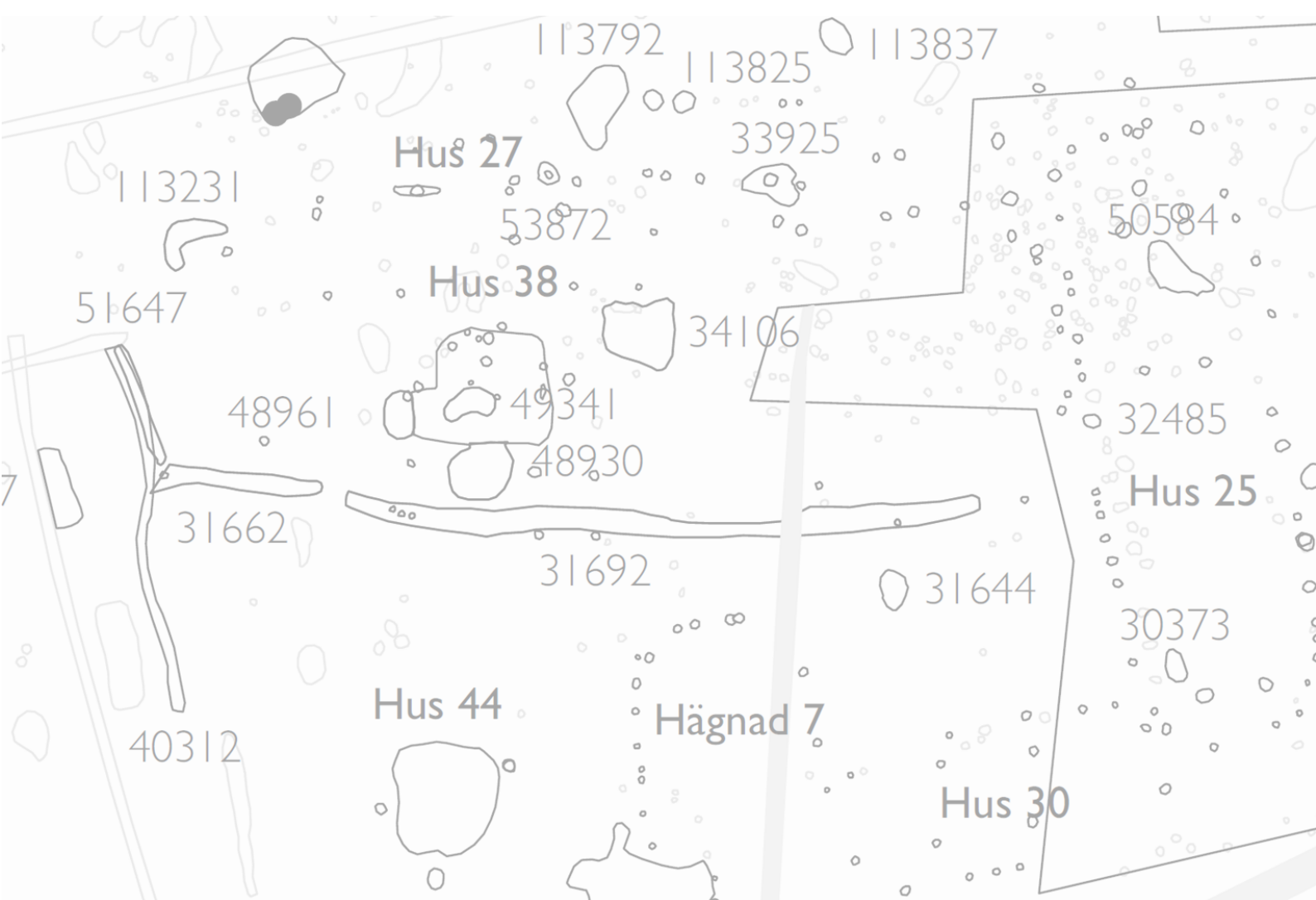


Living in the Late Iron Age

A proposal for integrated theoretical studies of households and
farmsteads as lived social spaces in Vendel Period and Viking Age
southwestern Scania, Sweden



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Abstract

Southern Scandinavian and Scanian settlement archaeology has in the past four decades been able to highlight overarching shifts in prehistoric and especially Iron Age settlement organisation, and thus developed methods of rigorous typo-chronological analyses. Within the past two decades several publications by Late Iron Age scholars have under the influence of household archaeology emphasised the need to focus on individual site-biographies and have been able to offer alternative perspectives regarding the study of Scandinavian settlement remains, by means of deconstructive and ontologically challenging theoretical approaches, in order to highlight social aspects of daily settlement life in the context of unique site-biographies.

Following such endeavours, this thesis conducts an analysis of the three Late Iron Age settlement sites of Hjärup, Västervång and Eskilstorp in Southwestern Scania, Sweden, by re-examining the archaeological record captured in excavation reports. Against the background of said household archaeological and Late Iron Age settlement archaeological research traditions, this thesis aims to illustrate the applicability of a theoretical framework which encompasses assemblage, multispecies and space syntax theory and sensory studies, in order to highlight the individual components of each case study's farmstead-assemblage and by extension hopes to offer a reconstruction of daily household-activities that would have consequently represented meaningful lived and social spaces.

The analysis was able to provide overall useful results and alternative perspectives on dynamic household activities, while it simultaneously acknowledged the significant limitations posed by the overall poor preservation of the case studies' recorded material in order to achieve detailed reconstructions of on-site activities. The individual theoretical approaches and the degree of their successful practical application varied significantly depending on the extent of the occurrence and preservation of the differing structures and features. Nonetheless, the alternative perspectives generated during the analysis enabled an awareness of how significant multitemporal, spatial, relational and affective qualities of farmstead-assemblage's components are for a differentiated understanding of Late Iron Age daily life.

Keywords: Late Iron Age, Scania, household archaeology, settlement archaeology, household activities, farmsteads, multi-theory, ontological turn

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Additional thanks go to Marianne Hem Eriksen for having provided the main inspiration with her 2019 publication *Architecture, Society, and Ritual in Viking Age Scandinavia*. This book was awe-inspiring and eye-opening in a way which motivated me to attempt an alternate approach in settlement archaeology that I had until recently not known to be possible, making archaeological theory more than worthwhile and exciting.

Special thanks go to Doris Gutsmedl-Schümann for having introduced me to Hofstaðir, the site which kickstarted my passion for the Viking Age. Equal thanks go out to Hildur Gestsdóttir and Oddgeir Isaksen from Fornleifastofnun Íslands and Minjastofnun Íslands for having accepted my participation in the 2025 field-school at Hofstaðir, which enabled me to sit in the skáli that started it all.

Lastly and most importantly, surmounting the stress would not have been possible without your unending joy, unwavering support and unconditional love, Tinúviel and Huan.

“Ríg then wandered by straight paths; he came to a house, with its door ajar, and stepped right in: there was a fire on the floor; a couple sat there, and kept on working.”

- Andy Orchard, translation of *Rígsthula: Ríg's list*

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1. Introduction

While settlement archaeology has been a prevalent strand of Vendel Period and Viking Age studies in Scandinavia in the past decades since at least the 1970's, its main concerns and motivations have in recent years received significant criticism, especially with regards to studies conducted in Southern Scandinavia (Beck, 2014; Beck, 2017a; Eriksen, 2019). Several prolific and extensive excavations of often entire sites dating to the Late Iron Age in Denmark have had a marked influence on the fundamental motivations governing settlement archaeological research in the greater area, which is reflected by a general interest in building traditions and typological developments of documented structures pertaining to functionalist perspectives (Bukkemoen, 2025, p. 242). It was believed that by analysing the development of house form as it was reflected in the typologies and situated in linear chronologies, it would be able to elicit aspects of societal change, especially those of a socio-economic character.

While it has not been a frequently pursued endeavour in the archaeology of the Late Iron Age in Scandinavia, Eriksen (2019) and Bukkemoen (2025) recently advocated for an active integration of alternative theoretical perspectives and household archaeological approaches, as well as a reengagement with the archaeological documentation of settlement remains of said period on a social scale as proposed by Beck (2017a). Despite not representing an entirely independent field within archaeological research, household archaeology in its current state can be defined as the theoretical and methodological effort to identify and study inter-human and non-human relations, materially imprinted in a multiscalar and multitemporal domestic settlement-context, and the resulting potential to observe cultural and societal processes (Tringham, 2001, p. 6925f.). For an up-to-date definition of archaeological households, I cite Bukkemoen, who states that they can be understood as “social groups, building blocks and assemblages that are constituted by and through tasks and practices, roles and relationships, in addition to the materiality, spatiality and temporality of everyday life” (Bukkemoen, 2025, p. 242).

1.1. Aims

The main aim of this thesis is to contribute in the effort initiated by the aforementioned scholars whilst taking inspiration from household archaeological studies conducted in Scandinavia and outside of the relevant period and region to highlight past dwelling spaces of the Late Iron Age in Scania as dynamic lived spaces and homes to more-than-human life-worlds, instead of bare hulls mirroring typological developments. This thesis aims to add to a diversified understanding

of Late Iron society as seen on a domestic scale. Through a review and the analysis of the archaeological record in the shape of selected case studies situated in southwestern Scania, Sweden, I hope to present the advantage of re-evaluating and re-engaging with the material by means of a theoretical framework that is at its core characterised by a variety of different perspectives stemming from various fields of research within and outside of archaeology, but all sharing fundamental similarities. All were created with a purpose of deconstructing functionalist and structuralist understandings of past and current societies and offer alternative ontological perspectives. As in all other parts of the world at any given time in past or present, the Late Iron Age household will be argued to have been “a primary arena [...] where the very stuff of culture is mediated and transformed into action.” (Netting, Wilk and Arnould, 1984, p. xxii).

It is neither the aim of this study to provide a comprehensive overview of Late Iron Age settlement structure in southwestern Scania, nor create a blueprint of a ‘typical’ Scanian farmstead or household during the relevant period. A central motivation is to provide an alternative approach of dealing with settlement and household remains and to demonstrate the advantage of observing each individual site and its features on its own terms and respect the individual site-specific biographies. Nonetheless it is my hope to inspire students and researchers in other parts of Scandinavia to dare similar alternative perspectives of settlement material, such that a clearer picture of daily Late Iron Age life in Scandinavia in a social sense might in the future be provided.

1.2. Research questions

The research questions guiding this study are as follows:

- Can a re-engagement with the archaeological record from selected case studies with the help of an integrated theoretical framework expand the general knowledge of Late Iron Age household activities and daily life on farmsteads?
- How can a framework based on space syntax theory, assemblage theory, multispecies theory and sensory studies help generate an understanding of how people and other organisms interacted with each other and their built environment in a meaningful way, creating lived and shared spaces?
- Which limitations does the Scanian archaeological record pose in the study of Late Iron Age households and how does this impact the understanding of settlement sites as lived social spaces?

1.3. Outline

Focusing on household and settlement archaeology as a whole, the first half of chapter 2 provides an overview of the theoretical developments and methodological applications within archaeological household studies across the globe. In order to analyse Late Iron Age households in the context of the farmstead, a thorough understanding of how the household is defined theoretically within archaeology is necessary, as well as how the household concept is situated in Scandinavian settlement archaeology. Therefore, the second half provides a summary of the research history of Scanian settlement archaeology and concludes the presentation by illustrating some key problems in Late Iron Age settlement studies. In chapter 3 a compilation of several theoretical approaches will be provided with the aim of creating a framework that shall aid the following analysis of Late Iron Age settlement sites and enable an interpretation of domestic spaces as inherently lived in and socially situated. Separate sub-sections will respectively highlight the developments and core principles of space syntax theory and spatial analysis, assemblage theory, multispecies theory and sensory studies. Chapter 4 presents the methodology applied in the thesis' analysis, demonstrating how precisely the theoretical framework presented beforehand can be employed practically to study each case study's individual features and highlight the qualities which make them lived social spaces. The following chapter 5 represents in its first half a presentation of the Late Iron Age farmstead in a general Scanian context and a subsequent overview of developments within Scanian settlement structure in the relevant period. The chapter's second half represents the central analysis of the three selected case studies, beginning with a presentation of the sites and their respective structures and features and ends with separate discussions. Before reaching the conclusion in chapter 7, chapter 6 acts as a synthesis where the results of the individual case study discussions are compared and weighed against each other. It is the aim here to review the theoretical framework's application and understand the results against the background of known information about Late Iron Age households and society. An in-depth presentation of the material from each case-study is provided in the Appendix in chapter 8.

1.4. Material

While sites from all of Southern Scandinavia, i.e., Denmark and southern Sweden, and others from the remaining areas of the Late Iron Age world such as Norway and the North Atlantic will be included as points of reference throughout the thesis, the analysis of selected case studies in chapter 5 focuses on the southern Swedish historical and administrative region of Scania. More precisely, the three sites of Hjärup, Västervång and Eskilstorp located in Southwestern



Fig. 1. Study area of south-western Scania. (Google Earth, 2026).

Scania (fig. 1). For the sake of this thesis the area will be limited by the modern-day cities of Lund in the north, the Malmö metropolitan area and the Öresund in the West, Trelleborg and the Baltic Sea in the South and the Romeleåsen horst to the East (fig. 2).

The period of concern is the Late Iron Age in southern Scandinavia which encompasses the Vendel Period and the Viking Age, approximately covering the time span from 500 to 1050 CE. Where necessary the term Late Iron Age will be abbreviated as ‘LIA’ and the individual two periods will be referred to as such. While the LIA has mainly been selected due to personal preference, it represents a point in time in Southern Scandinavia when qualitative and quantitative shifts as well as a general proliferation in the archaeological record can be observed in terms of settlement structure, mortuary rituals and material culture, which have created the opportunity for researchers to elicit aspects of societal structure, Old Norse cosmologies and daily dynamics (Zori, 2024).

The analysed material consists of the documentation of occupation remains from settlements which are made up of general architectural remains and other anthropogenic features, artefacts, faunal remains and macrofossils, that are described in detail in the appendix. The documentation of the three sites stems both from open access excavation reports produced by contract

archaeological companies (*Arkeologerna* and *Sydsvensk Arkeologi*) and the Swedish National Heritage Board (*Riksantikvarieämbetet*) following pre-investigations and full excavations. Additionally, publications synthesising excavation reports from sites within the research area have been included. Each site was chosen following several criteria: First and foremost, the features and material outlined above must have been preserved and recorded well enough to allow for basic functional interpretations and dating, secondly the sites must present a large extent of settlement area in order to capture all possible habitation phases. Thirdly, the sites must exhibit a coherent phasing with clear indications of an establishment and abandonment.

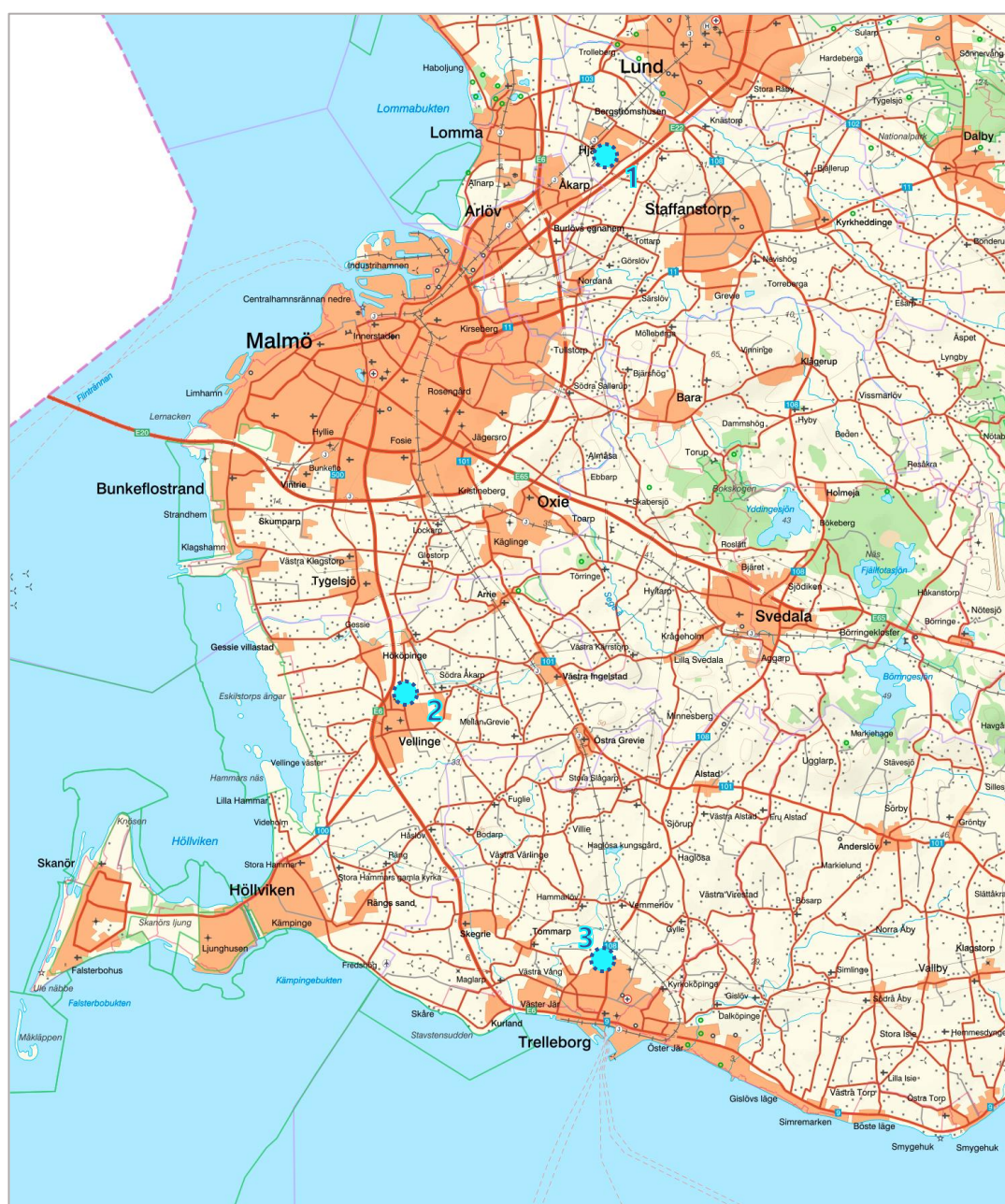


Fig. 2. Map of investigation area. Sites marked as blue dots. 1: Hjärup; 2: Eskilstorp; 3: Västervång. (©Lantmäteriet, 2026).

2. Household and settlement archaeology

2.1. General theoretical developments in household archaeology

In the second half of the 20th century the household took shape as a coherent concept within anthropology and its role as a societal building block was recognised (Netting, Wilk and Arnould, 1984, p. xxii), and defined and discussed within North American archaeology during the 1980's (Wilk and Rathje, 1982; Wilk and Netting, 1984). The definition of the archaeological household underwent several significant changes: Drawing on theoretical influences from social anthropology, the study of the household was believed to reveal the absent middle range between the archaeological record and culturally and temporally overarching societal changes, since households were essentially thought to be the “most common social components of subsistence” (Wilk and Rathje, 1982, p. 618; Douglass and Gonlin, 2012, p. 1), and practices and functions deemed as their central defining characteristics (Wilk and Netting, 1984, p. 5). Allison (1999) states that households presented themselves as lenses into statistically measurable aspects of past societies, and many understood this perspective as necessary in generating well-founded knowledge of connecting factors between material culture and the grand structures of society. This generated substantial criticisms during the 1990's, where it was argued that scholars perceived households as static entities and stale analytical units. Said scholars were accused of regarding the relationships between household members among each other and towards their physical surroundings as trivial (Allison, 1999, p. 2). Despite these fundamental criticisms, it has to be noted that the influence these early works had are at their core still viewed as foundational for all following efforts in household archaeology, even in this thesis, because of which it is common to see Wilk and Rathje's (1982) core concepts and definitions referred to in more recent publications (Kennedy, 2023, p. 25f.; Kienlin, 2024, p. 10f.).

