

# MAGNATE ESTATES ALONG THE ROAD

## VIKING AGE SETTLEMENTS, COMMUNICATION AND CONTACTS IN SOUTH-WEST SCANIA, SWEDEN

ANNE CARLIE

### INTRODUCTION

Just a few decades ago, the research picture of the social dimensions of Iron Age settlement in southern Scandinavia was still rather hazy. As a result of the more systematic use of metal detectors on sites, the state of our knowledge today is completely different, and details are beginning to stand out. One of the phenomena that can be clearly discerned is the complexes of large estates with halls from the Late Iron Age and Viking Age. Based on similarities in building styles and organization, it has been suggested that these sites should be regarded as exponents of a collective aristocratic network of individuals and groups which gave certain families a special social position above others. A characteristic feature of these estates, which is believed to distinguish them from other more ordinary farms, is the occurrence of sequences of halls. In a study of the complex at Järrestad in south-east Scania, Bengt Söderberg uses the hall as a distinguishing element, which can be followed on the same site during several successive phases (Söderberg 2005, 107).

Excavated farms with sequences of halls are at present known from five places in southern Scandinavia. Apart from Järrestad there are three sites in Zealand, represented by Tissø on the west side of the island, towards the Great Belt (Jørgensen 2002), Lejre in Roskilde Fjord (Christensen 1997), and Strøby Toftegård at Stevns on the east side of the island, by the Sound (Tornbjerg 1998). The fifth site is at Slöinge in Halland, by the Kattegat (Lundqvist 2003). Uppåkra in south-west Scania should also be added to the group, with its sequence of halls, although the relationship to a contemporary estate complex has not yet been clarified (Larsson & Lenntorp 2004). In a comparative study Söderberg urges caution, saying that we should not ascribe too much importance to the

geographical distribution of the sites, since new finds can quickly change the picture. At the same time, he notes the lack of sites with sequences of halls in Jutland and Funen, despite the fact that several large estates with halls have been excavated in these areas (Söderberg 2005, 112f).

Smaller magnate estates<sup>1</sup> from the Late Iron Age and Viking Age, that is, estates not belonging to the uppermost stratum of society, but to individuals or collectives who were lower down the social ladder, have attracted much less attention in the archaeological discussion (but see e.g. Widgren 1998; Ethelberg 2003, 310ff; Carlie & Artursson 2005, 218ff). These are estate complexes which differ from the mass of farms through their appearance and size, but do not show any explicit traces of an aristocratic lifestyle or special functions such as specialized craft.

In this article I have chosen to focus on one such type of smaller magnate estate. The empirical point of departure is the Västervång site at Trelleborg in south-west Scania, where the Southern Excavations Department (UV Syd) of the National Heritage Board a few years ago investigated parts of a large settlement from the Late Vendel Period and Viking Age which also contained remains of a large estate complex (Ericson & Carlie 2006). The estate can be followed during two settlement phases on the site, but otherwise does not distinguish itself by its finds.

The aim is to understand what the estate at Västervång and other similar complexes represented in their own times. Should the size of these units in relation to other contemporary settlement be viewed solely as a reflection

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<sup>1</sup> At the moment we lack adequate terminology to describe different types of Iron Age farms in terms of social and settlement hierarchy. I have chosen the term "smaller magnate estate" to distinguish these sites from larger estate complexes with a clear aristocratic character.

of greater prosperity? Or are there signs suggesting that these belonged to a local elite with social contacts that extended outside the local district? My thesis is that we should look at the estate complexes from the latter perspective, mainly because of the similarities in building styles that can be detected in the archaeological record from contemporary estates in different parts of southern Scandinavia. In Scania and Zealand one can see clear influences in the architecture of the buildings from western Denmark and houses of Sædding type. In Scania it is striking that the estate complexes with Sædding-like houses that we know of were all located along one of the major roads in the region, running between Uppåkra and Trelleborg on the south coast of Scania. I would not go

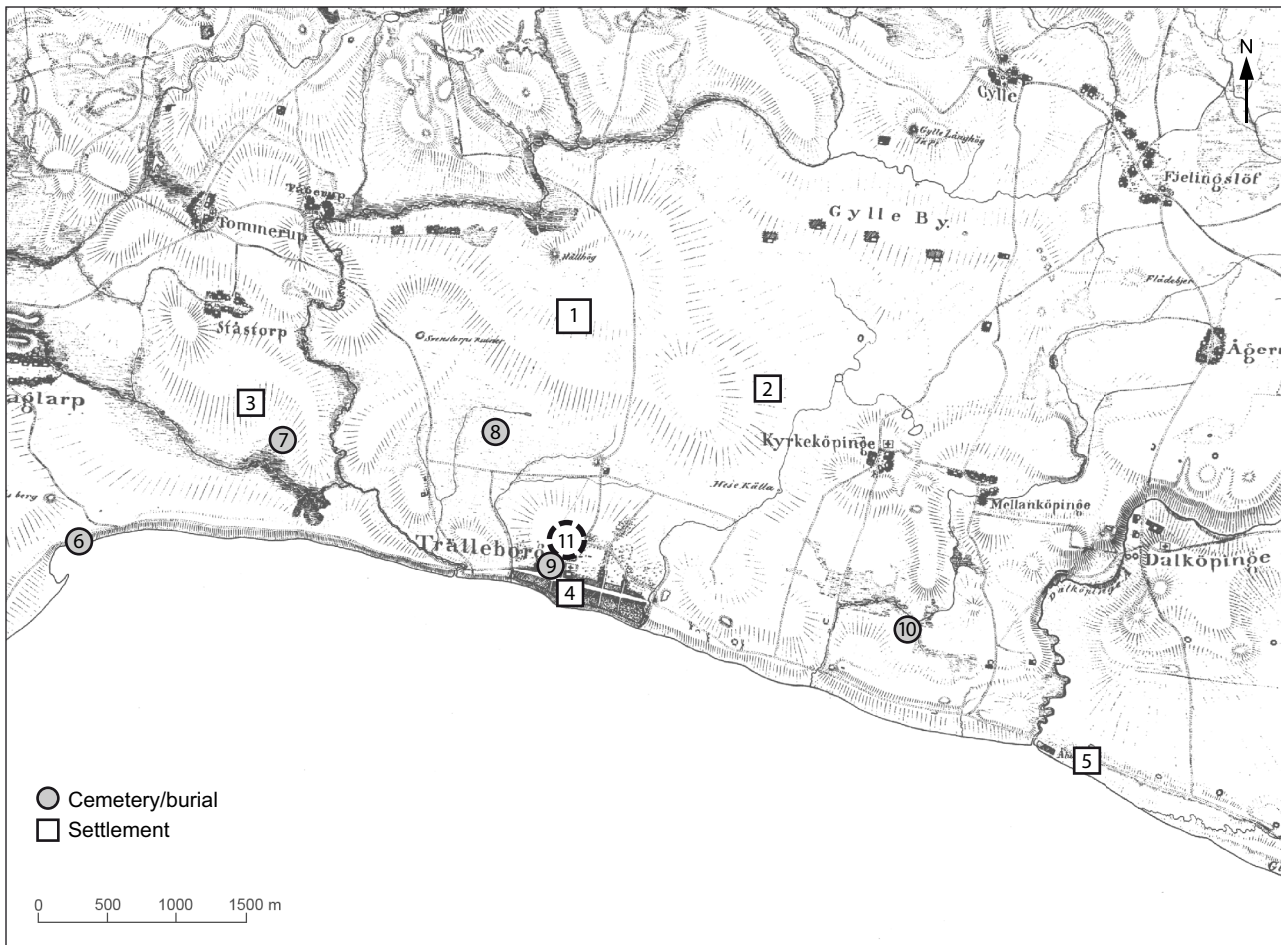


Fig. 1. Section of the Scanian Reconnaissance Map from 1812–20. This shows the location of the Västervång site in relation to known graves and settlement sites from the Vendel Period and Viking Age in the vicinity. The map also shows the location of three of the four Köpinge-places north-east of Trelleborg. Illustration: Henrik Pihl.

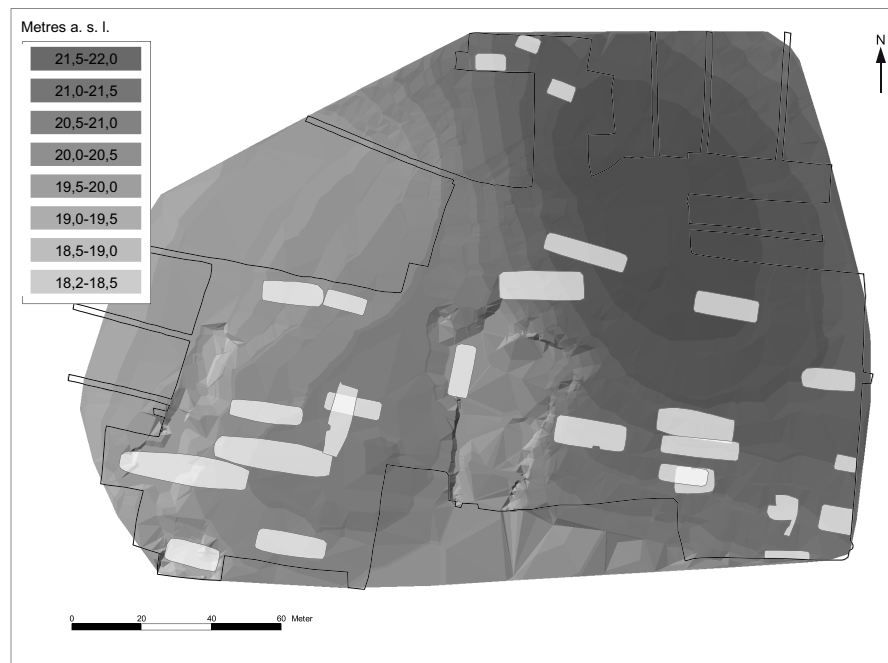


Fig. 2. GIS model of the microtopography of the site, with the houses marked. The model is based on a large number of altitude figures measured all over the site under today's topsoil cover and preserved layers, which means that this captures the variation in the early surface topography of the site, before the effects of modern agriculture. The altitude varied between 19 and 23 metres above sea level and is shown in the GIS model with 0.5 metre equidistant contours, with light areas marking higher terrain and darker areas lower sections. GIS model: Karin Lund. Illustration: Henrik Pihl.

so far as to ascribe political implications to the similarities in building style, that is, viewing these as expressions of regional or supra-regional alliances between different individuals or collectives. The adoption of a new building tradition should instead be regarded as an active choice, through which the owner/builder manifested his social affiliation.

The article consists of four parts. The first part presents the settlement site and magnate farm at Västervång, after which the site is related to the Late Iron Age settlement and graves in the surrounding district. The introduction to the site and the landscape around Trelleborg is followed by an analysis of the architecture of the estate. The focus is on the appearance and construction of the main building on each site, which is discussed from a comparative southern Scandinavian perspective. I argue that the influences on the house types should be sought in Jutland in houses of the type called after the example at Sædding. The third part of the article asks how we should interpret the similarities in the buildings on the estates. To answer that question I choose to look more closely at how the

Scanian farms were localized in the landscape, which provides a foundation for putting them into a contemporary social context. The article is followed by an appendix, where the Late Iron Age settlement at Västervång is presented in more detail. The emphasis is on an analysis and description of the spatial and social organization of the settlement.

## VÄSTERVÅNG SETTLEMENT

Västervång is situated in south-west Scania, just north of the town of Trelleborg (Fig. 1).<sup>2</sup> The Iron Age settlement was located on a noticeable height, about 19 to 23 m above sea level, some two kilometres from the coast and with a view of the sea. The distance to the coast is approximately two kilometres. To the south, west, and east of the height the terrain slopes gently down towards slightly wetter land. Less than a kilometre north-west of

<sup>2</sup> Historical maps show that the site is in the west field belonging to the town lands of Trelleborg, hence the place-name *Västrevång*.

the site there is a small watercourse lined by wetlands, which discharges into the sea just west of the town.

Besides a short phase in the Bronze Age, the settlement at Västervång can be followed on roughly the same site from the fifth century BC until the Late Viking Age, that is, for almost one and a half millennia.<sup>3</sup> Most of the long-houses were on small ledges and/or heights in terrain gently sloping towards the south and west. The location of the houses is evident from the GIS-based terrain model in Fig. 2, which shows a reconstruction of the early topography of the site. The soils are mainly till and boulder clay without much stone; experiments have shown that this clay is suitable for use as daub.<sup>4</sup> In the excavated area there were also a very large number of pits, probably dug to extraction of clay.

The Early Iron Age settlement consisted of single farms which moved at regular intervals – perhaps with each new generation – to a new location on the cultivated lands. It was not until the eighth century AD that settlement became more stationary and a village was established on the height. In the oldest phase (c. 770–900 AD) the village consisted of at least four or five farms.<sup>5</sup> These were built around a natural depression which had been filled in with soil during the Early Bronze Age, roughly two thousand years earlier. One of the farms, placed slightly on its own to the west of the depression, was much larger than the other units. With its 37-metre long-house and extra buildings the farm had a building area of approximately 380 m<sup>2</sup>, which can be compared with the smallest farm in the village with an area of less than 100 m<sup>2</sup>. The big estate and two more farms were rebuilt in the Late Viking Age (900–1050 AD), while other units were abandoned or moved from the site.<sup>6</sup>

In both phases the main building of the estate was virtually identical in appearance and proportions, 37 and 34 metres long respectively, with convex long walls and a maximum width of 8.7 metres at the middle of the house. In their external construction both houses display influences from the building tradition of western Denmark and

houses of Sædding type, while the internal plan seems to have a more local touch.

In both phases the estate had extra buildings. In the later phase, however, the estate took on a more complex composition, in that it probably had two extra post-built houses besides the main building. One of these – a 20-metre-long single-aisled building – was at right angles to the long-house and was joined to it. The estate also had a medium-sized house south of the main building. This meant the estate had buildings with a total area of about 510 m<sup>2</sup>. The increased building area suggests that the economy of the estate had changed, perhaps towards a greater emphasis on grain production, which required extra space in the form of barns for threshing, storage, and so on.

The village probably also had a small workshop area, located at the south-east of the site.<sup>7</sup> The remains consisted of a small post-building with an open side and windbreak, which was possibly used as a forge. Among the finds there were occasional objects indicating that textile and antler crafts were pursued in the vicinity. There were no sunken-floor huts, however, and there is no evidence of specialized craft on the site. The finds are instead dominated by ordinary domestic pottery and animal bones.<sup>8</sup>

## LATE IRON AGE AT TRELLEBORG

### GRAVES

The area surrounding Trelleborg is very rich in antiquities. The Iron Age remains mostly consist of graves and cemeteries, whereas settlements from the period are not as well known. A large cemetery (Trelleborg RAÄ 2), which is contemporary with the village and the estate, is located roughly one kilometre south-west of Västervång (see Fig. 1). The cemetery has been excavated several times between 1916 and 2005. Approximately 40 graves have been investigated, but the cemetery has been damaged by gravel quarrying, and the total number of burials has been estimated to be twice as high. The burial ground is thus one of the biggest known in the area around Trelleborg. The cemetery was in use during a time extending over both the Vendel Period and the Viking Age. 14C dates obtained from the skeletal material show, however,

<sup>3</sup> The dating of the settlement is based on a combination of different materials, consisting of <sup>14</sup>C samples, the architecture of the houses and the objects found, chiefly pottery. For a presentation of all the settlement phases (1–6) readers are referred to the report (Ericson & Carlie 2005; Carlie 2008).

<sup>4</sup> Personal communication, Ylva Kristina Ekelund, Trelleborg.

<sup>5</sup> See *Appendix*, phase 5.

<sup>6</sup> See *Appendix*, phase 6.

<sup>7</sup> See *Appendix*, phase 5.

<sup>8</sup> The pottery has been analysed by Ole Stilborg of the Ceramic Research Laboratory, Lund University (Stilborg 2006), while the animal bones have been identified by Annica Cardell (2006).

that the majority of the graves date from the tenth century. The graves mostly consist of flat-earth inhumations, but there are also traces of kerb trenches, probably remains of removed burial mounds (Hellerström 2005; Arcini & Jacobsson 2008).

