mortuary practice as a form of re-use

Ancestral worship and memory theory are both intertwined with mortuary practices, such as burial rites and rituals. Death is and was an important aspect of cosmological beliefs; how people approach the actions associated with death and burial reflect their respective belief systems. It is widely accepted that Scandinavian society during Late Iron Age believed in an afterlife and life after death. Most people in present-day Western society have at least heard about one of the multiple afterlife realms: Odin's hall for fallen warriors, Valhalla. From historic texts and grave goods from excavated burials, it is evident that the dead continued to live on after death in whichever hall or realm they transitioned into. But this society also believed that the dead could interact with the living and vice versa. By burying the dead near their settlements, the community could keep their ancestors alive in their shared memory and a memory that would live on through permanence in the landscape. As Tilley suggests, the ancestors become part of the living landscape once interred (1994).

As discussed in the previous chapter, ancient fortifications are one type of monument in which Late Iron Age burials are found on Gotland. The location of fortifications in the landscape follows some of the same criteria that were important for the placement of burials in the Late Iron Age. Of primary significance is the location of these monuments in places of elevation and their proximity to waterways. That is to say, it is common for Late Iron Age burials to be situated in visible places, i.e. on top of hills or near landing sites, where their presence denoted territorial boundaries (Cassel 1998: 153f). It was also important to provide order to the landscape, by designating certain places as sacral, separate from the mundane,

through natural features of the landscape or through constructed boundaries (Anttonen 2013: 13f). The ancestral rituals connected to burial practices would have required a physically separate sacral space. These locations, in some instances, coincide with the existence of fortifications, which would have already been in ruin by the time Late Iron Age societies came to use the same space (Hegardt 1991a; Cassel 1998). It is therefore worth questioning whether it is merely a coincidence that Late Iron Age burials appear in or near to fortifications due to a need for particular natural features in the immediate landscape, or are there other cultural or ritual purposes met by using these ancient monuments. Notably, the ancient fortifications where burials are found are located in seemingly varied landscapes and at differing elevations of which makes the situation more complicated. Some could argue that the ruins of fortifications provided a localised concentration of raw materials - in this case, stone - that would have been appealing for the construction of graves within or in close proximity to the structures (Nylén 1973). However, the reason is likely to be more sophisticated than simply the desire to take an easy route in burying the deceased because burials are highly intentional constructions with a profound meaning.

It is well known that burial practices and rituals played a significant role in ancient cultures and that burials are often times expensive and time consuming ventures, as exemplified by the grandiose ship burials of the Late Iron Age, such as the Oseberg ship in Norway or the lavish burial chambers in Birka on the Swedish mainland (Price 2007). Of course, not all burials of the Vendel and Viking Ages are as grand as these examples, and it is of high probability that the majority of people were buried in graves that leave no visible trace in the landscape, or that they not were buried at all (Price 2007). Even so, the action of constructing cairns or raising stones to mark burials is in and of itself an intentional display of importance, placing value (both monetarily and symbolically) on the burial. That graves themselves are immensely significant, the locations chosen for their placement are likewise intentional and significant and therefore, should be intertwined with their interpretation.

3 Gotland's ancient fortifications

3.1 On ancient fortifications

There are several problems facing the study of ancient fortifications: one is the terminology associated with these structures (Cassel 1998; Arnberg 2007; Bornfalk Back 2011; Widegren Lundin 2016), another the limited excavations that have taken place, especially on Gotland, and the lack of empirical evidence gained from the excavations that have occurred (Hegardt 1991b; Fallgren 2014). There is considerable history to the study of Scandinavia's fortifications, and many differing opinions and theories related to typology, chronology and function are represented in the reference materials. Although the majority of research has focused on sites on the Scandinavian mainland and Öland and many well-known fortifications, such *Sandbyborg* and *Ismanstorp*, the study of fortifications on Gotland has gained traction in recent years (see Cassel 1998, Arnberg 2007, and Bornfalk Back 2011), with more a comprehensive viewpoint and new ideas paving the way for even more research. It is important to explain the current research and prevailing theories of their construction and function focusing primarily on those found on Gotland, as they will serve as part of the case study. In this chapter, these issues will be discussed to establish a background of study necessary for context before the matter of secondary use of these monuments is inspected in Chapter 4.

3.2 An issue of semantics

One challenging aspect of the study of this topic is the inadequacy of the terminology and place names referring to ancient fortifications. For any modern work on the subject, this is the area which needs to be addressed to clarify the position of the proceeding text (for example Bornfalk Back 2011 and Widegren Lundin 2016). Clarification is especially important for the English-speaking audience as the terminology used to define these constructions insinuates intrinsic values of structure and function, which may not be accurate in all cases.

The Swedish term used to describe these ancient remains, *fornborg*, was presented by Frederik Nordin at the end of the 19th century (Nordin 1881) and is commonly translated to the term "hill-fort" but can also be literally translated to "ancient castle". The term "hill-fort" is misleading in both its connotation of placement within the landscape, and its function being that of defensive value. Not all hill-forts are situated in areas of elevation, particularly on the relatively flat islands of Öland and Gotland. Likewise, local place names for these sites typically include words such as "castle" (ON *borg*, sv. *slott*) or "mountain" (sv. *berg*), are similarly misleading, given that not all can be definitively identified as having been used as places for defence, and even less accurate is the connotation of an elite structural enclosure as proposed by the term "castle". In some cases, where fortifications are found in areas of lower elevation, and where the natural topography has made it necessary to enclose an area through manmade walls of earth, stone or ditches, the "hill-fort" is abandoned for the term "ring-fort". If this distinction is made, then part of the problem is solved.

The second issue involving the terminology is the term "fortification", which implies a defensive or martial function. The majority of archaeological investigations into the original purpose of these sites do not yield great amounts of evidence, if they indeed yield anything, for the use of such structures as locations for military defence. Of course, that is not to say that all investigations lack evidence for such activities, but definitive evidence appears elusive and a number of excavated sites have provided evidence that implies other functions. This will be

discussed in chapter 3.5.

For the purpose of this thesis, and until a more accurate term arises, these ancient remains will be referred to using several different terms with the foundation being "fortification", which is no less problematic as it once again raises the issue of a militaristic connotation (Olausson 1995; Arnberg 2007; Bornfalk Back 2011). It may be more appropriate to refer to these constructions as "enclosures", which does not imbue pre-conceptions about their purpose or topographical placement, however, the term "enclosure" is commonly used to describe prehistoric stone fences or animal pens on Gotland. The goal is not to establish a more accurate term, but to stay within the pre-established nomenclature. When a defensive meaning needs to be attributed to a particular site, it will be stated as such accordingly.

3.3 Typology and Morphology

Gotland's ancient fortifications (see fig. 1), of which 84 are registered as "*fornborg*" or "*fornborg?*" in the RAÄ database (2019), are difficult to define due to the various landscapes in which they reside, and the varying forms of their structures and shapes. The RAÄ definition of an ancient fortification is "a fortified construction from prehistoric times and early Middle Ages" and refers to "a terrain-adapted stone or earthen wall together with natural barriers in a crested position which completely delimit an area, or usually rounded or oval stone and/or earthen wall (ring wall) combined with moats, placed on level or flat ground, which completely delimits an area" (RAÄ 2014; translation by author).

The preeminent scholars of Gotland's fortifications, Frederik Nordin (1881), Mårten Stenberger (1945), Peter Manneke (1983) and Johan Engström (1984a) have each created classification systems to differentiate between the varying morphological, topographical and functional characteristics of ancient fortifications (Nordin 1881; Stenberger 1945; Manneke 1983; Engström 1984a; Cassel 1998). In her dissertation, Cassel (1998) examines each of these classification systems more comprehensively to define the typology of each of Gotland's fortifications. Consequently, these classifications will only be described briefly below. Allocating fortifications to a specific subset can be a difficult process due to the large degree of variation in size, shape, appearance and location (Cassel 1998: 129) as well as the varying functionalities they potentially served (Bornfalk Back 2011).

The first investigation into ancient fortifications on Gotland was conducted by Nordin in 1881 in *Om Gotlands Fornborgar*. He divided fortifications into seven types, based on their morphology and the differences in enclosing structures (i.e., limestone or granite walls, dikes or earthen walls) (Nordin 1881; Cassel 1998: 131). In *Det Forntida Gotland* (1945), Stenberger described ancient fortifications in reference to their location in the landscape as either fortifications on a rocky outcrop/mountain, flat ground, or in a mire (Stenberger 1945; Cassel 1998: 131). Nordin's classification system is useful for demonstrating the variation in fortification appearances but fails to address the variation in topographical location, whereas Stenberger's typology is simplified and only addresses the missing topographical information of Nordin's system.

Expanding upon on Stenberger's and Nordin's previous classifications, in 1983 Peter Manneke established yet another classification system that addresses both the morphology (i.e., enclosed fortifications or crescent-formed fortifications, etc.) and topographical location (i.e., cliff or flat ground, etc.) (Manneke 1983; Cassel 1998: 131). Manneke's system fails to specifically address or delineate the existence of fortifications in mires, as proposed by Stenberger. He also includes RAÄ Tingstäde 30:1, known as *Bulverket* (en. The bulwark), located in lake Tingstäde. *Bulverket* is a wooden construction from the twelfth century and is not currently listed as an ancient fortification in the RAÄ's register of ancient monuments (Manneke 1983; Rönnby 1989; RAÄ 2019). Because *Bulverket* is not registered as an ancient fortification and is dissimilar to other forts in structure and age, it will not be considered further in this text.

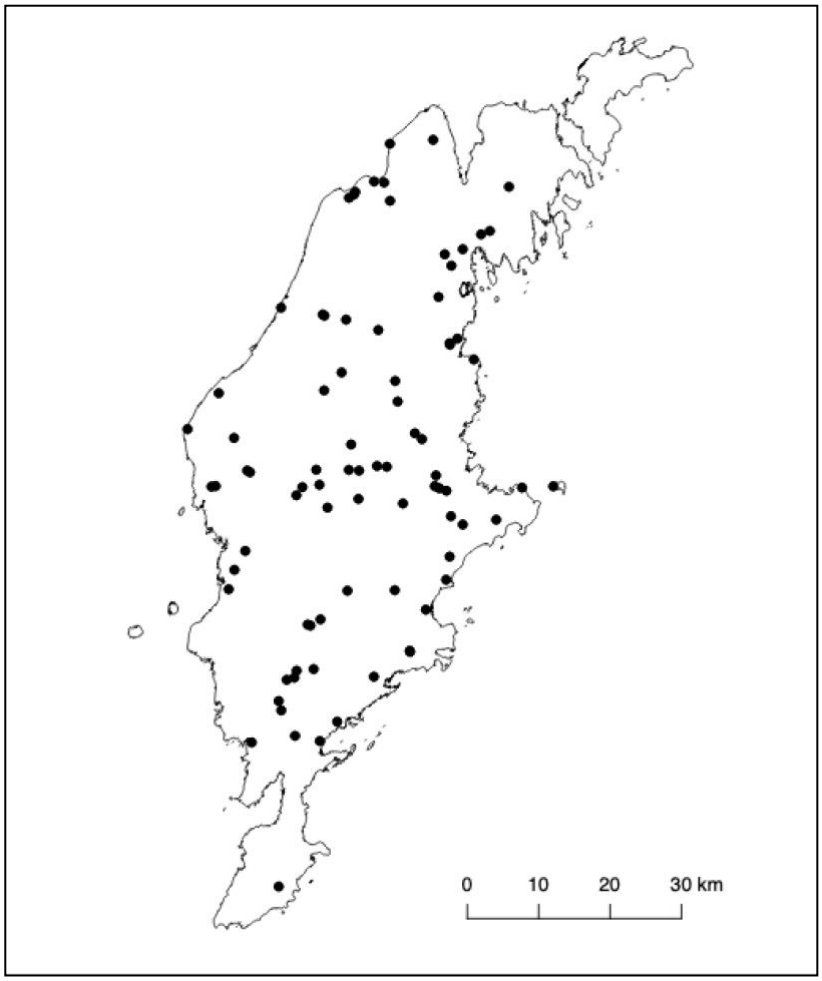

Fig. 1. Location of ancient fortification sites on Gotland. Map by author.

Finally, a year after Manneke established his system, Engström created yet another classification system in his dissertation about the fortification *Torsburgen.* He divides fortifications into three topographical types akin to Stenberger's system: 1) forts on heights, 2) forts on low or flat land, and 3) forts in mires. He also further classifies fortifications according to overarching functional purposes: 1) offensive function, 2) defensive function, or 3) fortification-like fence (Engström 1983a; 1984a; Cassel 1998: 131). This third functional division is meant to account for funeral enclosures, animal enclosures and sites with judicial or ritual functions (Engström 1984a: 124). This final classification is an improvement to the previous three systems which appear to suffer from the antiquated and single-minded theory of a militaristic bias as they do not account for any functional divisions.