The complexities and internal diversities within individual households became the defining interest of the field during the 1990's as post-processualism cemented itself (Tringham, 2001, p. 6927f.). Tringham (2001, p. 6927) notes that households were understood as fundamentally shaped by daily practice. There was an observable focus on epistemologically challenging and deconstructive perspectives, which in turn made a perception of households being co-resident domestic groups or kinship-based conglomerates with decided foci in economical and subsistence-focused production less viable (*ibid.*, p. 6929). Instead, as Tringham (1995) notes, in the light of theoretical and methodological advances during the 1990's it was argued to be

more fruitful to understand archaeological households in terms of ‘life-histories’, whereby internal processes shaped by households within physical dwellings became the centre of interest, lending a fundamental portion of interest to a recognition of dynamic intra-household activities and organisational complexities (Tringham, 1995, p. 89). While these developments were accompanied by dualistic interpretations of past life worlds, they also triggered critical discussions such as those expressed by Allison (1999) and Pope (2007), as both were able to show how structuralist notions became popular during the 1990s. Allison (1999) specifically takes a critical stance in the context of household archaeology, and at the time of publication notes the potential and the risks of elucidating facets of ideology, inter-human relationships or gender through the study of artefact assemblages, and questions the dichotomy of the house as a physical structure and the household as a concept. Pope (2007) notes how even during the post-processual shift in research, many studies in British Iron Age settlement archaeology tended to base their interpretations on presumed cosmological arrangements of daily life as informed through structuralism in order to explain physical orientations of dwellings and their entrances.

The first two decades of the 21st century exemplify a diversification of perspectives in household archaeology, which is outlined by Beaudry (2015), who lists several central themes that have become popular in the field during the time of publication, with a focus on relational and practice-based aspects of daily life (Beaudry, 2015, p. 2). The adherence to economic and functionalist interests from earlier research is contrasted with the alternative perspectives of acknowledging the diversity of internal activities and relationships of households (*ibid.*, p. 3). A different perspective is offered by Schmid (2014), who illustrates the benefits of applying spatial analysis in order to shine light on the interaction between households and the built environment. Since daily and repeated household-practice is an embodied experience in relation to the surrounding physical world, an analysis of physical structures with regards to the spatial qualities therein is argued to be productive (Schmid, 2014, p. 57f.).

An additional important step in the development of household archaeology is the integration of site formation theory with regards to house floor assemblages, as defined by LaMotta and Schiffer (1999). Acting as a fundamental critique of conventional artefact distribution analyses, LaMotta and Schiffer synthesise ethnoarchaeological and experimental archaeological works and present several possible cultural and non-cultural processes – e.g., processes during habitation, abandonment and post-abandonment – which all have a significant measurable impact on the post-depositional context of artefacts within house floor layers (LaMotta and

Schiffer, 1999, p. 20). Parker, Prieto and Osóres illustrate how LaMotta and Schiffer's review of ethnoarchaeological and experimental archaeological studies and the subsequent theoretical definitions of formation processes directly inform the premise of microartefact analysis (Parker, Prieto and Osóres, 2018, p. 59).

While some scholars such as Douglass and Gonlin (2012, p. 18) follow the early perspectives established in the 80's with a decided focus on economic household production, several developments during the 2020's reflect further theoretical diversification in accordance with the ontological shift and influences from neighbouring scientific disciplines. Informed by current theoretical discussions, Bukkemoen (2025) defines households in an Iron Age Norwegian context as social concepts with fundamental temporal, relational and practice-based characteristics. A defining quality of the most current definition of households is their relational aspects, which are characterised by the interactions of the living members among each other, with the surrounding built space, the activities performed through these interactions and finally the socially meaningful relationships generated hereby; in essence the relational aspects of households enable a "state of constant becoming" (Bukkemoen, 2025, p. 242). Importantly, she notes the overall importance of integrating considerations of more-than-human participation in household *becomings*, as well as the possibilities of eliciting socially meaningful interactions between humans and physical space by means of spatial analysis. Relational and assemblage theory in connection with wider post-humanist endeavours to identify bottom-up processes have had a significant influence on contemporary definitions of households. Kienlin (2024) for example argues for micro-scale approaches in the archaeological study of past households. In accordance with Bukkemoen (2025), Kienlin supports the definition of households as context bound and dynamic assemblages with inherent relational qualities, which could altogether be revealed through analyses on a micro-scale, taking into account various micro-stratigraphical excavation techniques, geo-chemical and archaeobotanical analyses (Kienlin, 2024, p. 16).

2.2. Excavating the house – Finding a household

The aforementioned influence of site formation theory has not only impacted theoretical perspectives with regards to the cultural and non-cultural processes that shape and re-shape the archaeological record (LaMotta and Schiffer, 1999; Schiffer, 1987), it has also shaped various methodological approaches employed in household archaeological studies, of which a brief selection shall be presented in the following.

The most common method applied in the study of archaeological households is microartefact analysis, which is recognised as building on the fundamental theoretical claims established by LaMotta and Schiffer, who showed that it is the only archaeologically developed method able to produce reliable artefact-distributions by taking formation processes into account (Parker, Prieto and Osóres, 2018, p. 59; LaMotta and Schiffer, 1999, p. 21). In order to conduct microartefact analysis, it is necessary to accept the fact that fragmented artefacts of a size smaller than 1 cm deposited in floor layers are generally less prone to be affected by post-depositional cultural and natural processes (Ullah, Duffy and Banning, 2015, p. 1239f.). Additionally, these microartefacts tend to “accumulate more densely in locations where the behaviours that produce them most frequently occur” (Ullah, Duffy and Banning, 2015, p. 1240). Following these principles, detailed floor layer sampling-strategies and GIS based distribution analyses can allow for reconstructions of probable activity areas and enable subsequent interpretations of household organisation and spatial use (Parker, Prieto and Osóres, 2018; Milek and Roberts, 2013; Parker and Sharratt, 2017; Ullah, Duffy and Banning, 2015). Other authors such as Shahack-Gross (2017) argue for integrated approaches that combine microartefact and geochemical analyses with studies of ethnographic contexts to provide geological and social explanations for depositional contexts. Studies by Milek (2012) and Milek and Roberts (2013) showcase the practical application of such an integrated framework and the potential to reveal household organisation and activities, as well as aspects of spatial use in past dwellings. The micromorphological study of floor layer accumulations in modern historical dwellings and the ethnographic context these are situated in could thus reveal interior domestic activities (Milek, 2012, pp. 132-135). In a similarly thorough study Milek and Roberts showcase the same strengths when applied to a prehistoric context, providing a similar high-resolution reconstruction of household activities (Milek and Roberts, 2013, p. 1864).

2.3. Settlement archaeology in Scania

2.3.1. Research history

Put simply, settlement archaeology can be defined as the archaeological study of prehistoric settlement organisation (Ødegaard and Ystgaard, 2023, p. 11), and more explicitly it entails studies concerning production, subsistence and intra-settlement relations with regards to more socio-political aspects such as land-ownership, land use and societal hierarchies (*ibid.*, p. 13). In order to obtain a better grasp on the developments of research traditions in Scania, it is helpful to highlight the origins of settlement archaeology in Sweden as a whole.

The earliest attempts to identify, excavate and discuss remains of Iron Age settlement can be seen to have taken place on Gotland during the end of the 19th century, with comparable attempts in the 1920's on Öland, mainly due to the preservation of remains above ground (Martens, 2005, p. 48; Martens, 2017, p. 184). While similar contemporary studies were conducted in Southwestern Norway and Jutland in Denmark during the first half of the 20th century, scholars in Scania were struggling to identify prehistoric house and settlement remains resulting in a delayed development, but nonetheless there were several significant attempts that shaped the character of Scanian settlement archaeology in the decades to come. A noteworthy contribution was Magnus Bror Vifot's 1934 discovery of parts of house remains at Uppåkra which were dated to the Late Iron Age (Martens, 2005, p. 48). Despite several dedicated manual excavations of single sites in Scania around the middle of the 20th century, Martens notes that these did not achieve any innovations in general research strategies until the introduction of mechanical excavators in the second half of the century (ibid., p. 48ff.). Following earlier attempts to identify Iron Age house remains in the 1940's, Berta Stjernquist's 1969 publication of excavations at Hötöfta marked a significant milestone in Scanian settlement archaeology, since she observed similarities in Iron Age house construction across most of Southern Scandinavia (ibid, p. 50).

The developments in Scanian settlement archaeology in the second half of the 20th century generally mirror those observed in Denmark with a slight delay in the introduction of mechanical and open-area excavations around 1970 on an overall smaller scale (Beck, 2017a, p. 25). Despite the exemplary larger scale application of mechanical digging in the late 1960's and early 1970's at Löddeköpinge, which uncovered multiple thousands of square meters, apart from multiple pit-houses no entire post-built houses were recorded (Martens, 2005, p. 51). At Löddeköpinge and other contemporary projects there were several factors which hampered the identification of post-built structures that are important to note. Firstly, during the introduction of mechanical digging in Scania entire house layouts were not known, as opposed to Denmark where this had already been the case; secondly, the type of mechanical excavators employed severely undercut features in upper soil layers, which merely left the most deep-cut traces of pit-houses for example (ibid.). Remarkably, the first fully excavated and recorded post-built house from the Iron Age was discovered in central Lund during the 1970's, more precisely the well-preserved remains of a late Viking Age longhouse including preserved internal furnishing and architectural elements (ibid., p. 51f.; Nilsson, 1976). The first regular discovery of less well-preserved post-built houses dating to both the Neolithic and the Roman Iron Age was made by Sten Tesch at Lilla Köpinge during the 1970's (Martens, 2005, p. 52). Continuing into the

1980's, this period saw a proliferation of large-scale excavations and an exponential increase in settlement archaeological efforts, paired with the standardisation of the typo-chronological approach, the increased use of radiocarbon dating and (Optical) Thermoluminescence (ibid., p. 53). Carlie notes that contemporary projects in Denmark such as Grøntoft, Vorbasse or Hodde had a marked influence on the Scanian tradition, as these produced thorough understandings of Iron Age settlement organisation which were sought after in Scania (Carlie, 2005, p. 14). Several large-scale infrastructure projects initiated multiple significant excavations during the 1990's and 2000's which had a decided focus on settlement remains and enriched the overall source material stemming from settlement contexts. Examples include *Öresundsförbindelsen*, *Fosie* in Malmö, *Ystadsprojektet* and *Gårdlösaprojektet* (ibid.). The contemporary excavations at the famous Iron Age central places such as Uppåkra and Järrestad mark a special role in this tradition due to their focus on internal economic and socio-political dynamics instead of overarching structural changes in society (ibid., p. 15).

2.3.2. Household studies in South Scandinavian Late Iron Age scholarship

The overarching focus of current settlement archaeology in Southern Scandinavia and Scania on typo-chronological developments can thus be understood in the developments presented above. Scholars such as Beck (2017a, p. 32) argue that said approaches can be expanded by the integration of alternative analyses and interpretations of the settlement archaeological record, especially concerning the Late Iron Age. In order to expand understandings of social processes in farmsteads and individual longhouses from the relevant period it is suggested that a re-engagement with the archaeological record with the help of assemblage theory can help highlight the dynamic processes which shape settlements and their inherently individual temporal qualities. Thus, it would be possible to reconstruct a dynamic biography of Late Iron Age longhouses, farmsteads and households as lived spaces rather than following exclusively typo-chronological perspectives (ibid., p. 12ff.).

A glance into older and current settlement archaeological studies from Southern Scandinavia reveals another prevalent aspect which has fundamentally shaped the field, namely the various investigations of house layouts and linked typo-chronological analyses. Since the discovery of the Trelleborg house-type and subsequent studies especially within the context of the Late Viking Age ringforts, it seems to have become a “‘dream scenario’ of a house type” (Beck, 2018, p. 146) within settlement archaeology due to its appearance within a seemingly tight chronology, the uniform architectural features and associations with high-status sites such as the ringforts and the Jelling-complex, reflecting socio-political expressions relating to Harald

Bluetooth at the end of the 10th century (Beck, 2018, p. 145). Beck highlights some inconsistencies with the use of the Trelleborg house-type, which despite its regular use in past academic and contract archaeological research as a coherent typological and chronological concept is demonstrated to be a singular phenomenon in a much more varied landscape of architectural traditions of the Viking Age (ibid., p. 151). Beck presents the Trelleborg house-type as an example in settlement archaeological practice for the at times incoherent ways in which a type is defined and applied, to fit preconceived notions of Viking Age settlement organisation. In essence, these discrepancies are argued to reflect misunderstandings by some scholars within settlement archaeology of how or why to study house-types (ibid., p. 152). While Beck (2018, p. 152) argues that said discrepancies in the study of house-types limit full understandings of Late Iron Age settlements, various older and contemporary works such as Martens (2005) or Tesch (1993) on the nature of construction details and typo-chronological refinements in Scania represent core discussions which shape the understanding of developments in Scanian settlement-structure, upon which many publications referred to in this thesis and this thesis itself are built on.

To conclude this chapter, it is worth turning towards the most recent developments and the current state of household and settlement studies of the Late Iron Age and especially within Viking Age archaeology in Scandinavia and the North Atlantic. The presentation of South Scandinavian, i.e., Danish and Scanian research traditions, as well as their development throughout the decades has shown some clear tendencies. Above all, studies on the Late Iron Age longhouse and settlement are as of recently focused on fixed preconceptions of chronology, typology and society. Even though some scholars have aimed at highlighting some general socio-political qualities of longhouses and farmsteads in Scandinavia – such as the phenomenon of the hall buildings as socially, politically and ritually significant arenas of society (Herschend, 1993) – they have tended to remain quite superficial in terms of studying the daily dynamics of interacting and living in the context of a longhouse or farmstead (Beck, 2017a, p. 31). While there have been several notable publications in this regard, e.g. explorations of farmsteads and longhouses as social spaces with regards to interactions with built space (Eriksen, 2019; Croix, 2014), analyses of household activities and practices in a long-term perspective (Bukkemoen, 2025), houses and households in an urban town-setting (Boyd, 2024), human-animal interactions on farmsteads as reflected in written sources and the archaeological record (Evans, 2017), geoarchaeological analyses of activity areas within longhouses (Milek and Roberts, 2013; Milek, 2014) and various in-depth settlement site excavations (Beck, Schultz and Ulriksen, 2025; Zori and Byock, 2014; Griffiths, Harrison and Athanson, 2019), Eriksen notes

that in the late 2010s dedicated studies of house and household organisation within Iron Age and Viking Age studies in Northern Europe are mostly absent or at the least peripheral (Eriksen, 2019, p. 7). Turning to our current decade, Lund and Sindbæk's (2022) review of studies in Viking Age archaeology offer a telling insight into current research trends, as dedicated studies of the domestic sphere seem to be mostly absent. If studies concerned with settlement are mentioned, they are linked to questions regarding identity – especially in the context of the North Atlantic diaspora – or those regarding trading-towns histories, but in general the authors note a marked interest in power-dynamics and an emphasis on high-status sites (Lund and Sindbæk, 2022, p. 193f.). Said over-representation is merely addressed with a short recommendation to reconsider traditional views on power dynamics in Viking Age settlement archaeology (ibid., p. 198). Apart from a single mentioned of studies focusing on an alternative “conceptualization of temporality, group identity, and self-perception” (ibid., p. 197), and a similar off-side mention of households in relation to studies of gender-identities and trading centres (ibid., p. 181; p. 188), it becomes clear that there is a limited number of studies aiming to reveal more nuanced qualities of everyday life in a Viking Age settlement context as in the recent developments in household archaeology. It is remarkable then, that in the wake of new theoretical models being introduced into Viking Age and settlement archaeology which offer alternative ontological perspectives relating to daily life in a household and settlement context, only recently studies emphasising alternative and dynamic perspectives (Beck, 2017a; 2025; Eriksen, 2019; Bukkemoen, 2025) have begun to be published, and aim to fundamentally deconstruct conventional interpretations within the field.

3. Developing a theoretical framework for lived social spaces

The interpretational challenges within South Scandinavian settlement archaeology, as it has been illustrated above, call for renewed efforts in the study of longhouses and settlement remains. I aim to further the theoretical perspectives outlined in some of the above-mentioned works (Beck, 2014; 2017a; 2017b; 2018; Eriksen, 2019; Bukkemoen, 2025) by the addition of other selected approaches in order to further an understanding of Late Iron Age farmsteads as lived social spaces. In the following, the theoretical approaches are each presented with respect to their key proposals and subsequently contrasted with each other to establish a cohesive framework.

3.1. Space Syntax theory

Among various works in social theory concerned with the interaction between humans and their built environment, the work of Giddens (1984) laid out the theoretical foundation for space syntax theory and by extension its practical application in the shape of access analysis (Fisher, 2009, p. 439f.). Central to his discussion of structuration are interactions of knowledgeable agents within the context of built space and its physical boundaries, inevitably generating social reproduction. Built space as the material context of these interactions is as Fisher (2009, p. 440) notes a fundamental affording and active component rather than a neutral backdrop. Hillier (2014, p. 21) importantly states, that while movement is fundamentally linear, interactions are not, and consequently the spatial relations physically framing these interactions between humans, other agents and built space shape human behaviour. Space syntax and access analysis – in its base form developed by Hillier and Hanson (1984) – can thus be seen as a means to theoretically and practically explore these relationships within the archaeological record (Hillier, 2014). Assuming that built space is structured by social ideologies or rules, the delimitation of space and consequently the degree of accessibility can reflect said norms and rules, meaning that a higher or lesser degree of accessibility by a visitor entering a building from the outside can illuminate how control of movement is instigated by for example the owners of a building (Fisher, 2009, p. 440; Eriksen, 2019, p. 87). Adding onto such discussions, Eriksen (2019, p. 81) concisely illustrates the interconnectedness of physical and social space. Consequently, repeated movement patterns that are connected to specific social activities and interactions, within and beyond built space, and their control would have resulted in an embodied experience, reaffirming or restructuring a person's position within society and on a micro-scale in the household (*ibid.*, p. 103).

But space syntax has received significant criticisms, many boiling down to the fact that it can excel at analysing the topological properties of space, yet lacks the means to study social places including the variety of interactions and relationships performed on a daily basis (Fisher, 2009, p. 442, Paliou, 2014, p. 7f.). At its core, space syntax is not able to account for the sensorial and affective factors at play in the interaction with built space; most notably geometrical properties such as room sizes and shapes which have been proven to affect said interactions, unfixed mobile objects such as furniture, as well as aesthetic qualities such as decorations (Fisher, 2009, p. 442f.). Similarly, access analysis is unable to consider elaborate constructions of architectural elements – examples are formal entrances with additional aesthetic and physical properties such as ornaments, door-width, thresholds etc. – as it focuses purely on entrances which enable

movement in and out (Fisher, 2009, p. 443). Additionally, the method merely functions in two-dimensional space at a single level, disregarding verticality when multiple stories might have possibly been present. In an effort to combat some of these shortcomings Fisher (2009, p. 444-448) discusses the relevance of combining access analysis with nonverbal communicative aspects, which state that there exist certain social cues embedded in built space, e.g., room-size, room-capacity or wall and doorway-characteristics. Taking said cues into account it would be possible to identify and assess patterns of movement and encounter and by extent types of social interactions (ibid., p. 448).