Yet another large cemetery, Järavallen (Maglarp RAÄ 5), is situated on the coast about four kilometres south-west of Västervång. The cemetery consists of 80 or so small barrows, but it was originally larger. Earlier excavations indicate that the barrows were built in the Late Iron Age, from the Migration Period up to the Viking Age, but that the site was also used for burials in the Pre-Roman Iron Age and the Roman Iron Age (Hansen 1945; Jacobsson 2003, 197f). Single graves or small groups of inhumation graves from the Late Iron Age have also been found at other places around Trelleborg (see Fig. 1, Trelleborg RAÄ 18, 19, and 21). For instance, a group of three inhumation graves was discovered just south of a Viking Age ring-fort in the town of Trelleborg at the end of the 1980s (see below) (Jeppsson 1995).

Fredrik Svanberg, in his study of Viking Age graves and funeral rituals in south-east Scandinavia, interprets south-west Scania as a separate tradition area (2003), characterized by inhumation graves with few grave goods. Cremation graves also occur, but to a much lesser extent. Most inhumation graves have been found under flat earth. Svanberg considers it likely, however, that many graves were originally covered by flat mounds which have been destroyed by later ploughing; he refers to the barrow cemetery at Järavallen. Svanberg simultaneously stressed that the burial tradition in south-west Scania should be regarded as part of a more widespread ritual tradition that also existed in much of present-day Denmark (*ibid.*, 85ff).

#### SETTLEMENT SITES

The large number of graves in the Trelleborg area suggests that it was heavily populated in the Late Iron Age. Current excavations occasioned by the extension of the E6 in the plains north-west of Trelleborg confirm this picture, having uncovered remains of Late Iron Age settlement at a number of sites along the road (Jacobsson & Riddersporre 2007). There are in total ten or so sites located near the historical villages of Maglarp, Skregrie, Hermanstorp, Södra and Norra Håslöv, and Vellinge. The excavations hitherto show that settlement consists of both long-houses and sunken-floor huts. From several sites there are also metal finds, including different types

of costume brooches from the Vendel Period and Viking Age (beak fibulae, equal-armed brooch, circular flat fibula, Urnes brooch) and a couple of Arabic silver coins.<sup>9</sup> All in all, the excavations indicate very dense settlement in the area in the Late Iron Age. The frequent occurrence of sunken-floor huts is especially interesting, contrasting it with the settlement at Västervång.

If we look instead at the area immediately surrounding Trelleborg, there are only two excavated sites in the inland with Late Iron Age settlement apart from the Västervång site (see Fig. 1). The nearest settlement is about one and a half kilometres east-south-east of Västervång (Trelleborg RAÄ 21). The excavation uncovered traces of settlement in the form of long-houses and sunken-floor huts, and pottery from the Vendel Period or Viking Age. Otherwise the extent and size of the settlement site is unknown (Jacobsson 1996). The other settlement is at Ståstorp, about two and a half kilometres west-south-west of Västervång (Västra Tommarp RAÄ 38). Here a well-preserved farm in two settlement phases was excavated. In both phases the farm consisted of a roughly 25-metre long-house, a large outbuilding, and one or more small outhouses, including a sunken-floor hut (Jacobsson 2002).

Apart from the settlement sites in the inland, parts of a large coastal settlement from the Vendel Period and Early Viking Age were excavated in the present-day town of Trelleborg, in connection with various building projects and inspections there (Trelleborg RAÄ 19) (Jacobsson 2000). Besides remains of settlement, chiefly in the form of sunken-floor huts (about 25 in number) but also post-built houses, evidence of a large occupation layer was also found. The layer is up to about 30 centimetres thick and can be followed within an area some 800 metres long and 100–200 metres wide along the former shoreline (Fig. 3). The finds mainly consist of pottery and animal bones, but there are also quite a few everyday objects, including loom weighs, spindle whorls, and bone needles, testifying to the pursuit of textile craft on the site. There is no sure evidence that specialized craft was pursued on the beach ridge. On the other hand, there is quite a lot of pottery of foreign provenance, suggesting that there was some trade or exchange on the site. It is above all early Slavic pottery (AII) of the Feldberg and Fresendorf types. There are also sherds from pots of Tatinger type (AI) from Frisia, and oc-

<sup>9</sup> Personal communication, Bengt Jacobsson and Bengt Söderberg, National Heritage Board UV Syd, Lund.

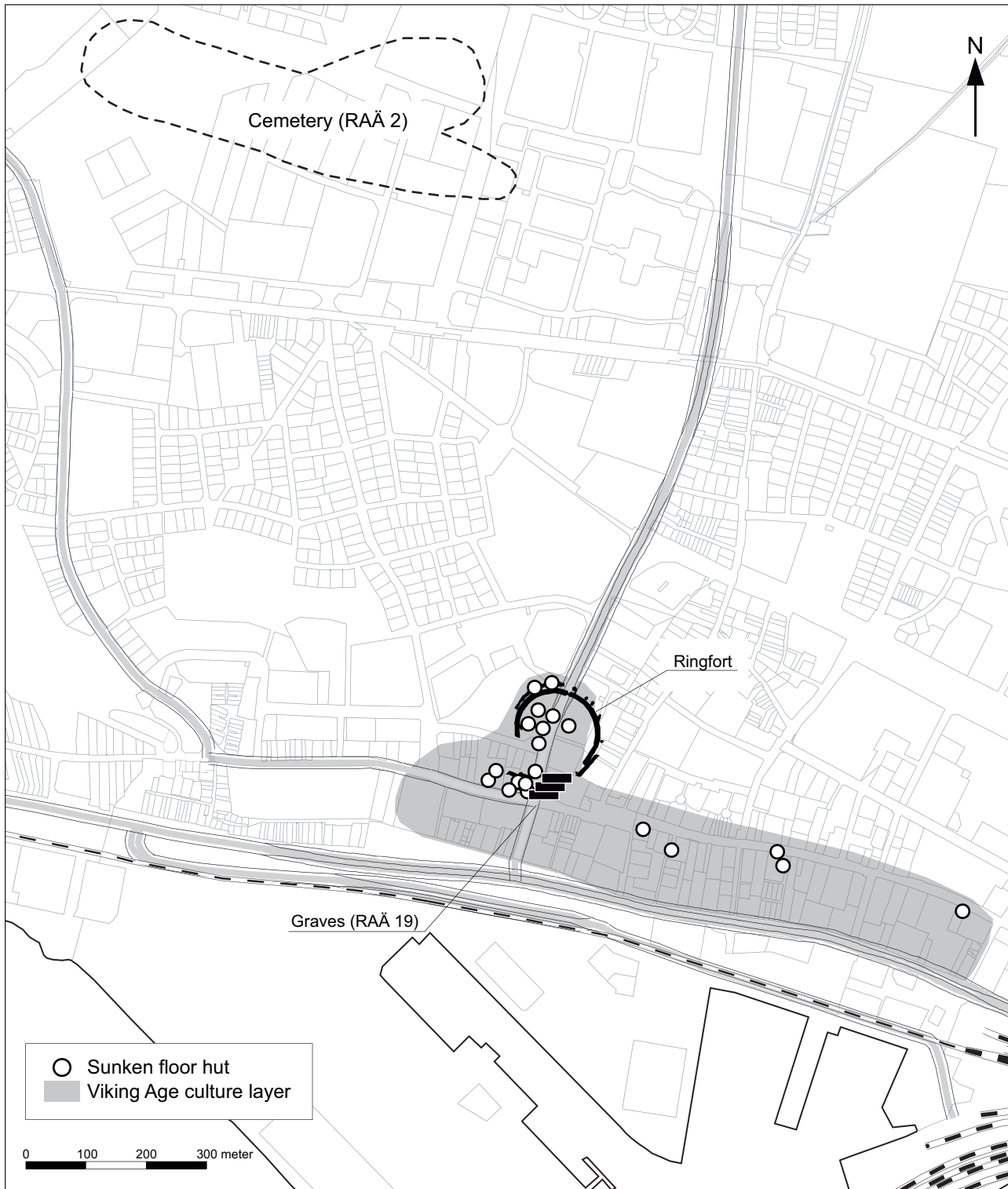


Fig. 3. The map shows the extent of the Viking Age occupation layer, the occurrence of sunken-floor huts, and the location of the ring-fort in Trelleborg. Illustration: Henrik Pihl.

casional sherds of glass beakers, probably of Western European provenance (Jacobsson 2000, 51ff; cf. Brorsson 2003). Like other coastal sites in southern Scandinavia, the settlement at Trelleborg has its chronological centre of gravity in the eighth and ninth centuries and some time into the tenth century. This is confirmed both by pottery and by <sup>14</sup>C dates, which show that the settlement ceased to exist some time in the first half of the tenth century, after which parts of the area were cultivated (Jacobsson 2000, 142).

Apart from the large coastal site, a small Iron Age farm has been excavated near the shore east of Trelleborg (Dalköpinge RAÄ 35). The farm is interesting through its location, just 300 metres from today's coastline. Despite this, the farm seems to have been geared to agrarian production, and there are no traces of sunken-floor huts on the site (Aspeborg 2008).

#### *THE RING-FORT*

Some time after the coastal settlement had been abandoned, probably in the mid-tenth century, a ring-fort of Trelleborg type was built on the site. Even before the fort was discovered at the end of the 1980s, archaeologists and historians suspected that there must have been a Trelleborg fort that gave its name to the town. The fort, which was partially excavated between 1988 and 1991, was found in the north-west part of the site. It was on a natural rise in the landscape with a view of the sea and surrounded by protective wetlands (see Fig. 3). The excavations have shown that the fort was built in two phases. The older ring-fort with an external diameter of 135 metres was probably constructed in the mid-tenth century, while the younger building phase, when the surrounding circular rampart was reinforced and supplemented with an outer ditch, can be assigned to the last decades of the tenth century. The younger phase of the fort thus coincides in time with the building of the west Danish Trelleborg forts which are dated to the 980s (Jacobsson 2000, 77f and 148). It may be added that the placing of the fort gates to the north and south coincides with the course of one of the oldest streets in the town, Bryggaregatan, which in turn is linked to the main road that can be followed in the oldest maps, from Trelleborg on the plains of Söderslätt up towards Upåkra and later Lund (Erikson 2001). This means that the main road probably also passed the Iron Age village at Västervång (see the section *Along the Road*).

In its basic fortification design, that is, the outer timber cover of the front wall and gates, and the berm and

moat, the ring-fort in Trelleborg is very similar to the forts in western Denmark, while also showing significant differences. Perhaps the most important differences are that the site lacks traces of contemporary settlement, and it does not have the same basic symmetrical shape as the Trelleborg forts in Zealand, Nonnebakken in Funen, and the forts of Fyrkat and Aggersborg in north Jutland. This has led to intensive debate among Danish and Scanian archaeologists as to whether the Scanian ring-forts in Trelleborg and Borgeby should be regarded as "genuine" Trelleborg forts (Svanberg & Söderberg 1999, 57; Jensen 2004, 384; Petersson 2008). The ring-fort was used for only a short time, and was probably abandoned, like the forts in western Denmark, at the end of the tenth century.

#### THE HISTORICAL VILLAGES AND THE TOWN OF TRELLEBORG

The predominant soil in the Trelleborg area is what is known as south-west till, a coarse boulder clay characterized by a high content of clay and a low proportion of stone. This, in combination with the fact that the clay rests on a bed of limestone, makes the area one of the most fertile in Scania. The good conditions for agriculture, both animal husbandry and tillage, generated a surplus in agrarian production, which is reflected in the Middle Ages in the greater population density than in, say, the interior and northern parts of Scania. The high population density is illustrated not just by the number and size (i.e. the number of farms) of the historical villages, but also the size and number of the parishes in the area (Skansjö 1983, 171f with reference to A. E. Christensen 1938).

Around Trelleborg, counting from west to east, are the historical villages of Ståstorp, Västra Tommarp, Tågarp, Västra Vemmerlöv, Gylle, and Kyrkoköpinge (see Fig. 1). All the settlement names have second elements testifying to a high age, going back to the Viking Age or Early Middle Ages (names in *torp* and *köpinge*), or before the Viking Age (names in *lev/löv* and *hög*). Early written sources testify to yet another village, Västra Köpinge, which was just under a kilometre south-west of the Västervång site. The village were probably abandoned in the latter part of the fifteenth century, in connection with an economic upswing for urban trades in Trelleborg, when the village lands were incorporated with those of the town, under the name Östre vång ("The East Field", Skansjö 1983, 94ff, 218f). An archaeological investigation in the

mid-1990s confirmed the occurrence of a medieval settlement in the area. The excavation also revealed remains of a settlement from the Late Iron Age (Trelleborg RAÄ 21, cf. above). Västra Köpinge is the westernmost of four köpinge-villages situated at a distance of a few kilometres in from the coast east of Trelleborg, consisting of Dalköpinge, Mellanköpinge, Kyrkoköpinge, and Västra Köpinge. The köpinge-names suggest that there was a trading centre in the Viking Age or Early Middle Ages near one of these villages. The exact location of the place is not known. The village of Dalköpinge, however, has been suggested as the most likely candidate, since there are some signs of urbanization in the village and parish, indicating economic resources over and above what agriculture alone could offer, such as a brick church from the 1270s and a chapel by the shore (Skansjö 1983, 177ff, note 6).

The town of Trelleborg was probably founded in the first half of the thirteenth century, and written sources show that the place received its borough charter in 1257. There is a great deal to suggest that the rich herring fishery, which began during the twelfth century, played an important part in the growth of the place. The development of the town thereby came under Hanseatic influence, which steered and dominated the herring fishery in the region at an early stage. In the mid-fifteenth century there is also information that the town was one of the places in Scania where herring was salted and herring markets were held (Jacobsson 1982, 8 and works cited there).

### VÄSTERVÅNG - A LINK BETWEEN THE COASTAL SETTLEMENT & UPPÅKRA?

All in all, it may be observed that the area on the south coast of Scania that developed into the town of Trelleborg in the mid-thirteenth century was already strategically interesting in the eighth century as a meeting place for the pursuit of craft and trade. The problem is that we have long lacked knowledge of what Late Iron Age settlement looked like in the area around the coastal settlement. What was here before this was founded, and what relations did the inhabitants of the coastal site have with the people at other settlement sites in the district? Nor do we know who was behind the establishment of the place. Was there a local elite in the area, with special interests in trade and craft? Or should we instead envisage a scenario

in which the coastal site was a pawn in a larger economic and political game staged by the ruling elite in south-west Scania, with Uppåkra as the regional centre? Evidence for this could be that the course of one of the main roads in this part of Scania ran from Trelleborg to Uppåkra. The question is the role played by the big estate at Västervång in this context.

Søren Sindbæk, in his dissertation *Ruter og rutinisering* (2005), mentions the coastal site at Trelleborg as one example of a large number of Scanian and Danish find spots which, because of their coastal location, and traces of sunken-floor huts linked to textile production, have been held up in the literature as “local trading sites”. He believes instead that these places are rather representatives of other activities than trade and exchange, or else that they were used for a shorter period than the large contemporary maritime trading places with their copious finds, such as Hedeby, Birka, and Ribe. I agree with Sindbæk’s critique, but as regards Trelleborg he evidently did not know of the excavations of recent years, as a result of which he underestimates the character of the place (2005, 74f).

Investigations show that the coastal settlement, judging by extant occupation layers, was of significant size, with an estimated area of between 80,000 and 120,000 m<sup>2</sup>. In this respect it resembles several of the other contemporary places in Scania, such as Löddeköpinge by the River Kävlingeån (Olsson 1976), the Tankbåten block west of Ystad (Strömberg 1978), and the sites on the River Helgeå south of Åhus (Callmer 1991). As at those places, the finds from Trelleborg show a not insignificant element of early Slavic pottery, chiefly of the Feldberg and Fresendorf types, which is dated to the period c. 775 to 825 (Brorsson 2003, 232). Petrographic analyses of the pottery show that this is both imported and locally produced. Torbjörn Brorsson has suggested, against this background, that the pottery should not just be seen as trading commodities, but was probably brought along by Slavic traders/craftsmen or manufactured locally by them while they were staying here (*ibid.*, 232f). Unlike other large coastal sites in Scania from the Vendel Period and the Early Viking Age, there is as yet no sure evidence of specialized craft in Trelleborg. Bengt Jacobsson therefore believes that the place should be interpreted as a trading site combined with agrarian operations and fishing (Jacobsson 2000, 144). The find of bronze scales from Trelleborg strengthens the assumption that the site was used for trade and craft (Strömberg 1961, 64).