The topographical classification as proposed by Engström is the most accurate and simplified version, which is used by Cassel in her research, and is the one used as reference in this text where applicable. In addition to the previously documented classification systems of fortifications, additional attributes such as the differences in shape, be it round, irregular, or complying with the landscape may prove relevant in analysing the site's purpose. For the sake of simplification, I will utilise the term "hill-fort" when specifying fortifications found on hills, mountains or otherwise elevated land where manmade walls together with the natural topography create an enclosed space, and "ring-fort" when specifying those found on lowlands or in mires where the area is completely enclosed by a manmade barrier.

To fully classify Gotland's ancient fortifications, one must take into consideration each aspect including landscape, morphology, chronology, and empirical archaeological evidence into account. A more complete, inclusive and expansive classification is necessary, but that task would better be left to future research. Such research has begun: for example, in his Master's

thesis Anders Bornfalk Back (2011) re-examined the categorisation of Gotland's 28 cliff-forts[1] claiming that fortifications should not be considered as one homogenous category as has been the prevailing notion (Bornfalk Back 2011: 5). He devised three subcategories based on the morphology, topography, and cultural context of the cliff-forts studied: Type 1) fortified farmsteads of the Migration Period; Type 2) defensive constructions from the Roman Iron Age and; Type 3) cultic enclosures from the Bronze Age/Early Iron Age (Bornfalk Back 2011: 11). Bornfalk Back's sub-categorisation exemplifies the kind of empirical and theoretical blending that would serve to further our understanding of fortifications across Sweden and other parts of Scandinavia, but more research and further analysis should be performed on this subject. Current investigations of fortification sites, including those described in this text, are presenting valuable information that will be able to broaden the understanding of use of these monuments as well as their re-use.

3.4 Chronology

The chronology of fortifications is perhaps simpler to define than the morphology, as the structures are proven to have been originally constructed in the Bronze Age to Pre-Roman Iron Age with a second construction phase during the Migration Period (Fallgren 2014) and in some cases can also date to the Bronze, Late Iron and early Middle Ages (Cassel 1998). A recent excavation of the hill-fort RAÄ Hörsne 153 revealed evidence of Neolithic activity, further expanding the time span of use of fortifications (Austin Main, personal communication 2019-06-10). On Gotland, the vast majority of fortifications have not been dated, and those that have, are primarily dated to the Pre-Roman Iron Age, Iron Age and Migration Period. One major difficulty facing scholars in dating the construction or determining its purpose is the continuity of use of these ancient sites for centuries, sometimes millennia, before and after their construction (Cassel 1998: 129). Especially those fortifications that reside on heights near the ancient shoreline, as these locations are pronounced in the landscape and naturally appeal to human activities. In some instances, primarily at these elevated fortifications, there is evidence of Mesolithic and Bronze Age activities having taken place (see Bornfalk Back 2011, Runesson 2014, Wallin *et al.* 2018, and Carlsson & Bokor in press).

In general, ring-forts are dated to the Early Iron Age, before the period of *kämpgravar* (200-0 BCE), while hill-top forts are dated to the period of *kämpgravar* and the Late Roman Iron Age, but mainly to the Migration Period (Cassel 1998: 144). Elevated fortifications are commonly found in coastal areas, far from settlements, whereas flat-ground fortifications are more likely to be found in the interior, near to settlements and cemeteries, suggesting they played a more active role in the community (Cassel 1998: 196). Depending on the time period they were constructed, it appears that fortifications possessed different functionalities, as demonstrated by the typology created by Bornfalk Back (2011).

3.5 Theoretical interpretations for the function of fortifications

There are numerous theories currently circulating to explain the function of Scandinavia's ancient fortifications. The prevailing theories are that these structures were built for defensive, political, social, or ritual activities, and in some cases as field systems (Engström 1983a, 1984a, Cassel 1998: 145f). It is important to bear in mind that the ascribed functions of these

[1] *Bornfalk Back chose to exclude several fortifications classified by Cassel as "hill-forts" (RAÄ Gothem 131:1, RAÄ Ardre 1:1, RAÄ Eke 49:1, and RAÄ Grötlingbo 25:1) due to their lower levels of elevation and that they are fully enclosed by man-made walls (Bornfalk Back 2011: 7). Cassel's reasoning for categorising these as "hill-forts" is that their topographical locations would have provided a natural barrier in the same manner as those forts found at higher elevations (Cassel 1998: 132).*

monuments are hypothetically based. Excavations are relatively limited, and a majority of sites lack material culture and therefore context. As a result of this, Andrén refers to forts as "empty spaces" (2006: 34). Further complicating the interpretations of forts is the disruption re-use causes to the preservation of the original function (Manneke 1983). A small percentage of excavations truly reveal the original function of the fortification, and it is clear based on these findings that the way in which they were used was differed drastically from one to the next. In order to better understand their use, it is necessary to know their cultural context (Cassel 1998: 129), which varies between geographic and chronological placement.

Since the late 19th century, the majority of research during the 19th and 20th centuries revolved around a militaristic bias; a problem spurred on by the terminology given to these structures and the time period in which they were researched. It would be folly to propose a singular function to all ancient monuments with the label "*fornborg*". However, given the misleading connotation of the term "fortification", the prevalence of ancient structures of similar morphology in other parts of Europe, for example those of the Roman Empire which are time and again confirmed military strongholds, and the time in which the terminology was founded, it is not surprising that the general understanding of these ancient remains has a militaristic basis.

Fortifications have a long history of intrigue, not least in Scandinavia where they have generally been examined through a single lens for the majority of their research. The prevailing theory for their construction has been that of a political nature (see Nordin 1881, Manneke 1983, Engström 1983a, 1984a, and Hegardt 1991b); likely due to terminology and the context of the time period in which they have been studied. Nevertheless, a number of scholars (see Johansen 1997, Price 2002, Sanmark & Semple 2010, Bornfalk Back 2011, and Andrén 2014) since the turn of the latest century have begun to question this assumption, and offer an alternative theory structured around a ritual purpose for at least some fortification sites. That is not to say that the possibility of ritual function was unheard of during earlier decades of research. Both Mårten Stenberger (1933) and Arthur Nordén (1938) have suggested that fortifications could have acted as defensive structures in addition to ritual locations (Johansen & Pettersson 1993: 23).

The Iron Age is generally accepted as a time of unrest, which would lead to the logical assumption that there was a need for communities to have a defensive place to retreat to. Bjørn Myhre has suggested that Scandinavia's fortifications served multiple martial purposes: as places of refuge, barrack locations, or for protection of communication lines (2003: 74f). A contradiction to the notion of militaristic functions, is the proposal that weapons or other artefacts associated with warfare should be found in these types of forts but are seldom present. Weapons are extremely rare finds in fortifications, though that does not necessarily mean they were never present. Although weapons could have been left behind if conflict had occurred at a site, since they were revered objects that were oftentimes ritualistically deposited in bogs and bodies of water, they might not have been left behind at fortification sites (Fallgren 2014). Even if these monuments were "empty spaces" (Andrén 2006: 34), meaning that they often lack material remains, this in itself does not indicate that certain activities, such as defense, did not take place there.

As mentioned previously, an alternative functional explanation for fortifications involves ritual practices. Chapter 2 discussed how rituals often occurred at natural places or at newly constructed places located in the same area. Given that the majority of fortifications are located in higher places and typically near to water sources, with both factors being important aspects of sacred places, it would make sense for ancient societies to choose these locations for rituals.

Anders Andrén (2014) explains that forts with a ritual purpose are most likely those where graves are found within the walls or where the place names may have a sacral meaning. He also notes that the location and structure of ritual fortifications, would not have been suitable for defence and therefore must have served another purpose (Andrén 2014: 87). For instance, he observes that Midgard was a fortress and therefore the form of these forts take likely has a cosmological meaning in that they can mirror the form and function of Midgard itself (Andrén

2014: 105). Similarly, Birgitta Johansen also perceives the walls of fortifications to have a cosmological meaning, but instead argues that the walls imitate the serpents or dragon which adorn runestones (1997: 319). Johansen's proposal resonates with the serpent motif, a common decoration in pre-Christian Scandinavia that survived past the conversion period, and likely represents Jörmungandr, the serpent that encircles Midgard in Norse Mythology. If these mythological interpretations are true, then the cosmologically symbolic construction of fortifications would imbue inherent ritual intentions.

Departing from the leading stances on functional purposes, there are several other possibilities that do not receive as much attention. Joakim Wehlin proposes that fortifications near waterways served as meeting places where rituals connected to arrival and departure were performed, and were welcoming places for travellers rather than political locations (2013). In this way, the fortification was associated both with literal journeys, and also with symbolic journeys (Wehlin 2013: 182). If used as a location for occasional gatherings, such as arrivals and departures, fortifications would only be temporarily occupied, and it would make sense for excavations of these sites to lack evidence of long-term habitation.

Conversely, there is some evidence of long-term habitation at fortification sites. The fortification *Havorborg* in Hablingbo parish, (RAÄ Hablingbo 32:1), is one of the best examples of a fortified settlement and one of the better known ring-forts on Gotland, partially because of an impressive hoard found at the site. *Havorborg* has been extensively excavated and the findings indicate a period of long-term inhabitancy (Nylén *et al.* 2005). There exists a collection of stone-foundation houses c.a. 50 meters outside of the fortification and numerous postholes found inside the site from former constructions (Nylén *et al.* 2005: 133ff). Material remains of ceramic and large amounts of faunal remains found within the structures inside the fort seem to also suggest that *Havorborg* was the location of ritual feasting (Arnberg 2007: 258).

Several scholars have also proposed that fortifications may have functioned as production sites (see Bornfalk Back 2014 and Widegren Lundin 2016). The fortification *Herrgårdsklint* (RAÄ Gammelgarn 51:1), located on the Östergarn headland on the eastern coast, is proposed to be one such production site as the excavated faunal remains of large amounts of cattle suggest there was some sort of beef production on site (Bornfalk Back 2014: 294).

Another possible functional explanation is the use of fortifications structures by an elite group. Johan Hegardt argues that fortifications were an esoteric space, belonging to a select group of people with power and sacral knowledge (Hegardt 1991b). He compares the fortification *Gudings slott* to "modern esoteric buildings such as churches, castles, university and government buildings" which act as "closed rooms", meant for a certain mysterious group (Hegardt 1991b: 80). He assumes, drawing from historical texts, that this esoteric group which has access to the fortification during the Roman Iron Age were likely the residing older men of the community; those who controlled alliances, and therefore the longevity of the society (Hegardt 1991b: 80).

The final proposed theory about the function of these fortifications is that their walls simply acted as fences or enclosures for animals. There are a number of instances occurring on picture stones where farmers appear to be in enclosed fields. It is unclear whether these depict fortifications or represent another type of ancient monument, the stone fence, which is a common feature from Migration Period farms on Gotland (Manneke 1983). Engström's functional classification, type 3) fortification-like fences, may also allude to this (Engström 1984a: 124).

Fortifications cannot be allocated to one singular classification due to the high degree of variation in their morphology and chronology (Cassel 1998: 129). Cassel proposes that they can loosely be classified under overarching types: 1) hill-forts, located on cliffs and hills, with a steep slope creating a natural barrier and a semi-circular man-made wall enclosing the space, and 2) ring-forts, located on flat ground or in mires, with man-made walls and/or ditches creating a fully enclosed area. The former are typically younger, belonging to the Late Roman Iron Age onwards, and are usually found on the coast or in uninhabited regions, away from

settlements. The latter, typically dated to the Pre-Roman Iron Age, are located closer to settlements and cemeteries, and likely played a more central role in communal activities (Cassel 1998: 196). Arthur Nordén (1938) suggested that the overarching term "fortification" pertains to both structures of defensive value, and those that must have served the function of ritual and gathering places (Nordén 1938; Cassel 1998: 145). Through the study of the re-use of fortifications, it appears the function of fortifications likely changed over time dependent on the social and political circumstances of the periods of use and the stuctures could have served multiple functions at any given time.

4 Empirical foundation and analysis: the secondary use of ancient fortifications

4.1 Qualitative and quantitative difficulties of establishing site re-use

One of the difficulties in investigating ancient fortifications is the tendency for continued use of the structures over centuries (Cassel 1998), which complicates the archaeological record. Moreover, excavations of these particular monuments are few and far between with little evidence for the dating or original function of the construction. Frequently, the majority of material remains that are found are either from earlier or the later uses of the site, such as at RAÄ Gothem 232:1 and RAÄ Eke 49:1 (see Wallin *et al.* 2018 and Carlsson & Bokor in press). A significant number of fortifications on Gotland, which will be discussed in detail in this chapter, show that these sites were commonly used or re-used as burial locations.

Due to the limited number of excavations of ancient fortifications and the tendency for excavations to focus on the monuments' construction or original purpose, it is difficult to ascertain with complete confidence the time period of the burials located at these sites unless the burials themselves are excavated and can provide secure dating. Cassel suggests that burials at fortifications are not contemporary with the time of construction, primarily the Late Roman Iron Age, because there was no need for the people who built the fortification to be connected to the area through ancestral means such as by graves (Cassel 1998: 154). The style of graves found at these sites and their stratigraphic position above the layers of the construction, however, implies that many of the burials should belong to the time periods of the Late Iron Age. Excavations that have included burials located at these fortification sites reveal evidence that substantiates their belonging to the Late Iron Age (see Carlsson & Bokor in press), though the chronology might not always be easily discerened (see Lundström 1955). These excavations will be examined later in this chapter.

