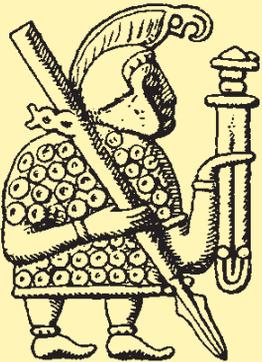


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A Central Scandinavian hall at a magnate farm near Uppåkra

By *Håkan Aspeborg*

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The purpose of this paper is to discuss a hall building of Central Scandinavian type at a magnate farm at Hjärup, close to the central place of Uppåkra. The few other buildings of this type in Scania are presented as well. The background for the presence of these houses in Scania and the house at Hjärup in particular is discussed. It is suggested that the Central Scandinavian houses in Scania are too few to presume a major immigration of people from central Scandinavian areas. Instead, they indicate a small influx of individuals, friends and allies to the Uppåkra leaders and probably men from that area who had been members of the Uppåkra leaders' retinue. This article indicates that houses, like other material cultural artefacts such as jewellery, can be used as signs of contacts between different areas.

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Introduction

Houses are culturally specific, given the restrictions of climate, availability of materials and level of technology. The house is part of the culture, the accepted way of doing things, the unacceptable ways and the implicit ideas (Rapoport 1969, p. 47). The house is also an essential part of shaping one's habitus and thus the transmission of culture (Bourdieu 1977, pp. 87–95). In fact, for a very long time in archaeological discourse, house form has been tied to culture identity (Childe 1929). Even inside the large area of northwestern Europe, where the three-aisle long house was the dominant building type during the Iron Age, one can detect small regional variations of it, of which the Central Scandinavian house is one.

Houses and architecture have reflected the owner's status since the dawn of civilization. There are features of Iron Age houses and farms in Scandinavia that seem to reflect the households' dif-

ferent social ranks. These could be suggested by the sheer size of the building, or by the presence of ceremonial areas or structures, special buildings like halls, and the number of annexes for storage or specialized craft production (Widgren 1998; Wason 1994). Of course, such interpretations are seldom made without considering the amount and composition of the artefacts.

I would therefore suggest that it is likely that the appearance of a few large or in other ways spectacular Central Scandinavian houses in Scania indicates immigration of assumedly socially prominent persons, with entourage, from central Scandinavia to Scania. With them, they probably also brought from their place of origin a master builder who led the construction of the house. On the other hand, one can not rule out the possibility that the house type just was fashionable among some members the south Scandinavian elite.

The point of departure for this article was the presence of a house at Hjärup, south of Lund, of a type that can be labelled “the Central Scandinavian house.” This house type has previously been found at few places in southern Scandinavia (Herschend 2009, p. 239; Bican 2014; Christensen 2015). In the southern Scandinavian context, the house type appears to have a connection with elite magnate farms during the 5th–6th century (Bican 2014). During this period, southern Scandinavia and the Mälaren Valley are to be seen as two distinct cultural areas (Näsman 1998). The appearance of the Central Scandinavian house in southern Scandinavia has been interpreted as a sign of an intrusion of powerful individuals with a foreign architectural ideal.

In southern Scandinavia, it has been suggested, some of these people took over the land holdings of the former aristocracy (Herschend 2009, p. 359). Frands Herschend views the destruction of many central places like Dejbjerg, Dankirke, Gudme, Uppåkra and Sorte Muld during a relatively short period, and the inability of most of these to be restored to the centres they once were, as a sign of sweeping political change. In these events, he also finds support from Procopius’ story about migrating Scandinavians (in Procopius’ terms, Danes) invading and settling in South Scandinavia. This interpretation is interesting and bold (and might be challenged) but movements of peoples and hostile takeovers of land in Europe have been proven to take place not only during the Migration Period, but even before and later.

One aspect that speaks against a hostile takeover – at least if one believes that the assumed intruders adhered to their building traditions – is the fact that, until now, the examples of Central Scandinavian houses in southern Scandinavia are too few to draw a conclusion about any major influx of people from central Scandinavia. As a matter of fact, Central Scandinavian houses have in Denmark only been found at Bulbrogård at Tissø (House II and House IV) and Fredshøj at Lejre (House II). Both places are clearly residences of an elite. The halls at Bulbrogård are dated to the middle of the sixth century, the hall at Fredshøj to the sixth century (Bican 2014, p. 60; Christensen 2015). However, those few Central Scandinavian houses that exist are a testimony to

cultural contacts between people belonging to the upper strata of society during Migration and Vendel Period from two neighbouring cultural areas and also probably movements of elite individuals between them. I propose that these individuals kept their preferences of architectural expression and aesthetics from their place of origin. The houses are signs of alliances, either maintained or new ones. I will try to highlight this and discuss the influence of the outside world on built environment, settlement pattern and society in the Uppåkra area.

