

### **Linear earthworks, ring fortresses, and sea barrages**

The Olger Dyke is not unique in southern Jutland, but it is the most impressive and well documented linear earthwork in this region. During the first 500 years AD, several linear earthworks (e.g. Æ Vold, Trældiget, and Danevirke) and sea barrages (e.g. Gudsø Vig, Margrethes Bro, and Æ Lei) were erected. The purpose of these structures was to protect an area by controlling or even preventing access to the area.

The ring fortresses make out a very special type of earthwork. They are often referred to as fortresses although they are not fortresses in the common sense of the word. Their location in the landscape is strategic, and they are erected as protective structures and military strongpoints. It is no coincidence that the two best known ring fortresses (Archsumburg and Trælbanke) are placed on either side of the Vidå estuary. The Olger Dyke, the river Vidå, and the two ring fortresses make out the oldest known defensive structure.

#### Captions:

1. *Trældiget runs some 12 km from Dollerup Sø west of Lunderskov to Jordrup. It consists of a V-shaped ditch and an earthen bank east of the ditch. It is dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.*
2. *Gudsø Vig. The remains of five sea barrages were found here. Element B is the oldest, and dates to 50 BC-150 AD. Element A is the second oldest, consisting of whole trees lying end to end and dated to the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD. The remaining elements – C, D, and E – date to the late Germanic Iron Age and Viking Period.*
3. *Æ Lei and Margrethes Bro. Two sea barrages are constructed across Haderslev Fjord. They have been dated dendrochronologically to 370 and 403/418 respectively. They consist of posts and floating planks allowing them to move according to the tide. Æ Lei is 600 m long and 15 m – 50 m wide and ran across the fjord. The two sea barrages were probably constructed by the Jutes in connection with the conflicts indicated by the youngest offering of military gear in Ejsbøl Mose near Haderslev. Drawing: Jørgen Andersen, MSJ.*
4. *Æ Vold. The earthwork is situated c. 15 km north of the Olger Dyke near Øster Løgum. It was erected shortly after 100 AD. It consisted of a palisade, a ditch, and an earthen bank, and resembles the Olger Dyke.*
5. *Trælbanke is a ring fortress with a diameter of 85 m – 90 m., constructed in the marsh north of Højer. Contrary to Archsumburg there are no remains of buildings inside the fortified area. It was erected by the Angles in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD and was in use at the same time as the Olger Dyke. It is one of the elements of the oldest known defensive structure in this region.*
6. *Archsumburg is a ring fortress with a diameter of 85 m – 90 m on the island of Sild in the Wadden Sea. Remains of radially arranged buildings inside the structure have been found here. It is one of the elements of the oldest known defensive structure in this region.*

7. *Danevirke. The Danevirke of the Viking Period stretches across the Jutlandic peninsula from Slien in the east to the Wadden Sea in the west. Recent excavations have shown that the oldest Danevirke consisted of a ditch and an earthen bank. The length of the oldest structure is still unknown. It was constructed around 500 AD. It is oriented towards the south and was erected by the Jutes or the Danes.*