The village and estate at Västervång were founded at roughly the same time as the settlement on the beach ridge. The distance between the places is just a couple of kilometres. This suggests that there must have been close contacts between the two places. The type of relations is, however, uncertain. Was the coastal site founded on the initiative of the big local farmers, or at the command of the elite in Uppåkra? The small quantity of finds from Västervång, mostly consisting of local domestic pottery, unfortunately offers no foundation for further comparisons between the places. It should be mentioned, however, that finds of early Slavic and other pottery of foreign provenance, which are relatively well represented at the coastal site, are not documented from the village.

Another contemporary site which can help to shed light on the relationship between the village and the coastal site is the big cemetery in the Verkstaden block (Trelleborg, RAÄ 2), located in between the two places (Arcini & Jacobsson 2008). A recent osteological analysis shows that the burial ground, like several contemporary cemeteries, was spatially divided into areas for children and adults. According to Arcini and Jacobsson, this, in combination with the fact that the graves show an equal gender distribution, suggests that the burial ground was not linked to a settlement with special functions, but probably to a large village or several farms.

The majority of the buried individuals have grave goods of very ordinary character, or none at all. They can consist of various personal objects such as iron knives, whetstones, spindle whorls, and bone combs. But there are also a number of graves with objects indicating greater prosperity, in the form of beads, brooches, and mountings of various kinds.<sup>10</sup> Both the inner and the outer mortuary practice, along with the character and composition of the grave goods, thus suggest a varied social structure among the deceased, which agrees well with conditions in the village at Västervång and other contemporary settlements.

<sup>10</sup> As examples of graves from the Verkstaden block displaying a certain degree of prosperity we may mention graves 12 and 9 (excavated 1953–54). Grave 12 contained remains of a large hexagonal coffin measuring 1.85 × 1 metre. Among the grave goods were a brooch and a Carolingian strap-end mount of bronze with plant ornamentation). Grave 9 contained a small set of beads, including a gold-foil bead. In the same grave there were also a spindle whorl, an iron knife with remains of a wooden handle, and a bone needle (Svanberg 2003, 293, Cat. No. 232). Another grave (A958, excavated 2005) contained a ring pin of bronze together with an iron knife and a bone comb (Hellerström 2005).

An interesting element in the cemetery is the occurrence of buried individuals (men), whose upper front teeth had filed grooves (Arcini & Jacobsson 2008). The phenomenon has been particularly discussed by Caroline Arcini, who has drawn attention to the fact most of the known examples of individuals with filed teeth have been found in Gotland. There are 65 of them, all men, of whom 42 are from Kopparsvik and 12 from Slite Torg. Against this background, she believes that the two men from the cemetery in the Verkstaden block probably come from Gotland. The social meaning of the custom of filed front teeth is not known to us today. Arcini speculates about the possibility that it could be a social marker of people connected to the hird or possibly to trade (*ibid.*). Regardless of the meaning that should be ascribed to the phenomenon, its occurrence shows that the cemetery was not just used for the local population but also for people from outside. The cemetery in the Verkstaden block can thus be viewed not just as a uniting link between the village and the coastal site, but also as testimony to contemporary inter-regional contacts and exchange.

## MAGNATE ESTATES, BUILDING TRADITIONS, AND CONTACTS

After this introduction to the settlement at Västervång and its hinterland, the spatial perspective will now be widened in order to elucidate the social and political composition of the settlement. The overall aim is to understand what the magnate estate at Västervång and other similar complexes represented in their own times. To approach this question I have chosen to look more closely at similarities and differences in the building style of the estates. Before I embark on the comparative analysis, however, I must comment on Viking Age building traditions in southern Scandinavia.

### *VIKING AGE BUILDING TRADITIONS*

The building traditions of the Late Iron Age and Viking Age have previously been examined by several scholars (see e.g. Egebjerg Hansen et al. 1991; Schmidt 1994; Skov 1994; Bender Jørgensen & Eriksen 1995; Ethelberg 2003; Artursson 2005). The tradition has its origin in the buildings of previous periods, characterized by three-aisled post-built houses of varying size and number of trestles. As in the Late Roman Iron Age and the Migration Period, the long-houses could have a straight or a convex

form. The general trend, however, is that the outer walls were given an increasingly convex form and that the construction of the gables was reinforced. Several scholars have emphasized the occurrence of roof-bearing posts in the gable structure as a characteristic feature of Viking Age architecture (Egebjerg Hansen et al. 1991, 19f; Skov 1994). According to Hans Skov, this phenomenon became increasingly common in the eighth century (*ibid.*, 139f). In the Viking Age it is above all long-houses of Sædding type that show this structural detail (Bender Jørgensen & Eriksen 1995, 20), but it is found in smaller post-built houses as well. The placing of roof-bearing posts in the gables has been associated with the introduction of a new type of gable structure, in which the rounded gables and hipped roofs of the Early Iron Age were replaced by a straight plank wall with a saddle roof or a half-hipped roof (see e.g. Ethelberg 2003, 343ff, figures 206–207).

The internal roof-bearing structure also underwent several modifications during the Early Iron Age. In the Late Roman Iron Age and the Migration Period the width of the roof-bearing trestles had gradually narrowed. This development reached its peak in the Early Vendel Period, when the trestle width could be as little as 1.2–1.5 metres, and then in the later part of the period and at the start of the Viking Age the width increased once again to three and sometimes four metres. These changes in the internal construction meant that the weight of the roof was shifted, so that instead of resting on the posts in the outer walls it was carried by the inner trestles.

In the course of the Viking Age there were also other changes in the mode of building. Besides the three-aisled roof-bearing construction, people started to experiment with new technical solutions, probably to gain greater space in the houses without obstruction from posts. At this time they also built houses of one- and two-aisled design, and in the big three-aisled long-houses there were sometimes combinations of trestles and separate central posts, to increase the length of the span and the space between the trestles. The classical Trelleborg houses may be viewed as the final stage in this development, in that the number of trestles was reduced to two, placed relatively close to each gable in order to give a large, hall-like room in the middle of the house. In the Trelleborg houses the weight of the roof rests in large measure on the outer walls as well, and to ensure the durability of the structure the wall was buttressed with extra diagonal posts (Olsen & Schmidt 1977; Schmidt 1994, 108ff).

Houses of Sædding type, which precede the Trelleborg houses typologically and chronologically, are characterized by a traditional three-aisled design and a convex shape. Houses of this type, which are dated from the eighth to the tenth centuries, have above all been documented on sites in southern and western Jutland. Apart from the eponymous Sædding near Esbjerg (Stoumann 1980), the type is represented at places such as Vorbasse, Omgård, and Trabjerg (Hvass 1980; Nielsen 1980; Bender Jørgensen & Eriksen 1995). The Sædding houses vary in size, from 7–12 metres long with three roof-bearing trestles, two of which are placed in the gables (group 1), up to 32–56 metres long and 5–8 metres wide, with five to ten trestles including gable posts (group 5). The roof-bearing trestles were often placed at relatively equal intervals, usually 4–6 metres. Examples of shorter or longer spans do occur, however, above all in the bigger and more complex long-houses. Another characteristic feature of the Sædding houses is that the width of the inner trestles is often relatively large, between three and four metres. This means that little of the weight of the roof rested on the outer walls, the posts in which could be easily repaired and replaced (Stoumann 1980, 100) (see Fig. 5).

#### COMPARISONS

Building traditions in Scania and southern Scandinavia in the Iron Age and Viking Age have recently been examined by Magnus Artursson as part of the West Coast Line Project (2005). In his compilation, however, there are no examples of big three-aisled convex long-houses of the type found at Västervång. This is because houses of this type have only recently been found in Scania, and the new material was not published when Artursson did his study. Houses of similar type, but smaller in size, have however been excavated at several places, chiefly in southern and western Scania and in southern Halland.<sup>11</sup>

Parallels to the Västervång houses have been discovered in recent years at three places in the Malmö area: Lockarp 7A, the site of the village of Lockarp, and Sun-

<sup>11</sup> Houses of Sædding type have been found in Scania at places such as Löddeköpinge 90:1 in Löddeköpinge Parish (Svanberg & Söderberg 2000), Ståstorp in Västra Tommarp Parish (Jacobsson 2002), Bjärred 9:5 in Flädie Parish (Pettersson & Brorsson 2002), Svågertorp 8A in Malmö (Rosberg & Lindhé 2001, 76ff), and Vantinge in Barkåkra Parish (Schmidt Sabo 2000, 16f). In south Halland the house type has been found at Ösarp, Laholm Rural Parish (Viking & Fors 1995, 21ff) and Stenstorp, Slöinge Parish (Johansson 2000).

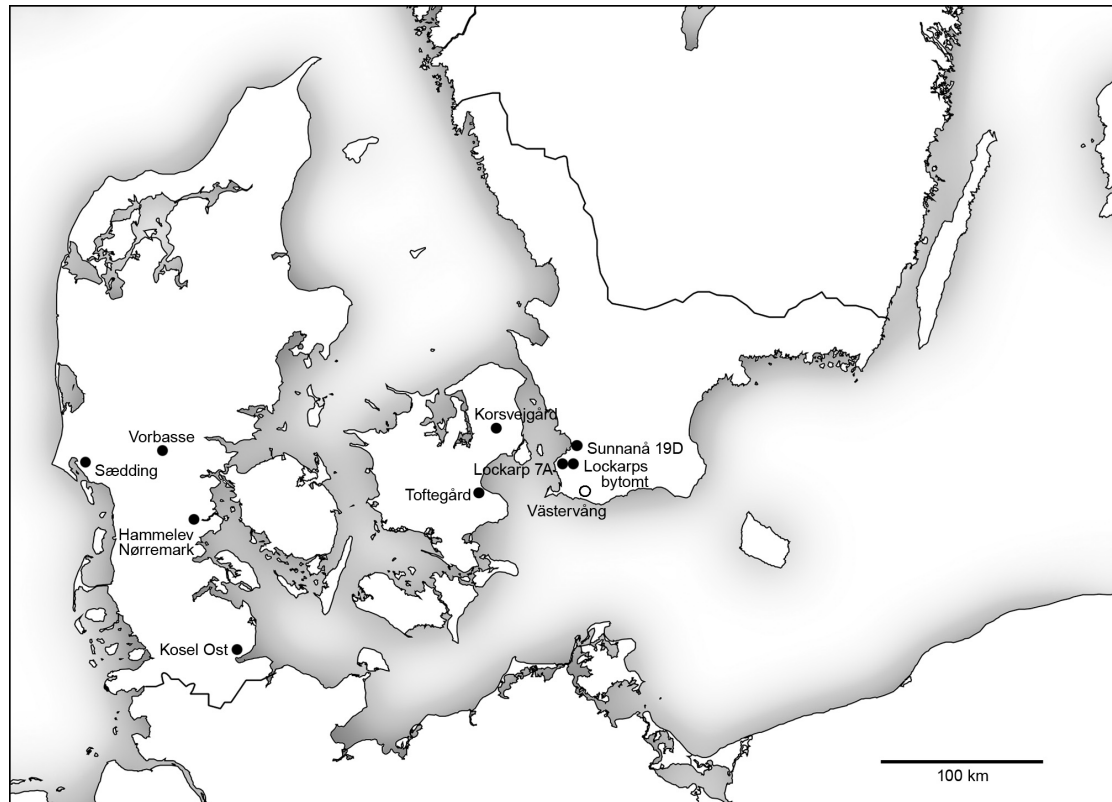


Fig. 4. Places with houses of Sædding type discussed in the article. Map: Thomas Hansson.

nanå 19D. In the report on the Sunnanå site Morten Steinecke, in connection with the analysis of a Viking Age farm complex at Holmängen by the River Segeå, discusses the possibility that the main building of the farm (house XXI) may have been influenced by the Jutlandic building tradition and houses of Sædding type (Steinecke et al. 2005, 195f). House XXI, above all displays similarities in the construction to the later Sædding houses, characterized by a convex inner and outer construction and roof-bearing posts in the gables, although individual details in the roof-bearing construction differ (*ibid.*, 196).

The big long-houses from Västervång are built with a similar technique to the house from Sunnanå and thus also to houses of Sædding type. This is an important starting point for the comparative analysis. To broaden the material in the study I have therefore chosen to look at contemporary houses from Jutland and Zealand as well. In selecting material I have applied the following criteria:

- (1) The houses should resemble the Västervång houses, that is, have a convex outer form, they should be large or very large (25 metres or more) and have a width of at least 6 metres or more.
- (2) The houses should preferably have been interpreted as the main building on a large farm.
- (3) The houses should be contemporary with the Västervång houses; that is dated to the Late Vendel Period and Early Viking Age, the time period from the end of the eighth century to the start of the tenth century.
- (4) The houses should be well-preserved, to increase the potential for comparisons of construction and spatial division.

The assembled material comprises 14 long-houses from Scania, Zealand, and Jutland (Fig. 4, Table 1).<sup>12</sup> The study is arranged in three steps. First I discuss a selection of representative Jutlandic houses of Sædding type. I then present the houses from Scania and Zealand, and finally extend the discussion to a comparison of the eastern and western Danish tradition.

<sup>12</sup> Despite searches of the literature I have not found any examples of large houses of Sædding type from anywhere north of Scania.

Table 1. Sites with buildings of Sædding type discussed in the article.

Site	House	Size	No. of pair of posts	With between posts in pair	Distance between each pair of posts	Reference	Dating
Västervång	House 6	37 x 8.7 m	11*	2.2–3.0 m (approx. 30%)	1.85–6.95 m	Ericson & Carlie 2006	Late Vendel Period–Early Viking Age
Västervång	House 7	34 x 8.7m	7–8*	2.15–3.2 m (31–36.5%)	2.25–11.90 m	Ericson & Carlie 2006	1095±40 BP 890–990 AD 1 s
Sunnanå 19D	House XXI	31.5 x 7.35 m	8*	1.8–3.87 m (45–52.5%)	2.7–7.8 m	Steinecke et al. 2005	1155±70 BP 790–980 AD 1 s
Lockarps bytomt	House 1	29 x 7.7 m	7	2.0–3.3 m (36.5–37.5%)	3.6–4.6 m	Heimer et al. 2006	1055±35 BP 900–1030 AD 1 s
Lockarp 7A	House 6	>38 x 6.0–6.4 m	10*	2.0–2.9 m (50%)	3.0–4.6 m	Rudin & Brink 2002	1150±60 BP 820–980 AD 1 s
Korsvejsgård	House 24	44.5 x 5.5–8.0 m	10	1.95–2.2 m (27%)	1.6–8.8 m	AUD 1994 Boye pers. com.	Early Viking Age
Korsvejsgård	House 2	26 x 5.5–8.0 m	8*	2.0–3.4 m (36.25–42.5%)	3.1–5.5 m	AUD 1996 Boye pers. com.	Early Viking Age
Toftegård	House 5	40 x 10.5 m	6	2.5–3.6 (34%)	2.6–12.5 m	Tornbjerg 1998	Early Viking Age 9th–10th C
Toftegård	House 4	38 x 10.5 m	6	2.8–4.0 m (38%)	2.5–12.0 m	Tornbjerg 1998	Early Viking Age 9th–10th C
Hammelev Nørremark	House 1	30 x 5.5–6.4 m	6*	2.0–2.9 m (approx. 42%)	5.10–6.10 m	Ethelberg 2003	Late Vendel Period 8th C
Sædding	House XL	44 x 4.5–7.0 m	10*	3.2–4.8 (61%)	4.2–7.0 m	Stoumann 1980	Early Viking Age 9th–10th C
Sædding	House LXXXVII	26 x 6.7 m	6*	2.6–3.8 m (52–56.5%)	4.7–6.0 m	Stoumann 1980	Early Viking Age 9th–10th C
Sædding	House LXV	28 x 6.6–6.8 m	6*	2.4–3.8 m (53–55.8%)	4.7–6.0 m	Stoumann 1980	Early Viking Age 9th–10th C
Vorbasse	House CCIII	33 x 5.5–8 m	7*	2.7–4.2 m (50–52.5%)	3.6–6.5 m	Hvass 1980	Early Viking Age 9th C
Vorbasse	House CCXXIII	33 x 5.5–8 m	11*	2.7–4.0 m (approx. 50%)	2.7–6.0 m	Hvass 1980	Early Viking Age 9th–10th C
Kosel Ost	–	36.5 x 5.5–7.0 m	9–10	2.7–3.2 m (approx. 46%)	–	Ethelberg 2003	Early Viking Age 9th–10th C

\* One pair of posts in each gable.