During the Late Iron Age, graves were important landmarks, signifying land ownership or tribal boundaries (Cassel 1998: 153). Cassel argues that the Viking Age custom of burying the dead inside fortifications must be examined completely differently from the previously discussed theories due to the different societal conditions of the Late Iron Age. She theorises that during the Vendel- and Viking Ages, hill-top forts were utilised for their position by the sea and harbour sites to "clarify and argue for new power structures" (Cassel 1998: 153), and that the burials at fortifications indicate the need to secure their right to the area based on ancestral continuity at these sites. It should be noted that not all fortifications or cemeteries located near the sea have known harbour sites in their vicinities, but Dan Carlsson believes that Viking Age cemeteries along the coast indicate the existence of a contemporary harbour nearby (Carlsson 1987: 16; Cassel 1998: 153). For those inland fortifications where burials are found, their location in the landscape might have also functioned in a similar way (i.e. strengthening ties to the land through ancestral continuity), as they are often located in significant landscapes, such as in mires or on cliffs. The spatial and geographic distribution will be discussed in Chapter 4.4.

4.2 Fortifications with evidence of burials

Graves take on different forms during the course of the Iron Age and therefore, not all grave styles can be definitively connected to any one period. In addition, not all cemeteries contain

graves of the same type. For example, *Trullhalsar* grave field (RAÄ Anga 3:1), on the eastern coast of Gotland, is an area with at least 320 visible graves ranging in size and form, from graves with orbs to erected stones, and stone-settings, including the "troll's throat" style cairns that provide the site with its name. Excavations of the site have dated the burials to the seventh century CE (Boman 2012: 14), providing a quantifiable example of varied grave forms during a short period of time.

One of the most readily visible styles of grave on Gotland is the stone-setting or cairn which was a style in use from the Bronze Age until the Christianisation of burial practice in the Early Middle Ages. Therefore, it must be noted that the graves included in the proceeding spatial analysis can neither be quantifiably connected to the Late Iron Age or the Early Iron Age except for in the cases where the graves in question have been excavated. The burials in the following section therefore suggest secondary use, however cannot be seen as definitive proof for such re-use, since some may actually be related to the initial period of use of their associated fortifications, or may even pre-date the fortifications (see section 4.2, this chapter, RAÄ Gothem 232:1). The lack of datable material remains from these sites, or in some cases the lack of dating of excavated organic remains, and how this impacts on this research will be discussed further on.

The types of ancient remains and monuments associated with burials that are considered in this thesis are grave fields (sv. *gravfält),* cairns (sv. *röse),* stone-settings (sv. *stensättning),* stone cists (sv. *stenkistgrav*), grave orbs (sv. *stenklot*), unmarked graves (sv. *flatmarksgrav*), mounds (sv. *hög*), stone chamber graves (sv. *stenkammargrav*)[2], graves marked by stone (sv. *grav markerad av sten/block*), stone circles (sv. *stenkrets)*[3] stone rows (sv. *stenrad), enclosed graves* (sv. *gravhägnad*), and rune or picture stones (sv. *runristning/bildristning*)[4]. These monument types are either definitively graves or features where graves are commonly found in tandem, such as with picture stones and fall under the category of ancient graves as defined by the RAÄ (RAÄ 2014).

In her research from 1998, Cassel named nine instances of fortifications containing graves in, on, or directly outside the structure's wall (1998: 153). Each occurrence (presented below) was the product of Cassel's research through manual query. These nine instances and their corresponding burial features are as follows:

Ardre (RAÄ 6:1)	Two stone-settings, one inside and one outside of the fortification (RAÄ 6:2-3).
Eke (RAÄ 49:1)	Two grave fields inside the fortification, containing in total 15 stone-settings (RAÄ 49:2-3). Additional unregistered graves were found in and around the wall during excavation and field survey (see Chapter 4.4.1.)
Fröjel (RAÄ 8:1)	Two stone-settings, one inside and one outside of the fortification (RAÄ 8:2-3).
Fröjel (RAÄ 43:1)	Graves inside the wall and a grave field outside of the fortification containing seven stone-settings (RAÄ 42:2).

[2] *The sub-category of this type, dolmen (sv.* dös*), will not be considered in this analysis as they are typically dated to the Stone Age.*

[3] *"Judge circles" (sv.* domarringar*) are included in this category.*

[4] *Rune and picture stones have commonly been moved and assembled at churches, therefore the instances where these monuments are found in relation to fortifications have been examined more closely to eliminate those found in churchyards.*

Gammelgarn (RAÄ 38:1)	Erected stone in the eastern part of the wall and four stone-settings just south of the fortification (RAÄ 37:1-4).
Hangvar (RAÄ 2:1)	Skeleton remains found inside the fortification wall and a grave field to the south-east consisting of ten unmarked graves (RAÄ 3:2).
Linde (RAÄ 6:1)	Grave field inside, on and outside of the wall consisting of 30 stone-settings (RAÄ 6:2).
Lärbro (RAÄ 17:1)	One cairn (RAÄ 17:2), two stone-settings (RAÄ 17:3-4), one grave orb and one more possible stone-setting inside the fortification.
Othem (RAÄ 76:1)	Grave field inside the fortification and possibly on the wall consisting of eight stone-settings (RAÄ 76:2), one stone-setting (RAÄ 104:1) and two cemeteries east of the wall containing in total nine stone-setting, between which five stone-settings were removed (RAÄ 77:1, 115:1).

During my work with the database for archaeological sites and monuments, it became apparent that there were more instances of burials located within close proximity to ancient fortifications other than the nine examples listed above. Using the spatial data provided by FMIS, I created a spatial query based on the nine examples presented by Cassel. The parameters for this query included the intersection of the different grave types, mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, within the confines of fortification polygons and the intersection within the 100-meter buffer zone around each of the 84 fortifications. A buffer of 100 meters was chosen based on the inclusion of RAÄ Gammelgarn 38:1 above, where the furthest stone-setting is approximately 75 meters from the fort, to use a round number that would not skew the research. The results determined 18 additional occurrences of fortifications with associated graves, which are as follows:

Ardre (RAÄ 1:1)	Two graves marked by erected stone inside the fortification (RAÄ 1:2-3).
Björke (RAÄ 44:1)	One grave marked by erected stone outside the fortification (RAÄ 44:2).
Ganthem (RAÄ 22:1)	Four stone-settings inside and two outside the walls (RAÄ 22:2).
Gothem (RAÄ 232:1)	One stone-setting to the southwest (RAÄ 234:1).
Gothem (RAÄ 236:1)	One possible stone-setting to the northwest (RAÄ 235:1) and one possible cairn to the south (RAÄ Boge 32:1).
Grötlingbo (RAÄ 25:1)	One stone-setting just south of the wall and graves to the northwest and southeast (RAÄ 25:3), and several unregistered graves in the north-western portion of the wall, as discovered during field investigation (2018).

Hall (RAÄ 11:1)	Grave field inside the fortification containing eight stone-settings and two stone-settings outside the wall (RAÄ 11:2-4).
Hangvar (RAÄ 1:1)	One grave north of the fortification (RAÄ 471).
Hörsne (RAÄ 105:1)	Grave field inside the fortification containing eight stone-settings and one cairn (RAÄ 2:1).
Hörsne (RAÄ 153:1)	Graves found inside the fortification during excavation.
Kräklingbo (RAÄ 25:1)	One grave field inside, on and outside the fortification comprised of 12 stone-settings (RAÄ 94:1) and a second grave field outside the fortification containing 15 stone-settings (RAÄ 95:1).
Kräklingbo (RAÄ 53:1)	Four stone-settings (RAÄ 220:1-3, 223:1), and two possible grave fields consisting of 41 stone-settings inside the fortification (RAÄ 224:1, 225:1).
Lärbro (RAÄ 66:1)	One grave field inside, on and outside the fortification consisting of seven stone-settings (RAÄ 66:2).
Mästerby (RAÄ 12:1)	One grave field containing 21 stone-settings inside the fortification (RAÄ 12:1).
Othem (RAÄ 38:1)	One grave field inside the fortification containing 20 stone-settings, five stone-settings and one grave field containing seven stone-settings outside the fortification (RAÄ 38:2-8).
Stenkumla (RAÄ 38:1)	Four stone-settings inside and ten stone-settings as well as one stone circle outside the fortification (RAÄ 38:2-4, 39:1-3, 40:1, 96:1-2, 97:1-2).
Vänge (RAÄ 2:1)	One stone-setting and one mound northwest of the fortification (RAÄ 3:1-2).
Östergarn (RAÄ 13:1)	Four stone-settings and one grave marked by erected stone outside the fortification (RAÄ 112:1-4, 327).

To illustrate how arbitrary the 100 meter buffer is, if the range is increased to 200 meters, another four fortifications can be added to the list (see list below), and a number of the aforementioned sites can then have additional graves included in their relation. In an effort to preserve the continuity of Cassel's original research, however, these four locations will not be of primary interest, but should not entirely be disregarded because "close proximity" is a malleable concept and has different meanings to different individuals or groups. What we in the modern western world consider to be close or distant is likely not the same as the people of the Late Iron Age's perception. Proximity is also dependent on the scale used. For instance, a one-kilometre distance is close on a scale of 100 kilometres, but not at a scale of ten kilometres. The burials considered in the analysis should be within a short walking distance and hopefully visible from the fortifications themselves (which is difficult to discern today due to the changes in the landscape). If comparing proximity to graves located on the outskirts of settlements and farms, a scale of c.a. three kilometres could also be considered close proximity, but the intention

in this research is to locate sites where the graves can be directly connected to the fortifications.

Hangvar (RAÄ 4:2)	Grave field to the north consisting of seven cairns, three graves marked by erected stone, and 165 stone-settings (RAÄ 14:1).
Sjonhem (RAÄ 86:1)	One stone-setting to the north (RAÄ 85:1).
Väte (RAÄ 27:1)	Stone-setting and grave field containing six stone-settings to the east (RAÄ 71:1, RAÄ Atlingbo 45:1).
Väte (RAÄ 89:1)	Grave field to the west, containing 18 stone-settings (RAÄ 11:1).

In addition to the previously noted sites, there are also several instances where human remains or grave goods have been found at fortification sites, suggesting the possibility for the existence of unmarked graves or burials that have been destroyed by more recent human activity such as agriculture or development. The fortification RAÄ Visby 26:1, known as *Snäckgärdet,* could have once contained graves as an animal head brooch, an artefact highly associated with Vendel and Viking Age burials, was discovered at the site as a stray find during a modern renovation of the wall (Cassel 1998: 153; additional source unknown). There is also the fortification RAÄ Kräklingbo 15:1, where human bones were discovered between the stones of the wall (RAÄ).

Fig. 2. Fortifications with graves in close proximity. Note that the fortifications in close proximity overlap. Map by author.

At RAÄ Stenkyrka 24:1, the remains of human skeleton were found, but no other information available about this discovery (D. Carlsson, personal communication 2019-04-29). Another fortification of possible interest is RAÄ Tofta 85:1 where bones and potential grave goods were found displaced during an excavation (Bornfalk Back 2011: 23). These stray finds, however, lack archaeological context and therefore cannot be used to justify the existence of graves at these sites. Even without these final seven locations included, the 27 fortifications with burials within the 100-meter buffer zone make up 32% of the fortifications on Gotland (see fig. 2). It should be noted that if only fortifications that contain graves directly inside them are considered without the buffer zone, then 20 of Gotland's fortifications, nearly one quarter, are subject to the pattern. If it is accepted that the 27 instances are representational of a pattern of burial at ancient fortifications, then the next logical step is to investigate the commonalities of these sites to explain why the pattern exists. But first, it is important to consider more closely those fortifications listed that have been excavated so as to examine the archaeological evidence for Late Iron Age burials at these sites.

4.3 Excavations of selected sites

Of the 27 fortifications known to have burials within or in close proximity, only nine have been partially excavated or investigated. Of these, several small-scale investigations and excavations have occurred with relatively limited, but no less important, findings. The most prominent difficulty that appears from these investigations, is that a number of the excavations or data comes from either the fortications themselves or the graves, rather than both. While the data is useful to a certain extent, the relation of burials to the fortifications cannot be reliably examined without thourough investigation of both contexts.

Of the nine investigated sites, four have concerned only the burial contexts. At the fortification RAÄ Hangvar 2:1, in 1953, a couple of children found two skeletons in a part of the wall which had been disturbed, though no excavations were undertaken as to not disturb the wall any further (Silvén 1954). Also in 1953, Erik Lundberg excavated a grave, previously disturbed by the construction of a ditch, in between the fortification RAÄ Kräklingbo 25:1 and one of the associated grave fields (RAÄ Kräklingbo 95:1). This grave consisted of a stone cist containing a small number of bones belonging to a child and contained no additional artefacts (Lundberg 1953). In 1940, Stenberger excavated five cairns in the grave field (RAÄ Othem 77:1) alongside the fortification RAÄ Othem 76:1. Each cairn contained cremation burials, but no artefacts were found to provide chronological context (Stenberger 1940). Unfortunately, none of these cases provided datable materials, so their purpose only serves to justify the existence of burials at these given sites.