In an applied sense, access analysis can be used as an analytical and qualitative tool to identify possible routes of movement within a prehistoric structure and consequently reveal the control which determines movement. As a main prerequisite, the archaeological material – in the shape of a house – in question must be well-preserved such that it can provide an indication of where architectural elements such as doors, other entrances, walls, partitions and posts were situated in relation to one another (Eriksen, 2019, p. 88; Fisher, 2009, p. 442). When a complete two-dimensional house-plan is given, movement from outside the building, through and into it can be measured via a so-called *gamma map* (fig. 3), where circles or other symbols represent rooms or spaces connected by lines which represent relations of accessibility from the so-called *carrier* (the outside space) as the main point of reference, within the house and between the rooms (Fisher, 2009, p. 440; Eriksen, 2019, p. 88). Further labels serve to depict additional architectural elements such as special doorways or rooms with known or presumed functions. Movement from one room into another can be seen as a metaphorical step, and each step corresponds to a *depth* value, i.e., the more steps that have to be taken from the carrier into the innermost of the house, the higher the depth value and consequently the less accessible a room is. Additionally, access analysis rests on the concepts of *symmetry* and *distribution* (ibid., p. 88f.). Symmetry describes the relationship between two or more rooms in terms of their control over accessibility, meaning that if equal access is provided through two rooms it is symmetrical such as in figure 3d; whereas asymmetry is shown by movement through one room in order to reach another, such as in figure 3b. Distribution on the other hand describes the number of routes between rooms, meaning that a spatial relationship is distributed if there are multiple paths to enter a room, such as in figure 3d, while it is non-distributed when there is only a single path leading to both, such as in figure 3b. Following this approach, controlled movement within a house is reflected by asymmetrical and non-distributed spatial relationships, potentially

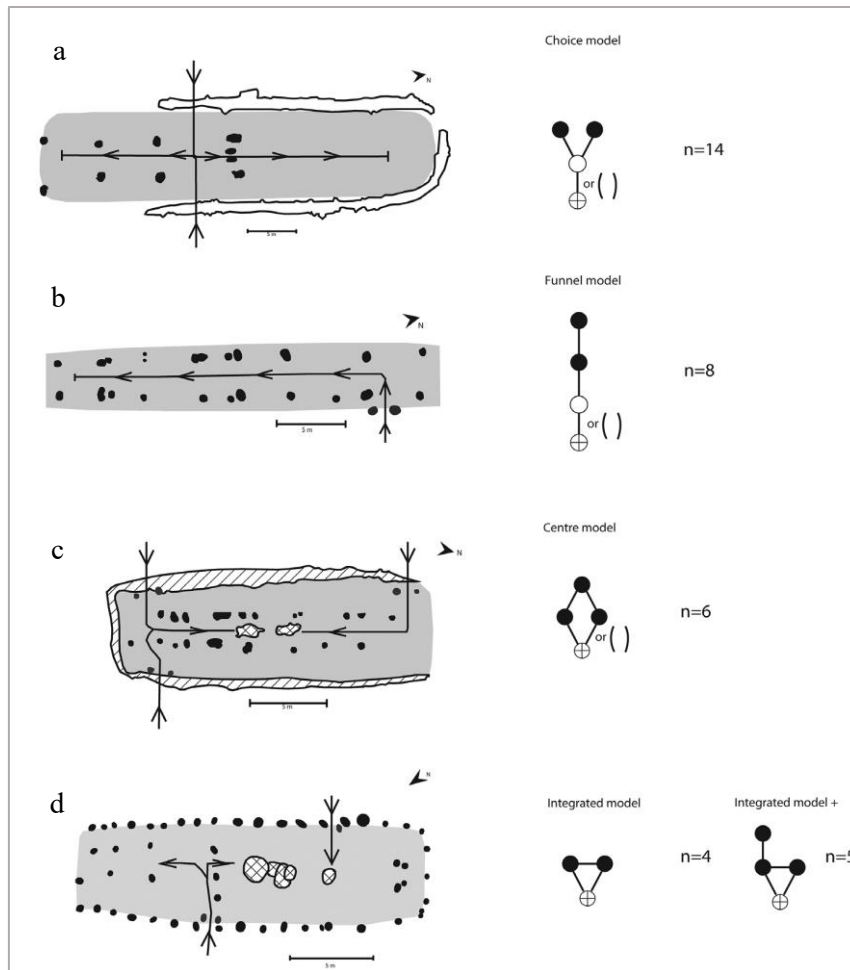


Fig. 3. House plans from Late Iron Age longhouses on the left. Arrows and lines indicating possible entrance and movement patterns. Corresponding gamma maps depicting the movement patterns on the right. (Eriksen, 2019, p. 92. Letters to the left of the house plans added by author).

reflecting social differentiation between household inhabitants and guests entering the house (Eriksen, 2019, p. 89). While not immediately connected to space syntax theory, *proxemics* share some core perspectives in terms of non-verbal communication and how humans interact with one another in the context of their physical environment. Proxemics focus on human social interactions and how these can be measured with regards to the use of physical space and mutual visual perception (McCall, 2016, p. 296). As defined by Hall (1966), there can be four zones of social interaction, each with unique distances: the *intimate* body-focused space; the *personal*, immediately surrounding area of control; the *social* where different people gather; the *public* and openly accessible space (Eriksen, 2019, p. 103). While these zones do not reflect precise and measurable delineations of differing social interactions, and individual social, environmental and historically situated factors will determine exact distances of proximity, they generally act as useful approximations (Fisher, 2009, p. 442). Each space is accordingly assigned a distinct socio-cultural meaning in a non-verbal manner. Hence, expanding access

analyses with a proxemic perspective can help estimate which spaces were perceived as private and which as public (Eriksen, 2019, p. 123f.).

3.2. Assemblage theory

Assemblages in their current definition have become an integral part of archaeological theory since around 2010 when its previous conventional definition had been rethought and adapted – most notably in the wake of the nascent theoretical stream of new materialism and through an integration of approaches rooted in human geography, political theory and material culture studies (Hamilakis and Jones, 2017, p. 77). Said theoretical studies begin with the earliest discussions of *agencement* by Deleuze and Guattari (1980) translated into the English ‘assemblage’, as a concept which reflects the affective relationships and agential capacities between heterogeneous entities (Hamilakis and Jones, 2017, p. 79), and culminated in the developments of Latour (2005) who investigated the assemblage’s potential to reveal social ontologies where the individual components are self-subsistent but the connections provide agency distributed along networks. DeLanda (2006) on the other hand emphasises the individual actors such as humans and objects to possess equal but independent agential capacities within networks of relationships. When speaking of ‘entities’ and ‘actors’ it must be noted that despite their connotations there is no restriction towards conscious entities, rather assemblage thinking includes material and immaterial, living organisms and inanimate objects, and even intangible concepts and ideas (Wiltshire, 2018, p. 1).

Following its original definition within archaeology since the 1960’s, an assemblage sought to describe either an aggregation of artefacts sharing similar typological or stylistic characteristics, or an aggregation of artefacts with differing characteristics gathered in a shared context (Hamilakis and Jones, 2017, p. 77). In its current use within archaeology, assemblage thinking can be seen to reflect adaptations of both DeLanda’s and Latour’s definitions and extensions of DeLeuze’s and Guattari’s original concept, but generally aims to illuminate the relationships in various forms between material and immaterial actors or entities (Wiltshire, 2018, p. 1). Wiltshire (2018, p. 2) notes the significant influence of symmetrical archaeology and Actor-Network-Theory on current assemblage theoretical thinking: In an active stance against anthropocentric worldviews, human and non-human actors are argued to act symmetrically and possess equal agency. The works of Lucas (2012) and Fowler (2013) have equally had a lasting impact on the archaeological conception of the assemblage, as both explore criticisms of archaeological practice through the lens of assemblage theory and rethink interactions that archaeologists have with the record, in practice and interpretation. Other scholars have

emphasised the importance of studying assemblages in the contemporary past, meaning that excavating itself is to be understood as a dynamic engagement where the archaeological record as a non-static entity is perpetually assembled and reassembled (Hamilakis and Jones, 2017, p. 82; Wiltshire, 2018, p. 3).

Hamilakis (2017) extends contemporary discussions of the concept to include sensorial and temporal factors, which are of relevance for the later analysis, as his definition overlaps conceptually with the other selected theories in this thesis. Apart from multiplicity and heterogeneity being two key characteristics of assemblages, Hamilakis adds the *affective/sensorial*, the *mnemonic/temporal* and the *political* as three additional core aspects which hold special importance within archaeology. This re-thinking of what an assemblage can be understood as, is in part caused by what he sees as a tendency within archaeology to copy and paste definitions of Latour's Actor Network Theory onto assemblage thinking, resulting in overtly mechanistic and unvaried perceptions, wherefore affectivity, sensoriality and temporality are treated as fundamentally defining features of assemblages (Hamilakis, 2017, p. 176). Affectivity as a fundamental aspect in human interactions illustrates that there are immaterial and material components within assemblages such as memories or verbal interactions which steer various relationships and interactions. Additionally, senses and sensoriality enable affectivity, whereby material objects and immaterial atmospheres of places or moments generate affective connections which merge the various components of an assemblage (ibid., 173). Furthermore, Hamilakis sees temporality as another influential aspect in the constitution of assemblages, in the sense that assemblages possess "a multiplicity of times, of various pasts and various presents" (ibid.), meaning that instead of following a linear understanding of successive moments and times, assemblages are constituted of various temporally varying components and themselves become temporary and unique. Including memories, senses and their affective qualities makes it possible to better understand the processes that generate meaningful relationships between assemblage-components. As Hamilakis and Jones (2017, p. 83) note, assemblage theory holds the potential to help deconstruct conventional context-bound notions within archaeology, meaning that the archaeological record tends to be slotted into fitting social and historical contexts, generating meaning and significance for archaeologists now.

3.3. Multispecies theory

Anthropocentric and Western-European worldviews have had a crucial impact on the perception of animals within society and among researchers of various fields in the humanities, influencing

even archaeologists' conceptions of where animals had their place within human prehistoric societies (Birch, 2018, p. 1f.). Humans were recognised as agential focal points, shaping their surrounding natural environment with animals at the periphery, meaning that animals were part of the human world, yet did not possess the capacity to participate and contribute in any meaningful way. Works in multispecies ethnography and anthropology have sparked multidisciplinary efforts to recognise animals and other organisms – therefore prompting the term 'more-than-human' – as an integral part of human existence (Birch, 2018, p. 2). In other words – and to draw on the above-mentioned assemblage theoretical approach – animals and other organisms have been recognised as equal agents with meaningful affective capabilities within the various multiscale assemblages throughout most of past and recent human history.

In an archaeologically applied sense multispecies theory has been developed and integrated since around 2000 in order to break with past notions of human exceptionalism, which implies that humans are the dominant force in shaping relationships with animals and other organism we encounter regularly, dynamics that consequently and supposedly imply a linear interaction where animals for example are viewed as economic assets, sustenance or symbols, mirroring first and foremost human worldviews (Birch, 2018, p. 3). Eriksen and Ratican (2025) note that in much of past and current research on prehistoric Europe during the 1st millennium AD, animals are mainly viewed as economic resources or static symbols, reflecting views rooted in postmodern and western understandings of the world as illustrated above. Yet, Eriksen and Ratican (2025, p. 10) point out the potential of actively integrating multispecies theory to elucidate human-animal interactions in settlement archaeology. There have been several attempts made with the aim of actively considering animals and other organisms as active participants in archaeological interpretations of domestic space throughout the last two decades, some of which shall be outlined in the following to illustrate the potential for this thesis.

Within a household-farmstead context, Evans' (2017) work on human-animal relationships in Viking Age Iceland as reflected in the archaeological record and in written sources is noteworthy. Her integrated study of Old Norse Sagas, Medieval law codes and spatial analyses of Viking Age settlements shows the complexity of the daily interactions and the profound impact relationships shared by humans and domestic animals had on the household beyond purely economic or symbolic importance (Evans, 2017, p. 287). Armstrong Oma and Goldhahn (2020) and Armstrong Oma (2013) are both concerned with the complex and interwoven relationships shared by both species. All living organic components possess agential

capabilities, reflected in archaeologically traceable physical meeting points in a domestic context (Armstrong Oma and Goldhahn, 2020, p. 12; Armstrong Oma, 2013, p. 163).

The theoretically progressive work of Lucas (2016; 2018) is particularly noteworthy and relevant for this thesis because it advocates for an understanding of physical living spaces as complex multispecies-assemblages. In an analysis of Icelandic early modern turf-houses, Lucas follows the central viewpoints of multispecies theory which consider animals and other organisms, in this specific case even the turf walls and their microscopic inhabitants such as insects and fungi, as active components (Lucas, 2018, p. 106). He suggests to view a house as an assemblage that is after construction held together through a multispecies-symbiosis: During and after construction the house is shaped and maintained by a perpetual interaction and interdependency of animate and inanimate components (ibid., p. 114). While it is not the main intent to view the house as a living organism itself, Lucas stresses the importance of understanding it as a self-sustaining entity which “exists and persists through its relation with other entities, especially humans” (ibid., p. 115). Central to this view is that the individual components or entities of the symbiosis have the agential capabilities of activating change and meaning in this assemblage through their inherent properties and affordances

Two additional multispecies approaches from neighbouring disciplines possess significant potential and insightful perspectives for the archaeological study of past human-animal interactions as observed within households. That the dwellings in which households reside, and where humans and animals spend a significant amount of their life have not been considered through the perspective of ‘the home’ is striking, since as Schuurman (2024) shows, her human and animal geographical study of the conceptualisation of the home presents it as a place that is fundamentally shaped and shared by both animals and humans. Despite the temporal and cultural differences, the implications which this concept provides can help view prehistoric households in a non-anthropocentric way. Shared practices between humans and animals take place in homes as spaces which “carry significance in terms of affect and control and shared understandings – or discord – of how the spaces can and should be used” (Schuurman, 2024, p. 660). To understand these ‘homescapes’ as actively shared lived spaces is presented as imperative (ibid., p. 663). Finally, in an ethnographic study of human-animal relationships in modern day Scotland, Fry (2023) exemplifies how socioecological relations between farmers and the animals they encounter on a daily basis constitute an interspecies belonging. It is shown how daily interactions characterised by affective and embodied practice between farmers and animals such as sheep which they have to tend to, or foxes whose populations have to be

controlled, generated deep emotional understandings of these particular animals as belonging to the landscape (Fry, 2023, p. 2502).

3.4. Sensory archaeology

When studying the archaeological record including material culture or stratigraphy, ethnographic studies or historical sources, and digital data, scholars often fail to acknowledge past sensorial and bodily experiences in their interpretations (Metheny, 2022, p. 172f.). Many scientific fields including archaeology, history, anthropology, sociology and cultural geography have begun to consider sensory experiences as an important factor in their research, as the increasing amount of scientific evidence from neurosciences, psychology and other fields has helped emphasise the importance of the senses in human experiences, in the past as well as in the present (ibid.). The human sensory experience is proven to be a constant process of the conscious and unconscious reception of information from one's surroundings, while the brain has been shown to even fill in gaps of missing information by adding past experiences and memories, hence being recognised as an inherently multitemporal experience that is shaped by embodied experiences, emotions and memories (ibid., p. 174).

Sensory archaeology in particular has shown to be a prolific field of research focusing on the various ways in which humans in the past experienced their world through the senses, and publications such as *The Routledge Handbook of Sensory Archaeology* (Skeates and Day, 2020a) underline the diversity of approaches and the vast array of areas of human life around the world that can be studied through a sensory approach. The beginnings of archaeological endeavours to study the senses took shape at the end of the 20th and the early 21st century, which – set in the context of contemporary theoretical and methodological developments – have been conducted in connection to research on various themes such as death, emotion, memory, aesthetics, bodily experiences and many more (Skeates and Day, 2020b, p. 1f.). Some important studies of this time recognised human experiences to be multisensorial, acting as critiques against until then prevailing notions of the five senses representing the main repertoire available to humans at any point in time in history (ibid., p. 2f.). These developments can be seen to have taken place against the background of general post-humanist tendencies gaining foothold in the humanities, rejecting Cartesian dualisms for the sake of studying the body and its senses as a whole. There have been several foundational works in the 2010s which helped define sensory studies as they are understood nowadays, with some such as Hamilakis (2013) even accentuating the need for a fundamental paradigm shift (Skeates and Day, 2020b, p. 3). The sensory experience can be defined and described in a variety of ways, one of which is the

sensorium, meaning “the sum of an organism’s perceptions of the environments within which it lives” (Skeates and Day, 2020b, p. 4), created through a variety of contexts which an organism lives through and experiences, such as the physical, biological, social and cultural. The sensory experience has additionally been likened to a sort of sensorial assemblage, aimed at deconstructing the primacy of single senses and instead focusing on multiplicities and interrelationships of many simultaneously enacting senses (ibid., p. 7).

Even though many studies have focused on the sensory affect of material culture in the shape of objects in particular, the built environment of the past is equally recognised as being an impactful influence on sensory experiences (ibid., p. 9f.). An example of how to practically engage with the reconstruction of past senses in built environments is presented by Love’s (2016) ethnographic study of modern houses in order to delineate how different building materials used in architecture have the potential to evoke a range of sensory experiences, and how these measurable responses can inform comparable experiences in past human lives as observed through the archaeological record. While Love combines an understanding of sensory experiences as informed through both anthropology and archaeology, she emphasises the importance of historically situating the reconstructed experiences (Love, 2016, p. 214), meaning that despite a timber-built longhouse from Neolithic Central Europe and a longhouse from Iron Age Scandinavia might have shared similar construction techniques, materials and dimensions, other factors unique to each period and place will have made the experience of living in and sensing the houses very different. Studies in various fields of research have shown that architecture possesses inherent sensory qualities that influence the well-being of humans, and that consequently they are informed of these qualities through haptic sense in a full bodily experience, where the sensory contact between a person and the physical world triggers meaningful emotional qualities (Love, 2016, p. 225). Therefore Love (2016, p. 226) notes that “like emotions, architecture is inseparable from everyday life, which includes emotions and the senses, each capable of invoking an array of responses.”

A similarly captivating study is offered by Bille and Sørensen (2016), who aim to complement traditional architectural studies – which are usually interested in revealing social, economic or symbolic aspects of built space – with a consideration of sensory and affective experiences. While the authors propose that archaeological studies of architecture should actively consider

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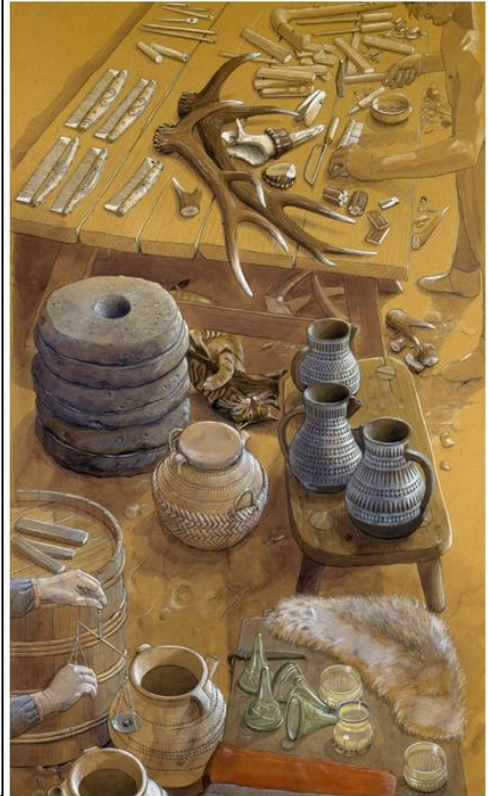


Fig. 4. Illustrative reconstructions of Iron Age daily activities. Illustrations from left to right and top to bottom: [Roman Iron Age settlement in the south of Norway](#), ©Mats Vänehem; Kammager og købmand, ©Flemming Bau; Interior of reconstructed Viking Age longhouse, ©Ribe VikingCenter, Denmark; Pløjningsmetode i vikingetid, ©Flemming Bau; Smed ved ambolt, vikingetid, ©Flemming Bau.

architecture altogether, they recognise the significance of the physical properties of built space and wish to establish a symmetrical understanding of it, seeing the physical, senses, atmospheres and social processes collectively taking place in the context of architecture (Bille and Sørensen, 2016, p. 12). Architecture and built spaces are subject to the inhabitants' social values concerned with the quality of the material, which affects function and aesthetics; these qualities have an impact on the sensorial perception of the building which in turn affects the experience and the desires of the interacting inhabitants, thus constantly shaping and maintaining it (ibid., p. 20). It is in this complex assemblage where all aspects of time, material, atmosphere and aesthetics come together and meaning is created (ibid., p. 22).