### JUTLANDIC HOUSES

From the very large material from western Denmark I have selected seven long-houses which satisfy the majority of the stated criteria. These are three houses from Sædding (houses XL, LXXXVII, and LXV) (Stoumann 1980), two houses from Vorbasse (houses CCIII and CCXXIII) (Hvass 1980), and one house from Hammelev

Nørremark (house 1) (Ethelberg 2003) in southern and western Jutland. In addition, a large long-house from the Kosel Ost site east of Hedeby in Schleswig (ibid.) has been included in the sample (Fig. 5). The houses can be divided into three groups based on size:

A. Long-houses which are 26–30 metres long and 6.4–6.8 metres wide with six trestles in the roof-bearing structure, one of which is incorporated in each gable. This group is represented by houses XXXXVII and LXV from Sædding and by house 1 from Hammelev Nørremark.

B. Houses that are 33–36 metres long and 7.0–8.0 metres wide with 8–11 trestles in the roof-bearing structure, with one trestle in each gable. This group consists of houses CCIII and CCXXIII from Vorbasse and a house from Kosel Ost in Schleswig.

C. Houses more than 40 metres long and 7.0 metres wide, with nine roof-bearing trestles, with one in each gable. This category is represented by the 44-metre long house XL from Sædding.

A characteristic of all the houses is that the form is clearly convex, as regards both the inner and the outer construction. Another shared feature is that the houses had a balanced or over-balanced design, so that the weight of the roof rested both on the inner trestles and the outer walls. The over-balanced houses (52–61%) are all from Sædding, while the balanced houses (42–50%) come from Vorbasse, Hammelev, and Kosel Ost. In most of the houses the roof-bearing trestles are at relatively even intervals, the distance varying from 4–5 metres up to 6–7 metres. Exceptions to this are the two houses from Vorbasse, with a roof-bearing structure showing a more irregular placing. These are also the only houses in the material with distinct traces of a division into stalls in the eastern part. Yet another characteristic feature is that the houses often have several entrances, both in the long walls and in one or both gables. The entrances can either be counterposed, as in the big house XL from Sædding, or asymmetrically placed, as in house 1 from Hammelev Nørremark and house CCIII from Vorbasse. Judging by the placing of the entrances and the occurrence of inner partition walls, the houses had between three and five rooms, depending on differences in size. A more exact assessment of the function of the rooms has not been possible in this context.

#### SCANIAN HOUSES

Apart from the Västervång houses I have found three comparable houses from the Malmö area in south-west Scania in the published material. These are house 6 from Lockarp 7A (Rudin & Brink 2002), house 1 from the Lockarp village site (Heimer et al. 2006), and house XXI from Sunnanå 19D (Steinecke et al. 2005) (Fig. 6). These houses were all discovered by the excavations conducted

for two major infrastructure projects, the Öresund Fixed Link and the City Tunnel. The distance between these places and Västervång, as the crow flies, is 20–25 kilometres.

The magnate estate at Västervång can be followed in two building phases on the same site. In the first phase the farm consisted of a main building (house 6) and a smaller post-built house (house 9), the latter placed south of and parallel to the long-house.<sup>13</sup> House 6 was about 37 metres long with a distinctly convex shape. The maximum width at the middle of the house was 8.7 metres, narrowing to approximately 5.5 metres at the gables. The roof-bearing structure is under-balanced (approx. 30%) and consists of 10 or 11 trestles, many of which are not complete. The first trestle coincides with the straight west gable of the house, while the east gable was probably open. The house had at least four rooms and three entrances, two on the north side and one on the south. In the western part there were two rooms, seven and eight metres long. These were followed in the middle section by a ten-metre room, which in turn was followed by an eleven-metre room at the eastern end, where the open gable suggests a function as a cart shed. It is uncertain which part of the house was used as a dwelling. It may have been the middle section, although this is made less likely by the closely spaced posts in this part of the house, which would rather indicate a function as a byre or stable. An alternative interpretation is that the dwelling was in the western part of the east room, where the occurrence of stone lining in several post-holes indicates a reinforcement of the construction.

During the second phase the estate consisted of two large buildings placed in the form of an L, with the main building (house 7) oriented east–west.<sup>14</sup> This long-house is a direct successor of the very similar house 6 in the first phase. The post-built house running north–south (house 8) has no inner roof-bearing posts and its south gable is joined to the north long wall of the main building. The estate probably also had a smaller long-house, house 10.

House 7 is almost identical in style to house 6. The building was 34 metres long with convex walls. The maximum width of the house was 8.7 metres, with the walls narrowing towards the gables, which were about 6 metres wide. The house, like the older main building, had at least three entrances, two on the north side and one

<sup>13</sup> See *Appendix*, Fig. 11.

<sup>14</sup> See *Appendix*, Fig. 11.

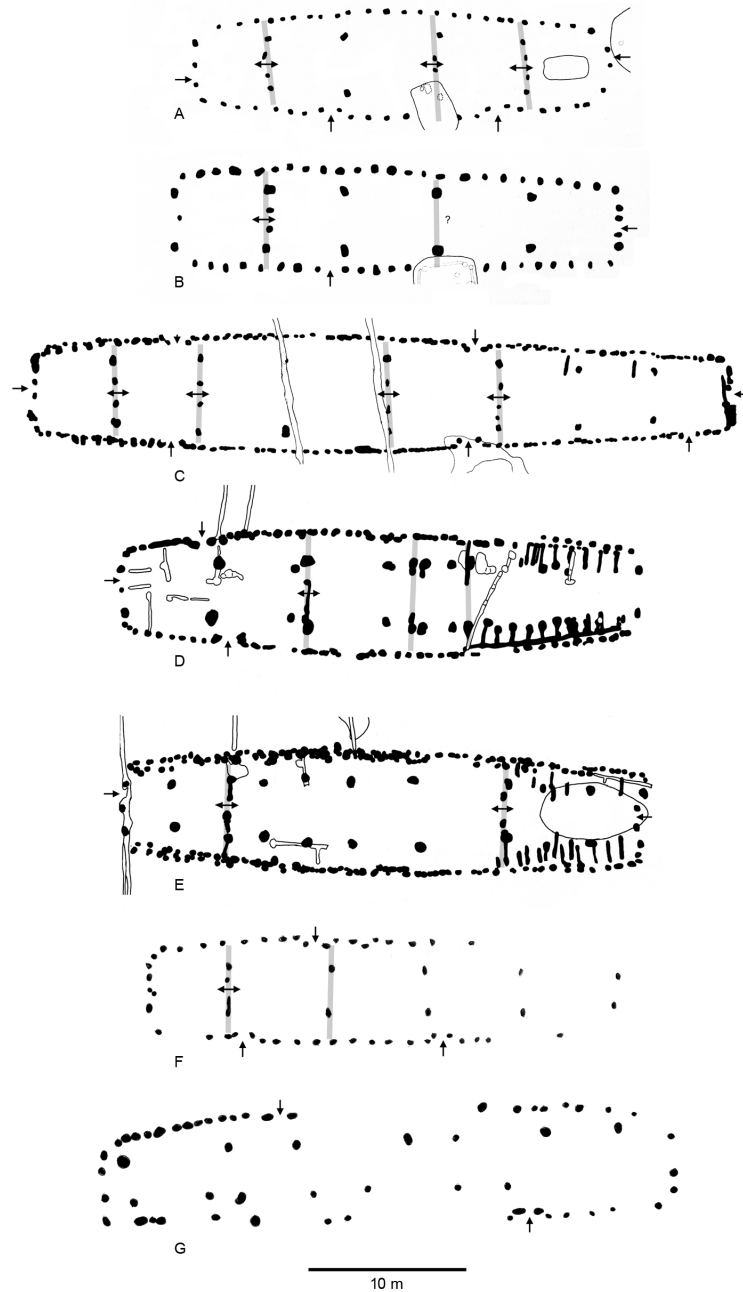


Figure 5. Examples of houses of Sædding type from Jutland and Schleswig. A) Sædding, house LXXXVII, B) Sædding, house LVI, C) Sædding, house XL, D) Vorbasse, house CCIII, E) Vorbasse, house CCXXIII, F) Hammelev Nørremark, houses I and G) Kosel Ost, Schleswig. For the dimensions of the individual houses see table 1. Illustrations: Anne Carlie and Thomas Hansson.

on the south, and an open gable in the east. The biggest difference is in the roof-bearing structure, although it is still under-balanced (approx. 31–36%). Whereas the older house 6 had ten or eleven trestles, six of them placed more closely together in the middle section of the house, the younger house had only seven or eight trestles. The

room with the longest span, which has the proportions of a hall, was in the middle section. Otherwise the plan of the building was virtually identical; besides the hall it had two large rooms in the western part and a room in the eastern part, where the open gable indicates a function as a cart shed.

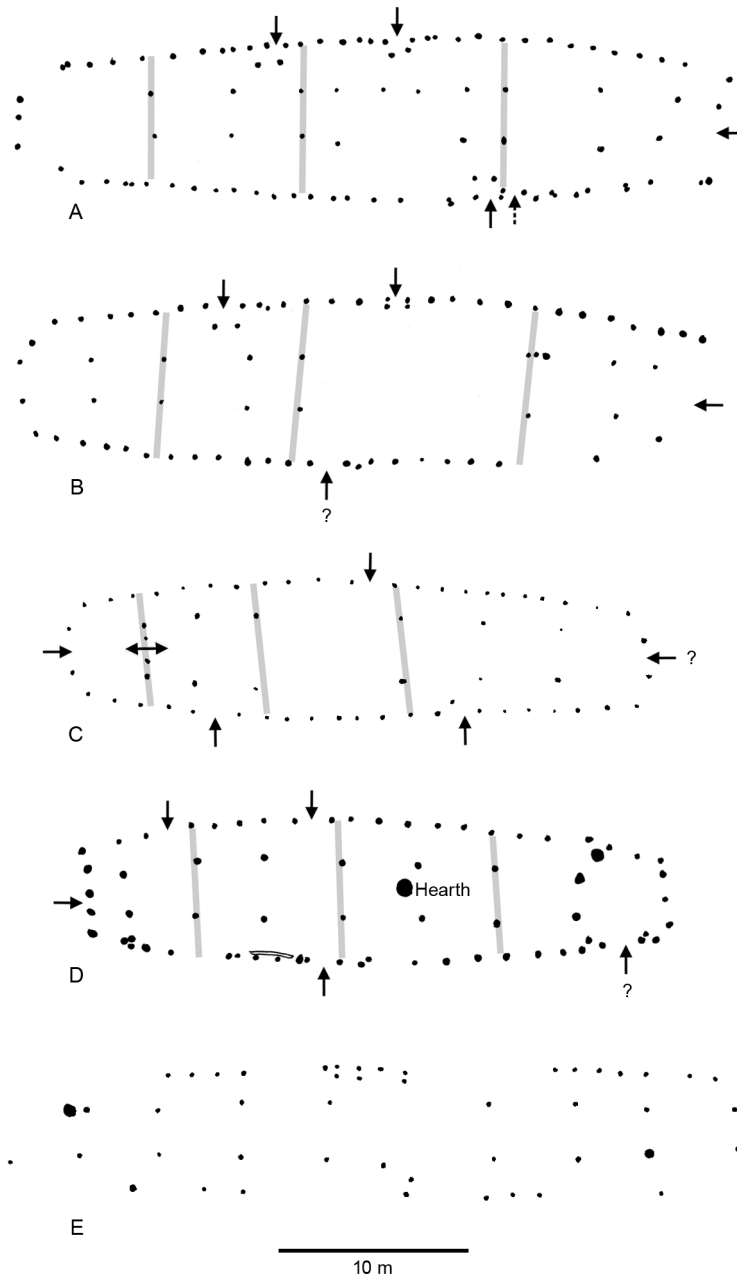


Fig. 6. Houses of Sædding type from Scania. A) Västervång, house 6, B) Västervång, house 7, C) Sunnanå 19D, house XXI, D) the Lockarp village site, house 1, E) Lockarp 7A, house 6. For the dimensions of the individual houses see Table 1. Illustrations: Anne Carlie and Thomas Hansson.

The buildings on the Lockarp village site are interpreted as a farm unit, with site continuity from the seventh century to the second half of the tenth century. House 1 is the main building on a U-shaped farm with the opening towards the east belonging to the second building phase, dated from the late ninth century to the mid-tenth

century. In this phase of the complex there was probably also a fourth building, located north of and parallel to the main building (Heimer et al. 2006, 151ff). House 1 has a ground plan that is very similar in form and appearance to houses 6 and 7 from Västervång. The most important differences are that house 1 from Lockarp is slightly

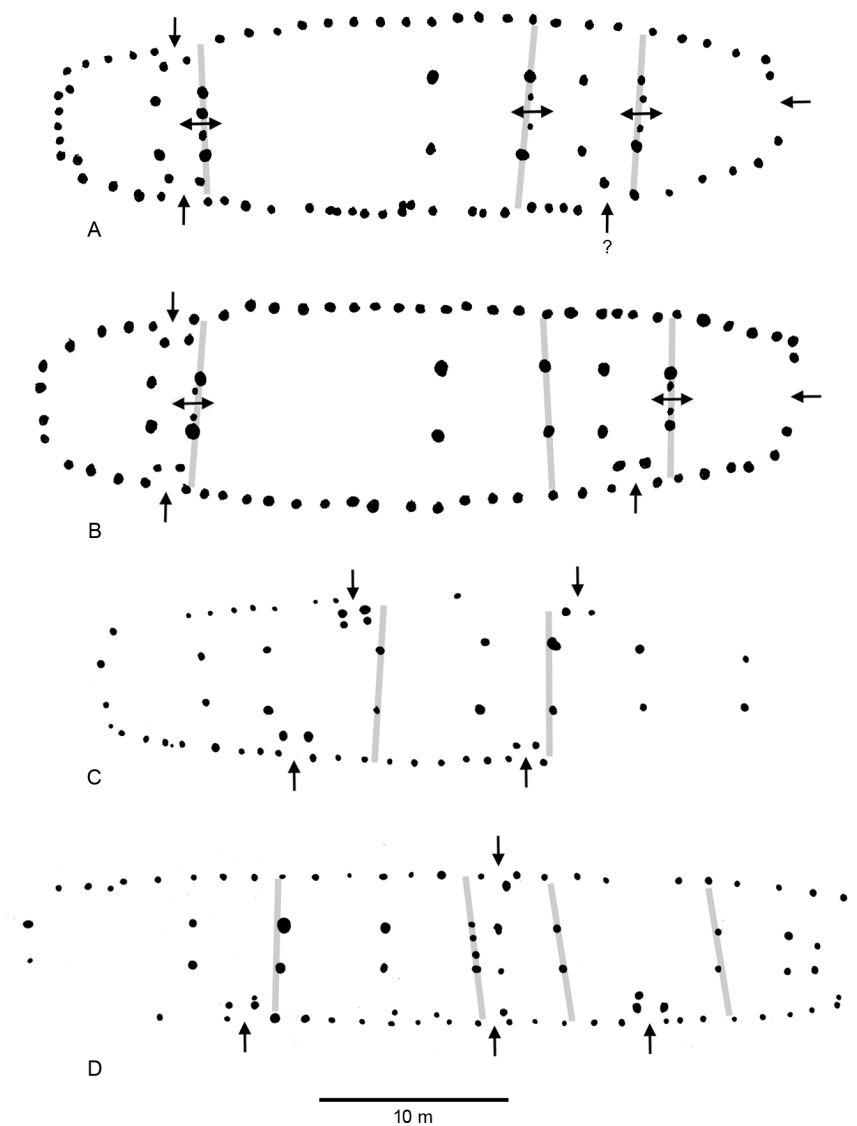


Fig. 7. Houses of Sædding type from Zealand. A) Toftegård, house 4, B) Toftegård, house 5, C) Korsvejgård, house 2, D) Korsvejgård, house 24. For the dimensions of the individual houses see table 1. Illustrations: Anne Carlie and Thomas Hansson.

shorter and narrower (approx.  $29 \times 7.7$  m) and that the roof-bearing trestles are spaced more regularly (*ibid.*, 38f). Like the Västervång houses, the house from Lockarp has several partly asymmetrically placed entrances in each of the long sides. On the other hand, the house seems not to have had an open gable in the east. In the second half of the tenth century the farm was rebuilt and a new main building was erected (house 7). The house was at least 22 metres long, showing great similarities in

construction to house 1. The remains of the house were not in such a good state of preservation, however, so it has not been included in this study. In the latter half of the tenth century the farm was moved to a new location in the vicinity. On the new site the farm developed in the mid-eleventh century into something close to a splendid magnate estate complex, with no less than five different buildings of Trelleborg type, including a small post-built house interpreted as a chapel (*ibid.*, 153ff).