One excavation at RAÄ Fröjel 8:1 occurred in 1989 after children at play discovered two arm-rings and two animal-head brooches inside a ceramic vessel, which dated to the late Vendel Period-Early Viking Age (Lindquist 1989). Two stone constructions were then excavated at the site, which contained beads, bronze fragments and burnt bones, but no dateable artefacts (Lindquist 1989). There remains no further excavations at the site to provide a date of the fortification, but Malin Lindquist suggests that the stone grave constructions were made using stones from the wall of the fort, implying the fortification is older than the graves (Lindquist 1989).

Four larger scale excavations of both hill-forts and their connecting burials have been made, with results that do not necessarily support the hypotheses made in this work, however they should not be excluded on that basis. The findings from their reports provide potentially useful material for the analysis of these sites in the future.

One of these excavations occurred at Scandinavia's largest fortification, *Torsburgen* (RAÄ Kräklingbo 53), which has been a predominant subject of intrigue and investigation due to its mythical relation to the *Guta saga* (the Saga of the Gutes), written down around the same time as the *Guta lag*. In the saga, it is said that the island became overpopulated and that one-third

of all people were made to leave, but they did not and instead retreated to *Torsburgen* (Peel 2009: 3) The fortification resides on one of Gotland's highest "mountains", where the surrounding areas and coast are easily visible. Excavations of the hill-fort, described by Engström in his dissertation (1984a), were carried out in 1977-1978 and again in 1980-1983 (Engström 1984a:120). The relevant areas of investigation included two trenches across the wall and five stone cairns (see fig. 3). The findings from the excavation reveal that the fortification has gone through multiple stages of construction, first in the Migration Period and the last in the Viking Age; time periods that have been confirmed through radiocarbon dating (Engström 1983b, 1984a:120; Peel 1999: xxviii). Unfortunately, excavations of the registered cairns did not provide any viable remains to either confirm or deny their function as graves and therefore more of the remaining stone-settings would need to be investigated to gain more information.

Engström proposes the construction of *Torsburgen* is an indication for the need of protection during a critical time, due to its enormity and as it is large enough to fit the presumed contemporaneous population of the island and all its animals with nearly 100 acres to spare (Engström 1984a: 127). The area in which the fortification resides, the Östergarn headland, is the shortest passage to the Eastern Baltic and would have been a vulnerable location and therefore the fort's function as defensive retreat is almost certain (Engström 1984a: 126). However, the name given to the site may imply an alternative or additional function. Most literature about *Torsburgen* discusses that the theophoric name "Thor's mountain" could indicate the significance of the site as a cult place (Nihlén 1975; Peel 1999: xxviiif). Gold solidi from the 5th and 6th centuries found at the fortification in the early 20th century (Bergman 1929: 31)) could indicate a sort of ritual deposit, but as these were not found through formal excavation, that is merely speculation, although it is true that this type of artefact is generally

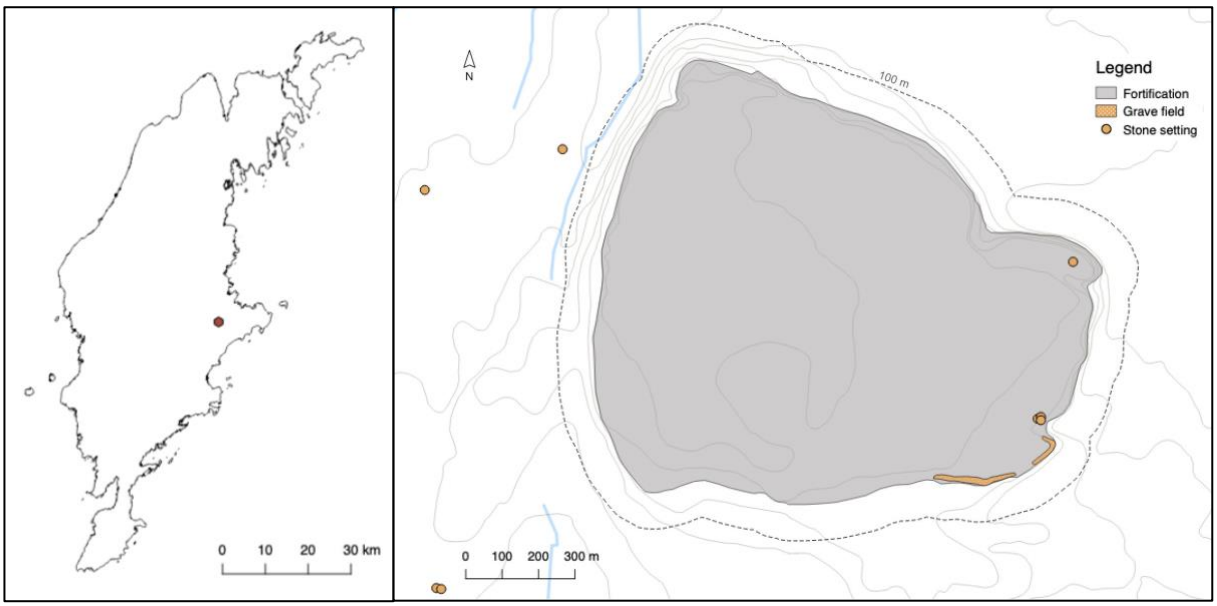

Fig. 3. Left: Location of Torsburgen. *Right: Map of* Torsburgen *and corresponding grave features as registered in FMIS. Maps by author.*

associated with such practices. The utter monumentality of the hill-fort, together with its prolonged use, multiple construction phases and longevity of oral as well as written records give the site a mythical quality.

A recent excavation of one of the hill-forts in Gothem Parish (RAÄ 232:1) on the eastern coast of the island, occurred during the spring 2018 semester by Uppsala University. The hill-forts are located on natural plateaus, c.a. 130 meters apart, in a landscape known as *Lina Myr*, best known for its significance during the Bronze Age (Wallin & Martinsson-Wallin 2018;

Wallin *et al.* 2018) and the famous stone ship setting called *Tjelvars grav*[5]. The investigated hill-fort is comprised of steep cliffs in conjunction with a stone wall. Trenches were opened on the southern wall and across "the entrance", and test pits were made across the plateau, around the lowland outside the fortification. Where the wall was excavated, fragments of sheep/goat, cattle and horse bones, as well as human teeth were found. One of the teeth along with a fragment of horse bone were radiocarbon dated to 20 – 230 CE, and their connection to the wall suggests the construction was erected during the Roman Iron Age (Wallin *et al.* 2018: 49). The findings from the excavated areas of the plateau were of typical Mesolithic assemblage including bird and seal bones as well as flint, but Carbon 14 analysis of the bone material was in some cases inconclusive, and in others pointed to the Vendel and Viking Ages. The proposed conclusion regarding the dating suggests that if the finds are indeed from the Iron Age, then the activities at the fortification were marine-oriented, similar to Mesolithic activities (Wallin *et al.* 2018: 51).

Of particular interest is one of the test pits which was located at the base of an erected stone on the slope leading up to the plateau and that contained a small cremation grave. The burned remains were that of a juvenile, and while the burial composition was reminiscent of Iron Age cremation graves, the Carbon 14 analyses of the bones resulted in a date range of 1400 to 1200 BCE (Wallin *et al.* 2018: 51). Although this burial appears to be in opposition to the hypothesis of this thesis, it is vital that it is included to provide a fill picture of the activities at these sites, considering the relative lack of excavations. That this was yet another unregistered grave however, along with the others mentioned previously, demonstrates the possibility for additional unknown burials at other fortification locations.

The third investigation, performed by Uppsala University in 2019, took place at RAÄ Hörsne 153:1 where a burial was found inside the fortification wall. The human remains were dated to the Stone Age based on the accompanying grave goods, including a seal-tooth necklace (Austin Main personal communication 2019-06-08). At this location, there were no registered grave monuments, once again stressing the importance of investigation to procure information about burials at fortifications beyond the available registrations of visible burials.

Unlike the aforementioned excavations, the fortification *Styrmansberget* (RAÄ Fröjel 43:1) reveals substantial evidence that the burials located in and around the fortification are later additions to the site. *Styrmansberget* was excavated by Per Lundström in 1949, as part of the Vallhagar project led by Stenberger, in an attempt to connect the hill-fort to the nearby excavated Roman Iron Age-Migration Period settlement of Vallhagar (Lundström 1955). The position of the fortification on a steep cliff overlooking the western coast and its proximity to the village would lead to the assumption it acted as the stronghold for the community (Lundström 1955: 610). The excavation consisted of 13 trenches across sections of the stone wall, the stone-foundation building located just outside the wall, and 15 graves.

Lundström states that the working hypothesis of the investigation was the premise that the fortification was a defence work, which is highly probable due to its strategic location in the coastal landscape (1955: 610). However, no findings from the excavation are of value to either support or oppose this theory, nor were any of the findings able to lead to a definitive dating of the construction itself. The most interesting and revealing findings were from the trenches over the wall, where the seven burials found within infilling and outer rubble layers (Lundström 1955: 623ff).

All of these burials were inhumations, and included the remains of men, women, children, and infants, and all of the skeletons were identified to have been oriented north-south (except for where the remains were too disturbed to tell) (Lundström 1955: 623ff). There is a high probability that there are more burials within the un-excavated portions of wall based on the relatively high number of graves discovered in the trenches over random sections of the wall (Lundström 1955: 623). Eight of the excavated graves were stone-settings located on the

[5] Tjelvars grav *(en. Tjelvar's grave) is named after mythological man, Tjelvar, from the Gotlandic origin story in the Saga of the Gutes. It is in the ship setting that he is storied to be buried, but this legend cannot be confirmed.*

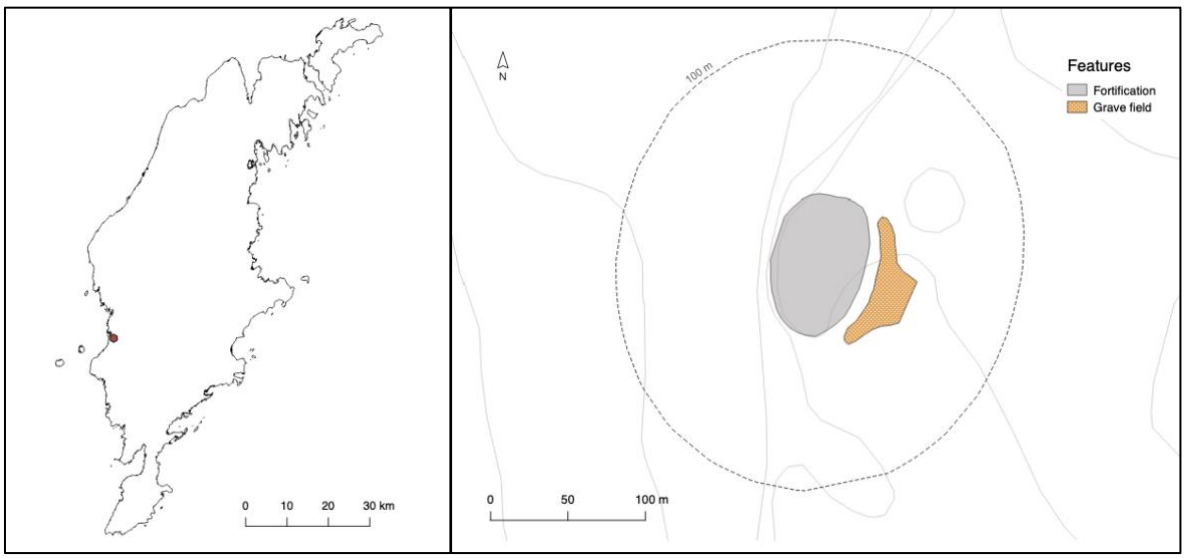

Fig. 4. Left: Location of Styrmansberget. *Right: Map of* Styrmansberget *and corresponding grave field. Maps by author.*

outskirts of the wall, which also contained similar inhumation burials, with the exception of one that contained cremated remains (Lundström 1955: 623).

The burials contained grave goods including animal bones of multiple species, iron knives, beads, bronze rings, belt buckles, and pottery. Comparative analysis of the artefacts against other finds on Gotland suggested the graves belong to the Roman Iron Age, as do the grave forms (Lundström 1955: 636ff). This typological dating, however, is not certain as the artefact types used to date the graves (belt buckles, beads, and circular buckles) are also common in the Late Iron Age (Lundström 1955: 636, 641). In addition, the morphology of the stone-settings found at *Styrmansberget* was a common grave form for the majority of the Iron Age. Three of these stone-settings were superimposed on a stone-building foundation located outside of the wall, which was also excavated but contained no artefacts and therefore could not be dated. It was concluded that the graves were constructed after the fortification and stone building foundation already lay in ruin based on their superimposition on the stone-building foundation and location within the remains of the wall (Lundström 1955: 642). Lundström notes that the building foundation belongs to a time period in between those of the fortification and the graves due to the likelihood that stones from the wall were used for the building's construction (1955: 642). It should be noted that the stone-building foundation does not appear on the map (see fig. 4) as it is registered as part of the grave field. Even though the graves at *Styrmansberget* are dated to the Roman Iron Age, they still qualify for the pattern of re-use as the fortification appears to be dated to a much earlier, though unknown, time period.