Experimental reconstructions

In an applied sense, experimental archaeology is able to help grasp certain sensorial perceptions during prehistoric times by creating faithful reconstructions of settlement sites based on the archaeological record. While people in past societies processed sensorial experiences differently than nowadays, both due to drastically varying environments and the governing societal conceptions of senses being historically and culturally situated, the basic biologically registrable impact on the overall human sensorial experience can be studied in reconstructed environments. Therefore, it is possible to study how the built environment and its interior and exterior spaces afforded certain interactions between household members and their surroundings, the reconstruction then lending itself to studies of sensorial factors and resulting inferences of activities and how these could have been once socially situated (O'Neill and O'Sullivan, 2020).

On a farmstead, various interactions with the built environment and resulting sensorially affective properties would have been generated through practice-based activities connected to the construction and maintenance of houses. Based on the recorded settlement sites dating to the Viking Age, a farmstead containing various house-replicas was reconstructed and studied at the Ribe Viking Centre (Ejstrud, 2014). At the centre of these efforts stood the assessment of the construction and maintenance of the replicated buildings informed through archaeological, architectural and carpenters' perspectives (ibid., p. 47ff.). Various factors generated significant interactions between humans, animals and the built environment, such as how fast posts or walls of longhouses and pit-houses would decay over the years and how they had to be replaced, how interior lighting had to be adapted to and affected the work of reenactors inhabiting the buildings, how fitting soil moisture had to be ascertained to prevent accelerated rot of timber posts prior to house constructions, or simply how to realistically provide sufficient interior and

exterior space for cattle to move without obstructions. Edblom (2004) similarly presented the reconstruction of a 4th to 7th century longhouse at Gene, Central Sweden as informative in terms of the overall interactivity with built space. It became clear that wall construction, openings and the general house orientation influenced important sensory factors and resulted in overall challenges to regulate aspects such as smoke emissions, ventilation and interior temperature even though the well-preserved remains of the longhouse's construction were closely followed during the reconstructive process (ibid., 188). From such experimental reconstructions and from the illustrations of studied materials stemming from secured contexts it is thus possible to approximate sensorial perceptions of the past. The illustrations and photographs in figure 4 thereby serve as a compilation of various household-activities and situations stemming from different Iron Age contexts in Northern Europe.

4. Methodology

Each theoretical approach aims to shed light on specific aspects of human and more-than-human life; hence I argue that said aspects can be identified within the archaeological record and studied accordingly. Such an approach requires critical reflection of what the archaeological record really is, and how we interpret its epistemological condition, a topic which has over the

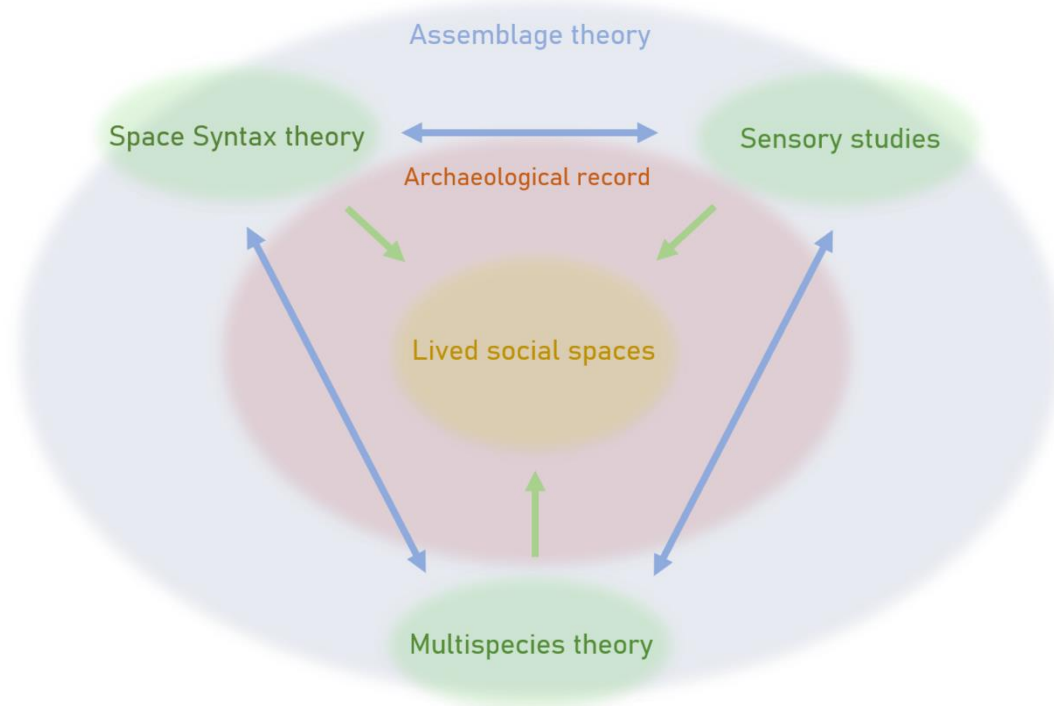


Fig. 5. Graph representing theoretical framework (By author)

years received a considerable amount of discussion (Barrett, 1988; Lucas, 2012). Or more precisely, what can the material – which we term ‘archaeological evidence’ – when excavated, interpreted, documented and compared really tell us about what we assume has taken place in the past? As it is defined within social archaeology the empirically observable traces of anthropogenic behaviour can be understood as the imprints of various social aspects of past societies (Barrett, 1988, p. 6). Assigning an artefact for example a specific interpretational quality – a grinding stone once used to process wheat which has been cultivated to sustain household members presumably reflects consumption and the economic capabilities of said household, therefore the context which it is found in must be assigned an equal meaning – inherently contains functionalist assumptions (ibid., p. 7), a problematic theme that has already been identified above in chapter 2 as static and uncritical. Nonetheless, a discoloration marking a hollow which was dug for the insertion of a post is – when compared to similarly characterised and immediately surrounding features – in itself a very probable indication of the construction of a post-built timber-structure in the past. Yet, more importantly, it is how we understand this single posthole as the part of an overarching process that shaped life in and around this structure (Pauketat and Alt, 2005, p. 214f.). While I do see each individual case study as the material trace of a specific way of life in its own unique context, tackling the analysis of each site in the following chapter 5 is consistently informed through assemblage thinking as the central binding factor. Studying the remains of household activity and a farmstead is therefore not merely a matter of past assemblages which we identify, but also about the nature of our documentation and its implications for the interpretation of those remains and the subsequent re-assembling (Lucas, 2012, p. 259; Beck, 2025).

Figure 5 serves as a visualisation for the chosen analytical approach, which first and foremost presents assemblage theory as an all-encompassing constant, connecting the remaining three approaches, while they themselves are interconnected, simultaneously providing the most traceable evidence in the record. While the selected sites are indeed assemblages in themselves, once having consisted of various animate, inanimate, tangible and intangible components and entities that met each other in interactions creating meaning, memory and affect, the assemblage draws out even further beyond the archaeological record and begins to encompass this very effort in the thesis (Lucas, 2012, p. 259). But when we do focus on the record itself, assemblage theory, space syntax theory, multispecies theory and sensory studies can help us understand the processes and relationships that once shaped the built environment, and by extension illustrate the social, i.e., the relationships and processes among the actors and components in a farmstead-assemblage (ibid., p. 265).

Actively considering *assemblage theory* during the study of settlement remains has the potential to shine a light on the temporal and relational qualities as reflected in the dynamic development of architectural features (Beck, 2025, p. 72) – which in turn is intimately linked to site formation processes – meaning how people and the built environment interact with each other. Thus, we must target the recorded remains of the said built environment, which includes postholes, stake holes, ditches, wall lines and paved pathways. The condition of each feature reveals different phases of a building's biography, yet the interplay of multiple structures and features on a site including the associated activities are themselves equally held together in an assemblage. I will delineate the development of a site's separate phases in detail during analysis in chapter 5, including other material imprints of daily life on a farmstead which are represented by additional anthropogenic features such as fence linings marking out dedicated areas in the farmyard, hearths, wells and pits, as well as features marking dedicated animal spaces. Additional mobile objects, most significantly artefacts such as pottery, metal finds, macrofossils etc. represent the material remains of daily activities. While overall less actively applicable than the following theories, the temporal, relational and scalar properties inherent to the components of a farmstead-assemblage will directly inform the final discussion.

As outlined above in chapter 3, *space syntax theory* and practical extension in the form of *access analysis* will be applied to study human and potential animal movement and the control thereof. The manner in which people or animals entered a house, and how they had to pass through its rooms depended on factors such as a person's position in Late Iron Age society, the according permission, refusal or control of movement depending on the social situation, and the general conception of public or private spaces – as far as they are identifiable. Thereby, following the identification of architectural features as outlined in the archaeological reports and subsequently creating a rough reconstruction of internal built space is central. A simple gamma map as outlined in chapter 3 shall be created for relevant structures within a site. I acknowledge the fact that there are more methods employed in the application of space syntax and access analysis such as statistical calculations, visibility analyses and other digital methods, which are able to provide more fine-tuned reconstructions of movement in relation to built space (Fisher, 2009, p. 448f.), yet their integration would go beyond the scope of this thesis and can therefore not be considered. Since a longhouse never stood by itself in a farmstead, and a considerable part of daily life took place in the farmyard and beyond, I will additionally consider the affective properties of built space in the context of the relationships between various buildings such as byres, storages and pit-houses in the exterior farmstead-space and the resulting movement in this space, as movement was not confined to interior spaces. Following access analysis and a

general knowledge of Late Iron Age society, an estimation of which spaces of a farmstead could have been deemed interactional or private can be attempted.

Multispecies theory aims to highlight the importance of all non-human components on a farmstead, or at the very least the observable imprints of meaningful human-animal interactions. The most visible albeit abstracted traces of such interactions are mirrored in the traces of animal bones. The context, amount and distribution of burnt or unburnt animal bones will serve as a general indication for various activities related to animal husbandry, processing and consumption of food and craftsmanship, and overall interactions between humans, animals and their natural environment. Depending on the species and their role in LIA society additional propositions about human-animal interactions can be made. The less visible yet telling traces of such interactions are mirrored in structures such as byres or enclosures built to house animals, to control their movement or process their remains. The relative position of byres, enclosures and other structures can help create a broad estimation of animal movement in the farmyard, and thereby reflect the effort exerted by human household-members to create dedicated more-than-human spaces in each individual farmstead. Additionally, the consideration of macrofossils will help identify other multispecies engagements related to cultivation, hunting, food processing etc.

The *sensory experience* of past life on a farmstead is admittedly difficult to reconstruct, nevertheless, several elements within structures, in the farmstead area and in the surrounding landscape beyond can help reconstruct general aspects of this experience. While these ephemeral features will have possessed affective qualities with the potential to trigger sensory reactions, they could very well also have influenced movement and access. Light sources, the resulting degree of visibility and perceptions of temperature will have played an important role in both sensory and access related considerations and experiences, therefore hearths are seen as the most traceable feature fitting for this endeavour. Features and artefacts found at each respective site are connected to specific activities that will have also possessed various auditory, visual and olfactory qualities, altogether triggering a range of sensory experiences that can be fitted in to the wider reconstructed picture of daily life on a farmstead. Their identification in specific contexts will thus inform the analysis and the following discussions about sensory experiences at each individual site. By extension, experimental archaeological studies as presented above will inform the analysis of said features and their influence on the sensory experience.

5. Late Iron Age and Viking Age farmsteads

Before engaging in the analysis of the case studies, it is necessary to illustrate how settlement structure and the individual farmstead in the Late Iron Age are currently understood. Sub-section 5.1. deals with the individual farmstead in Southern Scandinavia and Scania in particular and associated activities. Sub-section 5.2. focuses on the study area of Southwestern Scania but widens the perspective from the individual farmstead to general patterns visible in settlement structure during the second half of the first Millennium CE, thus focusing on the Late Iron Age until its end in the Late Viking Age in the mid-11th century.

5.1. The Late Iron Age farmstead and longhouse

Similar to the preceding Bronze Age and Early Iron Age, daily life in Late Iron Age Scandinavia like most European prehistoric settlements was centred around the farmstead, and its appearance and structure varied regionally. Within Scandinavian settlement archaeology a typical farmstead in the Late Iron Age can be defined as a settlement unit with permanent sedentary intent and a focus on agricultural production (Aspeborg, 2026, p. 53). Carlie and Artursson (2005, p. 163f.) have argued that defining a farmstead as a social and economic settlement unit is not sufficient in reflecting the significant nuances of social organisation, and suggest both the central building-complex of a farmstead and all associated activity-areas within and beyond to be of relevance. Schmidt Sabo and Söderberg define a single farmstead or *gård* as a settlement unit that housed a family or a household-unit and must contain the archaeologically traceable remains of at least a single longhouse and optionally additional buildings (Schmidt Sabo and Söderberg, 2019, p. 9). Following Old Norse definitions, a farmstead, or *garðr* “denoted settled and arable land enclosed by a fence” (Ødegaard and Ystgaard, 2023, p. 14). Large farmsteads or *storgårdar* consist of a larger variety of post-built structures, an increased area and additional traces of prestige-objects or specialised production altogether indicating increased social status (ibid.). While the following view is not commonly held in the field, I would argue that a farmstead can be understood in the terms of the current definition of a household as a relational assemblage¹. This means that a farmstead is characterised by its material imprint – houses and objects – its inhabitants – humans, animals and other organisms – and the activities and practices taking place there.

¹ See in-depth discussion of household definition in chapter 2.1.

As a rule, a farmstead consists of a main longhouse and at least one or two additional buildings in its immediate vicinity, while the numbers of additional buildings can vary, especially among large farmsteads (Fallgren, 2008, p. 69; Aspeborg, 2026; p. 53). The dominant house-construction type in Scandinavia since at least the Early Bronze Age was the three-aisled longhouse, which was in use up until the Early Middle Ages (Fallgren, 2008, p. 67; Aspeborg, 2026, p. 39; Armstrong Oma, 2017). A longhouse in itself can be defined as a post-built structure that is longer than it is wide and its length could vary from 5 to 50 m and more, while its width was approximately around 6 to 7,5 m (Beck, 2025, p. 68; Fallgren, 2008, p. 67; Aspeborg, 2026, p. 39). The diversity in construction of longhouses during the Late Iron Age is reflected in varying dimensions or placements of individual architectural elements (Artursson, 2005). Some more noticeable constructions have even resulted in entire defined types, such as the Trelleborg-type-phenomenon and the Sædding-type (Carlie, 2008b, p. 119). Yet, the focus on single defining types in Scanian settlement archaeology has been criticised as being one-dimensional (Artursson, 2005, p. 77).

Longhouses during the Late Iron Age retain building-traditions from the preceding Late Roman Iron Age and Migration Period (Artursson, 2005, p. 122). Two central post-rows were the main roof-supporting elements where one pair of posts measured by width constitutes a trestle. The number of trestles varies depending on a longhouse's length and general construction type, hence some houses, like those resembling features of the Trelleborg-house-type can even consist of a minimum of two trestles (Beck, 2018, p. 145). The interior space of a three-aisled longhouse was therefore believed to have been divided into multiple rooms since traces of additional posts, ditches or door-frames marked dividing walls, hence some trestles generally – but not exclusively – constituted a partition between two rooms. Some of the more noticeable characteristics include either straight or bow-shaped longitudinal walls, and straight or rounded gables (Eriksen, 2019, p. 47; see fig. 6). Due to finds of burnt clay in post-holes and the general construction of walls as post-rows, it is assumed that in Southern Scandinavia they were made of either wattle and daub or wooden planks (Fallgren, 2008, p. 67). While there have been preserved finds of window-frames from Viking Age trading towns, it is not known whether the more common farmstead-longhouse possessed any openings. Another noticeable feature is the entrance, which can be identified in wall-lines or in dividing walls. If preservation allows for an identification, a doorway is marked by gaps in the wall, most often accompanied by additional receded or extended posts into the interior or exterior (Eriksen, 2019, p. 82). Across most of Scandinavia longhouses possessed at least one or two doorways centrally in both longitudinal walls or at each end towards the gables (ibid., p. 84f.). Since remains of roofs tend

not to be preserved, it is difficult to precisely reconstruct their making, but it is suggested that they were either thatched with straw and tree-barks or wooden, and possessed some kind of smoke opening (Eriksen, 2019, p. 47).

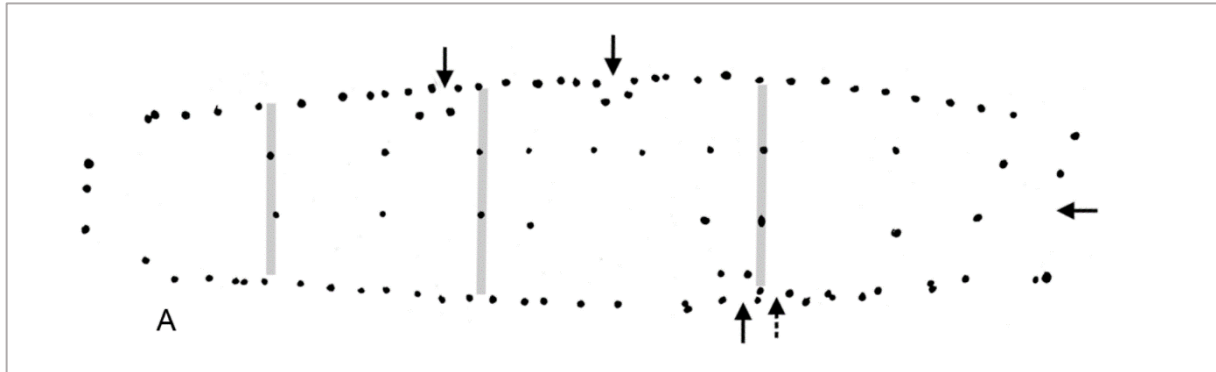


Fig. 6. House 6 from Västervång dated to the Vendel Period to Viking Age (Carlie, 2008, p. 124).

While three-aisled longhouses constitute the majority of structures found on a farmstead, smaller and rectangular three-, two- and one-aisled post-built structures appear likewise. Due to the lack of elaborate constructions, their functions remain mostly unclear – although they are often interpreted as outhouses and are assigned single economic functions such as granaries, storages, byres or stables (Carlie and Artursson, 2005, p. 164; Aspeborg, 2026, p. 39-43). Lastly, sunken floored buildings or pit-houses show up throughout the entire Iron Age, yet their observation on regular farmstead-sites in Scania is infrequent (*ibid.*, p. 43f.; see fig. 7). Pit-houses are small rectangular or irregularly shaped features that are dug down into the ground and often fitted with simple single or two-post timber structures (Carlie and Artursson, 2005, p. 165). As it is the case in other parts of Northern Europe and Scandinavia, these sunken floored buildings are especially in the Late Iron Age associated with various activities related to specialised craft-production, such as textile and metal working and appear more frequently at trading sites (*ibid.*).