Central Scandinavian houses

Frands Herschend has pointed out that there are different house-building traditions in southern Scandinavia and central Scandinavia during the Late Iron Age (Herschend 1998; Herschend 2009, p. 239). The Central Scandinavian house is common in the regions of the Mälaren Valley, but also along the northern coastline and in Norway. Little is known about the occurrence and frequency of this house type in the Götaland area, although it has been found at Vittene in Västergötland (house 2) (Fors 2009, p. 38). The earliest examples in both Norway and Sweden are from Roman Iron Age. In Norway, the South Scandinavian house and the Central Scandinavian houses coexist, although the Central Scandinavian type seems to dominate in most areas (Ramqvist 1983; Løken 1988; Liedgren 1992; Løken 1997; Bårdseth, & Utigard Sandvik 2007; Herschend 2009, p. 14 f, 27; Armstrong Oma 2016; Gjerpe 2016; Gil 2016).

According to Herschend, who invented the term, the Central Scandinavian house (or Middle Scandinavian house) was an invention of the Roman Iron Age (cf. Herschend 1998, fig. 1B). This is reflected *inter alia* by where the entrance rooms are located. The Central Scandinavian house has two entrance rooms close to the short ends while South Scandinavian houses have their entrances at the middle (Herschend 1998, p. 14 f). The gable structure is also different, with Central Scandinavian houses having large gable corner posts, sometimes several posts in a straight line—a timber-consuming way of stabilizing the house (Herschend 1989, p. 93; Ulväng 1992, p. 34). This gable construction probably acted to stabilize the whole

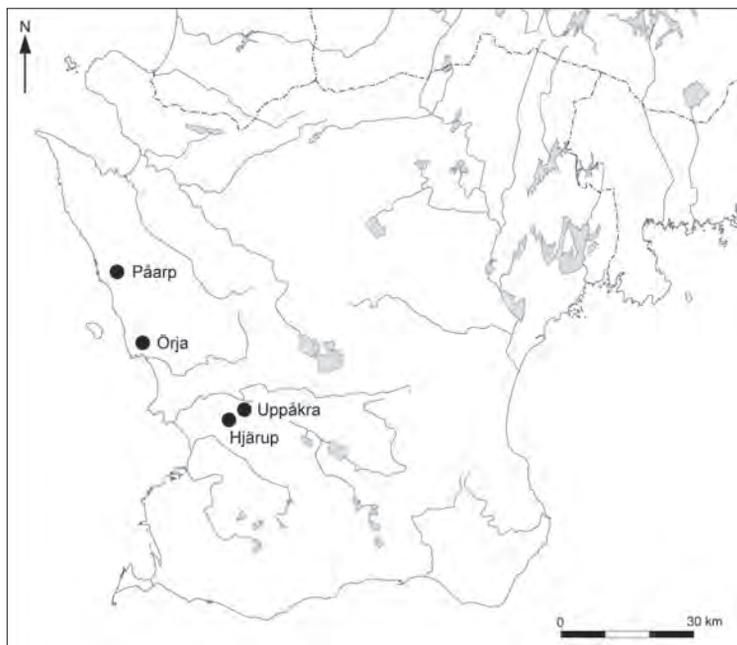


Fig. 1. The location of Hjärup and Uppåkra, and other Scanian places mentioned in the article.

roof structure. They also indicate a hipped roof at the gables (Göthberg 1995, p. 87). The South Scandinavian house on the other hand had an apsidal gable. During the Migration Period, this gable construction incorporated the innovation that its two posts also acted as ridge supporters (Herschend 2009, p. 240).

Josefine Franck Bican claims that the sturdy gable corner posts are undoubtedly a Swedish phenomenon, but also with a few South Scandinavian examples (such as Bulbrogård, Pårp outside Helsingborg, the ceremonial house at Uppåkra and the small ceremonial hall at Järrestad), although they are the most common in the Mälaren Valley (Bican 2014). She has suggested that the large gable corner posts as well as large entrance posts accentuated the monumentality of the house and further suggests that they were the subject of ornamental decoration (Bican 2014, p. 60).