From the above information about excavations at a number of Gotland's ancient fortifications, it is not possible to ascertain reliable insight into the subject of site re-use, owing to the lack of data or that the results from those investigations that have provided inconclusive data. To investigate the matter of secondary use of these monuments the more expansive excavations performed at the fortification site RAÄ Eke 49:1 is detailed as the primary case study in this text. This case study offers the most empirical data available to substantiate the re-use of ancient fortification as burial locations.

4.3.1 Case study: Eke 49, *Gudings slott*

The fortification RAÄ Eke 49:1, otherwise known as *Gudings slott* (see fig. 5), is located on a slightly elevated plateau on the south-eastern coast, c.a. 800 meters from the modern coastline. At an elevation above 5 m.a.s.l., the plateau would have likely been a headland during the Iron Age. The fortification consists of the ruins of a stone wall that conforms to the shape of the natural topography and encloses the entire area, with an opening in the northern division that is

demarcated by a row of erected stones. The registered stone-settings and the enclosure's stone wall are clearly visible in the landscape, and the wall is notably higher and broader in the northern, western, and southwestern sections, where most of the stone-settings can be found. Due to the thin soil and poor arability, the land around the fortification would have been, and still is today, unsuitable for agricultural activities other than grazing land for animals. The surrounding area around the fortification is laden with Bronze Age cairns (visible from the fort), grave fields, and ritual buildings (see discussion in Chapter 5), providing ample evidence of sacred ancestral activities in the area.

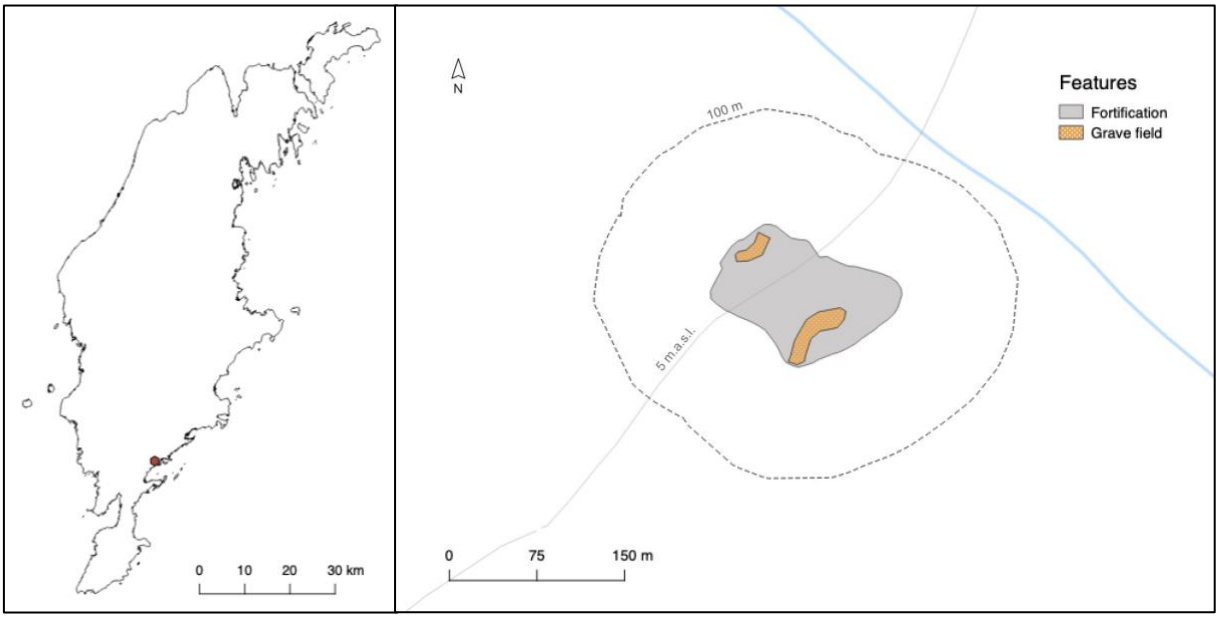

Fig. 5. Left: Location of Gudings slott, *on the southeastern coast. Right: Map of* Gudings slott *and corresponding grave fields as registered in FMIS. Maps by author.*

Gudings Slott was previously excavated in 1987 and 1988 by Johan Hegardt for Uppsala University's Gustavanium Museum. The excavation was limited to a trench over part of the southern section of the wall, and one stone-setting inside the wall adjacent to the trench. The findings included four inhumation burials inside of the cairn, one being notably destroyed, and a hearth found at the bottom of the trench in between the excavated cairn and another nearby stone-setting (Hegardt 1991a). The burials were dated to the later part of the Viking Age (c.a. 1000 CE) using the accompanying grave goods, which included box and animal-head brooches, knives and pins. Radiocarbon analysis of coal extracted from the hearth dates to the Roman Iron Age (approximately 29-339 CE). Hegardt proposed that the hearth can be related to the construction or activities surrounding the fortification, while the graves are a much later addition after the abandonment of the original structure (Hegardt 1991a). It is unclear how the hearth was determined to belong to the initial period of construction or use of the enclosure, as it was not located in direct context to the structure, although the presiding temporal ideas would connect the fortification to the Roman Iron Age. Unfortunately, no datable materials or artefacts were found in direct relation to the wall structure. Further, during his time at the fortification, Hegardt noted the possibility of additional graves in the destroyed part of the wall, which will be discussed shortly.

A more extensive excavation of *Gudings slott* occurred during the summers of 2018 and 2019 by Gotland Archaeological Field School, directed by Dan Carlsson, in which the author participated. The initial purpose of the investigation was to find evidence for the function of the fortification in order to relate it to activities along the nearby coast (a project called The Connecting Point, which is still ongoing) (Carlsson & Bokor in press).

The excavation involved features related to the fortification itself (Eke RAÄ 49:1), including several sections of wall, areas around the "entrance", one unregistered house

foundation, and multiple test pits across the plateau. In addition, six stone-settings from the grave fields registered inside the monument (Eke RAÄ 49:2-3) and five stone-settings previously unregistered were excavated (see fig.6). In one of the test pits, a concentration of charcoal was found and dated to the Bronze Age, but it should not be considered to belong to the establishment of the fortification. The findings from the excavated areas of the fortification itself did not definitively offer a time period of use, but radiocarbon dating of charcoal from a hearth located in the northern extent of the fortification suggests a time period of 423-580 CE, not exceedingly chronologically distant from the hearth found during Hegardt's excavation. Unfortunately, the materials found were too few to indicate at the original function or the dating of the fortification (Carlsson & Bokor in press). However, the excavated stone-settings did provide interesting data, and were the factor which spurred the interest in the secondary use of fortifications as burial places.

The stone-settings were excavated to 1) investigate their contemporaneity to the grave excavated in 1988, and 2) confirm the expanse of the cemeteries, due to the appearance of a higher number of stone-settings at the site than previously registered. Out of the 11 cairns excavated, six contained inhumation burials (consisting of male and female individuals, as well as one juvenile), one of which contained three individuals with only one individual accompanied by grave goods, two of which contained two individuals with grave goods, three of which contained the remains of grave goods and bone fragments, and one in which the individual was not accompanied by any artefacts (Carlsson & Bokor in press).

Based on the typology of artefacts and the north-south orientation of the individuals found within the graves, 11 burials could be comparatively dated to the Viking Age, more specifically, the Late Viking Age, again consistent with Hegardt's excavation. A bone fragment from one of the looted burials confirms the Viking Age chronology with a radiocarbon date of 970-1050

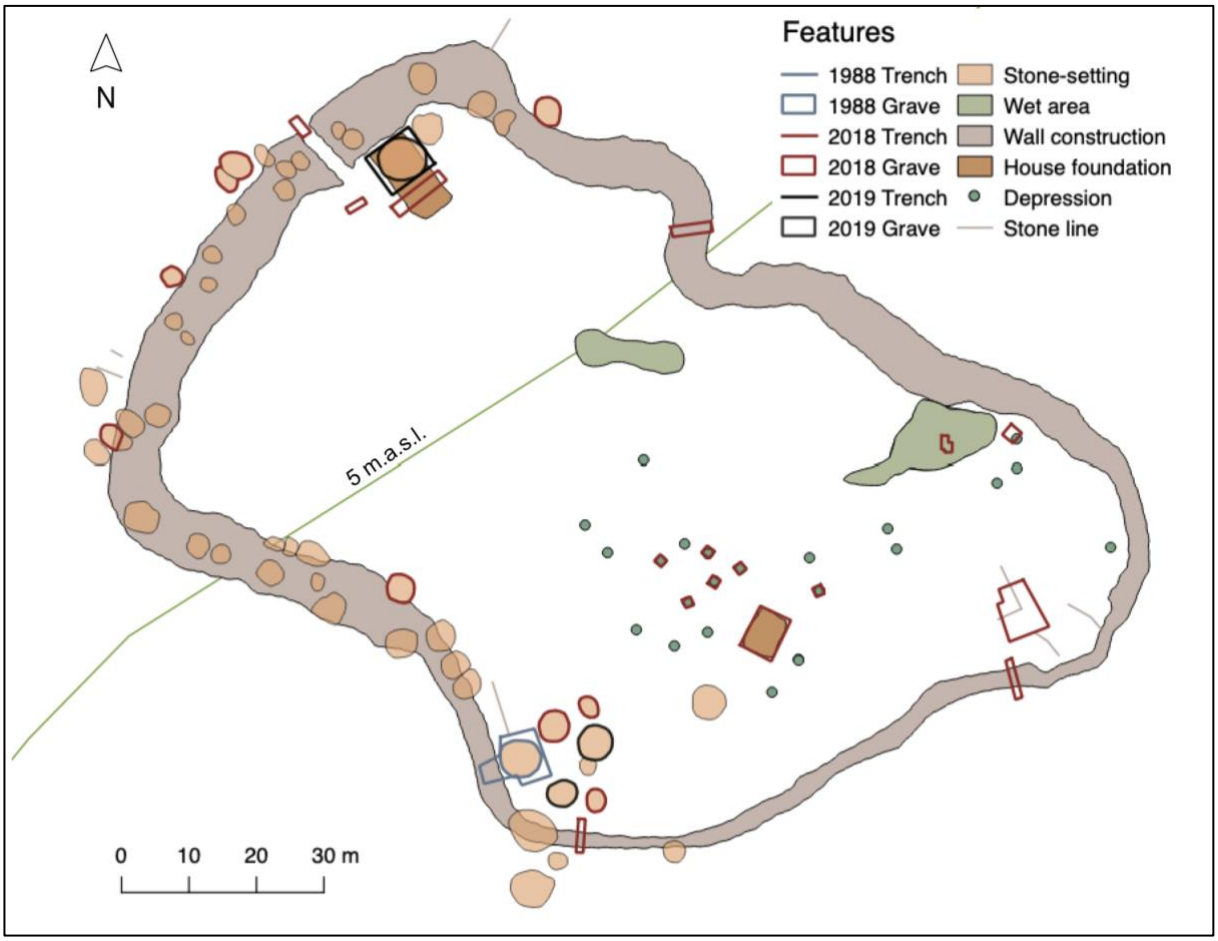

Fig. 6. Map of Gudings slott *excavations (2018 and 2019) and corresponding features. Map by author.*

CE. Bones from the inhumation burial excavated that did not contain grave goods were radiocarbon dated to the Early Medieval Period (1190-1280 CE). Carbon 14 analysis on a bone fragment from one of the graves where the body had been relocated or looted concluded that the individual lived during the Early Medieval Period, although the artefacts recovered from the grave appeared to belong to the Late Viking Age.

During the 2019 season, one of the largest stone-settings, located on top of the house foundation, was excavated, revealing a central burial of one individual, oriented east-west. Radiocarbon testing of this individual has not yet been completed at the time of this publication, but it is likely that this burial also belongs to the conversion period (own unpublished observations). These three graves appear to be an interesting pattern in the material remains of the grave fields, based on their dating and that two of which are oriented east-west[6], rather than north-south. This is important because the orientation of the body inside the grave is relevant to the cosmological and religious beliefs of the time (Parker Pearson 2000: 6).

Given the radiocarbon analysis results and the orientation of the two individuals, it is likely that these burials can be associated with the transitionary period between pagan and Christian burial practices. If this is the case, the removal of the skeleton from the Medieval north-south oriented grave might not relate to plundering, but could rather indicate that the body was later moved to the local churchyard, a practice noted in several sagas, but this would not explain why the other individuals were left in the grave fields unless they were forgotten or misplaced. Further radiocarbon testing of the graves excavated during the 2018 and 2019 field seasons are underway to investigate the existence of additional Medieval burials in order to ascertain if these particular individuals are anomalies within the context of the grave fields or if the location was in continuous use from the Viking Age through the Early Middle Ages. It could be possible that these graves do represent continuous use through the early period of Christianisation, as both contemporary pagan burials and Christian burials from this transitional period on Gotland are accompanied by similar ornamental artefacts, except that pagan burials would also contain everyday artefacts meant to be used in the afterlife (Gräslund 2007: 239f). If this is indeed the case, it may lead us to question why there was such a strong need to continue burying individuals in a pre-Christian ancestral location so long into the conversion period and after the establishment of the local church[7]. It would not be unreasonable to assume that the conversion period was a critical time during which people felt the need to assert their status and ancestral connection to the landscape through continued burial in ancestral grounds.