Late Iron Age longhouses have generally been described as multifunctional, but Aspeborg (2026, p. 39-46) notes that these inferences are purely analogous and based on better preserved sites from elsewhere in Scandinavia and Northern Europe. Because of their size longhouses are seen as multifunctional, while smaller buildings are understood as additional structures with single functions, complementing the main longhouse and thereby also receiving less attention in settlement archaeology (*ibid.*). Through interdisciplinary analyses, these additional buildings could potentially be interpreted more precisely (*ibid.*, p. 46). In any case, it is assumed that large Late Iron Age longhouses were in varying constellations comprised of storage rooms, byres,

halls, hearth rooms, entrance rooms and additional spaces (Eriksen, 2019, p. 54). It has been argued furthermore, that the size of a farmstead's buildings potentially reflects variations of social stratification (Artursson, 2005, p. 78), whereby for example large farmsteads with elaborate longhouses and multiple additional buildings are interpreted as high status settlements (Carlie, 2008b, p. 110). Additional characteristic features of LIA farmsteads found in farmyard-spaces are wells, pits, open hearths, fences and ditches. Against all of the above noted information it has to be noted that the general state of preservation at most sites is lacking and does not allow for any in-depth interpretations.

Southern Scandinavia exhibits distinct characteristics in terms of settlement structure when compared to the entirety of Scandinavia. While settlement in most of Scandinavia was dispersed and characterised by solitary farmsteads, settlement in the regions to the south in modern-day Denmark and Scania was much denser with hamlets and even larger villages consisting of multiple tightly spaced farmsteads (Fallgren, 2008, p. 67; Eriksen, 2019, p. 111).

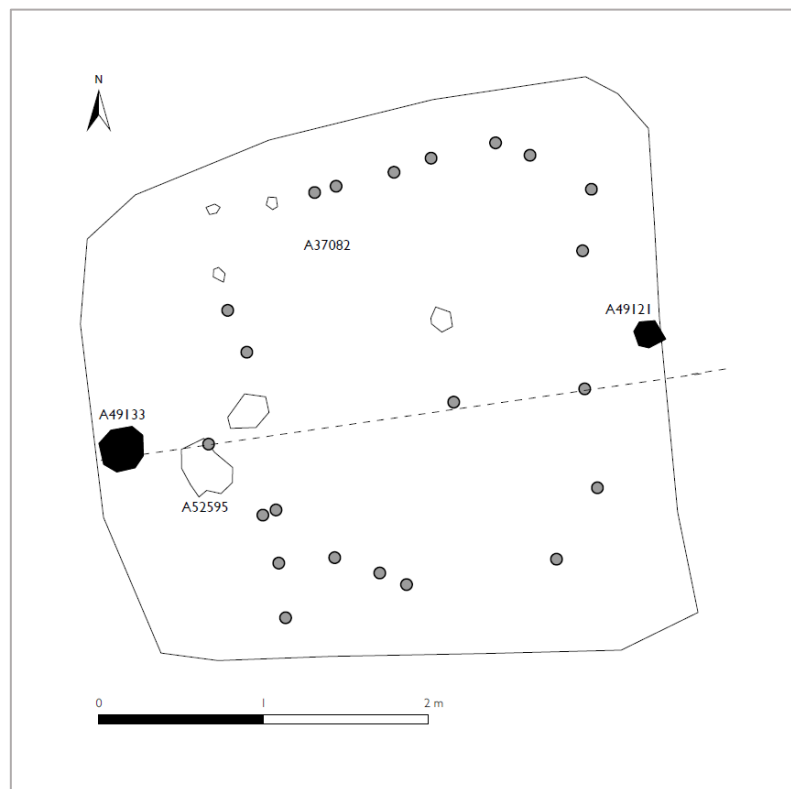


Fig. 7. Pit-house 36 from Eskilstorp 2:26 dated to the Viking Age to Early Middle Ages (Grehn and Ohlsson, 2024, Hus 36).

Schmidt Sabo and Söderberg (2019, p. 9) define a village as a settlement unit consisting of at least two closely situated agrarian farmsteads with some form of cooperative work. Yet even in the South there exist certain regional differences with a generally observable shift in settlement structure from Jutland in the West to Scania in the East.

As a settlement unit placed in a landscape which was focused on agrarian production, the farmstead came into being through the interplay of the main longhouse and its various additional buildings set in the context of the farmyard, meaning the open space between and immediately beyond the farmstead-buildings. The farmyard and the landscape beyond must be

understood to have been equally as important as the interior space of a longhouse, i.e., depending on the season the fields and crops in and around the farmyard were merely a part of a grander assemblage of rural life in Scania, where access to fields, pastures for cattle, meadows, forests, wetland areas and the sea presented themselves not just as resources but also as significant areas of interaction that shaped daily life (Aspeborg, 2026, p. 53). While post-built enclosures are a regular occurrence during the Iron Age in Western Denmark, they become less common especially in Scania where they have been rarely observed (*ibid.*, p. 54-57). It is possible that farmsteads and their farmyards were either enclosed by undetectable features such as vegetation and subtle earthworks, or not enclosed at all.

5.2. Scanian settlement structure during the Late Iron Age

As mentioned in chapter 2, several excavation projects in Western and Southwestern Scania have in the past two to three decades generated significant publications, which in turn have synthesised material from the Stone Ages to the Viking Age and illustrated several key changes of settlement organisation and structure (Carlie and Artursson, 2005; Högberg, Nilsson and Skoglund, 2009; Schmidt Sabo and Söderberg, 2019) and building traditions throughout the centuries (Artursson, 2005; Björhem and Magnusson Staaf, 2006). Most notably the Malmö-area has seen several large-scale infrastructure projects producing large amounts of settlement archaeological material that has consequently made it one of Sweden's most well studied settlement areas from prehistoric times (Schmidt Sabo and Söderberg, 2019, p. 11).

This thesis is mainly concerned with the Late Iron Age, yet said publications have emphasised the importance of acknowledging the developments in the preceding archaeological periods leading up to the Vendel Period and ultimately the Viking Age as significant in order to understand settlement structure and organisation at the tail-end of the Iron Age. In a study of settlement structure and building traditions in Western Scania Carlie and Artursson (2005) analyse ca. 70 sites and the behaviour of individual farmsteads throughout the centuries. They note how even in their regional study of Western Scania settlement structure cannot simply be generalised, instead building types and settlement organisation in each micro-region will have depended on the local landscape including its topographical and natural-geographical aspects (Carlie and Artursson, 2005, p. 235). While settlement in Early Iron Age Scania tends to be more mobile and dispersed and building types more uniform, settlement structure gradually develops into a more condensed and complex form during the Migration Period and into the Late Iron Age (*ibid.*, p. 235-238). As the number and types of buildings per farmstead generally increase and pit-houses become a more common sight, farmsteads can be observed to remain

both solitary and spread-out, yet more commonly they are clustered and appear in villages of varying sizes and densities (Carlie and Artursson, 2005, p. 238f.). It is during this time when large high-status farmsteads, specialised trading and crafting sites such as Löddeköpinge and Åhus and central places such as Uppåkra and Järrestad become defining features in the socio-political landscape of Scania.

A micro-regional study in the area south of modern-day Malmö by Björhem and Skoglund (2009) offers some valuable insight as it synthesises material from various infrastructure projects and extensive excavations from the 90's and 2000's and consequently focuses on long-term settlement processes and continuity throughout the Iron Age. Their presentation rests on a chronological division that is based on building traditions and is divided into four phases that corresponds to set artificial time-frames and loosely follows the regional archaeological periodisation (Björhem and Magnusson Staaf, 2006; Björhem and Skoglund, 2009, p. 46). In phase D (700 to 900 AD) settlement in the area is still characterised by mobile multi-phased farmsteads, as villages are established and abandoned, yet most notably at the end of the Viking Age villages and farmsteads tend to be clustered and remain around the later historical towns and villages (ibid., p. 57). In several cases entire villages can be observed to have been abandoned concurrently. The authors see three distinct breaks in settlement structure and building-traditions around 200 BC, 300 AD and 700 AD, which potentially line up with overarching societal changes that affected agriculture and life on farmsteads (ibid., p. 59). They argue that during each break landownership was re-arranged, farmsteads moved locations and new building traditions were developed or adopted, reflecting new socio-economic structures in society.

Schmidt Sabo and Söderberg (2019) offer an analysis of large settlement datasets from prehistoric to historic Scania in order to compare fluctuations and shifts of settlement structure from 400 to 1800. More specifically they compare datasets from different Scanian regions and measure the total number of farmsteads, large farmsteads, pit-houses and aristocratic farmsteads in 25-year-intervals. After reduced agricultural activities and a decline of settlement and population numbers between 500 and 700 AD, a noticeable rise in settlement numbers occurs at the beginning of the Late Iron Age around 700 and continues well into the Viking Age (Schmidt Sabo and Söderberg, 2019, p. 17ff.). At the end of the Late Iron Age a significant rise in farmstead numbers and sizes of individual farmsteads can be observed. As a case study the authors analyse long-term developments in the aforementioned micro-region around Lockarp south of Malmö in intervals of approximately 100 to 150 years. This area is chosen as it is

suggested to have been an important prehistoric crossroad where the Uppåkra-Trelleborg road is assumed to have met an east-west road running towards the coast (Schmidt Sabo and Söderberg, 2019, p. 23). The authors illustrate how a characteristic pattern of alternating farmstead and village formations can be observed: In the early Vendel Period few farmsteads are established in certain previously ‘unsettled’ spots. After a while, additional farmsteads gather round either loosely or as dense villages, within which large farmsteads appear (around 700), are then split into multiple farmsteads (around 875), and thinned out with time while later historically known villages around remaining foci are formed (10th to 11th century) (ibid., p. 23-31). These formations and reductions can be seen as constant processes and local sporadic phenomena, highlighting the fact that despite over-regional similarities each region in Scania must be investigated separately (ibid., p. 44).

5.3. Case studies

It is against the background of complex settlement processes illustrated above that the following three sites of Hjärrup, Västervång and Eskilstorp are analysed with the help of the theoretical framework presented above. Acknowledging the fundamental limitations posed by the preservation and the general condition of the analysed material, it will be emphasised how alternative perspectives aided by integrated theoretical and methodological approaches as presented in this thesis, can help in a re-examination of the archaeological record. An in-depth presentation of each site’s developments and detailed descriptions of the individual features can be found in the appendix, and for clarifications it will be referred to as such.

5.3.1. Lived Social Spaces at Hjärrup

The picture of household activities provided in the following analysis cannot be understood as complete, as the archaeological record at Viking Age Hjärrup is fragmented. Any suggestions below have been made in the knowledge of these limitations, meaning that potential future excavations at the site might change the current understanding of the farmstead’s composition and the connected activities.

In a deep-time perspective, Viking Age settlement activities at Hjärrup can be seen to indirectly follow after earlier sporadic traces of single or multiple farmsteads, i.e., the inhabitants of the Viking Age settled in an area which was last occupied centuries earlier and lastly around ca. 600 AD (Schmidt Sabo, 2016, p. 20). It is during the middle of the Viking Age that the earliest structures appear to the east in area C, and during the Late Viking Age that the farmstead reaches its largest extent and most complex and differentiated settlement structure spanning across all

three excavated areas, here defined as A, B and C (see appendix 8.1. and fig. 8). Despite the fragmented state of the site, the recorded built environment, the associated finds and the

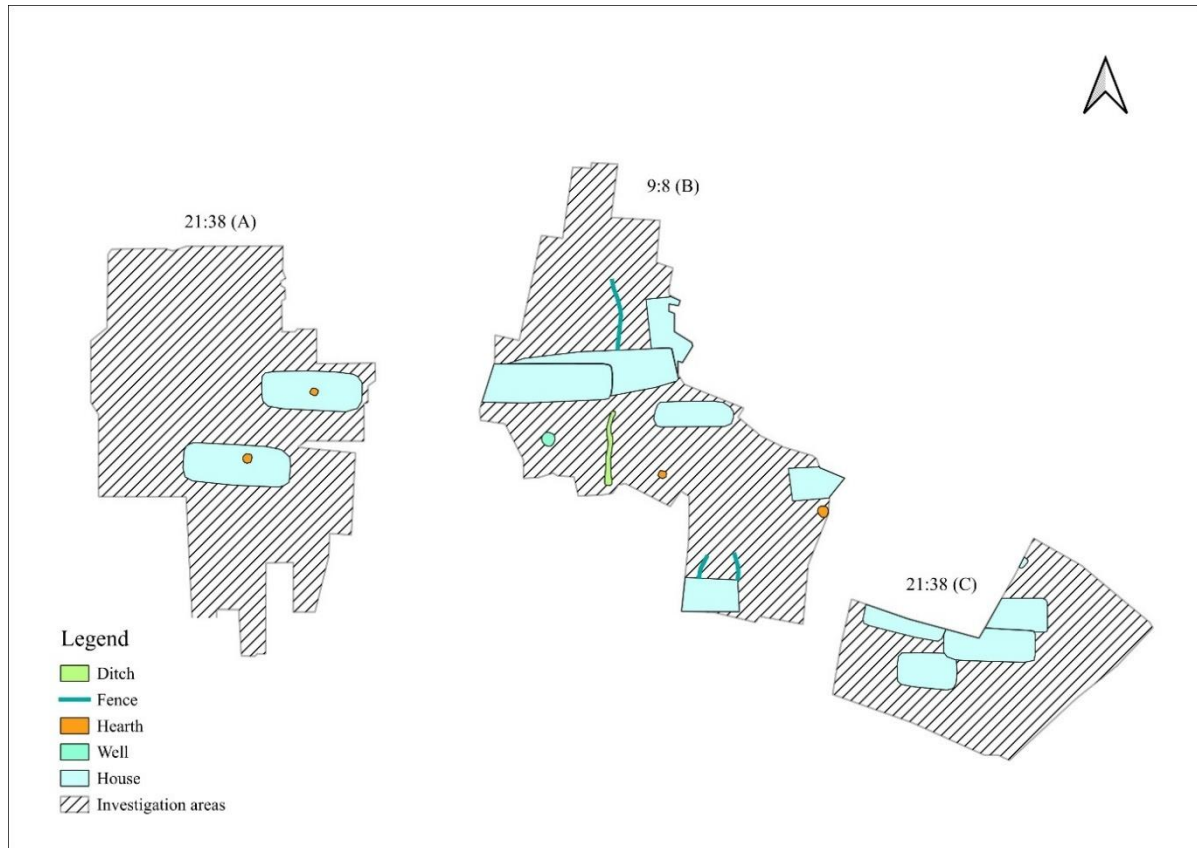


Fig. 8. Hjärup 21:38 (A and C) and 9:8 (B) with schematized Viking Age features. (Redrawn by the author after Schmidt Sabo, 2018, p. 143.)

reconstructed activities at Hjärup can be used to grasp lived social spaces within this large farmstead.

Beginning in area C with the earliest structures belonging to the Middle to Late Viking Age farmstead, we see the establishment of one or several consecutive medium-sized longhouses. Neither the exact sequence, nor exact functions can be identified, meaning that the houses could have been used as either human dwellings, byres or storages (Schmidt Sabo, 2016, p. 22; 66ff.). Merely house 13 which contains the possible remains of a hearth can be understood to have fulfilled some domestic function. The fact that these longhouses were placed tightly against and almost overlapping each other indicates that this area was intentionally kept occupied throughout the 200 years of habitation, which emphasises the multitemporal quality of this eastern area of the farmstead and which by extension implies a lasting memory as the positions of recently abandoned houses are respected. The presence of pit-house 121 and pit A735 to the north of the complex means that the possible dwellings, byres or storages were integrated into an overall activity area, that represented the eastern-most extent of the farmstead (ibid., p. 68-



Fig. 9. Hjärup 9:8, house 13 and possible room divisions and routes of access (Schmidt Sabo, 2011, p. 25; shapes added and gamma map created by author)

71; see fig. 21). Nonetheless, the exact nature of activities in this area cannot be defined any more precisely than generally domestic, due to the lack of macrofossils, artefacts and animal bones. From the limited finds of a single pig-bone fragment and few cereals in house 13, as well as the evidence from pit-house 121 general agricultural and domestic activities in a broad sense can be assumed to have taken place here during the Middle and Late Viking Age.

At the centre of area B initially stood the small longhouse 14 which marks the beginnings of the Hjärup farmstead, and sometime during the Late Viking Age and following the disassembling of house 14, the large longhouse 13 is built immediately on top (Schmidt Sabo, 2011, p. 24-28). This new longhouse is significantly larger and the spatial qualities of its interior layout are much more complex, representing the creation of dedicated spaces and patterns of movement (fig. 9)². The following access analysis sees the recorded entrance as the only one, even though more could have existed in the disturbed portions of the wall. From the northern

² For the remainder of the analysis the gamma map's symbols and corresponding colours denote following meanings: **Shapes:** circle: room-unit, line between circles: single or dual path of movement between spaces, dotted line: Possible movement between spaces. **Fillings:** crossed out: carrier/exterior space, grey: transitory space, orange: hall, green: rooms with unknown function, yellow: potential economic rooms.