To complicate matters more, Josephine Franck Bican has observed two different types of elite house from the 5th to 6th centuries with curved walls. These two types differ mainly from each other in the spacing of their inner roof-bearing

trestles, from each other and from the walls. The first type has a convex internal roof-bearing structure, consistently equally spaced from the posts to the wall, meaning that the exterior walls of the house have a convex shape. The other type also has curved walls, but the inner roof supporting posts stand in straight lines and with almost equal distance between the trestles (Bican 2014). Examples of the first type can be found in both Sweden and Denmark, but Josephine Franck Bican has only found examples of the other type in Sweden, for instance in Pårp (house 2), outside Helsingborg.

Although sturdy gabled corner posts are found in many spectacular buildings that belong to the elite stratum, the house type was also commonly used by the lower social layers in the Mälaren region. There, these types of buildings can also be seen on ordinary farms and used as outhouses.

The gable corner posts seem to have stabilized the wall and the roof structure, but in spite of that, they are missing in some houses that in other aspects are similar to Central Scandinavian houses, which makes their purpose uncertain (Bican 2014, p. 59).

Fig 2. The Iron Age settlement with all 73 houses, both multifunctional dwelling houses (grey) and outhouses (black).



The setting

The magnate farm is situated in arable land just outside the village of Hjärup and about 3 kilometres west of the central place Uppåkra (fig. 1). The Iron Age settlement was inhabited from the Pre-Roman Iron Age to the Viking age and consisted of 73 buildings, along with other settlement features (fig. 2). The excavation of this area was one of the largest in the Uppåkra hinterland and covered an area of 2,6 hectares. No houses had remaining floor levels since the settlement was situated in arable land (Bolander & Söderberg 2019).

The houses at the excavated site were poorly preserved, the occupation levels having been destroyed by ploughing. In most cases the only thing that remained of the houses were the pits in which the internal roof-supporting post once

stood. Sometimes remains of the walls could also be found as lines of postholes or trenches, with or without postholes in them. There were occasionally postholes that marked the entrances or doorways. Traces of internal walls in the buildings were very rare. Hearth and cooking pits are sometimes preserved in the houses, but, due to the poor preservations, are far from being preserved in every house interpretable as a dwelling. The function of the individual buildings was often, due to the poor preservation, difficult to determine.

The place was settled already during the Pre-Roman Iron Age as a small hamlet with a few farms grouped around an unsettled space with Neolithic graves, having probably at least one mound (of which no traces were found). At the magnate farm's plot, a few houses stood during short time spans in the Pre-Roman Iron Age, but

