

# Contents

## INTRODUCTION

<b>Viking Dynasties</b> .....	<b>7</b>
Archaeological sagas and material histories	
<i>Neil Price, Tom Christensen &amp; John Ljungkvist</i>	

## PART I

### THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD

<b>Chapter 1. Lejre and the rise of a dynasty</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<i>Tom Christensen</i>	
<b>Chapter 2. The ship settings and Grydehøj at Lejre</b> .....	<b>107</b>
<i>Julie Nielsen</i>	
<b>Chapter 3. Gamla Uppsala</b> .....	<b>131</b>
<i>John Ljungkvist</i>	
<b>Chapter 4. Animals and people at the central places</b> .....	<b>253</b>
<i>Rudolf Gustavsson</i>	
<b>Chapter 5. Places of consumption and production</b> .....	<b>285</b>
<i>John Ljungkvist &amp; Tom Christensen</i>	

## PART II

### HISTORY AND LITERATURE

<b>Chapter 6. The Uppsala kings</b> .....	<b>315</b>
Narrative – Tradition – Reality	
<i>Daniel Sävborg</i>	
<b>Chapter 7. Viking Age kings of Denmark and Sweden</b> .....	<b>377</b>
<i>Niels Lund † 2021</i>	

## PART III INTERPRETATIONS

### Chapter 8. The dynasties at sea in the Late Iron Age..... 415

*Ole Thirup Kastholm*

### Chapter 9. Dynastic dialects..... 463

The symbolic languages of power and ritual

*Neil Price*

### Chapter 10. Powerful performances..... 499

Political dramas across Europe and in Viking Age Scandinavia

*Sandie Holst*

### Chapter 11. Lejre, Uppsala and their North Sea connections..... 531

*John Ljungkvist, Neil Price & Tom Christensen*

## CONCLUSION

### Power, place, and story..... 545

A synthetic model for the Late Iron Age

*Tom Christensen, John Ljungkvist & Neil Price*

### Notes..... 556

### Bibliography..... 585

### Illustration credits..... 616

# Viking Dynasties

## Archaeological sagas and material histories

*Neil Price, Tom Christensen & John Ljungkvist*

This volume presents the results of a five-year Danish-Swedish collaborative research project, set up as a joint venture between the National Museum of Denmark and Uppsala University, with generous sponsorship from the KrogagerFonden. The project's aim has been to bring together two arenas of debate that have operated largely independently for over a century, namely the archaeological and textual analyses of the early Scandinavian kingdoms focussed on the central places of Gammel Lejre and Gamla Uppsala. According to either legend or history (and the balance between those terms lies at the heart of this research), these sites were associated with two royal families, the Scyldings and the Ynglings, each of whom would leave a lasting mark on the literary, heroic, and mythological narratives of the North.

The background and inspiration for the project can be found in the very successful long-term collaboration between the archaeological research programme at Lejre run by Tom Christensen of ROMU, and the KrogagerFonden. In 2015 this resulted in the monumental standard work *Lejre bag myten*, building on years of smaller publications and public outreach. This work naturally concentrated on the site of Lejre itself, the royal halls and the features of their immediate hinterland. The present project expanded the focus to the larger political environment of the time – the context within which Lejre came into being – and to include its closest equivalent contemporary in Sweden, the royal seat and monumental landscape of Gamla Uppsala. As a result, the project has entailed a collaboration between the existing Lejre team and the Uppsala University researchers who have for many years been investigating the Gamla Uppsala site.

Conscious of the difficulties inherent in the term, but using it with a deliberate eye to its future ramifications in Scandinavian history, we here explore the interactions and conflicts between the Viking dynasties of Lejre and Uppsala.

## The research background

The royal families of Lejre and Uppsala are hardly unknown to history, and indeed have been part of the national(ist) folklore of the Nordic countries for centuries. However, there are almost no contemporary textual sources that describe their activities (and none from inside Scandinavia), forcing a reliance on writers at removes of both distance and culture. The sources themselves are remarkably numerous and need little introduction, spanning everything from poetic epic and retrospective historical (and mythological) construct, to Eddic verse, saga narrative, the work of ecclesiastical chroniclers, political spin, and more. At the same time, scholarly trends in the interpretation of such texts have moved through cycles of source critical emphasis that have spanned the full bandwidth from extreme credulity to the total rejection of any genuine historical content.

Some of the earliest texts, though preserved in later manuscripts, are in verse. In a class of its own is naturally *Beowulf*, perhaps the quintessential literary expression of hall culture, royal prestige display, and its social context, combined with a long-form relation of dynastic politics in Denmark and the western Baltic. Debates on the poem's dating form almost a research field in their own right, but a broad consen-