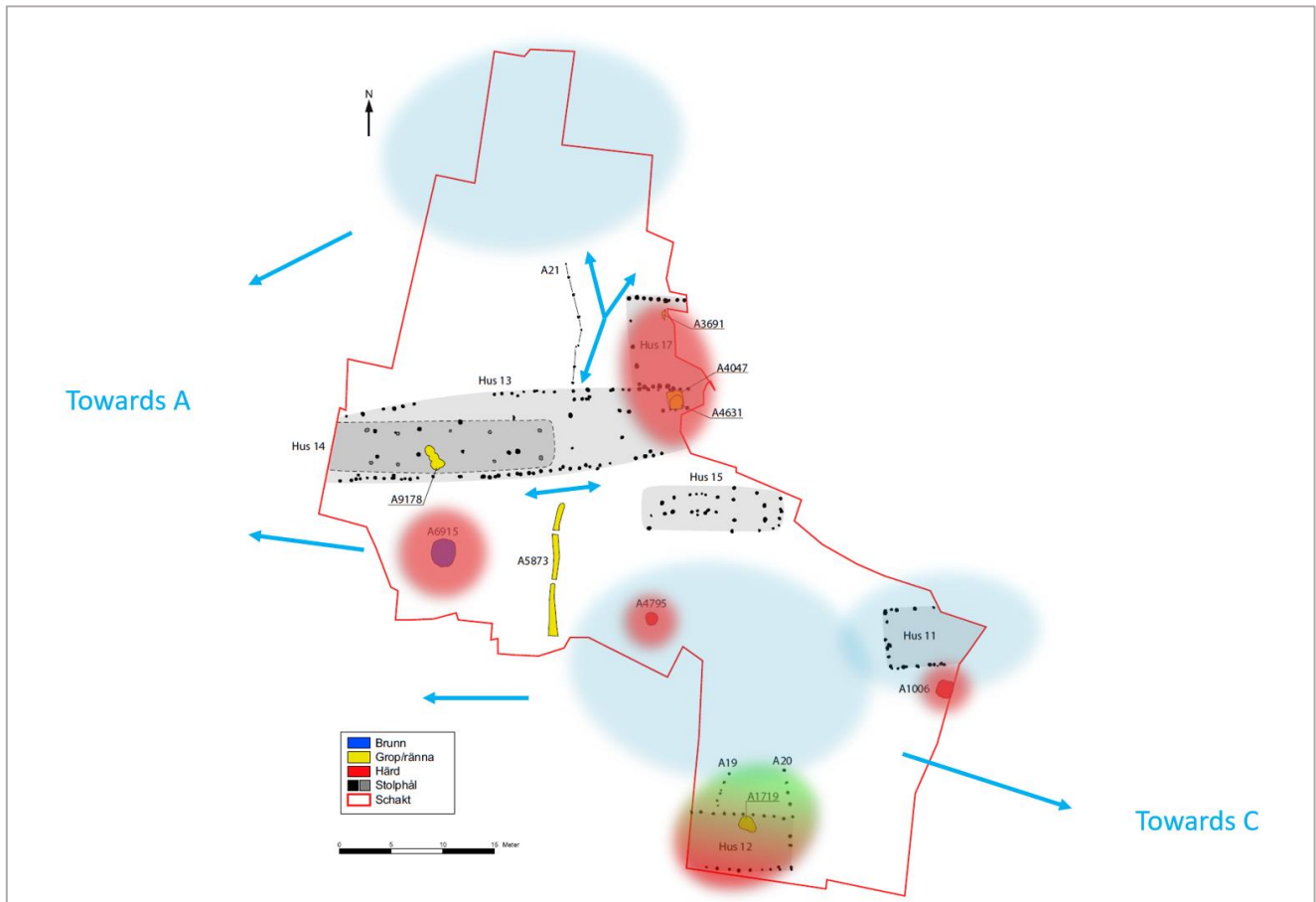


Fig. 10. Hjärup 9:8, area B phase 2 farmstead (Schmidt Sabo, 2011, p. 23, shapes added by author)

entrance one would have first entered a transitory room which provided access to either the eastern gable room or the central hall to the west. Beyond the hall lay one or several further rooms, which at the current state of understanding were only accessible through the hall. Thus, access specifically to the eastern-most rooms was controlled, being potentially reserved for specific members of the household. Access into the hall was otherwise less controlled, which makes sense if we understand the hall as a public and private gathering space for both household-members and visitors. Yet depending on the role of a household-member, the according daily patterns of movement could have been decided already in the transitory room, as choosing the eastern path would have enabled access to the multifunctional room initially used for storage. The evidence gathered from pit A4047 and the consecutive oven A4631 indicates that the room was repurposed to focus on food processing at some point during the longhouse's life span (Schmidt Sabo, 2011, p. 27; 31; see fig. 9). Feature A6252 represents the most conspicuous internal feature of house 13, and is hard to interpret. Schmidt Sabo (2011, p. 25ff.) argues that due to its infill consisting of charcoal and few worked animal bones and its

relation to a neighbouring posthole, it can be seen as contemporary and potentially even as a deliberate deposition. This shall be discussed in the concluding discussion in chapter 6.

Sometime in the early 11th century, house 17 is built against or into the main longhouse, which is significant as house 17 could theoretically have been established as its own free-standing structure (Schmidt Sabo, 2011, p. 30). But importantly the inhabitants specifically chose to create this at Hjärup uniquely constructed and substantial structure, and integrate it into the material fabric of the main longhouse. This begs the question if a doorway once existed between both structures, which would have enriched the complexity of movement patterns. The contents of its hearth A3691 imply functions related to food-preparation, yet were probably not limited to these (ibid., p. 30).

The post alignment A21 to the north and ditch A5873 to the south of the longhouse represent conspicuous features which align with each other and seem to have acted as a boundary, dividing two general spaces in east and west (ibid., p. 31f.). In the north it would have meant that a person entering or exiting the main longhouse would have needed to move around the fence before reaching a possible farmyard in the north, i.e., it controlled movement in house 13's and 17's exterior space. When house 17 was constructed, it would have additionally created a narrow space between house 13, 17 and the fence, almost acting as a funnel for movement. As no other entrances were identified, it remains unclear if this was the main entrance through which household-members and visitors would have passed. From the open area to the north of house 13 a person could have moved west past the main longhouse and towards houses I and II. The ditch to the south would have similarly steered movement either along house 13's southern wall, providing access between the eastern area and the almost enclosed farmyard to the west. Given the fragmented picture of the farmstead's extent it is difficult to entirely follow Schmidt Sabo's interpretation of the area west of the ditch-/fence-alignment as a domestic and representative and the area to the east as dedicated to economic endeavours (ibid., p. 43). It does become clear though that the area southeast of house 13 gives the impression of an almost enclosed farmyard space with ample evidence of various activities. The two hearths A4795 and A1006 must have represented focal activity points within the farmyard, affording interactions, controlling movement and possessing affective qualities. Both were used for some form of food processing or preparation, and would have therefore either attracted movement through interaction and would have represented a sensorially striking feature (ibid., p. 31). A1006 is placed close house 11, implying a potential association between both, and interestingly contained a significant amount of burnt clay and clay lining which might

have stemmed from a dismantled oven or other structure nearby. While house 15 seems to have been partitioned, suggesting a division of internal space, houses 11 and 12 bore no internal posts, thus each containing large open spaces (ibid., p. 22ff.). It is striking though, that house 12 was constructed in a more orderly fashion than both houses 15 and 11, with less posts re-set in a cluttered fashion. This could indeed speak for a lacking need of repairs and thus correspond to good craftsmanship, yet conversely could also mean that house 12 simply possessed a shorter life-span than the others. House 12's open one-aisled construction speaks for potential storage or byre purposes, and the dual fences bordering its northern end represent a kind of small enclosure, possibly used for domestic animals, yet the activities which can be deduced from the contents of pit A1719 within house 12 imply activities connected to animal butchering (Schmidt Sabo, 2011, p. 22). Overall, this structure reflects an area of potentially diverse human-animal relationships.

From this enclosed farmyard space and moving west one would cross the well which represented an essential feature of the farmstead (ibid., p. 32). Its close proximity to house 13 implies easy access to water procurement, and moving further west one would reach houses I and II. Their size, internal layout and the associated hearths speak for ordinary domestic uses, yet both hearths seem to have represented foci of daily life within. In house I the hearth lay in a central open space, and a pathway lead from it possibly towards an entry in the north. In house II a sequence of two hearths can be observed, implying an extended use of this inner space. Both might have therefore possessed meaningful properties for the houses' inhabitants, in a functional yet also sensorial sense, as will be shown in the following.

Discussion

The overall most striking characteristic of the farmstead at Hjörup 9:8 and 21:38 is its complex spatial language. All analysed structures and features seem to have been arranged according to each other in an intentional manner. That several structures contain many re-set posts speak for the inhabitants' wish to maintain said spatial language, which in turn afforded specific movement patterns through the farmyards, between houses and into interior spaces. In direct relation to the open exterior areas and especially the farmyard south of house 13 are the various features. The presence of open hearths in the farmstead's central yard is quite significant in several ways. Firstly, if we assume that livestock had to be led through said farmyard and was even temporarily held in the suggested enclosure abutting house 12, large open hearths could be seen as obstructive features hindering movement. In a study on human-animal interactions in Viking Age farmsteads in Iceland, Evans notes that the placement of byres and spaces

dedicated to livestock in relation to human dwellings can severely impact the relationships created and interactions shared by both species (Evans, 2017, p. 157). Yet in the case of Hjärup this dedicated animal place around house 12 was directly integrated into and faced the farmyard as a central activity area.

On the other hand, open hearths so close to human and animal dwellings would have meant a significant sensorial impact. The visual, olfactory and auditory qualities of the hearths would have been ever-present in the daily routines of moving through the farmyard and especially when interacting with the hearths. They were to be interacted with in order to fulfil the daily needs of household-members residing on the farmstead or even for guests, yet they simultaneously afforded interaction through said sensorial properties. Such large open hearths would have had an affective impact even beyond the farmstead, as the smoke and smell they would have generated were carried beyond the farmstead. Depending on the time of day, both the smoke and light generated by the hearths could have been seen from afar. The oven in house 13 would have possessed similar affective properties, yet accentuated in a different manner. Having an oven in a tightly spaced interior would have required ventilation of some kind to make working and living conditions bearable. With this in mind, it seems almost natural that the eastern gable room was separated from the central hall and potential living quarters to the west by a transitory entrance room, potentially delimited by wooden screens. Any person entering house 13 from the north would have initially noted smoke rising from the structures, and walking through the narrow area between the fence and house 17 would have created a gravitational effect, drawing movement into the longhouse. Upon entry, the smell, sound and light emanating from the room to the left-hand side must have been striking. The household-members working in the eastern gable room would have equally connected the activity of operating the oven and moving around it with the various sensorial aspects it generated for themselves (Hamilakis, 2011, p. 216).

Similar experiences would have been made in houses I and II to the East. We might not know who of the Hjärup-household lived here, but the way how they tended to the hearths and moved around them tells us that the hearths were regarded central in both a spatially and socially structuring sense (see appendix 8.1.). The size of houses I and II and the central placement of their hearths indicate that upon entry they were immediately seen, heard and smelled. The light, smoke and smell would have filled the room, and the act of entering and exiting the houses meant a sensorially experienced and embodied act. Being greeted by the light and warmth can elicit strong emotional reactions of feeling at home, and similarly exiting the house meant

leaving such comfort behind, although we cannot fully grasp how that would have felt to a person living in the Viking Age.

Returning to the spatial qualities of the site, it becomes clear that the inhabitants felt it necessary to demarcate the areas to the East and West for reasons unknown, yet there seemed to have existed a logic behind retaining a dense activity focused area to the east and a more open landscape to the west. Movement would have continued beyond the farmstead where there would have been fields used to cultivate a variety of cereals, whose products needed to be transported back, stored and processed in the farmstead's dedicated buildings and where livestock would have been able to graze. To the south even in Viking Age times there most-probably ran a creek and sometime during the Late Viking Age a potential household member from Hjörup could have been motivated to erect a runestone in remembrance of a family member or friend who passed, for all to see (Schmidt Sabo, 2011, p. 10; see appendix 8.1.).

In essence, the Viking Age farmstead at Hjörup represented a complex assemblage of affective sensorial, multispecies and spatial characteristics, where moving through the built environment and sensing various aspects of it resulted in embodied interactions and activities for both humans and animals. This farmstead assemblage is characterised by the means through which both species interacted with the built environment, while simultaneously experiencing a variety of senses generated via embodied interactions with features and structures. The interactions shared by all within the multispecies household would have had an impact on how built space was created and maintained while said space itself afforded certain behaviours and patterns of movement. The dense placement of varying points of activity and the deliberate shaping of internal space observed in many structures, emphasise the meaningful importance of each feature's position. The fact that a larger longhouse was placed on top of a younger one in almost the same orientation is quite striking, as such practices recorded at other Late Iron Age settlement sites across Scandinavia are often understood as deliberate recourses regarding inheritance and landownership (Eriksen, 2019, p. 116). If we consider the settlement processes known from other Southwestern Scanian areas as described in chapter 5.2., the erection of a runestone and the place name Hjörup being traced to Early medieval origins and the few high-status finds as noted in appendix 8.1., we can assume that the establishment of this large farmstead was significant in a regional socio-political sense.

To summarise, the farmstead-assemblage at Viking Age Hjörup is inherently multiscalar as life in this space and the associated activities are both focused on individual houses, their inhabitants, the interconnected structures and activity areas, yet also on movement across the

open, with one entrance in the North directly leading into it. Coming from the southern side an individual would have needed to pass through the suggested transitory corridor to then pass into either the eastern economic area to the right-hand side – which Carlie (2008b, p. 135) suggest to be a cart-sherd or workshop-/storage-area due to its open gable – or into the hall on the left-hand side. It is worth noting that while access from the hall into the neighbouring western room was possible, said room possessed its own entrance from the north and was furthermore the room which had to be crossed in order to reach the deepest western-most room. Hence, access to this western-most room can be seen as controlled. The fact that the western-most entrance to the north had seemingly been blocked up at some point indicates a desire to control access even further. It is difficult to discern if the two entrances in the south-wall should be understood as successive or contemporary, so for the sake of this analysis they shall be considered contemporary.

It has been argued that the number of doorways which a longhouse possesses is able to reflect a household's complexity, meaning that specific entrances could have been used by different members of a household (Eriksen, 2019, p. 96). As farm I:a/b at Västervång shows several signs of an overall higher social standing – most notably its overall dimensions and architectural complexity – it can be assumed that its inhabitants comprised of a diverse set of household members (*ibid.*, p. 68-79). Movement in and around house 6 can be understood as an embodied experience determined by the historically situated and site-specific composition of Viking Age society. Since a household comprised of people of differing social statuses and roles which were enacted in daily life, the according movement that accompanied and reified said statuses and roles would have been materialised in the shape of access routes throughout the longhouse. The existence of multiple entrances could indicate that movement and access for different household-members was encouraged to follow along dedicated axes, i.e., a guest visiting the farmstead might have been encouraged to approach from the north to directly enter the hall, while inhabitants and servants would have simultaneously taken the neighbouring western entrance or passed into the eastern gable to carry out specific activities in each dedicated space. The existence of two closely spaced entrances in the south leading into different areas could imply that the route taken either into the eastern-most room, or through the transitory corridor into the hall was a deliberate act of controlling access. Yet the highest depth value – the number of steps needed to enter a room from the outside – and restricted access to the western-most room could signify this being a highly private space, not just the deepest architectural unit, but also “the innermost space in the social system” (Eriksen, 2019, p. 102). Hence, if we understand the post placed inside of the western-most entrance to be an act of blocking up, the depth-value

of the western gable-end room becomes even greater, implying the decisive control of access hitherto. In essence, having multiple entrances would signify that certain activities within this longhouse were to be separated, and the movement accompanying these activities needed to be controlled accordingly.

While most household members might have dwelt in house 6, the existence of a hearth in house 9 to the south indicates that this small building on the farmstead might very well have housed other members of the household, although we cannot specify who exactly (Ericson and Carlie, 2006, p. 26; see fig. 27). The proximity of a pit to house 6 and its contents comprised of cattle bones tells us that cattle were held and slaughtered on this farm during this phase, yet it remains unclear to what extent, where this happened and what the exact nature of the interactions was. It is furthermore not specified by the authors where the pit lay, i.e., its spatial relation to house 6 and 9 is unknown to the reader.

Moving towards the east the inhabitants of farm I:a would have encountered their neighbours from farm II:a, who according to the lesser complexity of the houses' built environment seem to have housed in more 'humble' conditions (Carlie, 2008b, p. 136). The placement around the filled-in Bronze Age hollow is significant, creating a semi-enclosed area which was bordered by houses to the north, west and south and two pits in the east, hence representing the farmstead's farmyard and by extension its main activity area (see fig. 30). The reasons behind an angled arrangement and the creation of a semi-enclosed yard-space are manifold, and to assume that it reflects the desire to create a backspace is problematic at the least since we are not able to grasp such Late Iron Age conceptions of space and the use thereof (Eriksen, 2019, p. 139), yet it was ultimately a deliberate action taken by the inhabitants of farm II:a. The size of house 5 could indicate this being the farmstead's main dwelling, and consequently house 17 could have represented a byre or storage. That domestic animals were indeed held and interacted with on farm II:a becomes apparent through the contents deposited in the two pits A14577 and A14759 at the farmstead's eastern end. The contents from the pits reflect events of disposal, containing ordinary domestic waste indicating that animal husbandry and food-storage and preparation had been important activities during phase 5 at farm II:a (Carlie, 2008b, p. 136). It is striking that of all recorded farmsteads throughout both phase 5 and phase 6, the inhabitants of farm II:a were the only to treat the remains of sheep/goats and cattle by specifically depositing them into dedicated pits on grander scales (150 g and 816 g each) than elsewhere.

From farm II:a it would have been easy to notice the workshop area to the east (see fig. 26). House 14 to the north of the workshop-area could have possibly represented a connected

dwelling space, but since further structures could lie beyond the area's boundary it is hard to reconstruct its full extent. While both craft-related and food processing waste were deposited in house 18's internal pit, indicating diverse uses, the deposition of antler-crafting waste gives an indication of dedicated crafts within or around this house. Lastly, apart from the ephemeral remains of a hearth, house 26 is interpreted as a possible smithy due to its unusual shape, possessing a potential wind-break to allow for shelter during work (Ericson and Carlie, 2006, 38f.).

Phase 6 – 900 to 1050

Moving onwards in time, the settlement structure at Västervång is restructured significantly as only two securely identifiable farmsteads remain, of which farm I:a continues into the Late Viking Age as farm I:b. Most importantly the organisation of farm I:b can be seen to intentionally draw on the spatial properties of its predecessor by reproducing layout, orientation, placement and distance between structures (Carlie, 2008b, p. 138; see fig. 27. The successor to house 6, house 7, had been placed tightly against the earlier house while following the same WNW-ESE orientation. This and the fact that the relative distance between house 7 and house 10 closely resembles the spatial relationship between house 6 and house 9 suggests that the

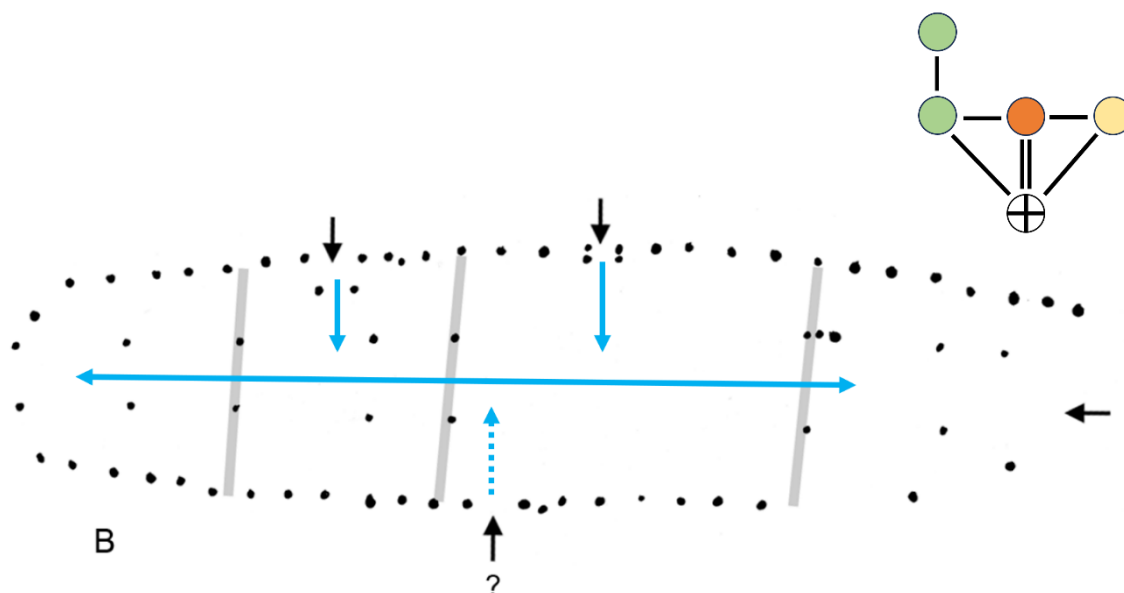


Fig. 12. Västervång 3:14, house 7 and possible routes of access (Carlie, 2008b, p. 124, shapes added and gamma map created by author.)