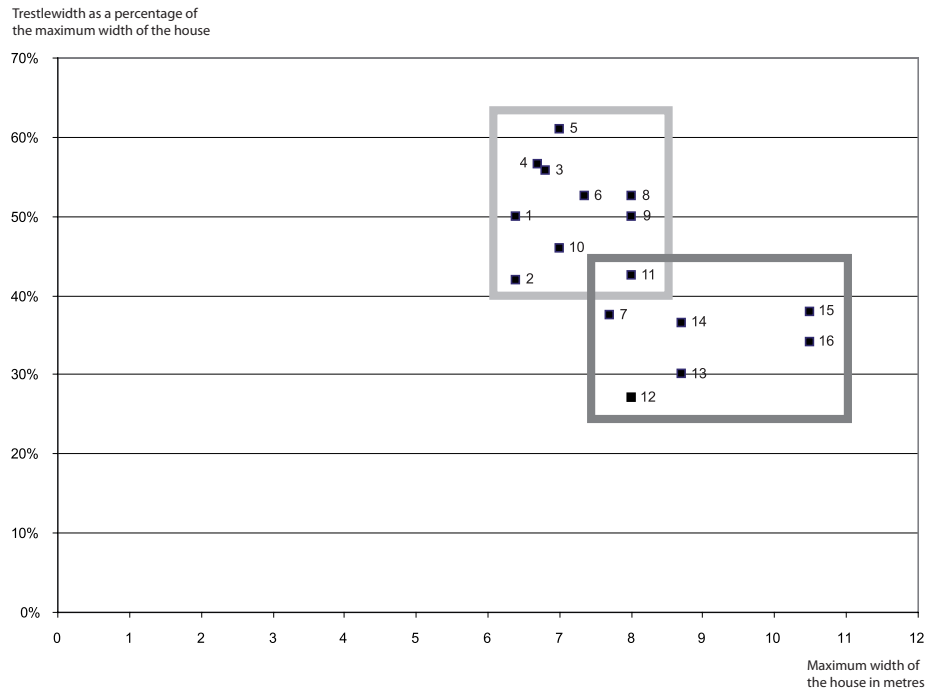


Fig. 8. Differences in building style between long-houses from magnate estates in Scania (Sk.), Zealand (Sj.), Jutland (Jy.), and Schleswig. Black rectangles indicate houses with balanced and over-balanced inner structure and grey rectangles mark houses with an under-balanced structure. 1) Sk. Lockarp 7A, house 6; 2) Jy. Hammelev Nørremark, house 1; 3) Jy. Sædding, house LXXXVII; 4) Jy. Sædding, house LVI; 5) Jy. Sædding, house XL; 6) Sk. Sunnanå 19D, house XXI; 7) Sk. Lockarp village site, house 1; 8) Schleswig. Kosel Ost, house; 9) Jy. Vorbasse, house CCIII; 10) Jy. Vorbasse, house CCXXIII; 11) Sj. Korsvejgård, house 2; 12) Sj. Korsvejgård, house 24; 13) Sk. Västervång, house 6; 14) Sk. Västervång, house 7; 15) Sj. Toftegård, house 4; 16) Sj. Toftegård, house 5. For the dimensions of the individual houses see table 1. Illustration: Anne Carlie and Thomas Hansson.

House XXI from Sunnanå 19D (Holmängen) was the main building in a complex from the Late Vendel Period/Viking Age, which also had two smaller post-buildings (Steinecke et al. 2005). The farm was found just south of the River Segeå, close to one of the major passages over the river on the main road running from Lund/Up-påkra south to Trelleborg on the coast. Also connected to the settlement was a crescent-shaped post structure about 200 metres long, beside the course of the river, interpreted as a possible jetty. This, in combination with the lack of traditional settlement site remains, led the excavators to interpret the settlement at Holmängen as a reloading place for goods, from water to further transport on land (ibid., 210ff). House XXI is, if possible, even more like the Västervång houses than is house 1 from the Lockarp village site. The building is almost identical in form and was only slightly shorter and narrower than houses 6 and 7 (approx.  $31.5 \times 7.35$  m). As in house 7, the roof-bearing trestles in the Sunnanå house are irregularly placed,

with sometimes short, sometimes long spans. An interesting feature of the construction is the almost eight-metre long span in the middle of the building, giving a hall-like room. The same technical solution is also found in the younger of the houses from Västervång (house 7). House XXI, like houses 6 and 7, has several asymmetrically placed entrances in the long walls, and probably one entrance in each gable. The only major difference from the Västervång houses is that the roof-bearing structure has a more convex shape and that the trestle width is greater than at Västervång, meaning that the building was almost perfectly balanced (approx. 45–50%). In this respect the house is more like the west Danish houses of Sædding type, to which I shall return later. House XXI has been 14C-dated to 790–980 AD ( $1155 \pm 35$  BP), which makes it contemporary with either house 6 or house 7 from Västervång.

The third example from south-west Scania is house 6 from Lockarp 7A. This almost forty-metre building

was probably part of a farm together with a small four-post house (house 26) (Rudin & Brink 2002). House 6 is less well preserved than the other houses in the Scanian material, chiefly as regards the construction of the outer walls and the number and placing of the entrances. This, in combination with the fact that the roof-bearing trestles are spaced at relatively even distances, means that the evidence is too scanty to enable an interpretation of the spatial division of the house. Analyses of macrofossils from post-holes, however, indicate that the dwelling was in the eastern part and that the western part was used to stable horses (*ibid.*, 251, fig. 215). The total length of the house is also uncertain, since the gable posts are not preserved. Judging by the inner structure, the building was at least 38 metres long with ten roof-bearing trestles. The outer walls had a slightly convex form, with a maximum width of 6.4 metres. Unlike the Västervång houses, this one had a balanced construction (50%), with the weight of the roof resting in equal measure on the inner trestles and on the outer walls. In this respect the Lockarp house follows the west Danish building tradition, although it is a little narrower. House 6 has been 14C-dated to 820–980 AD (1150±60 BP), and may thus be contemporary with both houses 6 and 7 from Västervång.

#### ZEALANDIC HOUSES

From eastern Denmark I have found just a few examples of large long-houses of Sædding type in the published material, which satisfy the criteria above. These are four houses from eastern Zealand, two of them from Strøby Toftegård (houses 4 and 5) at north Stevns east of Køge (Tornbjerg 1998) and two houses from Korsvejgård (houses 2 and 24) on the western edge of Greater Copenhagen (Fig. 7).<sup>15</sup> As in Scania, this type of house is documented at several other places, e.g. at Bøgelund, Varpelev Parish outside Køge (Tornbjerg 1992, 73ff) and at Vallensbæk in the Copenhagen area (Kaul 1985).

Houses 4 and 5 from Strøby Toftegård have been published by Sven-Åge Tornbjerg (1998). The houses, together with a further three big long-houses, are located in the central part of the settlement site and are interpreted as the two youngest phases of a manor with a hall function. A large number of outhouses both large and small

can also be linked to the estate. From the Toftegård site there is a rich and varied assemblage of finds testifying to prosperity and long-distance contacts, and craft activities are chiefly represented by bronze casting. Among the finds there are parts of glass beakers of Frankish origin, gold-foil figures, weights, parts of weapons and warrior's equipment, and pieces of precious metal. Houses 4 and 5 are dated, among other things, by finds of Baltic ware to the ninth and tenth centuries.

Houses 4 and 5 at Strøby Toftegård are 38 and 40 metres long respectively and have a virtually identical ground plan. The houses have clearly convex long walls with a maximum width of about 10.5 metres. The inner roof-bearing construction is also slightly convex. Like the Västervång houses, these ones are under-balanced (34% and 38% respectively in proportion to the total width). As with the Scanian houses, the Toftegård houses had several entrances in the long walls and an opening in the east gable. The greatest difference is that the houses are larger than the Scanian examples, and that the roof-bearing trestles are irregularly spaced, giving a partly different plan. Houses 4 and 5 both had at least four rooms, one of them a small room at the west gable, two rooms in the east and a large hall measuring 12–13 metres in the middle section (Tornbjerg 1998, 221ff). It is worth noting here that house 7 from Västervång and house XXI from Sunnanå also had a hall-like room in the middle.

Houses 2 and 24 from Korsvejgård at Måløv in western Copenhagen were the main buildings on two farm complexes from the Early Viking Age, of which the smaller unit was fenced. The farms were just a few hundred metres from each other and are possibly contemporary.<sup>16</sup> The bigger long-house, no. 24, is almost 45 metres long and 8.0 metres wide, with ten roof-bearing trestles, while the smaller one, no. 2, is 26 × 8 metres with eight trestles in the roof-bearing structure. Despite the differences in size, the houses display interesting similarities above all to the Västervång houses. Besides the convex shape, they had several asymmetrically placed entrances in the long walls. The bigger house, moreover, is likely to have had an open east gable. The distances between the roof-bearing trestles varies, and in both houses there

<sup>15</sup> The comparative material has mainly been collected from published studies. Special thanks to Linda Boye, Kroppedal Museum, for material from the Copenhagen area.

<sup>16</sup> The houses at Korsvejgård were excavated in 1994 and 1996 by the Copenhagen County Museum Council, now Kroppedal Museum. The material has not been published; I have only had access to descriptions of houses in the technical report. Cf. AUD 1994, no. 40, pp. 113, SØL 463, and AUD 1996, no. 45, pp. 129, SØL 905.

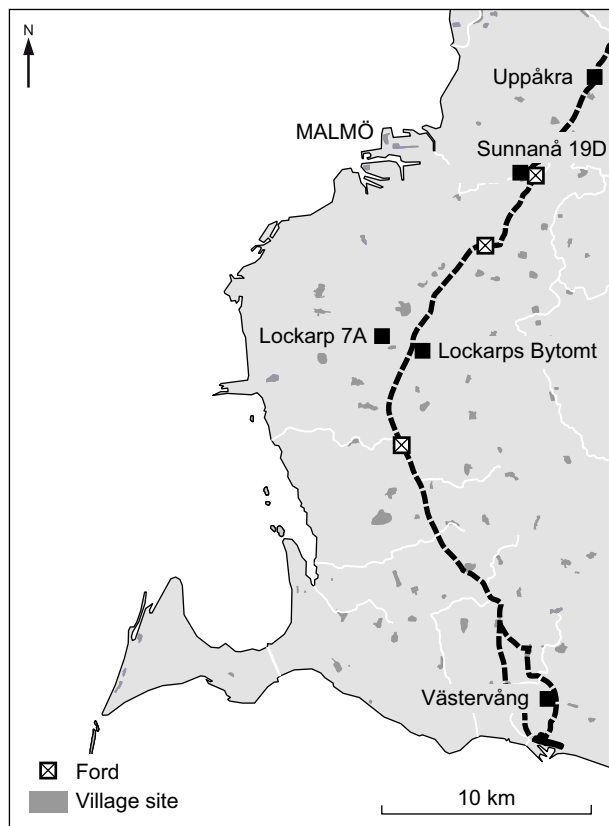


Figure 9. The course of the main road between Uppåkra and Trelleborg in relation to the historical villages. As the map shows, the four magnate estates with houses of Sædding type are located along the road. After Erikson 2001. Map: Thomas Hansson.

are short and long spans. The longest span is almost nine metres and is in the eastern part of house 24. The placing of the trestles and entrances indicates that the houses were divided into at least three and five rooms respectively. The data are insufficient to allow us to determine the function of the rooms. Finally, the houses from Korsvejgård, like the houses from Västervång and Toftegård, are under-balanced. This feature is particularly clear in the bigger house, where the width of the roof-bearing trestles is only about 27% of the total width.

## RESULTS

The comparative study of the main buildings from the Early Viking Age is based on a small sample, and the conclusions drawn should therefore be regarded as preliminary. Some tendencies can nevertheless be discerned

in the material. The appearance and construction of the long-houses reveal several interesting similarities between the long-houses from Scania and Zealand and houses of Sædding type in Jutland. Among the distinctive features in the west Danish building tradition that also occur in the east Danish houses we may mention the convex shape, the occurrence of roof-bearing posts in the gables, numerous and often asymmetrically placed entrances in the long walls, and the occurrence of entrances or openings in the gables.

At the same time, the study shows that the west Danish building tradition was not directly copied; it was incorporated into the indigenous tradition. It thus seems as if people sought primarily to copy the convex shape and outward appearance of the west Danish houses, but for the inner construction they preferred to stick to the older custom of building with an under-balanced roof structure. In the majority of the houses from Scania and Zealand the width of the roof-bearing trestles is less than a third of the total width of the house. Approximately the same proportions are found in other contemporary houses from these areas. In western Denmark, in contrast, houses were often built balanced or over-balanced, which meant that a larger share of the weight of the roof rested on the outer walls. This method not only gave the house increased stability but also allowed greater flexibility for repair, rebuilding, and extension without any negative effect on the roof-bearing structure. In the Scanian material studied here, only two of the examples, house 6 from Lockarp 7A and house XXI from Sunnanå, follow the west Danish tradition with an almost perfectly balanced construction.

Another thing that distinguishes Scanian and Zealandic houses from the west Danish tradition is that the roof-bearing trestles are often unevenly spaced, with short and long spans, while houses of Sædding type generally have equal spans (but the Vorbasse houses have unequal spans). The distance between the roof-bearing trestles is closely connected to the spatial and functional division of the house. Against this background the constructional differences between the west and east Danish houses probably reflect cultural differences in the outlook on the functional divisions of the long-house. For example, several of the Scanian and Zealandic houses seem to have had an open gable construction in the east, which indicates that this part of the house was used as a cart shed. Several of the west Danish long-houses, on the other hand, show clear traces of stall partitions in the eastern part,

revealing a function for housing animals. Another difference is that, in some of the east Danish houses there was a large, hall-like room of the same kind as found in the Trelleborg houses. These are houses 4 and 5 from Strøby Toftegård, house 7 from Västervång, and possibly house XXI from Sunnanå. The occurrence of a hall suggests that these long-houses were used for special purposes, for example, major religious festivals or feasts (cf. Herschend 1993). None of these long-houses has been dated exactly; they are dated on the basis of pottery and 14C in general terms to the ninth and tenth centuries. The inspiration for the technical construction of a large hall probably comes from large contemporary aristocratic estates, such as those excavated at Lejre (Christensen 1997) and Järrestad (Söderberg 2003).

What, then, is the meaning of the interregional similarities in building style? Was the west Danish tradition spread as an effect of increased travel, whereby people brought home new trends to their farm or village? Or should the new mode of building long-houses be regarded as a conscious choice among the local landowning elite, who used this as a way to show that they were a part of the “big” world? To shed light on these questions we must look more closely at how the Scanian estates were located in the landscape, in relation to important communications and contemporary power centres.

## ALONG THE ROAD

It is reasonable to assume that the ruling elite in the Late Iron Age, with increased travel and transports of goods, felt a greater need to control important communication routes. We know that one of the main roads in south-west Scania ran from Lund/Uppåkra, over the Söderslätt plain, down to Trelleborg on the south coast, a distance of roughly thirty kilometres (Fig. 9). The historical geographer Marja Erikson, in a cartographic analysis, has shown that the main road passed through the lands of no less than 23 villages in 17 different parishes.<sup>17</sup> An interesting observation is that the road only exceptionally ran

through the actual village sites. In Erikson’s opinion, this strengthens previous assumptions about the great age of the road, and that it reflects an older route that preceded the establishment of the villages. The age of the main road is not known, but the close spatial connection to areas with prehistoric graves and monuments - particularly Bronze Age barrows - has led to speculation that it could go back to prehistoric times, perhaps the Bronze Age (Erikson 2001, 172; Samuelsson 2001).