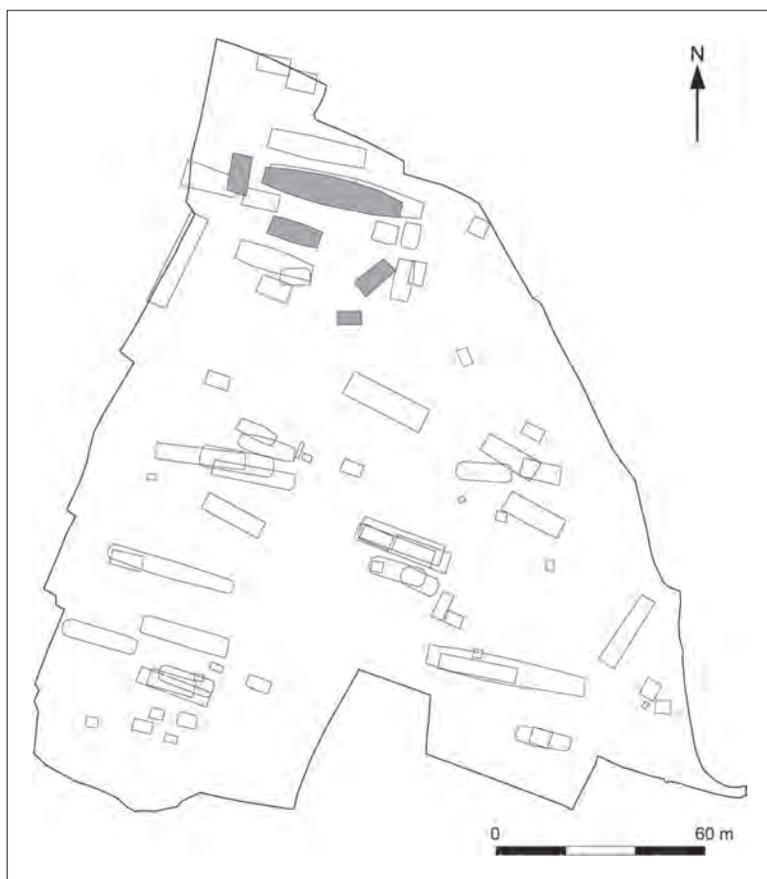


Fig 3. The Late Roman Iron Age phase of the farm was large and might also be labelled as a magnate farm, although belonging to a lesser elite. The main building that was precursor to the Central Scandinavian main building seems however to have been of South Scandinavian type, although some features, such as the curved walls and lines of roof-supporting posts, resemble Central Scandinavian building traditions.

it was deserted during the Early Roman Iron Age. The other farms in the village lay more or less on the same spots from the Pre-Roman Iron Age and onwards, except during a phase in the 2nd century, when the settlement was almost deserted and there might have been only one farm with two houses at the whole settlement. During this period, the rest of the area seems to have been used for farming.

During the Late Roman Iron age, a new large farm was founded, and a big main building was built in the most prominent spot in the village, the highest elevated. As high placement in the terrain is a characteristic feature of halls, this is as it should be (Hem Eriksen 2010, p. 73) (fig. 3). It seems like the house had a hall room in the longest span between two trestles. This would in such case be an early Swedish example of a hall

room integrated in the main building of the farm. This trait points toward Norway. There, the integrated hall room in a multifunctional building seems to be an early invention, exemplified by the 61 metre long house at Mysslingen from Early or Late Roman Iron Age (cf. Bårdset & Utigard Sandvik 2007). The house was a three-aisled long house, 38 metres long, and since it had bowed longwalls, it was 8,4 metres wide at the middle and 4,5 metres wide at the gables. The construction was underbalanced. The two lines internal roof supporting posts were also curved in the same manner as the sidewalls, but the distance from roof-bearing posts to the wall differed slightly. The distance from the centre line to the roof supporting post was almost proportional to the distance from the centre line to the wall in most of the house, except at the gables. This indi-

cates that the ridge of the house was straight but sloped towards the gables. Even though the house had a clearly convex shape and was probably of the Southern Scandinavian type, not many traces of walls and entrances remain. It seems, though, that it had at least one entrance in the middle, and it certainly lacked the sturdy gable posts.

The main house was supplemented by another house, about 15 metres long, with slightly curved walls. The site of the other house was very disturbed. It might have been used as a small additional multipurpose three-aisle house with a dwelling, or perhaps it should be interpreted as a small free-standing hall. A small gold pearl dated to Migration Period was found in the subsoil over the northern posthole in the second trestles from the west. The pearl might be deposit in the house during its last years of usage. The house was constructed with four trestles as the hall of a contemporary magnate farm in the area (Helgeson & Aspeborg 2017, pp. 7–8). In addition to these, there were three smaller annex buildings that presumably acted as workshops, byres, granaries, barns or other storehouses. It is not safe to say that all the annex buildings were contemporary with each other.

The main house and the two closest buildings made up an orderly farmyard, while two of the annex buildings seems to have been placed more haphazardly. Tentatively, they might have been built as additional space during a later phase of the farm.

The magnate farm lay apart from the other farms. Between them was an old burial site from the Neolithic Age. It is possible that these graves were still visible above ground level during the Iron Age and were incorporated as important monuments, markers of ancestral heritage to the site of the magnate farm's owner.

The total floor area of the farm added up to 370 square metres, making it undoubtedly the largest in the village. This is a big farm, but it is not exceptional. One might suppose that the farm owner belonged to a lesser ranked elite in the area. The new farm probably signals a break from a village community to settlement dominated by a magnate farm in hands of a warrior aristocrat.

The magnate farm with the Central Scandinavian house

In the beginning of the Migration Period the magnate farm was rebuilt and enlarged in a conscious architectural manner. Now, the warrior aristocratic aspects of the magnate farm are pronounced (cf. Holst 2014). The Migration Period phase of the farm consisted of, in total, nine buildings, but not all of them could be contemporaneous since there are a few superimpositions.