earlier structures might have still been standing and used as a point of reference during planning and construction (see fig. 27). House 7 in particular follows its predecessor's internal spatial layout closely (fig. 12). The absence of any obstructive roof-bearing posts at its central section

allows for a large and open room, which despite the absence of a hearth will very probably have been a hall. While both the western and eastern end essentially follow the same internal layout as house 6 – respectively two rooms, and a large room with an open gable – the transitory entrance room is left out for the sake of creating the central hall. Both entrances to the north remain in an almost identical position, while the western entrance is more elaborated as its posts are receded even further inwards, and a possible entrance lies to the south. The gamma map in fig. 12 and its visualisation in the layout of

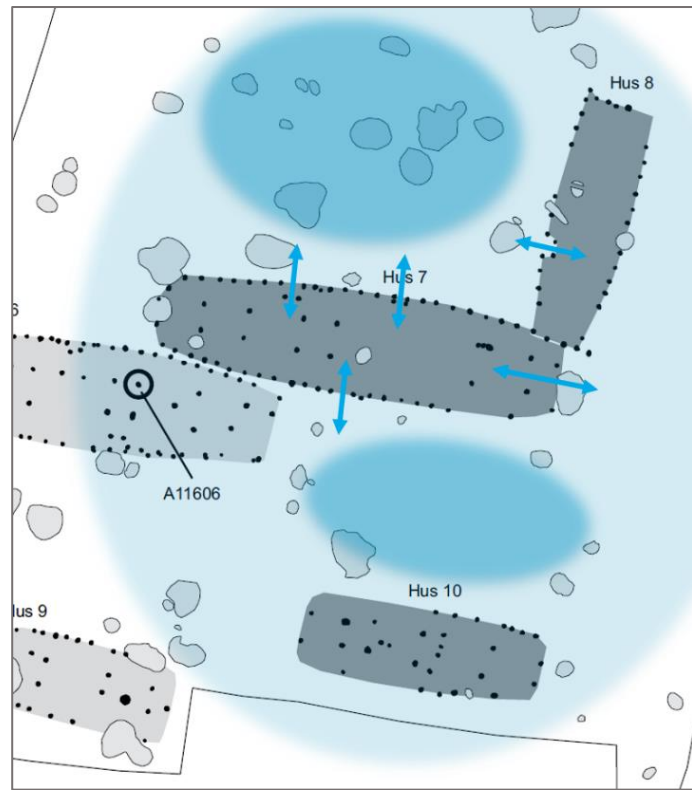


Fig. 13. Västervång 3:14, phase 5 and 6 farmstead I:a. Blue arrows indicate routes of access and blue spheres indicate zones of approximate activity. (Carlie, 2008a, p. 13.)

house 7 shows that access was in general more open and less controlled than its predecessor. Through the absence of a transitory room and the presence of two entrances into the hall, entry seems to have been encouraged. Nonetheless, the western-most room remains the deepest space in house 7, and the eastern-most gable-room remains somewhat unclear in terms of its construction – again a possible cart-shed or storage space with an open gable. An additional post-built structure, house 8, was built against the north-eastern corner of house 7 – possibly even into its timber-structure as the size and depth of said wall-posts is greater here than elsewhere in the longhouse (Ericson and Carlie, 2006, p. 25). The absence of any internal partitioning indicates the need to create an open and unobstructed space, and the existence of an entrance to the west – when compared with the two entrances in the north-wall of house 7 – speaks for the creation of an open farmyard, which is in part enclosed by the perpendicular arrangement (fig. 13). House 10 to the south is seen to increase its internal layout and general area, with a dedicated spatial partitioning as reflected in the internal entrance. Its size, position and the unburnt animal bones recorded in several of its postholes potentially indicate that this was a lived space, possibly even used for food preparation or consumption activities (Carlie, 2008b, p. 139). The multiple recorded re-settings of roof-bearing posts in house 10 indicate that the household-members at farm I:b saw not just the main longhouse, but also this smaller

structure as an investment that had to be maintained. While house 10 has shown no traces of a preserved doorway, it can be assumed that the space between it and the main longhouse represented another activity area in its broadest sense, i.e., an area where household-members would move about and potentially go after daily outdoor-activities. The exact reasons for the increase in total internal and external area of farm I:b are at first unclear, yet it is possible that it reflects a growth in household size or an increase in economic activities, as either more animals, people or more agricultural produce had to be respectively housed and stored in dedicated spaces (Carlie, 2008b, p. 141). The deposited animal bones in house 10, the addition of house 8, the creation of a hall, and the spatial reproduction seem to align with an increased complexity of household activities at farm I:b in phase 6 at the end of the Viking Age. While purely speculative, house 10 could possibly represent a dwelling for parts of the household at farm I:b outside of the main longhouse.

Across a now larger open space towards the east of farm I:b lay farm III:b, which had house 15 as its probable main dwelling, and the additional house 2. It has to be noted that the authors base an association between both structures on construction styles and similar orientations, yet lack supportive C14-dates from house 2 (Carlie, 2008a, p. 19f.). Nonetheless, both shall

here be considered part of a farmstead-ensemble. The manner in which the inhabitants of house 15 interacted with it is conspicuous, as the many traces of maintenance and repairs indicate significant efforts to alter or maintain the longhouse's structure (Ericson and Carlie, 2006, p. 31; Carlie, 2008b, p. 140). Its internal layout is rather simple and straightforward with a tripartite division, i.e., two gable-end rooms and one large central room possibly representing a hall. While maybe not as impressive as house 7, house 10 was constructed to allow for direct

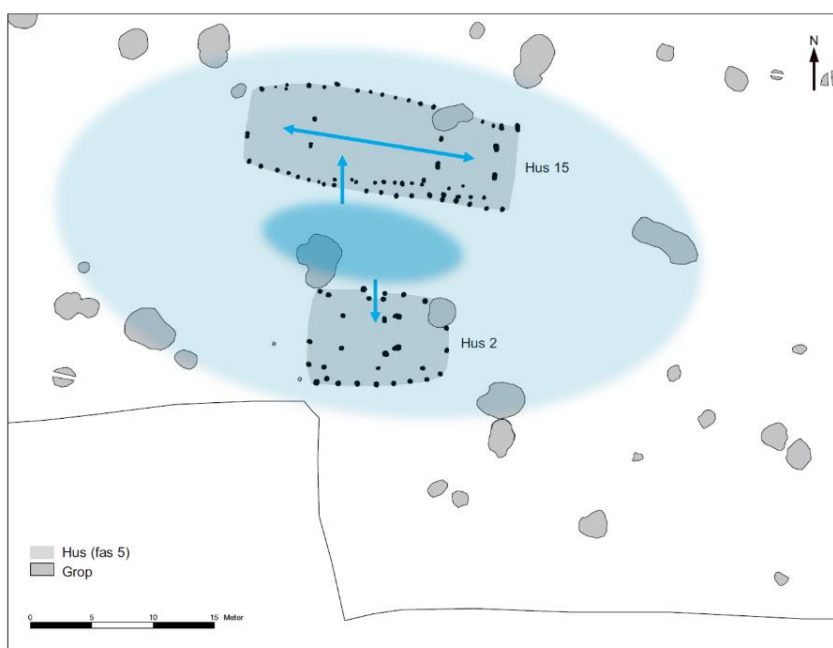


Fig. 14. Västervång 3:14, phase 6 farm III:b. Blue arrows indicate routes of access and blue spheres indicate zones of approximate activity (Carlie, 2008a, p. 19.)

access through a southern entrance into an open hall, which furthermore held a bench-like construction as indicated by a line of posts running along the inner southern wall. The reworking of the south-eastern wall-portion could simply indicate repairs of some kind, yet the alignment seems to have been deliberately moved to allow for a slightly wider space. Furthermore, the new gable-end might have been extended to allow for a strip which could have lain outside of the gable yet been covered by an extension of the roof. Despite the reasons being unclear, the inhabitants went at lengths to seemingly correct the alignment of the southern roof-bearing post-row. If we consider the reworking of the south-eastern wall, slightly increasing the house's width, we might assume that the internal correction was intended to follow an apparent symmetry. House 2 just to the south similarly possessed a fairly simple internal layout, a single room containing a bench-like construction along the southern wall which might have been used as seating furniture or as a work-bench. The observation of charcoal and burnt clay in some postholes are noteworthy, yet do not offer any interpretation of potential burnings having occurred in or around house 2 as the amount and detailed study of said finds are lacking. Both house's entrances are faced towards each other, which implies intentional movement patterns between both structures, creating a potential area of activity centred around the farmyard between both houses, yet most probably radiating even further outwards encompassing the immediate area beyond which would have been used for various daily activities (fig. 14).

Discussion

Ultimately, the lack of floor layers and finds limits our understanding of what activities were conducted in each internal and exterior space. The evidence gathered that does clearly tell us about activities at Västervång allows us to see that agricultural practice and crafts-work in a broad sense was practiced. Additionally, the lack of precise dates makes it impossible to illuminate the contemporaneity of all buildings and suggested activity areas. Yet the structures of one phase were more or less contemporary at any given point. It must be emphasised that daily life on a farmstead would have been experiential for all household-members on all farmsteads, including activities that can be inferred from the evidence gathered such as tending to cattle, pigs and sheep, daily chores such as woodworking, cleaning out byres, preparing and consuming food, smithing, manufacturing specialised objects, receiving visitors etc. Such daily activities not necessarily visible at Västervång would have held an importance for the inhabitants and were created through the affective qualities of said activities and interactions which engendered meaningful memories and emotions, and were by extension framed by the built environment which they had shaped for said activities and needs. The very nature of

interacting with for example a longhouse by entering it and moving within it in various ways, has in chapter 3 been shown to intrinsically influence human sensorial and emotional perceptions.

The farmsteads at Västervång – especially farms I:a/b, II and III:b – are best understood through assemblage theory and space syntax, yet to a lesser degree through multispecies theory and sensory studies due to the limited number of features and finds. The creation of a complex spatial-architectural language throughout the Viking Age speaks for differentiated household activities. The affordances posed by the built environment and the inhabitants' manipulation of said spaces to fulfil social needs represent a complex agglomeration of living inhabitants, the physical environment and the associated meanings where “humans are an inherent component of the assemblage of the longhouse” (Beck, 2017a, p. 51), and by extension an inseparable component of an entire farmstead and even village assemblage at Västervång. While scholars such as Carlie (2008b) might emphasise this site's importance as a ‘magnate estate’ in a network of the Late Iron Age elite in south-western Scania, they do not consider these spaces first and foremost as areas where humans and animals both dwelt and shaped each other's surroundings, subsequently creating meaning. If we consider these sites represented as static black and white house-layouts as places which were metaphorically speaking ‘activated’ through direct human and animal engagement, then we can move closer to an understanding of settlements as meaningful lived spaces. Architecture and the built environment are among other things subject to the inhabitants' social values concerned with the quality of the material, which affects function and aesthetics. These qualities can have an impact on the sensorial perception of the building which in turn affects the experience and the desires of the interacting inhabitants, thus constantly shaping and maintaining it. A prehistoric longhouse with its perishable organic elements is in constant need of direct maintenance, since the initial perception of how this space must look like and to which functions it shall cater is maintained to ensure a proper structure (Bille and Sørensen, 2016 p. 20).

Returning specifically to farm I:a/b, it is possible to observe the distinct multitemporal aspects of this farmstead throughout its life-span. While the main longhouse is “curated, made and remade to appear frozen in time [...] the rest of the assemblage (inhabitants, visitors, owners, ideas, practices) come and go.” (Eriksen, 2019, p. 141). The same can be said for the other farmsteads at Västervång, where the spatial language is respectively curated, shaped and expressed. It is striking that while farm I:a/b shows a long lasting continuity throughout the Viking Age, its surrounding farms, and even the neighbouring farmsteads at Västervång 2:25

exemplify greater fluctuations of settlement structure within the same period (Björk, Lenntorp and Skoglund, 2009). While on the one hand continuity and longevity of spatial language can indicate the wish to maintain certain traditional socio-cultural values as expressed through the built environment, the short-lived nature of some farmsteads and individual longhouses could on the other hand have resulted in a long-lasting awareness of their legacies (Eriksen, 2019, p. 141).

The wall-post re-settings speak for the inhabitants' wish to prolong the life of house 6 by repairing its timber structure, which has been shown to be connected to both practical wishes of prolonging the life-span of a dwelling space, but also to balance and maintain the social and semiotic qualities of the physical structure (Beck, 2025, p. 97). As people were most-probably born in or around such longhouses and experienced significant portions of their lives in them, emotional qualities were sub-consciously or unconsciously interwoven with the dwellings' physical fabric. It has been shown in the preceding chapters that built space apart from its immediate physical characteristics possesses inherent affective qualities that directly influence the perception of the inhabitants' daily experiences. This applies not just to house 6, but to any longhouse used at Västervång which in itself was an assemblage of living human and non-human inhabitants, the built environment, the relationships shared in these spaces and the memories and emotions generated as a result. The act of growing up, co-existing, visiting or simply just experiencing a variety of moments in and around a longhouse and its surroundings are sure to have left a lasting sensorial and even emotional impact on its inhabitants while the nature of the emotion will have differed drastically depending on one's role in society and more specifically the role and position within a specific household (Eriksen, 2019, p. 95f.).

The fact that farm I:b reproduced the spatial language of farm I:a implies that there existed a long-lasting memory of this farmstead at the end of the Viking Age, and by extension the fact that phase 5 farmsteads were spatially respected during phase 6 indicates lasting memories of those places too. Memories which were most-probably connected to contemporary perceptions of such buildings' meanings in Late Iron Age society. One such meaningful topos is the Late Iron Age hall which coincidentally can be found in the main longhouses of farm I:a/b and potentially on a smaller scale even in farm III:b. While research has been able to illustrate the significance of halls and hall buildings especially in terms of socio-cultural associations in connection with high-status settlements and elite gathering spaces (Jessen, 2012), their general importance as fundamentally structuring areas of household activities in not just a daily experiential but ontological sense has equally been stressed (Eriksen, 2019). The creation,

presentation and maintenance of halls and hall-buildings during the Late Iron Age can be seen as a deliberate act of reifying and materialising hierarchical claims of inheritance or land-ownership, yet moreover it connects to ubiquitous values of hospitality understood by all members of society (Herschend, 2020). Hence the inhabitants, or at least the household heads of farm I:a/b at Västervång seemingly sought to provide a space of interaction for the household but also for guests, thereby connecting the buildings' spatial language as reflected in the built environment with the socio-cultural aspects of the hall-topos. The reproduction of the spatial language at farm I:a/b throughout phase 5 and 6, the creation of a large hall room at both farm I:a/b and III:b, as well as the maintenance work done at both farmsteads must be understood accordingly. Within the context of a hall, the central hearth was an important focus of interior household activities, as well as a turnstile for movement within the longhouse as it binds the longitudinal axis one must walk along in order to reach any room within. House 9 in phase 5 as an exception contained the remains of a hearth. This small longhouse would have been in need of a main heating and light source, since a hearth was central in a spatial and most importantly in a daily practical sense. Yet most importantly maintaining it meant that its mere existence afforded relationships and interactions which became an embodied experience for humans. Moving around a hearth – depending on the season more regularly than during other times of the year – interacting with it, sensing it through its radiating heat and light, smelling the food cooked over it and the smoke emanating from it would have altogether been deeply affective encounters which the inhabitants of house 9 would have either consciously or unconsciously connected with this built environment. Nonetheless, especially the large longhouses 6 and 7 will most definitely have contained at least one hearth and similarly affective qualities, as it is a common sight in LIA Scandinavia (Eriksen, 2019, p. 55ff.).

That of all farmsteads at Västervång 3:14 farm I:a/b possessed the most complex spatial language and the longest settlement continuity is therefore no coincidence. Its inhabitants' manner of interaction with it indicates a wish to mark this farmstead as a special place in the landscape and especially among its immediately neighbouring farmsteads. Yet while special in itself, it was also merely a component of the entire village assemblage, even if a fundamentally structuring one. Life in the individual farmsteads and throughout the village of Västervång would have been dynamic and vibrant, with the individual farmsteads and their inhabitants seeing each other on a daily basis and cooperating regularly. Yet it becomes clear that the limited preservation of the archaeological record at Västervång does not allow for an in-depth study and reconstruction of certain aspects such as the multispecies nature of human-animal interactions. A village of its size most certainly housed and tended to significant numbers of

cattle, pigs and other domesticated animals, as hinted at by the scattered remains of animal bones in both phases. Equally as ephemeral is the use of empty space between buildings and farmsteads. As macrofossil analyses have been lacking at the excavation of the site, we merely have to assume that the cultivation of various crops and plants was practiced in the respective

farmyards and on the fields beyond. These open spaces would have similarly been moved about on a daily basis by both livestock and humans, going about daily routines, leading animals into byres etc.

The most visible trace of practices can be observed in the suggested eastern activity area of phase 5. The auditory qualities of having a dedicated crafts-area in a village with a smithy and antler/bone workshop will have influenced the daily sensory experience of the surrounding farmsteads' inhabitants. The hammering on an anvil in the proposed smithy and the smoke rising from it would have welcomed any person approaching the area, and similarly the many passers-by – traders, farmers, travellers, neighbours – walking along the road leading to Uppåkra which lay just approximately 50 m to the east would have heard the same. Potentially, they would have even recognised and known the longhouse and the neighbouring small workshop on the horizon to be dedicated place where bone-combs were created, nearby the large farmstead (fig. 15). Both the antler/bone workshop and the smithy seem to have been dedicated structures. Repeatedly seeking out these structures on a daily basis, engaging in the crafting and smithing, experiencing the senses generated from the engagements, such as meticulous bone-carving, or laborious smithing in front of an open hearth would have altogether represented a fundamentally embodied experience for the specialists working in this area.

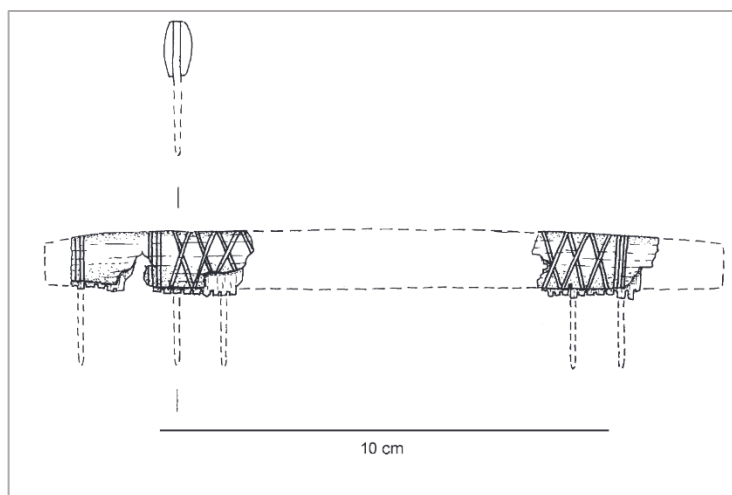


Fig. 15. Bone-comb recovered from pit A8363 (Carlie, 2008b, p. 138).