A few kilometres south of Uppåkra the road crosses the Segeå, at Görslöv Bridge, which in historical times was known as one of the most important passages across the river in the inland. It is also here, about one and a half kilometres west of the bridge, that we find one of the farms in the comparative analysis (Sunnanå 19D), to which we shall have reason to return. Another few kilometres south of the river the road passed the village site of Östra Skrävlinge, where parts of a settlement from the Late Viking Age and Early Middle Ages, with long-houses and sunken-floor huts, has been excavated by Malmö Heritage.<sup>18</sup> At Östra Skrävlinge a large road joins the main road from the south-east; in Erikson’s analysis this is called the East Road. It is identified with the early Ystad road, which continues to the north-west towards Malmö, founded in the thirteenth century (Erikson 2001, 172). The reason the crossroads is located in Östra Skrävlinge, according to Erikson, is that it crosses the Risebergabäcken, a small watercourse with adjacent wetlands that limited accessibility in the landscape (ibid., 172f).

Further south, the road runs through the lands of Fosie village, where extensive remains of settlement, above all from the Early Iron Age, but also the Late Iron Age, have been excavated by Malmö Heritage (Björhem & Säfvestad 1994; Björhem & Magnusson Staaf 2007). Further south again, the road passes through the lands of the villages of Lockarp and Fjärdingslöv, where it also crosses an east-west road called “The Vintrie Road”, which links the main road with the coast to the west (Björhem & Magnusson Staaf 2007, 230f; Eliasson & Kishonti 2007, 330, fig. 61). Here too, Malmö Heritage, in connection with the Öresund Fixed Link Project, excavated large areas with extensive remains of settlement from the Early Iron Age. In the area there was also settlement from the Vendel and Viking periods (Björhem & Magnusson 2007, 219ff). Two of the estate complexes that are included in

<sup>17</sup> The road was noticed at the start of the 1960s, when the historian Per Edvin Sköld, after studies of Gerhard Buhrmann’s map of Scania from 1684 and the Scanian Reconnaissance Map from 1812–20, presented a reconstruction of the early course of the road (1963). Sköld’s proposal was on a small scale and of a general character. As part of the Uppåkra Project a more detailed study was conducted by the historical geographer Marja Erikson, based on large-scale land survey maps from the eighteenth century (Erikson 2001).

<sup>18</sup> Personal communication, Ulrika Sjöstrand, Malmö Heritage.

the comparative analysis come from the area at Lockarp (cf. Lockarp 7A and the Lockarp village site). The eastern farm can be followed on the same site during several phases (Heimer et al. 2006, 151). In the latter half of the tenth century the farm was moved to a new and topographically more prominent location nearby. In this higher new place it developed into a magnificent complex which may be assumed to have functioned as the seat of the local landowning elite. The most complex settlement belongs to the youngest phase of the estate, dated to 1050–1150. At this time the estate consisted of no less than seven buildings, including several of Trelleborg type and a wooden church or chapel at the centre of the farmstead. Production is assumed to have been based on agriculture, but various forms of specialized craft, such as glass bead manufacture, smithwork, textile production, woodwork, and leather craft, were also pursued here. A varied range of finds testify to long-distance contacts, for instance with southern Germany and south-east England (Heimer et al. 2006, 152ff).

A few kilometres further south the road passes through the site of Hököpinge village, where it follows the damp terrain along the course of the Pilebäcken. Like the köpinge-places around Trelleborg and other places in Scania, Hököpinge has been suggested in earlier research to have served as a centre for a big farmer's trade in the Late Viking Age and Early Middle Ages (Cinthio 1975; Ersgård 1986). No archaeological excavations have been undertaken to confirm this kind of activity on the site, but a Viking Age silver hoard has been found within the area of the medieval village site (Rosborn 1984). The hoard comprises 422 coins and a piece of hack silver. The coins are mainly German and English with a small admixture of Byzantine and occasional Swedish-minted coins.<sup>19</sup> Although the find in itself does not testify to non-agrarian activity on the site, it is indirect evidence of a large Viking Age settlement in the vicinity.

South of Hököpinge the road veered towards the south-east, passing the lands of the villages of Södra Åkarp and Västra Skrävlinge. Erikson's cartographic analyses show that the road then continued south through the sites of Fuglie, Östra Värlinge, and Tågarp and on down to the coast just east of where the Albäcken flows into the sea,

<sup>19</sup> One of the German coins in the Hököpinge find gives a *terminus post quem* of 1002, which suggests that the hoard ended up in the ground some time at the start of the eleventh century (Hårdh 1976, 54, cat. no. 76).

west of the medieval town of Trelleborg (Erikson 2001, 169ff). Bengt Jacobsson's studies of the Viking Age ring-fort in Trelleborg, however, suggest that the main road north of the town also had an easterly course. Under one of the main streets running north–south in the medieval town, Bryggaregatan, remains were found of an earlier predecessor following the same course and running straight through the north gate of the ring-fort and out through the south gate (Jacobsson 2000, 149). Where exactly the road split into a westerly and easterly route north of Trelleborg is unknown. If one looks at the local topography in the area, it seems reasonable to assume that it was up in the hummocky landscape, perhaps just south of the village of Östra Värlinge, in order to use the high parts of the terrain. The east route then probably ran through the lands of the village of Hammarlöv and then curved in a gentle arc down to the town of Trelleborg. In the Viking Age this would mean that the eastern road passed the village and the magnate estate at Västervång and then continued south to the coastal settlement/ring-fort.

If we look at the four places with smaller magnate estates with main buildings in Sædding-like style, we see that they are all located on the main road between Uppåkra and Trelleborg. The spatial connection between the farms and the road may of course be coincidental. On the other hand, if there is a historical basis for it, we must then ask why the estates are situated where they are. Did they have functions other than purely agrarian? What type of functions could this be?

## SCANIAN MAGNATE ESTATES IN THEIR OWN TIME

In Viking Age society, various social resources, besides kinship, were used to confirm and regulate mutual obligations, such as friendships, marriage alliances, and ties of loyalty. In the social elite or the aristocracy this resulted in complex social networks between different individuals and collectives, where personal bonds functioned as guarantees of support and protection in critical situations (Skre 1998, 18ff). According to Lars Hermansson, who has studied elite political culture in twelfth-century Denmark, this led to the creation of broad horizontal and constructed "kin groups", the composition of which varied depending on different political circumstances (Hermansson 2000, 9).

Kinship-like social relations existed not just in the upper social strata but also at other levels in society (Skre

1998, 18f). The most common relationship, however, was probably that between the peasant and his lord, where the need for personal security was a central theme. By submitting to a landowning lord, the peasant had access not just to food but was also guaranteed protection in the event of attack, and help to assert his right in conflicts (*ibid.*, 20f).

The written sources (chiefly runic stones and Norwegian kings' sagas) testify to a wide range of social functions or titles in Viking Age society that were not based on kinship but on different types of reciprocal social relations. The most common titles on Scanian runic stones are *dreng* and *thegn*. There is a general opinion that these refer to royal vassals who served in the lord's hird in return for landed property (Randsborg 1980, 31ff; Anglert 1995, 36ff). Examples of other titles in the sources connected to the upper class and royal power are *bryde* (steward), *landman* (royal vassal), and *godi* (pagan priest). Other titles occur, however, such as *bonde* (big farmer) and *boman* (probably a small landowner). The epithet *godi* here is thought to indicate a close relationship or loyalty to the king, as his subject or rather vassal (Randsborg 1980, 34ff, 40).

Smaller magnate estates with big long-houses of *Sædning* type probably did not belong to people in the elite or the aristocracy, but to individuals slightly lower on the social scale. Perhaps we should regard these persons as belonging to the local landowning elite, best designated as big farmers or, to use the contemporary social title, *bonde*. These persons too, of course, were a part of the social network of the time. The question is at what level and how we should understand the estates and their inhabitants in contemporary terms.

The estates at Sunnanå, Lockarp, and Västervång in south-west Scania were founded at a time when the old order with Uppåkra as the power centre prevailed and represented normality.<sup>20</sup> High-class finds of import-

ed prestige objects in the form of exclusive fibulae and sherds from glass beakers show that the social elite in Uppåkra, from the fifth century onwards, maintained long-distance contacts with areas above all in Western Europe (the Rhineland, southern England, France), but also in Southern Europe (southern Germany and northern Italy) (Helgesson 2002, 48; Hårdh 2003, 43). In the Vendel Period the material undergoes a change in character; the proportion of exclusive objects decreases while fibulae and craft-related finds take on a more local or provincial touch (Helgesson 2002, 51, 63f). At the same time, inter-regional contacts seem to have flourished, with finds of gold-foil figures and patrices for gold-foil figures linking Uppåkra with other contemporary central places, such as Sorte Muld in Bornholm and Strøby Toftegård in eastern Zealand (Watt 1999). Another category of find testifying to the maintenance of long-distance contacts is the unusually large proportion of Arabic coins found on the site (Silvegren 1999; von Heijne 2004, 253).<sup>21</sup> The pure silver content of the coins makes it likely that they were used to a large extent as raw material for craft work, for example, for making jewellery. In view of the considerable metalwork and jewellery production at Uppåkra, there must have been a large flow of coins to the site.

Based on studies of the historical villages and place-names, Johan Callmer and Mats Anglert have argued that Uppåkra in the Late Iron Age constituted some form of magnate's domain extending from the Höjeå in the north to the Segeå in south (Callmer 2001; Anglert 2003). Opinions are divided as to how large a geographical area Uppåkra was the political centre of (cf. Larsson 2006, 181). The international network of contacts to which the place belonged at the time, however, suggests that the elite established points of support in the landscape in order to control important routes and thus secure communications. My thesis is that the smaller magnate estates in Scania represent these places. It is thus probable that the estates, from the end of the eighth century to the mid-tenth century, were linked to the organization of the Uppåkra elite, functioning as territorial points of support for controlling

20 Recent decades' extensive research around Uppåkra as part of the project *The Social Structure in Southern Sweden in the Late Iron Age* has shown that for a very long time, probably from the third century AD until the end of the Viking Age, the place served not just as a political and economic centre but also as a religious centre for people in south-western and western Scania. Although the main central functions of the place probably changed character over the centuries, it is above all the long continuity of the site, and the size and composition of the finds, that testify to a complex organization. The Uppåkra Project is run by Prof. Lars Larsson and Prof. Birgitta Hårdh at the Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, Lund University, in collaboration with various scholars. The results of the project are continuously presented in the series *Uppåkrastudier*.

21 The Arabic coins from Uppåkra consist above all of Abbasid coins from present-day Iraq, minted 749–902. But there is also a relatively large share of Samanid coins from the eastern parts of the Caliphate, minted between 893 and c. 950. Because of the predominance of Abbasid coins, the chronological centre of gravity in the Viking Age coins from the site is thus in the eighth and ninth centuries. This can be compared with, e.g., the Carolingian coins, of which there are just seven examples from the site (von Heijne 2004, 253; cat. find 1.155).

important transports and other movements. Evidence for this comes above all from the fact that the estates were strategically placed for communications beside the old road network and the main route between Uppåkra and the coastal settlement at Trelleborg on the south coast. They were close to important river crossings, major crossroads, or large coastal settlements. I have previously mentioned the estate at Sunnanå as a probable reloading place beside one of the most important passages over the Segeå. The two estates at Lockarp likewise have a strategic location along the main road at an important crossroads. Finally, the big estate at Västervång, on a prominent height, offering a good view of the lowlands and the sea, was strategically placed to control travellers and transports of goods between the coast and the inland. It is possible that the construction of the ring-fort in Trelleborg, the earliest phase of which is in the mid-tenth century, should be viewed in this context, that is, as one of the Uppåkra elite's territorial points of support in the landscape.

It is thus likely that the owners of the four estates in the Early Viking Age were in some form of dependence on the leading elite in south-west Scania. We cannot say anything about the precise nature of the relationship, but it cannot be ruled out that they served as some kind of vassals to the ruler in Uppåkra. It should be mentioned here that the smaller estates lack traces of sunken-floor huts, specialized craft, or ritual feasting in halls. This distinguishes the sites from contemporary aristocratic estate complexes such as Järrestad, which are distinguished by precisely this type of activities.<sup>22</sup>

It is probable that the adoption of a new style of building with influences from western Denmark was a way for the owners to manifest their social affiliation. By building their houses in accordance with the latest trends in the "big" world, they showed that they belonged to the "right" social networks.<sup>23</sup> The big long-houses of Sæd-

ding-like type can be viewed here as a kind of parallel phenomenon to the Trelleborg houses in the Late Viking Age. Like the big long-houses of Sædding type, those of Trelleborg type or similar chiefly occur on slightly larger and more prosperous estates (see e.g. Ethelberg 2003, 354ff). Regional analyses of building practices, however, in southern Halland, suggest that each house was constructed individually by different builders with knowledge of the new technique (Wranning 1999, 47f). This indirectly supports the thesis that the local landowning elite, even in the Late Iron Age, used this building style as a way to display their social affiliation.

At the end of the tenth century the political and religious scene in Scania changed, when the area was integrated into the kingdom of Denmark and Christianity acquired a stronger foothold among the population. At the same time as the town of Lund was established, we see changes in the finds from Uppåkra suggesting that the central functions of the place had dwindled in significance. The exclusive imports were now much rarer than before, but the occurrence of weights testifies to continued trade. On the other hand, the proportion of coins from the later part of the tenth century and into the eleventh century is very limited, represented only by a few English and Danish coins (von Heijne 2004, 253, cat. no. 1:155). There is also a small number of finds testifying to an early Christian mission, in the form of an encolpion and an early Christian burial (Anglert 2003, 134).

The town of Lund was established, probably at the command of the Danish king Harald (Bluetooth), as a new political and religious centre in the region.<sup>24</sup> The foundation of the town has been dated by new archaeological evidence (dendrochronological dating) to around 990. There have been different explanations for the origin of the town and why it was founded. Whereas earlier research chiefly sought economic explanations, the most recent contributions to the debate have highlighted the significance of the place as a political, administrative, and religious centre (Andrén 1980; see also Larsson 2006, 175ff and works cited there). Many people have pointed out that early medieval Lund in several respects shows clear English influences. The early minting, under the rule of Sweyn Forkbeard, is an example of this, and has been interpreted by Anders Andrén and Peter Carelli

<sup>22</sup> At Sunnanå, Lockarp, and the Lockarp village site, the excavated area was so large that the absence of sunken-floor huts must reflect the reality. For Västervång the situation is harder to assess. Although there are indications that crafts were pursued in the village (textiles, antler craft, possibly smithwork), there are no traces of sunken-floor huts. Sunken-floor huts could possibly have stood on the edge of the village, e.g., beside the wetlands to the south, which was not covered by the excavation. Another explanation for the lack of sunken-floor huts could be that they were located outside the village and should instead be sought down at the coastal settlement, a couple of kilometres from there (Ericson 2007).

<sup>23</sup> Houses of Sædding type are not yet known from Uppåkra. Only a small part of the large settlement has been excavated, however, and the picture could change quickly.

<sup>24</sup> Editorial note: King Harald may have died already in the (early) 970s, cf. Randsborg this vol.; this does not alter the argument.

as a desire to manifest himself as a Christian king in keeping with the ideals of the time (Andrén & Carelli 1998, 28). In Lund, as in Löddeköpinge, a large central cemetery was created, probably to function as a burial place for a large area in Scania, that is, for the people in the aristocracy who chose to manifest their new religion and were loyal to the Danish king (Anglert 2003, 134; cf. Lihammar 2007, 175).

In the discussion about the foundation of Lund, several researchers have drawn attention to the placing of the town in relation to the old road network and the main road running northwards from Uppåkra. The prevailing opinion is that the reason for this placing should be sought in the ambition of the Danish king to control important communication routes and thus movements in the landscape (Larsson 2006, 179ff). Anna Lihammar thinks that the foundation of Lund should be regarded as one of the most important symbolic royal acts in western Scania around the year 1000 (Lihammar 2007, 180). It was a way for the king and the Christian church to display its power and ambition vis-à-vis the old political and religious order. Instead of viewing Lund as succeeding the old central place at Uppåkra, Lihammar argues that the foundation of Lund was a deliberate provocation against the old power.

The Danish king's ambitions to acquire control over important communication routes in the landscape around Lund/Uppåkra probably also included strategies to create territorial points of support. We may assume here that the king was primarily trying to integrate existing places, either by winning over the local elite to its side, or if this failed, by appointing loyal new subjects in these places. Several scholars think that the Trelleborg houses could be viewed as an expression of loyalty to the Danish crown (Anglert 2006, 46). It is interesting in this connection that two of the smaller magnate estates discussed here also have remains of Trelleborg houses. On the Lockarp village site, when the big estate was moved to a new site at the start of the eleventh century, several of the new buildings were constructed in Trelleborg style. This can be interpreted to show that the local elite in Lockarp actively supported the Danish king and the ideals of the new age, thus turning their backs on the old order and the Uppåkra elite (Heimer et al. 2006, 156f; Anglert 2006, 46).