The development of the farm in the Migration Period probably started with the building of a new, medium-sized multipurpose three-aisle house, about 25 metres long, that served as an intermediary main building while the old main building was torn down and the new was built on its site (fig. 4). The new main building was bigger than its predecessor, at 46 metres long. It had bowed longwalls and lines of internal roof supporting posts and thus a ground plan with a clearly convex shape. The construction was underbalanced. The distance from the centre line to the roof supporting posts was almost proportional to the distance from the centre line to the wall in most of the house, which indicates a straight ridge. In the middle it was 9 metres wide, while it was over 5 metres wide at the gables (fig. 5). The interior postholes had an impressive size, up to 1,5 x 0,9 metres, while their average remaining depth was around 0,5 metres. The roof supporting post seems to have been between 0,25 to 0,55 metres in diameter. At least some of the posts were replaced during the lifetime of the house. The traces of the walls consisted of both postholes and ditches, some with postholes in them. The gables were each marked by two sturdy corner posts, a typical trait for Central Scandinavian houses (Bican 2010), and the wall between them was probably straight.

The house had a floor area of over 330 square metres. There were at least four entrances to the house. One wide entrance – and probably the main one – was at the centre of the southern long side of the house. It led into a room that lay in the widest span between two trestles in the house, probably a hall room. The entrance was 2 metres wide and had probably double doors. The entrance is flanked by two sturdy posts that may have formed a portal to accentuate the main en-



Fig. 4. The Migration Period farm with all houses. The house situated immediately north of the main building is interpreted as the intermediary main building, used between the demolition of the old main building and the completion of the new one of Central Scandinavian type.

trance. An even wider entrance with double doors was located in the eastern part, but in the northern wall. It is hard to say if this entrance was also important, or if it was instead used in everyday life and was wide for practical reasons. Double doors are a typical feature of halls and are therefore also found at impressive hall buildings such as Lejre, the ceremonial house at Uppåkra and the hall at Södra Kungsgårdsplatån at Gamla Uppsala (Christensen 1991, p. 42; Herschend 2005, p. 322; Frölund et al. 2017, pp. 121–124). The house was equipped with at least two more entrances of a more typical size: one in northwest and one in the southeast. These entrances were probably used in everyday life. Unfortunately, there are no preserved floor layers, and to make things worse, the house was damaged by later gravel pits. There were no signs of partition walls inside the house,

and the use of macrofossil analysis on material from the postholes also gave no clues as to the functional division of space in the house. The only hearth that was found in the house lay close to its middle, in the eastern part of the house. The house is interpreted as a multifunctional building and residence of a warrior aristocrat with a hall room for representational purposes. It is suggested that at least the centre of the house contained a hall room, thus making it a good example of an early Migration Period hall building. During this time, there was a tendency to change original oneroom halls into dwelling houses with several rooms, making them thus part of the permanent living quarters of the dominant farm owner and his household. This function is additional to the original function of the hall as an assembly room and an interface between high status agents in

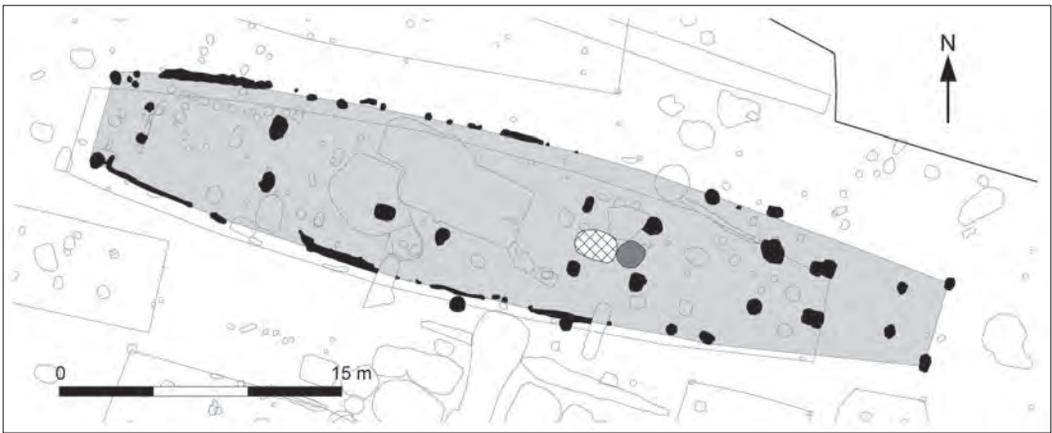


Fig. 5. The main building of Central Scandinavian type at the manorial farm at Hjärup from the Migration Period. The hall room was probably located in the middle, where the main entrance was situated.

society, as well as a room where overnight guests could camp during their visit. Frands Herschend states that this development indicates that the concentration of social and economic power grew when more space must be maintained to uphold one's status (Herschend 2009, p. 370).