The situation of the graves at Eke 49:1 confirms a far more expansive grave field system than the 15 stone-settings registered in the grave fields at the site. Stone-settings appear inside the fortification, along the perimeter, extending from the wall, and on top of the wall. Moreover, field survey of the site suggests the existence of at least 50 visible graves (see fig. 5), with the possibility for up to twice as many graves that may be more disturbed, or less easily visible against the ruins of the stone wall (Carlsson & Bokor in press). At this time, no further excavation of the fortification is planned, however more radiocarbon analysis of the skeletal material and coal from the hearth found inside the northern house is underway to expand upon the interpretation of the site.

The situation at *Gudings slott* is one of the most significant examples of long-term re-use of an ancient fortification on Gotland. That the landscape it resides in is of too poor quality for agriculture and that there is no evidence of any production or consumption, means that the site was never inhabited. The lack of material remains, other than the graves, at once informs us as to what activities did not take place but does not inform us as to what exactly took place there. The site's proximity to the sea would have made it a viable place for gatherings related to sea

[6] An east-west orientation is a Christian practice and signifies that the individual may rise to greet God on Judgement Day by facing east (Parker Pearson 2000: 6).

[7] The parish church in Eke was established in the mid 13th century and the remains of a preceding stave church were uncovered in 1916 and were dendrochronologically dated to the 11th century (Braathen Dendrokronologiska Undersökningar 1995, alfdendro.se/gotland/gotland.html, accessed August 9, 2019).

voyages, but there remains no archaeological evidence of such activities. It is also interesting to note that the entrance to the enclosure is located in the inland-facing section of the wall, likely meaning that the fortification was trafficked by those coming from the settlement region of Eke Parish. The only material remains found inside the excavated area of the entrance were three horseshoe nails, which cannot be dated to any specific period of the Iron Age, and therefore, more extensive excavations of the area around the entrance and the wall itself would be needed to narrow down what time period the entrance was made or used.

Based on the surrounding monuments in the landscape and the available evidence from the excavations, it is evident that *Gudings slott* was a significant location for the local society during the Late Iron Age through the Early Middle Ages. That there was such a long period of use, followed by several hundred years of burials at the fortification, there must have been a strong association with the location, likely in connection to an ancestral association backwards through time.

4.4 Spatial Analyses

Now that the dataset of fortifications with burials in their association has been established, the 27 sites must be compared to try to define if they share any recognisable attributes that would have made these monuments significant to the people who later used them as locations for their burial rituals. Specifically, in the following sections, the factors analysed include topographical locations and the other ancient monuments in their relation, however, other factors may haved played a part.

4.4.1 Topographic location

By examining the topographical classifications (as set forth by Cassel in 1998) of the sites in question, we see that the majority (17) of fortifications inside this pattern are elevated forts, whereas nine are located on flat ground and only two are located in a mire (see fig. 7). There appears to be a clear spatial division based on type. Most of the hill-forts are located by the coastline and would have been nearer to the coast during their periods of use, due to the shoreline displacement. Those that are found further inland, RAÄ Linde 6:1 and RAÄ Hörsne 105:1, are located by modern inland waterways, such as streams, and were surrounded by mires during the beginning of the 20th century according to the available historical spatial data. The ring-forts found on flat ground and RAÄ Ganthem 22:1 are located further inland, in two distinct regions; the central and northern parts of the island. These too are close to waterways and mires. It is normal for burial locations to be near to watercourses, especially when those waterways were used for travel, as the visibility of the graves would have been important for marking territorial boundaries.

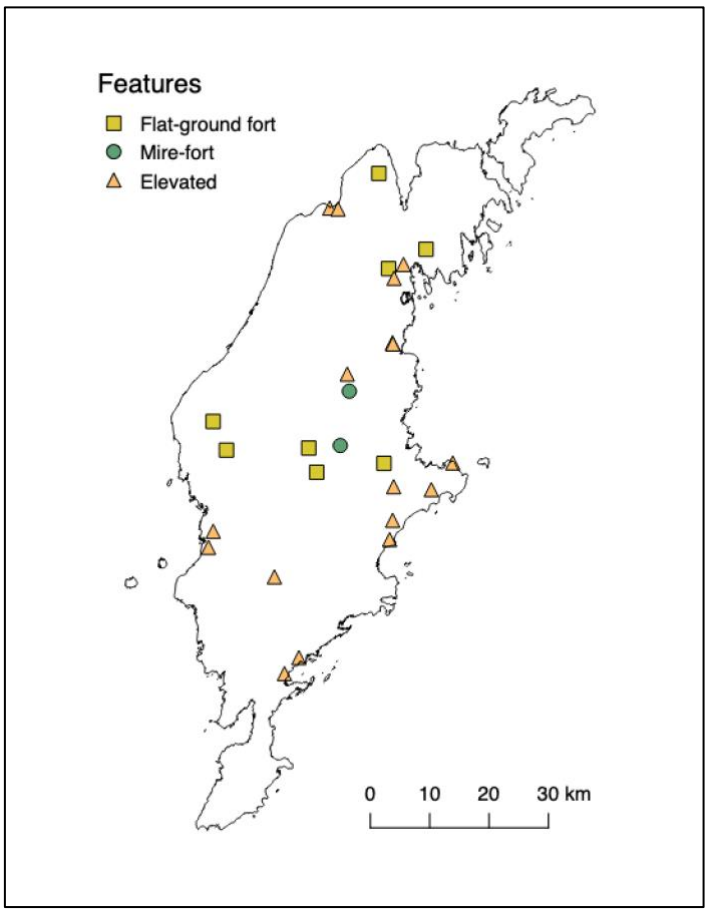

Fig. 7. Distribution of fortification types based on topography. Note that the two fortifications in Gothem parish overlap Map by author.

It has already been established that ring-forts are typically located closer to settlements and

that hill-forts are found further from the communities, but burials are found in both types, and therefore, their placement might not have depended on the distance. As explained in Chapter 3, the time periods of the flat-ground and mire-forts are certainly within the Early Iron Age, but those of elevation can also potentially be dated to the Bronze Age (Runesson 2014).

It may be significant to note that ring-forts and hill-forts do not appear together, but that hill-forts appear in pairs in several locations. This factor could relate to the original function of the fortifications, rather than relate to their re-use (Cassel 1998).

Elevated fort	***Flat-ground fort***	***Mire-fort***
*Ardre RAÄ 1:1**	*Björke RAÄ 44:1*	*Ganthem RAÄ 22:1*
Ardre RAÄ 6:1	*Hall RAÄ 11:1*	*Hörsne RAÄ 153:1*
*Eke RAÄ 49:1**	*Kräklingbo RAÄ 25:1*	
Fröjel RAÄ 8:1	*Lärbro RAÄ 66:1*	
Fröjel RAÄ 43:1	*Mästerby RAÄ 12:1*	
Gammelgarn RAÄ 38:1	*Othem RAÄ 38:1*	
Gothem RAÄ 232:1	*Stenkumla RAÄ 38:1*	
Gothem RAÄ 236:1	*Vänge RAÄ 2:1*	
*Grötlingbo RAÄ 25:1**		
Hangvar RAÄ 1:1		
Hangvar RAÄ 2:1		
Hörsne RAÄ 105:1		
Kräklingbo RAÄ 53:1		
Linde RAÄ 6:1		
Lärbro RAÄ 17:1		
Othem RAÄ 76:1		
Östergarn RAÄ 13:1		

Those locations marked by an asterisk (*) are discussed in the footnote on page 15.

4.4.2 Spatial division

Based on the distribution of the 27 fortifications compared to the total 84 (see Figs. 2 and 7), there appear to be large areas, primarily in the central regions of the island, where burials are missing from fortification contexts. Furthermore, there seems to be another division into three general regions: the north, middle, and south.

Tryggve Siltberg and Majvor Östergren (2018) have completed extensive research into the location of general assembly places (sv. *tingplatser*) across Gotland. In the *Guta saga*, Tjelvar partitioned the island into thirds and gave one third to each of his sons (Peel 2009: 3). These thirds or "ridings" (sv. *tredningarna*) were later made up two sixths (sv. *settingar*), or districts each, and were called the Northern Third (sv. *Nordertredingen*), Middle Third (sv. *Medeltredingen*) and Southern Third (sv. *Sudertredingen*) (Siltberg & Östergren 2018: 7, 183).

The first record of the division dates to 1213 CE, but it is suggested by Åke Hyenstrand that this could have come after the partition of the island into twelfths, as the number twelve is common in the *Guta saga* (Peel 1999: xxv).

As during the Iron Age Gotland was sovereign and governed by local chieftains, rather than kings and jarls, legal matters were held at the general assembly or "ting" (sv. *ting*). The ting took place at the local, regional and country levels. While I am not suggesting that these sites were ting places themselves, they may have belonged to certain territorial regions, because these division appear to correspond to the distribution of the fortifications in question. However, it should be noted that every fortification on the island would belong to one of these thirds, so it is possible that any random assemblage of 27 fortifications could demonstrate a similar visible pattern. This observation is merely put forth as an interesting speculation that may benefit from further research.

4.4.3 Stone-building foundations

As discussed in Chapter 2, stone-building foundations have been re-used as sites for cultic deposition of silver, the superimposition of later houses, and as the location of graves. At *Havortyp* fortifications, stone-building foundations likely indicate temporary or permanent residences; it is, however, possible that when they appear alone or in smaller numbers, along with grave monuments, they may have served a ritual purpose. Of the 27 fortifications containing graves, six also contain stone-building foundations, registered as 'house foundations' (sv. *husgrund*), either within the fort, just outside, or within the 100-meter buffer zone (see fig. 8). The fortifications with both stone-building foundations and graves include the following:

RAÄ Eke 49:1	Two house foundations, unregistered, inside the fortification, in the northwest and southeast. The first, oriented WNW-ESE, measuring 8x16m; the second, oriented N-S, measuring 5x6m.
RAÄ Fröjel 43:1	One house foundation to the west, oriented NNE-SSV, measuring 12x7m (RAÄ 43:3).
RAÄ Grötlingbo 25:1	One house foundation inside the fortification, oriented NNE-SSW, measuring 30x8m (RAÄ 25:2).
RAÄ Kräklingbo 25:1	One house foundation inside the fort, oriented NNE-SSV, measuring 7x6m (RAÄ25:2).
RAÄ Lärbro 17:1	One house foundation to the northwest, oriented N-S, measuring 22x11m (RAÄ 15:1).
RAÄ Vänge 2:1	Three house foundations north of the fort. The first, oriented NW-SE, measuring 20x12m; the second, oriented ENE-WSW, measuring 28 x12m; the third, oriented NW-SE, measuring 15x9m (RAÄ 3:3-5).

From the excavations at both *Gudings slott* and S*tyrmansberget*, we can see that the stone-building foundations found at these sites offer little to no evidence of the structures having served as permanent dwellings. In fact, very little can be said about these structures at all based on the lack of material culture they provide. What is notable about the 'house' foundations at

these sites is that they have graves superimposed on them. The northern stone-building foundation inside *Gudings slott,* adjacent to the "entrance", was disturbed in the north-western extent by the placement of a large stone-setting across the structure, though it appeared to extend beyond the burial construction to the wall of the fortification. The 2019 excavations at *Gudings slott* included the stone-setting and the portion of the house foundation that was under it. The finding of one individual inside the stone-setting confirm the use of the foundation for a grave, though the skeleton has not yet been dated. At *Styrmansberget,* the building foundation was located outside of the fortification's "entrance" and contained three stone-settings, with a small stone chain (sv. *stensträng*) linking it to the hill-fort's stone wall (Lundström 1955: 620). At both sites, the position of the stone-settings on top of the house foundations are clear indicators that the houses are older than the graves.

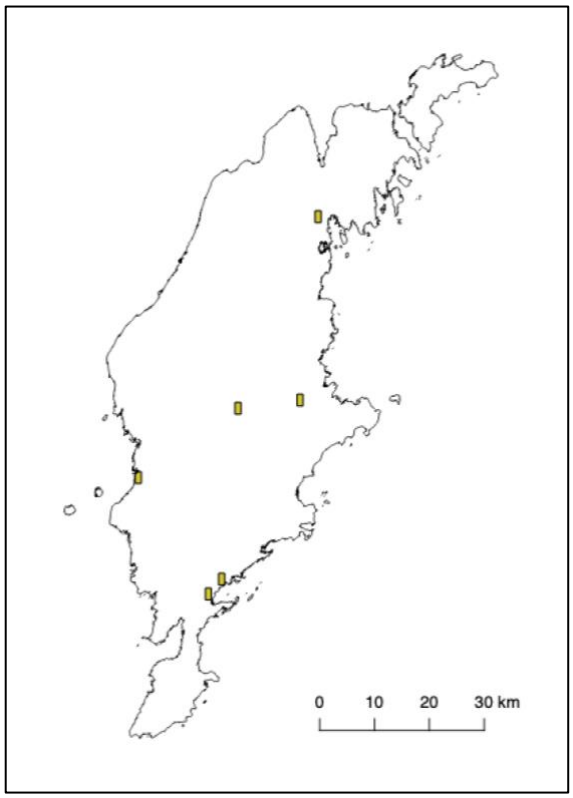

Fig. 8. Distribution of fortifications with stone-building foundations and graves within close proximity. Map by author.