The youngest buildings at Västervång are contemporary with the youngest ones in the ring-fort in Trelleborg, which are dated to the last two decades of the tenth century. The rebuilding of the fort coincides in time with the other Trelleborgs in western Denmark, which are assumed to have functioned as a kind of bridgehead in the expansion of Danish royal power (Randsborg 1980, 99ff; Anglert 1995, 46ff, 53f). This suggests that the Danish king took over and integrated the Scanian fort as a point of support in his own organization. The role played by Västervång in this is uncertain. Here too, however, the fact that the main building on the youngest estate, at least its interior, was built in Trelleborg style may indicate a change of loyalties in favour of the Danish king.

## FINAL REMARKS

In this article I have sought to highlight a group of non-aristocratic estates from the Viking Age which have not previously received much attention in the archaeological discussion. By studying the building style of the estates and their placing in the landscape, I found several interesting tendencies in the material which do not seem to be random, instead calling for some form of historical explanation. In the article I suggest that the estates in Scania in the Early Viking Age were linked to the Uppåkra elite and that they probably served as territorial points of support to control important routes and movements. At the end of the tenth century, when Scania was integrated in the Danish power sphere, there are signs that some of the farms were taken over and integrated in the new administration.

The thesis at present still rests on a shaky foundation, and naturally needs to be substantiated in different ways to gain in plausibility. What is needed is more "good" examples, with Iron Age settlement being analysed from a social perspective and in terms of settlement hierarchy, while the places are simultaneously put into a larger landscape context. I hope that this article will inspire other similar works that put Iron Age settlement and farms at the centre.



# APPENDIX

## VÄSTERVÅNG: DEVELOPMENT & ORGANIZATION 770–1000 AD

### PHASE 5: LATE VENDEL PERIOD AND EARLY VIKING AGE (770–900 AD)

The settlement at Västervång was probably established in the latter half of the eighth century, when three farms (I:a, II:a, and III:a) were set up on the site. The farms were built around a natural depression which had been filled in with earth during the Early Bronze Age (Fig. 10). In the latter part of the period yet another farm was built (IV) at the far east of the site, and at the same time two small buildings (houses 18 and 26) were erected south-east of farm III:a. The latter may have had something to do with craft activities, in the form of bone and antler craft and possibly smithwork. A fifth farm was located west of farm II:a (cf. house 11). The dating of the house is uncertain, however, and it may also belong to phase 6.

The size and composition of the farms vary. The biggest farm, I:a, was on a small but noticeable height south-west of the depression. The farm consisted of a big long-house (house 6) and a smaller post-built house (house 9), the latter placed about 15 metres south of and parallel to

the main building. Farm II north of the depression, besides its long-house, probably had an extra post-building, placed at an angle south-west of the main building. Other units consisted of just a small or medium-sized long-house (Fig. 11).

The main building of the magnate estate (farm I:a) is a 37-metre long-house with convex walls. The maximum width of the house at the middle is 8.7 metres, which then narrows towards the gables to about 5.5 metres. The roof-bearing structure consists of 10 or 11 trestles, most of which are not complete. The first trestle coincides with the straight west gable of the house, while the east gable was probably open. The trestle width in the house is relatively narrow (2.2–3.0 m), which gives the building an under-balanced construction (31–36,5%). The distance between the spans varies from 1.90–6.85 metres, with the shortest spans in the centre of the house. It had at least three entrances, two of them on the north side and one on the south. The latter had been moved to the side some time during the life of the house.

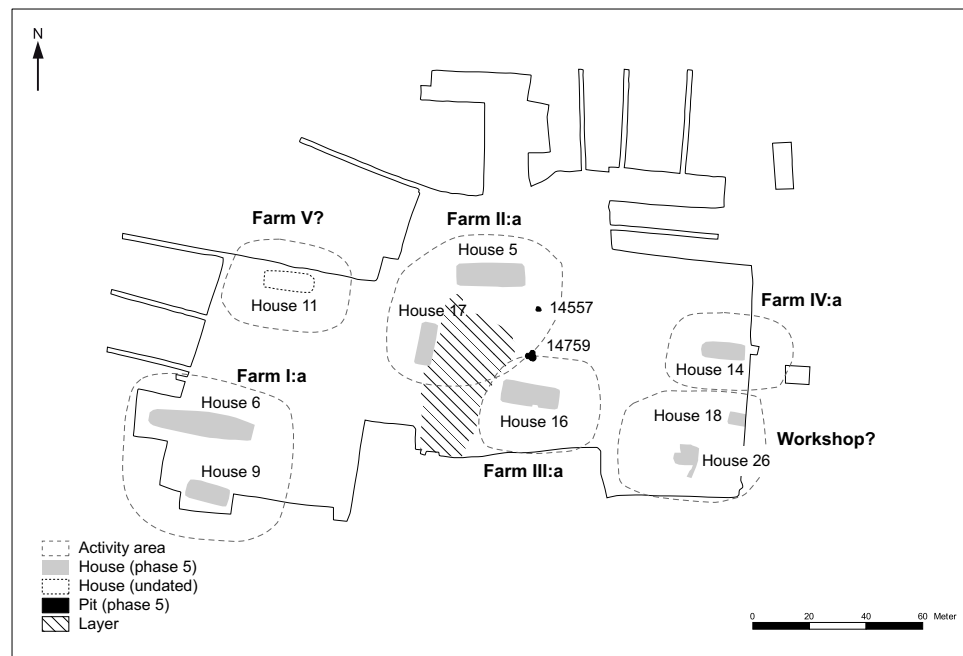


Fig. 10. Settlement phase 5. Farm structure and activity areas in the Late Vendel Period and Early Viking Age (c. 770 BC–900 AD).

Illustration: Henrik Pihl.



Fig. 11. The magnate estate (farm I:a) during settlement phase 5 (light grey) and 6 (dark grey). Illustration: Thomas Hansson.

House 6 probably had at least four rooms, two of them in the western part, 7 and 8 metres long respectively, a 10-metre room in the middle section, and an 11-metre room at the eastern end, where the open gable indicates a function as a cart shed. It is uncertain which part of the house the people lived in. One possibility is that the dwelling was in the middle room, although this is contradicted by the close placing of the posts in this part of the house, which would suggest a function as a byre or stable.

An alternative interpretation is that the dwelling was in the western part of the eastern room, where the occurrence of stone lining in several post-holes indicates that the structure was reinforced. In one of these post-holes, for the north-west corner post (A11606) in the eastern room, there was a ritual deposit consisting of a spindle whorl, a smoothing stone, and part of a rib. The objects were found at the bottom of the post-hole, which suggests an inauguration sacrifice when the house was built (Fig.



Fig. 12. Inauguration sacrifice from the main building of the magnate estate (house 6). Photo: Staffan Hyll.

12). The composition of the finds is interesting, since the objects have a female touch through their connection to textile crafts (Carlie 2004, 171).

House 6 shows great similarities in building technique to house XXI from Sunnanå, house 1 from the Lockarp village site, and house 6 from Lockarp 7A, located in the Malmö district and dated to the Viking Age.<sup>25</sup>

The other building on the estate (house 9) is a post-built house measuring about  $15.5 \times 6.9$  metres with three roof-bearing trestles and slightly convex outer walls. The house probably had two rooms, one of them in the western part of the house with an entrance on the south side and a smaller room in the eastern part, where a centrally placed hearth between trestles 2 and 3 suggests a dwelling function. House 9 shows similarities in width and post positions to several of the Early Viking Age houses from Bjärred, although these are somewhat longer (Pettersson & Brorsson 2002, 41).

A waste pit (A6936) north-east of house 9 should probably be linked to the location of the farm. In the pit there were small quantities of cattle bones and an iron object of indeterminate type. No other features or activities can be linked to the farm.

The north farm, II:a, likewise consisted of two buildings. These were at an angle to each other, with the long-house (house 5) placed on a rather steep slope towards the west and an outbuilding (house 17) set in a north-south direction just west of the depression. The long-house was about 20.5 metres long and 8.5 metres wide with almost

straight long sides and with an internal construction of four or possibly five trestles. The placing of the trestles gives no hint as to the inner spatial arrangement of the house. A waste pit (A14557) containing remains of four large vessels of domestic type is contemporary with the farm and was dug south-east of the long-house (Stilborg 2006). The pit also contained small quantities of animal bones (150 g) from cattle and sheep/goats (Cardell 2006).

The other two farms (III:a and IV) belonging to settlement phase 5 consisted of a solitary long-house each. Of these, the long-house on farm III:a (house 16), east of the depression, was roughly the same size as the long-house on farm II:a. The house has six roof-bearing trestles, of which the outermost one was part of the gable. The placing of the trestles and an entrance on the south side suggest that the house had at least three rooms, with the biggest span of about six metres in the middle of the house, probably marking the dwelling section. House 16 shows clear parallels to house 2, on the contemporary settlement site of Ståstorp, located about two and a half kilometres west of Västervång (Jacobsson 2002).

A waste pit (A14759) with remains of five pots of domestic type was found north of the long-house. The pottery is typologically dated to the Vendel Period and can thus be linked to the farm (Stilborg 2006). A relatively large amount of animal bones was also retrieved from the pit (816 g), consisting of bones of cattle and sheep/goat (Cardell 2006).

Farm IV was approximately 50 metres east-north-east of farm III:a and is represented by house no. 14. This long-house measures about  $15 \times 5.8-6.3$  metres, which means that the building is somewhat smaller and narrower than other long-houses in this phase. The interior is also of different design, consisting of a combined two- and three-aisled construction. Just a few post-holes were excavated, which leaves the spatial division of the house uncertain.

To phase 5 we should probably also assign a workshop area in the south-east corner of the excavation site (see Fig. 10). Two buildings, houses 18 and 26, were found in this area. House 26 is a small three-aisled post-built house of roughly 35 m<sup>2</sup>. The building had an open gable and windbreak towards the south, where there were also discreet traces of a fireplace. No craft-related finds were discovered in the house; it is instead the construction that indicates a workshop, possibly a forge. House

<sup>25</sup> See the section on *The Scanian houses* in article.

18 is likewise a three-aisled post-built house, although the size is unknown, since the house is only partly within the excavated area. In the house was a pit (A8363) with finds including a bone needle, a comb (see below), a possible iron knife, and fragments of red deer antler showing traces of working. Unburned bones (327 g) from cattle, sheep/goat, pig, and a herring jawbone were also found in the pit, suggesting a secondary use of the pit for waste. The element of craft finds indicates that textile and antler crafts were pursued nearby. However, no sunken-floor huts were found, despite a thorough search of the excavation area.

#### DATING AND ORGANIZATION.

In phase 5 the dating of the settlement is likewise based on 14C, finds and house typology. Six 14C dates, all obtained from houses, can be assigned to the Late Vendel Period and Early Viking Age (Table 2).<sup>26</sup> A combined calibration of all the samples gives a dating to c. 770–900 AD (1160±16 BP). There are no datings from the main building of the magnate estate, house 6; instead the dating is based on the appearance of the house and the building method, and on the spatial placing in relation to the later and virtually identical long-house, no. 7 (see Phase

6: Late Viking Age). The distance between the long walls in houses 6 and 7 is only about half a metre. This suggests that the younger house was built shortly after the older main building had been demolished.

The finds that indicate a dating consist mainly of pottery and the remains of a comb (Fig. 13). The comb plate has iron rivets and is decorated with crosses and straight lines. It probably belongs to Ambrosiani's type B1:1, with an approximate dating to the first half of the tenth century (Ambrosiani 1981, 25, 62–64). The pottery comes from two pits (A14557 and A14759) close to the long-houses on farms II and III. The pottery from pit 14557 comprises the remains of at least four vessels. In every case they are large barrel-shaped vessels of domestic type, made of coarse ware. In the other pit (A14759) remains were found of at least five vessels, two of which were fully represented while the other three pots were represented by a single rim sherd. These posts too are of domestic type but they seem to be slightly smaller (Stilborg 2006).

The number and dating of the houses is evidence that there was more settlement on the site in phase 5 than in previous periods. Both the 14C dates and the appearance of the houses suggest that occupation was relatively brief, from c. 770–900 AD, that is, a period of about 150 years. It is likely that the magnate estate (farm I:a) and farms

<sup>26</sup> Calibration of <sup>14</sup>C values was done with the program Oxcal v. 3.10, Bronk Ramsey 2005.

Table 2. Late Iron Age. Radiocarbon datings from Västervång, Trelleborg, Scania.

Lab. No	Context	<sup>14</sup> C BP	+/-	1 sigma	2 sigma	Material
Ua-27713	Post-hole, house 20	1620	45	390AD-540AD (68,2%)	330AD-550AD (95,4%)	Charcoal (Quercus sp)
Ua-27707	Post-hole, house 27	1550	35	430AD-560AD (68,2%)	420AD-590AD (95,4%)	Charcoal (Prunus sp?)
Ua-27705	Post-hole, house 7	1395	35	620AD-665AD (68,2%)	585AD-680AD (95,4%)	Charcoal (Quercus sp)
Ua-27703	Post-hole, house 2	1360	40	630AD-690AD (66,8%)	600AD-720AD (86,4%)	Charcoal (Alnus)
Ua-27677	Post-hole, house 9*	1180	40	770AD-900AD (68,2%)	760AD-980AD (91,4%)	Macrofossil (Hordeum)
Ua-27681	Post-hole, house 17*	1180	40	770AD-900AD (68,2%)	760AD-980AD (91,4%)	Macrofossil (Seeds)
Ua-27674	Post-hole, house 16*	1175	40	770AD-900AD (68,2%)	770AD-980AD (92,9%)	Animal bone
Ua-27712	Post-hole, house 5*	1165	40	780AD-900AD (58,5%)	770AD-990AD (95,4%)	Charcoal (Pomoideae)
Ua-27680	Post-hole, house 14*	1140	40	860AD-980AD (65,7%)	770AD-990AD (95,4%)	Macrofossil (Ceralia)
Ua-27682	Post-hole, house 26*	1130	35	885AD-975AD (68,2%)	800AD-990AD (93,6%)	Macrofossil (Triticum)
Ua-27676	Post-hole, house 7**	1095	40	890AD-990AD (68,2%)	860AD-1030AD (95,4%)	Macrofossil (Triticum)
Ua-27678	Post-hole, house 10**	1065	40	890AD-1020AD (68,2%)	890AD-1030AD (95,4%)	Macrofossil (Triticum/Hordeum)
Ua-27679	Post-hole, house 13**	1045	40	960AD-1030AD (62,5%)	890Ad-1040AD (95,4%)	Macrofossil (Hordeum)
*Comb. Cal.		1160	16	860AD-900AD (41,2%)	770AD-900AD (74,8%)	
**Comb. Cal.		1068	23	970AD-1020AD (61,4%)	940AD-1020AD (77,3%)	

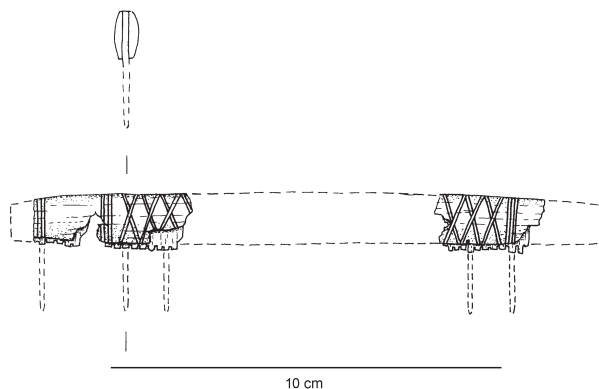


Fig. 13. Reconstruction of a comb from pit A8363. Drawing: Annica Jeppsson.

II:a and III:a, located respectively to the west, north, and east of the depression, were built at roughly the same time at the end of the eighth century or the start of the ninth. The dates from farm IV and the workshop area indicate that these are slightly later, perhaps built in the latter half of the ninth century. Farm V, located north of the magnate estate, is possibly be linked to the village as well, although the dating of the house is uncertain. The number of farms in the village could perhaps have been even greater, since the outer limits of the site were not determined to the south, where the topography would allow room for another couple of farmsteads.