The material found of the house's features was of ordinary character, consisting of household debris like pottery and animal bones. However, gold objects were found in the plough soil nearby, westward and northward of the western gable. These objects emphasize the economic as well as the aristocratic status of the farm owner.

South of the main house was a courtyard, 40 metres long and 18 metres wide, lined with buildings to the east and southwest (fig. 4). In the east, there were two small three-aisled outhouses built successively at a 90 degree angle from the eastern gable of the main house. The southernmost of them was later replaced by another outhouse. Another annex-building lay close to the main house, immediately west of the outhouse closest to the gable and inside the courtyard. In the southwest the courtyard was delimited by a roughly 20 metre long three-aisle multifunctional building, probably with a dwelling. Immediately on its south side was another outhouse. In the north, finally, there was one more outhouse in a secluded position.

It is obvious that not all buildings of the farm

are contemporaneous as two outhouses superimposed each other, but it is suggested that the farm's total floor area exceeded 800 square metres throughout its lifespan. That makes it an impressive farm. One can for instance compare it with Ölandic prominent farms (*Storgårdar* in Swedish) that had a floor area between 558 and 834 square metres (Fallgren 2008, p. 70). The large floor area demonstrates both that the household at the farm comprised of many people and that the farm had a large storing capacity.

There was no successor to the magnate farm at the site. What seems to be a smaller house from the Vendel Period was located west of the farm, almost at the edge of the trench. In the southern portion of the excavated area, however, there was a new large farmstead that was nevertheless smaller. The remains of its main building (of the same size as the one at the Migration Period dominant farm) was much damaged, but one could see that it was not of Central Scandinavian type (fig. 6). The return to South Scandinavian building traditions indicates that the Central Scandinavian building type was never fully culturally accepted in Scania.

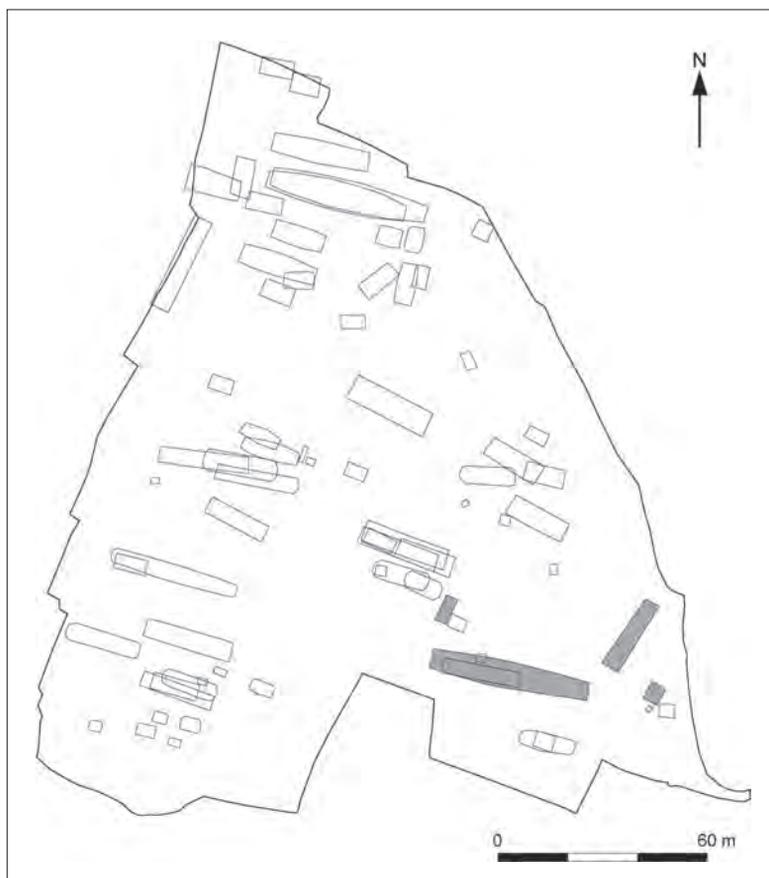


Fig 6. The main building of the dominant farm of the Vendel Period in Hjärup was not of Central Scandinavian type. Although it was of about the same size as that of the dominant farm in the previous period, the overall size of the farm was smaller, and it was also located at a different plot in the village. There were no exclusive finds in connection with this farm.