As discussed in Chapter 3, from her research of farm sites in the Mälaren Valley, Hållans Stenholm analysed house remains where later houses and graves were found superimposed (2012). Similar to older graves which were re-used for later burials, house foundations also formed an ancestral connection to the landscape, and the superimposition of graves at their location likely necessitated symbolic rights to the land by the community residing in the area years later (Hållans Stenholm 2012). Hållans Stenholm argues that a grave constructed over house remains marks "'association or disassociation by transformation, activation, or annexation'. A house in a 'deserted' settlement was superimposed by a grave, and the site's function as a settlement and its status as 'abandoned' changed" (2012: 244). Here, she means that association connects through "similarity, recognition, kinship, or affinity" and disassociation separates through "dissimilarity and alienation" (Hållans Stenholm 2012: 244). However, her research involves houses on farms, where people actually lived for an extended period of time. The stone-building foundations in at least the two excavated fortifications appear to have been uninhabited for any lengths of time as far as can be presumed by the lack of archaeological remains. This may imply that the meaning of the graves superimposed on these stone-building foundations is not exactly the same. The graves constructed over farmhouses most likely related to the families living in that same farmland generations later and needed to affirm their connection to the farm; no one was living at these fortification sites from what can be discerned in the archaeological record.

The stone-building foundations at these sites could instead have had a cosmological significance rather than genealogical. During the 2019 excavations undertaken by Gotland Archaeological Field School, two house foundations approximately 600 meters southwest of *Gudings slott* were investigated. There were no indications of settlement, temporary or otherwise, as the material assemblage only included small deposits of burnt bone found inside constructions of fire-cracked stones, bronze artefacts, ceramic fragments and a deposit of weapons. From the material, it appears the houses were in use during the Migration Period and

possibly the early Viking Age[8]. The function of the house foundations based on their situation in an inhabitable landscape, the style of deposits and the proximity to grave fields, including those at *Gudings slott*, appears to have been ritualistic. It is uncertain whether these structures can be classified as cult houses, but the deposits of bones and iron artefacts can be interpreted as ceremonial, and therefore may suggest that these types of house remains found in sacral landscapes and where graves have been built upon them could have functioned more similarly to Hållans Stenholm's classification of graves superimposed on older graves. In such cases, graves on graves "represent physically independent constructions that were combined with each other" in an effort to associate or disassociate with the past (Hållans Stenholm 2012: 244). Where house foundations at other locations functioned in less clearly sacral ways, the superimposition of graves may have been a change in function of the monument, rather than a combination in function.

[8] Fragments of the pottery found in the houses were typologically dated to the Migration Period and a sword found in the weapons deposit was typologically dated to the 8th century.

5 Discussion and conclusion

5.1 Indications and implications of secondary use of ancient monuments

With the identification of a significant number of sites where approximately one-third of Gotland's ancient fortifications contain burials within or very near to their locations and where at least excavations of one of these fortification sites verifies the construction of the graves to be later additions, the possibilities for explaining a phenomenon of re-use can be explored more thoroughly. To ascribe reason to a complex phenomenon such as that which this text is concerned with is in no way definitive, but relies on various factors, of which one, several or none at all may apply in all instances. The most probable reason behind the re-use of ancient fortifications as burial places relies on the establishment of ancestral connections between generations in the form of ritual practices and memory transformation to strengthen status, as well as, the significance of ordering space.

When examining the situation at *Gudings slott*, it becomes evident that the fortification is only a piece of a larger ancestral landscape. Richard Bradley makes the astute argument that archaeologists have placed their attention on material remains, and paid less attention to the landscape in which artefacts and monuments are found (2016: 161). Given that natural aspects of the landscape, such as elevation and waterways, were significant features for various ritual locations, as were the surrounding ancestral monuments, it is not difficult to see the appeal for Late Iron Age societies to utilise ancient fortifications for ritual practices. Even where ring-forts are concerned, they are near to water, and their morphology resembling elements of the cosmological world such as Midgard or its encircling serpent should resonate with a society so concerned with incorporating aspects of their cosmology into the real world. These physical and symbolic features together would, for all intents and purposes, create an ideal sacral landscape. Sacred places are typically distinguishable from ordinary places of activity by both their clear borders (such as walls) and location near to powerful natural elements (such as bodies of water) (Anttonen 2013: 13f). Being that ancestral veneration is more frequently a communal practice than individual and would likely be more distinct than everyday rituals, creating a defined space to engage in ancestral rituals is a common theme across various cosmologies. From historical texts, such as the Icelandic sagas and *Guta lag*, as well as excavations of sacred sites such as the temple at Uppåkra, it is evident that pre-Christian ritual activities took place not only in temples, but in natural and constructed locations in the landscape. There was a need to order space, to separate the mundane from the sacred, therefore I propose that the monumental nature of ancient fortifications would have provided an ideal location for burial rituals and ancestral veneration to be performed.

One of the more overt aspects of the fortifications in which burials are found is that the morphology of the stone walls and natural topography of the land create an enclosed and defined area conducive to sacred spaces. In prehistory, how space was organised was directly related to cosmological beliefs, and it appears scholars across disciplines agree that during the Iron Age, there was a need to separate the known world from the unknown world. The morphology of fortifications works effectively to create an inner room for the known and an outer room for the unknown. Cassel suggests that fortifications could have acted as a type of border phenomenon, where contact between the known and unknown worlds was handled (Cassel 1998:152). In this case, she means the worlds are physical: the local and the distant. Where burials in a defined place are concerned, it may be presumed that the inner room belongs

to the unknown world of the dead, and the outer room belongs to the known world of the living. Thus, where graves and fortifications are found in tandem, they suggest a dual phenomenon. This duality is represented by a physical border between the society in question and the unknown world around them, and a further figurative border between the (known) living world and the (unknown) supernatural world. Klavs Randsborg (1980) suggests that grave fields and fortifications could also be a type of border phenomenon where their location in the landscape marks the periphery of the inhabited lands (Parker Pearson 2000: 135). That both *Gudings slott* and *Styrmansberget* are located close to the ancient coastline, veritably at the edge of the land, it is possible to assume they would have been considered peripheral locations. Further, they may have also acted as transitionary places being that they occupied space where people departed the known world and entered the unknown, both literally and figuratively.

Since both fortification and burial locations are subject to a variety of similar geographic and physical factors, it should not be surprising that they would appear together. It seems that a combination of advantageous position in the landscape and prominent ancient constructions creating a demarcated space, sometimes with cosmological resonance, culminated in an ideal location for Late Iron Age society to repurpose for their mortuary practices and establish their ancestral connections through ethereal time and physical space. From this, it can be suggested that the burial of recent ancestors in a defined space constructed by earlier ancestors then signifies that these ancient fortifications acted as a place for cultic practices that honoured those earlier ancestors whilst incorporating them into the living memory of the community and thus confirming their rights to the land. Simultaneously, the placement of the dead into the ancient landscape via the remains of fortifications, interred the recent ancestors within the powerful and mythical past, further strengthening ties to the land.

In the case of ancient burials and house remains being re-used for later burials, the knowledge of the monuments' original function aids in the analysis of their secondary use. Richard Bradley suggests that the period of discontinuation of use of monuments during the Iron Age was "short enough for something of the significance of these earlier sites to have been remembered" (2002: 135). Previous ritual function at these sites could be related to their later ritual function but proving the consciousness of that knowledge by the secondary user would be difficult. The original function of ancient fortifications cannot be verified as a result of the limited number of excavations: a prominent challenge for this research. Those that have been investigated, as discussed in the previous chapter, offer little insight into their functional value. For example, Engström's interpretation of *Torsburgen* is that the hill-fort was indeed a defensive construction, where the community could retreat to (Engström 1983b, 1984a) while several scholars suggest the site could have had a ritual significance (Nihlén 1975; Peel 1999). This does not mean that *Torsburgen* or any other fortification could not have served dual purposes throughout the time period of use. The excavation of RAÄ Gothem 232:1 procured some evidence that the hill-fort may have had a ritual purpose as demonstrated by the internment of horse bones and human teeth in the stone wall (Wallin *et al*. 2018) as does the excavation of RAÄ Hörsne 153:1. However, the stone-settings excavated within the grave fields registered at *Torsburgen* were unable to be confirmed as burials (Engström 1984a:120), the Bronze Age dating of the single burial located at RAÄ Gothem 232:1 (Wallin *et al.* 2018), and the Stone Age dating of the burial at RAÄ Hörnse 153:1 cannot confirm re-use of these fortifications as burial locations. In order to do so, there would need to be additional investigations into the remaining burial monuments located at these sites. As for the two fortifications where the archaeological evidence confirms secondary use as burial grounds, *Gudings slott* and *Styrmansberget*, the functions of the original structures themselves could not be verified by the material culture found (Lundström 1955; Carlsson & Bokor in press).

If the original function of these specific fortifications under investigation cannot be concretely confirmed to have been constructed for ceremonial or ritual purposes, then we must deduce that some or all characteristics of the monuments appealed to the Late Iron Age society who later chose to use them for the ritual practice of burial. As Tilley states (1991: 11), "the key issue in any phenomenological approach is the manner in which people experience and

understand the world." Therefore, any analysis should be a compilation of what is known about the society's cognition of the world around them and their cosmological beliefs. What we do know is the Late Iron Age society's belief system was rife with cosmological interpretations, especially concerning burial rituals and practices, not least during the Viking Age.

Taking into account our discussion about ancestral worship in Chapter 3, we can suppose that ancestral rituals typically occurred at burial locations and were likely connected to burial practices themselves. The places where rituals were performed are perceived as cult sites, with graves being the remaining physical material of those rituals. We also know that the practice of worshipping at ancestral sites continued into the beginning of the Christian era, which could resonate with the existence of the early Medieval burials at *Gudings slott*. Whatever specific rituals occurred at ancestral sites, they were almost certainly related to power and identity (Hageman & Hill 2016: 5). Therefore, the burials at these locations were meant to solidify or construct new status in connection to the past constructions. In the case of *Gudings slott*, the long term use of the fortification as a burial site from the Late Iron Age through the early Middle Ages may imply that the need to establish one's ancestral connection and right to the land was especially crucial during the time period of the Christianisation of Gotland. The re-use of these locations may allude to social or political stressors on the community during the time in which the burials occur. However, there must be more research performed in order to identify temporal trends in the re-use of these sites before any specific stressors can be identified.

Since burials are a form of ritual, and that Hållans Stenholm defines superimposition as a ritual practice (Hållans Stenholm 2012: 244), it should be evident that the re-use of these fortifications as burials grounds is unquestionably ritualistic. Although her studies have centred on burials, farmsteads and runestones (Hållans Stenholm 2006; 2012), without the incorporation of forts of any kind, most of her assumptions nonetheless apply to this study. The ruins of fortifications as they existed during the Late Iron Age were unmistakeable physical remains from the past, which still contained the power and influence of the preceding society. By selecting these sites for the establishment of grave fields, it is probable that the individuals or community were using the past to confirm or strengthen their ties to the region. The ties could have either behaved as a continuation of ownership or as an end to the previous rights to the land and an establishment of new rights instead.

To determine whether the burials were meant to remember or forget the past is challenging in these cases. In the case of *Gudings slott*, the stone-settings are stacked on top of the wall or so close that it is difficult to discern where the wall ends, and the graves begin. The appearance of the burials at this site almost overshadow the fortification, which could be interpreted as an act of forgetting; however, a large portion of the wall remains distinctly present, and it is possible the graves enhance the presence of the wall. In this case, it can be suggested the situation most resembles Hållans Stenholm's grave/house superimposition theory; an act of association or disassociation by means of transformation, the two monuments existing together but the later monument(s) changing the meaning of the initial monument (Hållans Stenholm 2012: 244). However, where fortifications can be identified as ritual enclosures prior to the addition of later graves, or where burials are found inside the walls or placed alongside them, the structure of the fortification stays more or less intact and both monuments exist simultaneously, the situation could act as Hållans Stenholm's grave on grave classification, where the two monuments are combined to associate or disassociate (Hållans Stenholm 2012: 244). The prevailing issue, as mentioned previously, is the lack of empirical evidence to identify the purpose or function of the fortifications.

Nevertheless, due to the fact that intent and purpose are intangible, especially in concern to the rituals involving ancestors and remembrance, it may not be possible to ever accurately define them in relation to the phenomenon of re-use. The previously established theories meant to justify the reasons for the secondary use of ancient monuments provide a suitable framework on which to build future investigation, but there needs to be additional research to strengthen the surety these presumptions. The instances of re-use recognised in this work, as well as the assumptions made in order to explain them, is only a fraction of what could be a much larger

area of exploration.