The suggested interpretation means that the settlement for the first time displays a denser structure and greater stability. This picture contrasts with the earlier phases, which are instead characterized by an open and scattered settlement structure with great mobility. Another interesting feature in the settlement is that it now shows an internal hierarchy among the farms. This is evident, for instance, in the area of the buildings, which varies from small units of 90–160 m<sup>2</sup>, via a medium-sized farm of about 290 m<sup>2</sup> (II:a) to the magnate estate (I:a), with an area of about 380 m<sup>2</sup>. The estate also distinguishes itself in another way from the other farms in the village, in that the main building was erected on a slight ridge running east–west, in a somewhat secluded location west of the depression. The long-house on the estate also differs in building style from the other farms, being more like long-houses of Sædding type which have been found in other magnate settings from the same time in southern Scandinavia (see the article).

## PHASE 6:

### LATE VIKING AGE (900–1000 AD)

In the Late Viking Age we see a clear continuity in the organization of settlement on the site, although the number of farms decreased somewhat from that in the preceding phase. In phase 6 settlement consisted of three or possibly four farms (Fig. 14), of which the two largest units (farms I:b and III:b) were respectively east and west of the filled-in depression. The dubious farm is represented by house 11, the dating of which is uncertain; the farm could also belong to phase 5.

The magnate estate to the west, farm I:b, consisted of two large buildings placed in the form of an L, with the main building, house 7, oriented east–west (see Fig. 14). This long-house is a direct successor of the very similar house 6 in the preceding phase. The north–south post-built house (house 8) lacks inner roof-bearing posts and its south gable is joined to the north long wall of the main building. Probably also belonging to the estate is a small long-house, house 10, located about 15 metres south of house 7.

The main building on the magnate estate (house 7) is almost identical in style with house 6. The building is 34 metres long with convex outer walls and a maximum width at the middle of about 8.7 metres, narrowing towards the gables which were roughly 6 metres wide. The house, like house 6, had at least three entrances, two of them on the north side and one on the south and an open gable in the east. The trestle width is also approximately the same (2.15–3.2 m), i.e., under-balanced (31–36.5%). The greatest difference is in the roof-bearing structure. Whereas the older house 6 had 10 or 11 trestles, six of them placed more closely together in the central section of the house, the younger house 7 had only seven or eight trestles. The room with the longest span, which had hall-like proportions, was in the central section of the house. Otherwise the house has a virtually identical plan; besides the hall it comprised two large rooms in the western part and a room in the eastern end, where the open gable indicates a function as a cart shed.

The estate had two more buildings. One of these, a single-aisled post-house about 20 metres long and 4.1–6.45 metres wide with convex long walls and straight gables, was at an angle to the main building, with its south gable joined to the north-east long side and corner of the long-house. The house shows similarities to Jutlandic houses of Margrethehåb type with their characteristic slightly

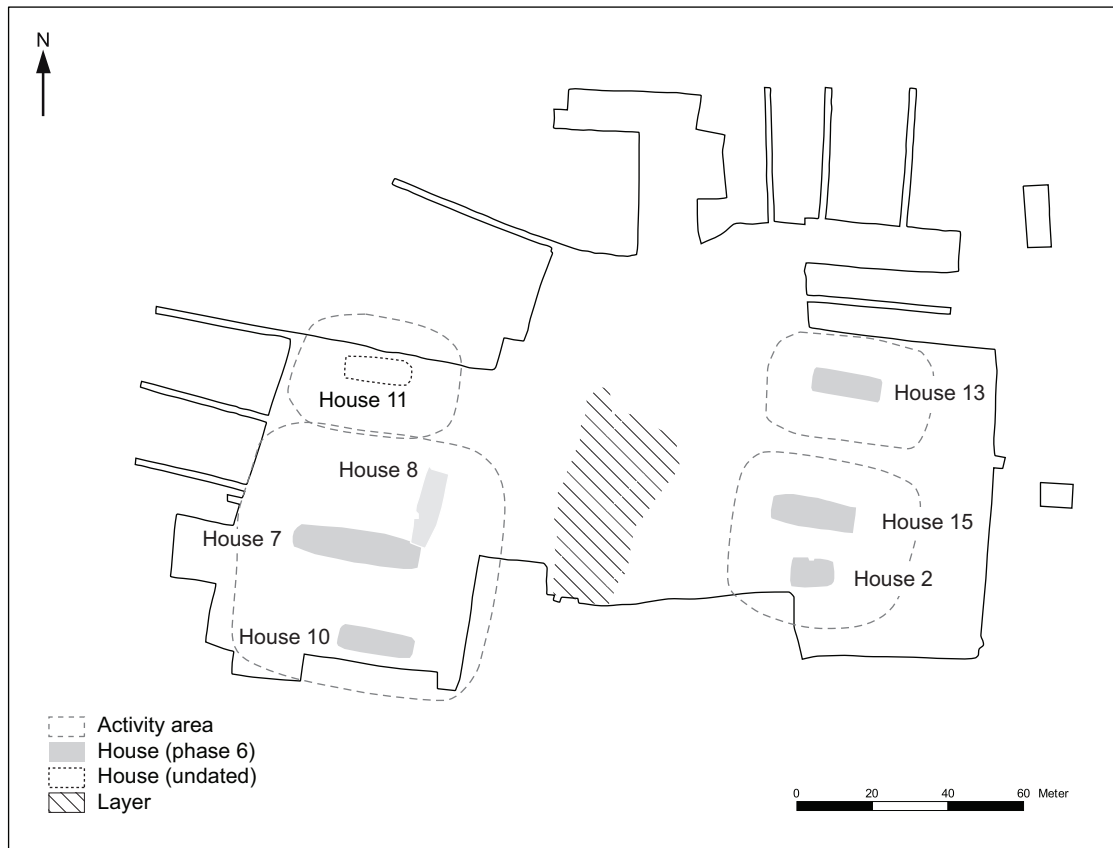


Figure 14. Settlement phase 6. Farm structure and activity areas in the Late Viking Age (c. 900–1000 AD). Illustration: Henrik Pihl.

convex outer walls and no inner roof-bearing structure (Bender Jørgensen & Eriksen 1995, 19ff). House 8 had at least one entrance placed slightly south of the middle on the west side. The function of the house is uncertain, but it may have been an outbuilding of some kind.

The other house (house 10) was about 15 metres south of the main building and parallel to it. The main reason why the house is not interpreted as a separate farm unit, but as part of the magnate estate, is the short distance to the main building, and the fact that a similar building can be linked to the estate during the earlier phase. It is a traditional three-aisled long-house, roughly 20 metres long and 6.8 metres wide. The house had five trestles, of which no. 5 at the far east was probably part of the gable. The house probably had several rooms, but because of the poor state of preservation the division cannot be ascertained. Several of the excavated post-holes contained small quantities of unburned animal bones (7–28 g), and the identified fragments are mandibles of pig. A fragment

of a comb was also found in the hole for one of the roof-bearing posts in the western part of the house. The element of animal bones in the house is interesting in view of the fact that bones otherwise were very scarce in the filling of the post-holes. This suggests that the house had a dwelling function and that some form of food preparation and/or consumption of meat took place in the building.

The eastern farm, farm III:b, consisted of a long-house (house 15) and a smaller post-built house (house 2) placed about seven to eight metres south of and parallel to the long-house (Fig. 15). The long-house is 22 metres long and 6.1–8.0 metres wide, with four trestles, placed in two pairs towards the gables. Between these there is larger span of about 10.5 metres. Inside and parallel to the line of the south wall there is a row of post-holes 7–10 metres long, which probably had some kind of function supporting a wall-mounted bench. The house displays several features similar to houses of Trelleborg type, with convex outer walls and widely spaced trestles with a hall-

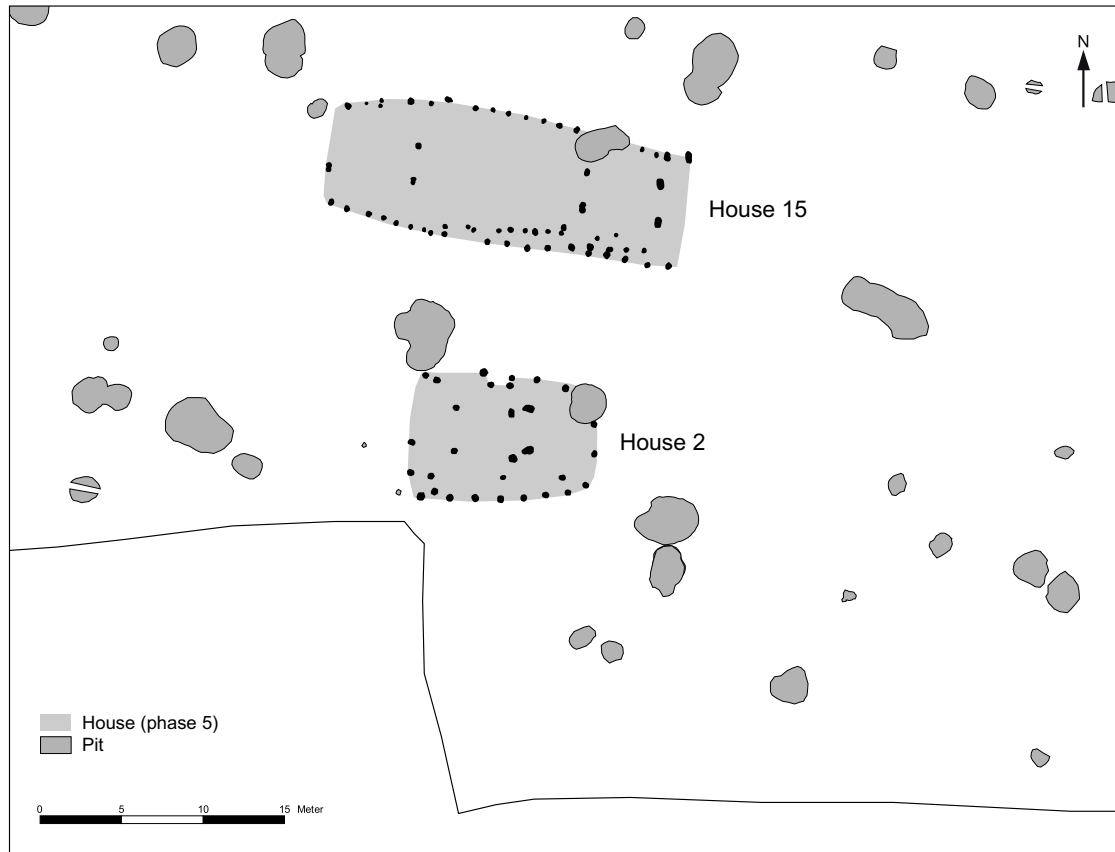


Fig. 15. The eastern farm (farm III:b) during settlement phase 6. Illustration: Thomas Hansson.

like room in the middle. The house, however, can hardly be described as a classical Trelleborg type since it lacks the outer row of oblique supporting posts (Nørlund 1948; cf. Artursson 2005, 131ff, with references).

There are traces suggesting that the house underwent rebuilding or repair. All the roof-bearing posts in the southern row are doubled, probably because posts were replaced. In the south line of the wall in the eastern part of the house there are also traces of double post-holes, most likely as a result of a rebuilding of the wall. In two of the post-holes in the south long wall there were parts of two extremity bones from cattle. There is a tibia from an animal aged 2–2.5 years in a post-hole belonging to the original wall and a whole metacarpus from a post-hole belonging to the rebuilt outer wall. Only occasional animal bones were found in other parts of the house, which corroborates the unusual character of the find. Against this background it is probable that the bones were ritually deposited, no doubt in connection with the rebuilding of the house, when

the old wall was closed and the new one was inaugurated. The deposited bones should thus be viewed as votive offerings after ceremonial meals to protect the house against misfortune and evil forces (Carlie 2004, 190).

The eastern farm also had a small post-built house (house 2), located about eight metres south of and parallel to the long-house. The building is 11.5 metres long and 6–8 metres wide, and like the long-house it had convex long walls. The entrance to the house is in the middle of the north side, thus facing the long-house. House 2 has not been 14C-dated; the interpretation that it is contemporaneous is based on the appearance of the house and its spatial placing in relation to the main building. It is difficult to say what the function of the smaller house was, but traces of several retracted wall posts suggest that it either had a double wall or some kind of wall-mounted benches. This indicates that it was not used as an outhouse but had other functions – perhaps as a workshop or a dwelling for the servile labourers on the estate.

The third farmstead, farm II/IV:b, is in the north-east part of the area, almost thirty metres north of farm III:b. This unit consisted of a single medium-sized long-house (house 13) with five roof-bearing trestles. An interesting technical detail in this house is the oblong shape of the post-holes, indicating the use of hewn timber. The positions of the inner posts and the span length suggest a traditional tripartite division of the house, with the dwelling to the west, an outhouse to the east, and a centrally placed entrance hall.

#### *DATING AND ORGANIZATION*

As in phase 5, the dating of the settlement is based on 14C and house typology. Three 14C dates belong in the Late Viking Age (Table 2), all taken from houses (houses 7, 10, and 13). A combined calibration of the samples gives a dating of 940–1020 AD (1068±23 BP). Neither pottery nor other date-indicating finds can be linked to the settlement. This may be due to a change in the handling of butchering and household waste, which was no longer deposited in pits on the site but spread on the fields when they were manured (Stilborg 2006).

The settlement in phase 6 is a direct continuation of the settlement in the preceding phase. A slight decline can be seen, however, in that the number of farms decreased from four/five to three/four, and the activities in the workshop area in the south-east probably ceased. Based on 14C dates and the building method of the houses, the settlement can be dated to c. 900–1050 AD, a period of about 150 years, after which it was moved away from the site. Three farms display continuity from the preceding phase, the magnate estate (farm I:b) and farms III:b and II/IV:b, located respectively east and north-east of the depression. Both the magnate estate and farm III:b were built on almost the same plots, with only a minor shift towards the east, while the long-house on the third farm may be a successor of either farm II or IV.

In the Late Viking Age the magnate estate took on a more complex composition. Apart from the big main building, it comprised two post-built houses, one of them a roughly 20-metre single-aisled building at right angles to the long-house and joined to it. Also belonging to the estate was a medium-sized long-house south of the main building. This gave the estate a total building area of approximately 510 m<sup>2</sup>, an increase by 130 m<sup>2</sup> or some 25% compared to the preceding phase. It is chiefly the north-south-oriented house 8 that accounts for this increase in

area, while the main building (house 7) is actually slightly smaller than house 6. This increase in the area of the buildings must mean that the economy of the farm changed, perhaps towards a greater emphasis on grain production, which would no doubt have required more room in the form of a threshing barn or stores for the estate's products and equipment. Perhaps the extra long-house south of the main building was also used to house the workforce.

In the last phase farm III also became slightly larger, with an increase in the area of buildings from 160 to 250 m<sup>2</sup>. In this case too, it is an extra post-built house (house 2) south of the long-house that accounts for the increase. As mentioned above, the interpretation of the function of this house is uncertain. Its structure, however, does not suggest that it was used for livestock or storage, but more likely for craft activities or as a dwelling.

An interesting detail in this phase is the different building traditions of the farms. The buildings on the magnate estate display both older and younger elements, with the main building, at least externally, being a virtual copy of the older long-house (house 6). At the same time, in the later phase we see a change of the inner organization, as the central section now has hall-like proportions. Innovation is also seen in house 8, which was built without inner roof-bearing posts and with bearing walls, a practice that became increasingly common in the second half of the Viking Age (Bender Jørgensen 1995, 19ff). If we look instead at farm III:b, we see no older features in the construction; the long-house was built in a style showing distinct influences of houses of Trelleborg type, with noticeably convex long walls and widely spaced trestles giving a large hall-like room in the middle section of the house (Olsen & Schmidt 1977; Schmidt 1994). House 15, however, lacks the outer buttressing posts of the classical Trelleborg house, with a simple wall construction in its stead.

The differences in building styles are probably due to the farms being built with a few decades' interval, so that new architectural preferences gained a foothold among the inhabitants of Västervång. Since the buildings on the magnate estate also show novelties in the technical construction, the difference in time between the farms ought not to have been greater than that they stood simultaneously on the site for at least part of the period. As the long-house on farm III displays several traces of rebuilding or repairs, this could hypothetically represent the last farm standing on the site, after the settlement had been abandoned to be moved to another place, probably in the vicinity.



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*Author's address*

National Heritage Board, Archaeological Excavations Dept. UV Syd, Odlarevägen 5, 226 60 Lund, Sweden  
anne.carlie@raa.se