Other hypothetical Central Scandinavian houses in Scania

To my knowledge (but not to say that my findings give the complete picture), only a few other houses of the Central Scandinavian type have been found in excavation reports.

At Påarp outside Helsingborg in northwest Scania, a magnate farm was established in Late Roman Iron Age. The farm was rebuilt and existed during four phases (Aspeborg & Becker 2002; Carlie & Artursson 2005, pp. 200–204). Interestingly, the houses of the first two phases, from Late Roman Iron Age to Migration Period were of Central Scandinavian type with sturdy gable corner posts and a central entrance room (Bican 2014). The farm had no predecessor since the site of the farm had not been settled since the Pre-Roman Iron Age. The Helsingborg area was den-

sely settled during the Pre-Roman Iron Age, but there is an obvious decline of settlements during the Roman Iron Age. This decline is mirrored in the number of stray finds from that period in the area. It is an educated guess that these are a sign of depopulation. The decline in settlements and finds could be attributed to a hostile takeover of the area by people from Uppåkra (Aspeborg 2014, p. 96). Following this line of reasoning, the void area was resettled by aristocrats allied to the Uppåkra leader during the Late Roman Iron Age/Migration Period. The houses at Påarp suggest that those who settled there came from Central Scandinavia.

At Örja, outside Landskrona, we find three houses with Central Scandinavian features on an ordinary farm that seem to lack connection with an elite stratum of society, but also one farm in

the village with a 30+ metre long main house having Central Scandinavia features. Unfortunately, all these houses are poorly preserved. The phase belongs to the Late Roman Iron Age (Carlie 2013, pp. 83–90). The existence of these houses is hard to explain, even if one farm, the one with the 30 metre long main building, seems to have been larger than the average farm. No exceptional objects were found at the excavation, but one kilometre away, a silver coin, more specifically a roman siliqua minted under Arcadius sometime between spring 393 AD and 6 September 394 AD (Aspeborg 2011), was found.

In the case of Järresta house 1, which Josephine Franck Bican interpreted as having gable corner posts, I must disagree. The internal roof-supporting posts are placed close to the post, and I would interpret it rather as a South Scandinavian gable with two gable posts also acting as ridge supporters.

Although the ceremonial house at Uppåkra also has the sturdy gable corner post – the corner postholes have the same dimensions as the inner postholes – this building does not in my opinion qualify as a Central Scandinavian building. The sturdy gable post has been interpreted as a means to build a tall structure (Larsson 2006, p. 150; 2011, p. 192). The early date of the first phase of the house also makes an influence from Central Scandinavia less likely.

The ceremonial house in Uppåkra has the sturdy gable posts and convex outer walls of a Middle Scandinavian house, but lacks the central entrance. Although the early freestanding hall at Odarslöv resembles the former house, its outward placed gable post is all but sturdy and there is unfortunately no way of telling where in the poorly-preserved house the entrances had been placed (Björk et al. 2017, pp. 125). Neither of these two houses can thus be classified as Middle Scandinavian. This has probably to do with the fact that the ceremonial house at Uppåkra was not only an extraordinary building in its purpose and what it symbolised, but also in the architectural sense that it was planned and built by experts (cf. Herschend 2018, pp. 35–39).

From the above, one can state that Central Scandinavian houses are very rare in Scania. Only two, maybe three, examples of prominent

farms with houses built according to a Central Scandinavian tradition can be found in the region. Obviously, these few examples do not indicate a major influx of people from Central Scandinavia, nor, for that matter, any significant cultural influence from that area. Central Scandinavian building is not a tradition that becomes popular in the wider Scanian population. The rare occurrence of the Central Scandinavian houses points instead in the direction of single individuals or families from Central Scandinavian areas settling in Scania.

The Central Scandinavian house seems only to have been introduced and built on few elite farms in Scania and on Zealand (Bican 2014), while other local magnates and the commoners continued to build their houses in the traditional South Scandinavian way. As everyone knows, however, there can be no rules without exceptions. At Örja, outside Landskrona, there are a few houses that have sturdy gable corner posts. The houses are dated to late Roman Iron Age, but nothing suggests that the houses belong to a magnate farm, although the neighbouring farm is of larger size (though in no way exceptional) (Carlie 2013, pp. 83–90). For the time being, one must conclude that the presence of these houses needs further consideration. On the other hand, in Uppland this house type was built on farms belonging to all levels of society, from late Roman Iron Age and forward, as long as three-aisle longhouse are being built.