5.2 Indications and implications for the future research of Gotland's ancient fortifications

The study of Gotland's ancient fortifications has gained traction in recent years, not least with the 2018 and 2019 excavations of RAÄ Gothem 232:1, RAÄ Hörsne 153:1 and RAÄ Eke 49:1, and is creating possibilities for future research and new perspectives as well. Antiquated theories about the classification and purpose of these monumental structures are being challenged and new information is slowly accumulating.

Efforts to better understand the phenomenon of re-use of these sites as burial grounds would benefit significantly from additional excavations of these sites and their associated burials, as well as re-examination of the data from past excavations. It would be advantageous to verify the ages of the fortifications and burials to exclude those that could possibly be contemporary and focus on those that are of proven secondary use. To reinstate a point from Chapter 2, fortifications with burials located inside their walls could have functioned as ritual locations (Andrén 2014) if the burials belong to the same time period as the monument. Even if the burials are from a later period, the grave fields can be considered ritual spaces imbuing sacred meaning to the fortifications through the continued use of the monuments. The accumulated list of sites from the previous chapter does not attempt to assume that all burials associated with those fortifications are from a later time period, except where it can be verified, either through field survey or physical evidence. Without investigation, it is extremely difficult to ascribe a certain time period to the burials. As evidenced by the excavation of RAÄ Gothem 232:1, one burial may appear to belong to a later time period, but in fact, belongs to an even earlier one. Therefore, more scientific testing must be done to ascertain the dates of the graves that have been excavated, especially in the cases where there are no artefacts to offer temporal information. I would suggest also that scientific dating needs to be completed on the human remains found at each location, in tandem with artefact typology, to securely date the burials, especially those remains from sites where no artefacts were found. Through researching re-use, it appears that dating artefacts alone is not enough to firmly provide a time period of deposit, as it may be that in some instances artefacts themselves were handed down or re-used. By securing radiocarbon dating from human remains, it would be possible to investigate the re-use of fortifications further, and the instances where artefacts and human remains provide different temporality could open new avenues in the study of re-use.

In addition, the majority of excavations that have occurred at the locations presented in this work have focused on either the graves or the fortifications, rather than both. The general time periods allocated to fortifications (i.e. the Bronze Age and Early Iron Age) creates an acceptable framework for dating the monuments where dateable materials are lacking, such as *Gudings slott* and *Styrmansberget*, but it is always best to try to apprehend scientific proof through the archaeological record, especially when it comes to the matter of re-use.

If more of Gotland's ancient fortifications do provide substantial evidence for re-use, and also further evidence of initial functional purposes, it may become more evident why these fortifications were chosen for later burials. Even the sites where burials are contemporary or predate the fort, the excavation results would still prove valuable to the study of Gotland's ancient fortifications in general. What is imperative is to investigate these sites with a broader lens, rather than focusing on one specific research question because valuable information may be undermined by the bias of the excavation or might mask multivariate use in the past, as many previous investigations demonstrate.

The study of re-use is a steadily growing field of research; thus the evidence and theories presented within this text could change with future discoveries, allowing for more precise interpretations, strengthening the current interpretations or, potentially, nullifying them.

6 Summary: the ancient fortification as a monument of ritual re-use

Ancient fortifications have long been a popular subject in the field of archaeological research. Scholars seem drawn to these monuments, possibly because they are so visible in the modern landscape or maybe due to the fact that excavations consistently reveal new possibilities for their meaning and function. One of the significant aspects of fortifications that is often overlooked in research is their tendency for various forms of re-use throughout different time periods. During the Late Iron Age, one of the ways in which these monuments were re-used was as burial sites. On Gotland specifically, there are 84 registered ancient fortifications. Of those, approximately one-third have graves in their immediate vicinity.

In an effort to examine the characteristics behind this pattern and reveal possible explanations for why these monuments made suitable places for burial practice, there needed to be a more in-depth look into what the ritual of re-use entails. Re-use is an intentional act that encompasses the meaning of the past into the present to serve a specific purpose. The concept of the past is intertwined with the significance of ancestors and the importance of ancestors in the Late Iron Age directly impacted society's place in the world. Connections to past generations formed rights and privileges to land and power, which could be established through the ancestral veneration and incorporating remnants of the past into symbolic practices such as re-use in the form of burial.

Only a small number of fortifications and their associated burials have led to empirical evidence of re-use, but from that information, it is possible to confirm that at least a portion of fortifications containing graves are examples of re-use rather than features contemporary to the construction of the fortifications. Due to the fact that ancestral worship and memory formation are intangible processes and therefore, unable to be traced through the archaeological record, the physical and symbolic characteristics of fortifications are necessary to explain otherwise unachievable hypothesis.

The characteristics of the landscape and the ancestral monuments embedded within it were essential to Iron Age cosmology. The location and appearance of fortifications met many of the criteria relevant to mortuary practice and therefore became repurposed for mortuary practices. For both the rituals of burial and re-use, the ties created or strengthened by remembrance and incorporation of the ancestors who constructed these monuments were likely significant in founding power and rights to the landscape for the later generations who superimposed graves upon their ruins. Given that the study of re-use is a relatively new subject in archaeological research, there remains much room for future investigations into the re-use of Gotland's ancient fortifications.

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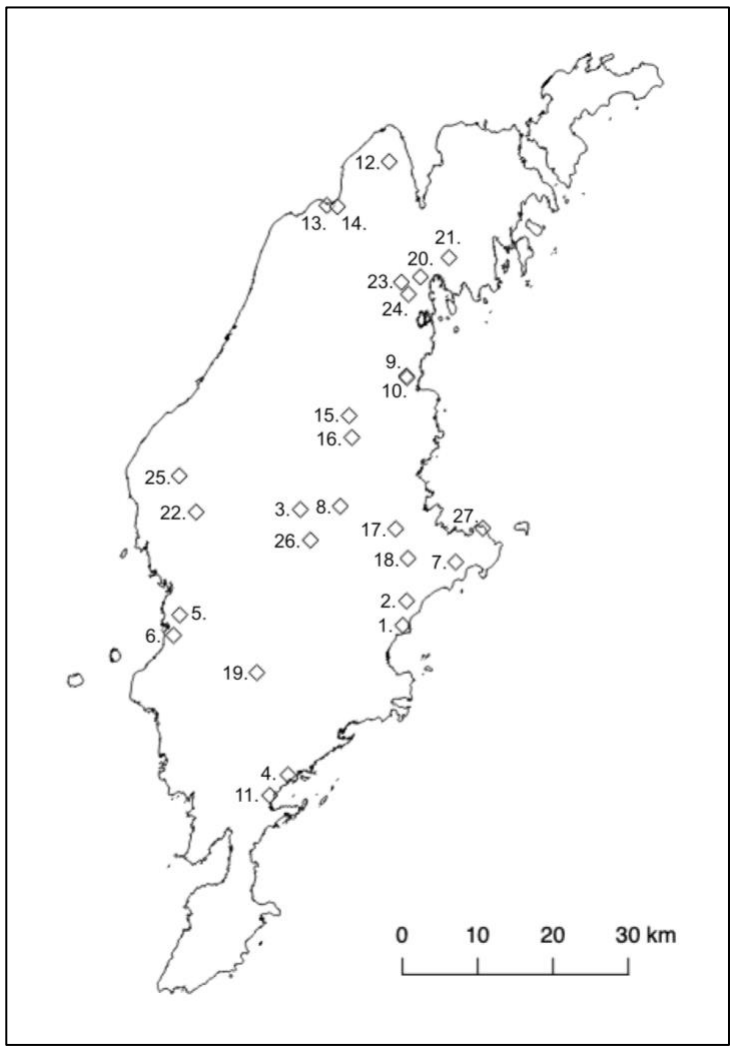
8 Appendix I



1. *Ardre 1*
2. *Ardre 6*
3. *Björke 44*
4. *Eke 49*
5. *Fröjel 8*
6. *Fröjel 43*
7. *Gammelgarn 38*
8. *Ganthem 22*
9. *Gothem 232*
10. *Gothem 236*
11. *Grötlingbo 25*
12. *Hall 11*
13. *Hangvar 1*
14. *Hangvar 2*
15. *Hörsne 105*
16. *Hörsne 153*
17. *Kräklingbo 25*
18. *Kräklingbo 53*
19. *Linde 6*
20. *Lärbro 17*
21. *Lärbro 66*
22. *Mästerby 12*
23. *Othem 38*
24. *Othem 76*
25. *Stenkumla 38*
26. *Vänge 2*
27. *Östergarn 13*

9 Appendix II

Registered Fortifications on Gotland

RAÄ	***Associated Grave Monument(s)***	***Excavation of Fortification***	***Excavation of Burials***
Ala 54:1			
Alva 26:1			
Anga 209:1			
*Ardre 1:1**	*Graves marked by erected stone RAÄ 1:2-3*		
*Ardre 6:1**	*Stone-settings RAÄ 6:2-3*		
Atlingbo 41:1			
Barlingbo 31:1			
Björke 44:1	*Grave marked by erected stone RAÄ 234:1*		
Boge 22:1			
Boge 50:1 (?)			
Bro 10:1			
Bro 13:1			
Bro 32:1			
Burs 154:1			
*Eke 49:1**	*Grave field RAÄ 49:2* *Grave field RAÄ 49:3*	*X*	*X*
Endre 84:1 *Eskelhem 149*			
Fole 77:1			

*Fröjel 8:1**	*Stone-settings RAÄ 8:2-3*		*X*
*Fröjel 43:1**	*Grave field RAÄ 42:2*	*X*	*X*
*Gammelgarn 38:1**	*Stone-settings RAÄ 37:1-4*		
Gammelgarn 51:1			
*Ganthem 22:1**			
Garde 71:1 (?)			
Gothem 131:1			
*Gothem 232:1**	*Stone-setting RAÄ 234:1*	*X*	*X*
Gothem 236:1(?)*	*Stone-setting? RAÄ 235:1* *Cairn? RAÄ Boge 32:1*		
*Grötlingbo 25:1**	*Stone-setting RAÄ 25:3*		
Grötlingbo 239:1			
Guldrupe 1:1			
Hablingbo 31:1			
Hablingbo 32:1			
*Hall 11:1**	*Grave field RAÄ* *Stone-settings RAÄ 11:2-4*		
Halla 62:1			
Hamra 2:1			
*Hangvar 1:1**	*Grave RAÄ 471*		
*Hangvar 2:1**	*Grave field RAÄ 3:2*		*X*
*Hangvar 4:2**	*Grave field RAÄ 14:1*		
Hangvar 89:1			
Havdhem 24:1			
Havdhem 141:1			
Hemse 1:1			
Hemse 77:2			

*Hörsne 105:1**	*Grave field RAÄ 2:1*		
*Hörsne 153:1**		*X*	*X*
Klinte 34:1			
Kräklingbo 15:1			
*Kräklingbo 25:1**	*Grave field RAÄ 94:1* *Grave field RAÄ95:1*		*X*
*Kräklingbo 53:1**	*Stone-settings RAÄ 220:1-3, 223:1* *Grave field RAÄ 224:1* *Grave field RAÄ 225:1*	*X*	*X*
Kräklingbo 575			
Lau 67:1			
Linde 5:1			
*Linde 6:1**	*Grave field RAÄ 6:2*		
Lojsta 115			
*Lärbro 17:1**	*Cairn RAÄ 17:2* *Stone-settings RAÄ 17:3-4*		
*Lärbro 66:1**	*Grave field RAÄ 66:2*		
Lärbro 88:1 (?)*	*Stone-setting RAÄ 88:2*		
*Mästerby 12:1**	*Grave field RAÄ 12:1*		
Norrlanda 64:1			
Norrlanda 168:1			
När 28:1			
När 83:1			
*Othem 38:1**	*Grave field* *Stone-settings* *Grave field RAÄ 38:2-8*		
*Othem 76:1**	*Grave field RAÄ 76:2* *Stone-setting RAÄ 104:1*		*X*

	Grave field RAÄ 77:1 *Grave field RAÄ 115:1*		
Rute 11:1			
Sjonhem 81:1			
Sjonhem 86:1	*Stone-setting RAÄ 85:1*		
*Stenkumla 38:1**	*Stone-settings RAÄ 38:2-4, 39:1-3, 96:1-2, 97:1-2, 40:1* *Stone circle RAÄ*		
Stenkyrka 22:1			
Stenkyrka 23:1			
Stenkyrka 24:1			
Stånga 44:1			
Tofta 85:1			
Viklau 25:1			
Visby 26:1			
*Vänge 2:1**	*Stone-setting RAÄ 3:1* *Mound RAÄ 3:2*		
Västergarn 16:1			
Västergarn 58:1			
Västerhejde 39:1			
Väte 27:1	*Stone-setting RAÄ 71:1* *Grave field RAÄ Atlingbo 45:1*		
Väte 27:2			
Väte 89:1	*Grave field RAÄ 11:1*		
*Östergarn 13:1**	*Stone-settings RAÄ 112:1-4* *Grave marked by erected stone RAÄ 327*		
Östergarn 20:1			

Fortifications marked by an asterisk are those included the final list of fortifications with graves inside the 100-meter buffer zone. Those marked by a question mark (?) are those listed in FMIS as "fornborg?".*