The number of Central Scandinavian houses in Scania and Zealand are at this moment few. They can thus not be seen in the context of a large-scale migration from Central Sweden, nor as a hostile takeover from that part either. Rather they should be seen as examples of contacts and movements within the elite group, where individuals within that group could promise fealty to kings wherever they thought their prospects were best.

Other indications of Central Scandinavians living in Scania

Another example of contact between Scania and the Central Scandinavian area, namely the Mälaren Valley, is the woman buried at Önsvala, who, from the composition of her grave goods, has been interpreted as coming from central

Sweden. The grave should probably be dated to the transition between the Migration Period and the Vendel Period (Larsson 2013, p. 144, 155). The remains are considered to be of a woman from central Sweden who moved south as a result of exogamy. On the European continent, many female graves with costume ornaments that differ from the deposition context have been interpreted as evidence of women from one ethnic group being incorporated, for example through marriage, into a new group with different traditions of dress or jewellery (Larsson 2013, p. 155). Another example of mobility, even if the origin of the people can't be decided, is the remains of four individuals from the central place. Strontium and oxygen isotope ratios suggest that these four are non-local (Price 2013). This exemplifies the mobility during the Iron Age and, through that, the spread of new ideas.

Proposition

In the Late Iron Age, able-bodied men from near and far sued to enrol in the retinues of petty kings and chieftains, as was seemingly the case among Germanic tribes since the time of Tacitus (Chapter 13–14). However, some scholars argue that the evidence of warrior aristocracies and retinues is consistent in temperate Europe from 2000 BC to 1000 AD (Kristiansen & Larsson 2005, p. 213). Recruitment to the retinues thus went outside kinship and ethnic group (Bazelmans 1999, pp. 4–5). The mobility ensured by young warriors earning places in foreign armies or retinues seems to have been fairly common and was probably a vital and expected part of an aristocratic upbringing. This seems to be a part of a recurrent pattern in European history but can also be attested from other parts of the world (cf. André 2011). One can imagine these young men belonging to high ranked families, a warrior aristocracy.

Being a skilled warrior was a means of social climbing in warrior societies, as was the case in the Late Iron Age, where warfare and warrior ideology were essential parts. The practice of fosterage could also have played a part in moving young aristocratic boys from one region to another. It is probable that some of these were rewarded for their long service or spectacular deeds and presented with both lands and hall

from their leader when they wanted to settle down. There are a number of literary examples which point to the paramount importance of building a hall or being presented with one (Herschend 2009, p. 194).

The conservatism within building tradition in Scandinavia during the Iron Age is striking. The chronologically significant types of houses in Scania have, for example, been built for long periods exceeding several archaeological time periods, as was the case in Mälaren Valley (Göthberg 2000, p. 88 f; Björhem & Magnusson Staaf 2006, pp. 86–116; Björhem & Skoglund 2009). The way of building a hall, and how one envisioned the perfect hall, was certainly rooted in the person's cultural background. The Central Scandinavian hall at Hjärup is thus a sign of an outsider from present day Norway or Sweden having relocated to Scania. The conservative attitude among people when it comes to building is also demonstrated by the fact that even when considering the immigrant's social status, none of the dependent farmers in the vicinity choose to follow his example, continuing instead to build their houses in the South Scandinavian house tradition.

The heirs to the hall owner at Hjärup do not seem to have been able to maintain their fathers' status, since no new hall building was built and the succeeding farmstead seems to be of a more ordinary size. That house was also built within the South Scandinavian tradition. In Pääarp, however, we notice that Central Scandinavian houses are built also in the second phase. But during the third and fourth phases, the houses are built in a South Scandinavian manner, which indicate that the heirs of the first settler were fully culturally integrated with regard to building tradition and, probably, all other ways too. The Central Scandinavian houses in Scania, and for that matter Zealand, are too few to presume a major immigration of people from central Scandinavian areas. Instead they indicate a small influx of individuals, and in the case of the Scanian examples, friends and allies to the Uppåkra leaders and probably the men from that area who had been members of his retinue. This article highlights the possibility to use houses, like other artefacts, as signs of contacts between different areas.

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