5.3.3. Lived social spaces at Eskilstorp

Phase 1 – ca. 700 to 950

The beginnings of the Late Vendel Period to Late Viking Age farmstead at Eskilstorp are focused around a cluster of settlement activity in the north of the excavation area 1A, following a gap in settlement activity after the Early Roman Iron Age (Brink, 2024b, p. 223ff.; see fig. 35)⁴. The exact phasing of the four or potentially five longhouses during this early period could not be

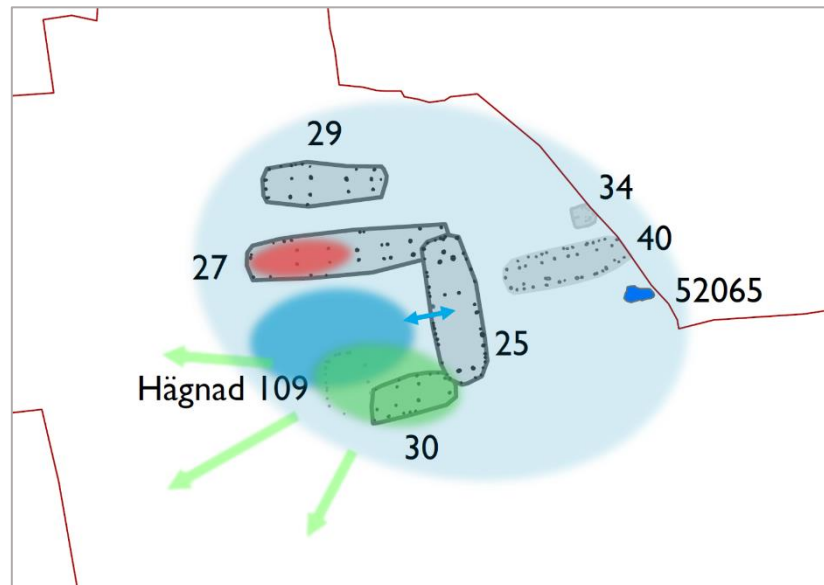


Fig. 16. Eskilstorp 2:26, phase 1 farmstead. Ellipses indicate activity areas and arrows possible patterns or directions of movement. Blue: Farmyard, Light blue: General farmstead area, green: Human-animal interaction, red: food production. (Ohlsson and Söderberg, 2024, p. 229, shapes added by author).

resolved conclusively, wherefore it is assumed that some were in use simultaneously to some extent throughout the 250 years of habitation (fig. 16). Importantly, the longhouses of the farmstead are arranged with respect to each other in an angled manner, thus creating a dedicated farmyard which is open to the West. Either house 25 or 27 could potentially be seen as the farmstead's main dwelling spaces, as their dimensions, internal layouts and contained finds suggest so (Grehn and Ohlsson, 2024, hus 25; hus 27). House 25 is rather simple in terms of its spatial structure with a large hall-like room and two possible adjoining rooms, and the contents of pit A32485 in its western wall consist of several ordinary daily household-objects. House 27 which is most possibly one and the same house in successive phases, overlapping itself and house 25 (Ohlsson and Söderberg, 2024, p. 230f.). Even though it might have originally existed earlier or later than house 25, it is clear that it was built with respect to it, indicating that the inhabitants were aware of the respective locations of both structures within the ca. 250 years of settlement during phase 1. Several postholes in its western end contained remains of rye, oat, barley and emmer and two closely placed small pits in the northern wall possibly represented a form of storage, although no finds except insignificant amounts of bones were recorded within

⁴ For detailed descriptions of phases and various numberings see appendix 8.3.

both (Grehn and Ohlsson, 2024, A113825; A113837). Despite the difficulties of assigning this western interior space any precise function due to the possibility of post-abandonment processes altering the original depositional context, it is due to the broad concentration of macrofossils in the western part of house 27 possible to assume that the processing of cultivated grains and by extension the preparation of food were carried out here. House 27's preservation of architectural remains is unfortunately lacking and cannot elicit any clear internal partitioning, such that it can only be interpreted as multifunctional in a broad sense.

Further aspects of agricultural practice at the farmstead can be observed in the constellation of house 30 and enclosure 109, which are interpreted as a byre or storage house with an adjoining animal enclosure (Ohlsson and Söderberg, 2024, p. 229f.). It is conspicuous that this structure's trestle width is greater than its contemporaries at the farmstead and therefore begs the question if this is related to said possible functions. The position of the enclosure against the open farmyard and the possible entrances marked by gaps in its north-eastern part could indicate that movement of the domesticated animals was controlled to pass the farmyard. Depending on the type of animal – cattle, pigs or sheep – the inhabitants would naturally have had to lead some out to pastures outside of the farmstead area. While precise patterns of such movement are in this case impossible to ascertain, the open western end of the farmyard implies movement in this direction.

Pit A52065 to the east of the focal settlement space can be seen as part of the extended farmstead area, and judging by its contents – insignificant amounts of animal bones, pottery, iron objects and slate – it represented a sort of waste disposal pit (Ohlsson and Söderberg, 2024, p. 231f.). Even though its precise relation to the farmstead is unclear due to the large unexcavated area in between, pit house 26 can due to the absence of any surrounding structures to the north, east and south be connected to farmstead activities in the west (*ibid.*, p. 232). Before having been used for waste disposal in phase 2 this small pit house was potentially used for multifunctional household purposes if the finds – a spindle whorl and an iron pin – are to be seen as indicative. As the jawbone of a horse deposited at the pit house's bottom dates to the farmstead's general period of habitation, it can be assumed that horses were to some degree held at phase 1 Eskilstorp.

Sometime during the transition from phase 1 to phase 2 pit house 34 and longhouse 40 are established and cohere to the same spatial language as the earlier structures with the same WSW-ENE orientation. As both structures could not be dated in more detail, it is possible that they coexisted with structures from both phase 1 and 2. How both precisely relate to the main farmstead or a potential extension of the settlement area to the unexcavated area to the east is not known, yet it can be understood to follow the



Fig. 17. Gilded silver-pendants F784 and F785 from pit-house 34. (Söderberg, 2024, p. 111).

continuity of the farmstead's main activity area. While no indicative material or features from longhouse 40 can clarify a focus on dwelling, animal husbandry or both, the exceptional preservation of pit-house 34 is the first in a row of striking features and contexts from the following phase 2 (Ohlsson and Söderberg, 2024, p. 233; 237; Grehn and Ohlsson, 2024, hus 34). Its features show an elaborate construction of a post-built structure with multiple additional pinholes resulting in a wall, and the presence of a small hearth or oven indicates human activity in this space. Such activity is confirmed by the various finds of everyday objects but standing out is the pair of gilded silver pendants of which there exist no direct parallels in Southern Scandinavia (Söderberg, 2024, p. 111; fig. 17). Their position at the pit-house's floor is seen by the authors as a possible deliberate deposit together with an iron knife and a ceramic cup (Ohlsson and Söderberg, 2024, p. 237), which is potentially supported by the fact that especially the pendant pair's size, appearance and context speak against them having been dropped by accident. As with the horse's jawbone in pit-house 26, how this deposit can be understood as a potential construction or closing offer will be discussed in chapter 6.

Phase 2 – ca. 950 to 1050

The inhabitants of Eskilstorp intensified activities during the Late Viking Age which is reflected in the diversification of building types and the overall spread of the settled area. Nearly the entire investigation area 1A is occupied, while the focus of farmstead activity can be located to the north around the former centre of the phase 1 farmstead and in the north-east (fig.18). The expansion of settled areas thus results in the creation of more open spaces and most longhouses in this phase can be seen to follow the same WSW-ENE orientation as in phase 1. Even if the

entirety of the farmstead's extent could not be recorded, the spread and position of all known structures suggests an almost rectangular area of settlement, which is possibly delimited by houses 43, 1, 19 in the west and south, and by ditch 118 and house 2 in the north-east, altogether creating an area of approximately 25,000 m² (Ohlsson and Söderberg, p. 234). The lacking preservation of most of the post-built longhouses in phase 2 complicates interpretations of activity, yet some exceptions can be made. Despite having originally made up one cohesive farmstead unit, the following discussion will be divided into the western and eastern area of 1A for the sake of practicality.

Within the main longhouse 38 it is impossible to discern a precise internal layout, yet the presence of pit A34106 and the dug-down feature-complex 31 at the house's centre indicates activities related to the storing and processing of food as seen in the multiple re-dug hearths, finds of quern-stone fragments and pottery (Grehn and Ohlsson, 2024, hus 38; Ohlsson and Söderberg, 2024, p. 242; see fig. 38). Posts set around the complex could have been part of some form of wooden furniture connected to activities around the hearths. Other objects recovered from feature-complex 31 indicate use for everyday purposes such as a tweezer, sieve-

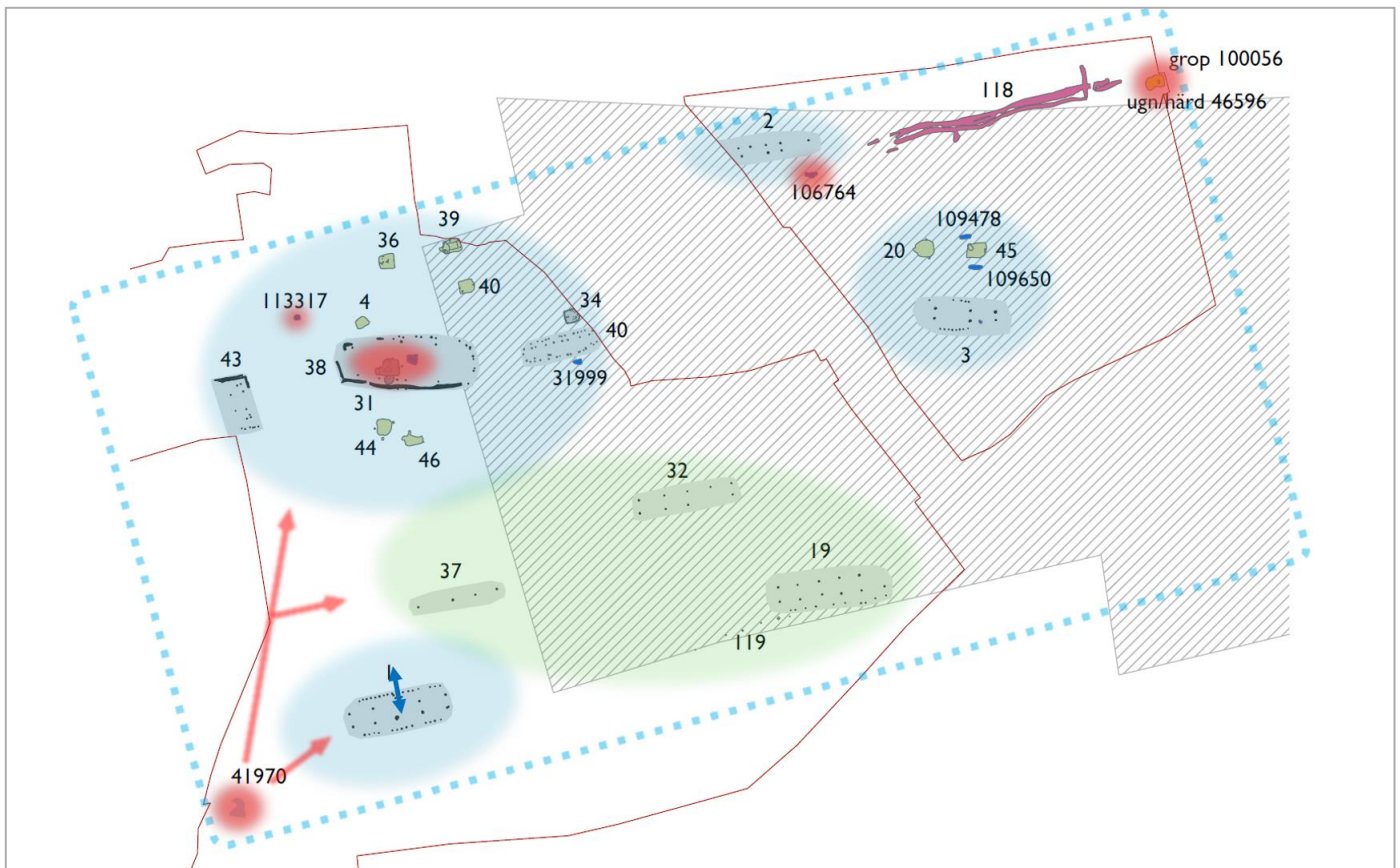


Fig. 18. Eskilstorp 2:26, phase 2 suggested activity areas. (Ohlsson and Söderberg, 2024, p. 234. Shapes added by author).



Fig. 19. Tweezer F1797 and sieve-spoon F1439 retrieved from feature-complex 31 in house 38 (Söderberg, 2024, p. 141).

spoon and spindle-whorl, as well as possible traces of limited metal-working (ibid.; fig. 19). All in all, if the artefacts deposited in this complex are to be understood as stemming from activities related to house 38, then it can potentially reflect a diverse and multifunctional nature set within the internal space of the longhouse where the hearth represented a focal point of daily activities.

The structure with the best-preserved architectural features house 1 is special at phase 2 Eskilstorp for multiple reasons (Grehn and Ohlsson, 2024, hus 1; Ohlsson and Söderberg, 2024, p. 244; fig. 39). While its layout is rather simple – consisting of a single preserved entrance which is clearly receded – and does not allow for an in depth access analysis, the condition of its features and associated finds are worth noting: Firstly, even though other entrances could have existed, the position of an elaborate entrance encouraging movement towards house 1 from the focus of farmstead activity to the north is significant, as well as its general position at the farmsteads possible southern edge. Secondly, the extensive repairs observed on several roof-bearing posts indicates a wish to prolong the life-span of this building, especially when considering the lack of such activities at other post-built longhouses at Eskilstorp. It is additionally the longhouse constructed in the most ‘orderly’ fashion at the site, following a strict symmetry. Thirdly, the archaeobotanical samples taken from features within the house speak for some form of garden plant cultivation and possibly even beer-brewing in the house’s vicinity (Lagerås, 2024, p. 174). Fourthly, house 1 is positioned closest of all longhouses to the well A41970 in the south-western corner. Fifthly and finally, a slight concentration of contemporary coins and other metal-objects appeared around house 1 (Söderberg, 2024, p. 99f.). Despite house 38 having represented the main longhouse of the farmstead, the above-mentioned aspects which characterise house 1 speak for this having been a space constructed to accommodate many people and enable some form of social gathering. The remainder of post-built longhouses on the phase 2 farmstead – houses 43, 32, 37 and 19 – could have been used as both byres or

storages, yet a multifunctional purpose with additional dwelling functions cannot be ruled out (Ohlsson and Söderberg, 2024, p. 244ff.). As will be discussed in the following, the sheer amount and composition of domestic animal bones recovered from various contexts at phase 2 Eskilstorp suggest that several of said houses must have been used accordingly. Yet as a farmstead of this size requires work from significant amounts of farmhands, these houses could also have acted as dwellings for such household-members. Ultimately, since most of them lack the preservation needed to make conclusive interpretations, it is difficult to know for certain what they were intended for, even if the authors argue that the presence of an undefined amount macrofossils – such as grain indicative of cultivation and food processing – would indicate a supposed dwelling-function (Söderberg and Ohlsson, 2024, p. 245). Ultimately, the amount seems to have been insignificant, wherefor it is of no further relevance to analyse their functions in detail. Of said remaining longhouses, house 19 stands out due to its size and orientation which follows a potentially contemporary fence-post alignment 119 running from its south-western corner. The spaces between the houses to the south of the main longhouse 38 become apparent if we consider the rather dense clusters of pit-houses and other features to the north and north-east. If we assume that the total farmstead area was indeed delimited by an approximately rectangular expanse as suggested by the authors and shown in figure 18, then the empty spaces could possibly even be considered as areas used for cultivation or livestock (ibid., p. 244). This suggestion should nonetheless be viewed as purely hypothetical in light of the absence of supporting evidence.

In comparison to the limited preservation offered by the farmstead's longhouses, the various pit-houses surrounding house 38 – which contain a multitude of daily objects related to activities such as textile work, food production, personal hygiene, craft-work, and possibly even religious beliefs as indicated by the cross-pendant from pit-house 36 – offer telling insights into possible activities within the respective pit-houses as well as from the surrounding areas (see appendix 8.3. for detailed description of finds and contexts). Internal features recorded in most pit-houses such as hearths and benches indicate the need for a well-lit and warm working and potentially even dwelling environment, and by extension suggest that even the smallest structures on a large farmstead were in need of offering comfortable conditions for inhabitation. In several cases such as in pit-house 4 and 39 the exact constellation of macrofossils retrieved from floor-fill layers and the oven provide a rich picture of various domestic activities including medicinal plants such as cornflower and chicory, bog myrtle for beer brewing and oat, barley, groats and wheat for food production and other plant remains potentially used as animal fodder (Brink and Ohlsson, 2016, p. 25; Ohlsson and Söderberg, 2024, p. 237). Equally as striking is

the diverse amount of animal bones recorded in the pit-houses, such as the impressive amount from pit-house 41 (5 kg) (ibid., p. 240).

Similar striking insights about daily life stem from the remaining features found in the western area of 1A such as the well A41970 in the south-western most corner with the deposited wooden ladder indicating maintenance events (ibid., p. 246), and most notably pit A113317 at the centre of activity around house 38 containing 3,7 kg of animal bones of which most could be related to the processing of herring, and previous storage purposes (ibid., p. 239).

In the eastern area of 1A two longhouses follow the same general orientation as the remaining structures in the western area, and most notably house 2 approximately follows the same alignment as the ditch-system 188 (ibid. p. 246), possibly representing a border to the farmstead's northern extent. The finds of animal bones, slag and a possible hearth speak for general dwelling activities within house 2, while house 3 offers less indications for any conclusive interpretations. The pit-houses in the eastern area follow in the same richness of detail as the western activity area. Especially pit-house 20 exhibits a noteworthy preservation of internal layout and significant amounts (13,3 kg) of bones stemming from various animals (Ohlsson and Söderberg, 2024, p. 247f.). Finally, the presence of the fish-smoking pit A106764 south of house 2 and the smith-workshop at the eastern edge of area 1A indicate diverse activities situated in this area. The pits A109650 and A109478 can due to their lack of indicative finds only roughly be interpreted as related to waste-disposal (ibid., p. 249).

Discussion

It becomes clear that the establishment of an ordinary farmstead at Eskilstorp in the beginning of the Viking Age would represent the starting point for the development of a larger farmstead throughout the last centuries of the Late Iron Age. The spatial language of phase 1 is retained in phase 2 as most longhouses follow the same WSW-ENE orientation, and most notably the former central farmyard area from phase 1 develops into the densest central farmstead area in phase 2 with the main longhouse 38 and the various immediately surrounding structures. While especially in this central area some overlapping of phase 1 and phase 2 buildings can be seen, most new structures erected in phase 2 occupy formerly 'empty' spaces. It must be noted though that such spaces which are now seemingly empty must not have necessarily been perceived that way to the phase 1 inhabitants, as they could have been used for cultivation, as pasture or for other now undetectable activities. Altogether, the deliberate placement of house 38 and the surrounding densely built environment, the general house-orientations and the use of previously un-developed areas indicate that a lasting memory of the early farmstead persisted even

centuries onwards into the Late Viking Age. While it is not central to this thesis, it is striking that even into the Early Middle Ages the same spatial language is retained, as the focus of farmstead activity remains in the north of area 1A (*ibid.*, p. 250f.). In a similar vein, the macrofossils recorded in both phases show how the staple grains were introduced in phase 1, further cultivated in phase 2 and expanded by a wider array of cultivated plants. The overall increase in number of post-built structures, the extent of settled area, the anthropogenic features and the size of the finds assemblage suggests that the complexity of household-structure increased significantly in phase 2, resulting in the establishment of a large farmstead with over-regional connections. This can be seen particularly well in the increase and clustering of pit-houses and pits associated with dedicated activities.

As it has been suggested above, daily life in phase 2 was potentially divided into different activity areas, either with multifunctional purposes or for single functions. Yet in reality there most definitely did not exist any strict boundaries between spaces, as movement between said areas could have been quite open. On a micro-scale, each single structure and feature could have been connected to activities in neighbouring structures, yet at the same time reflects the material imprint of one specific way of practicing daily life on a farmstead. Each individual structure and feature equally reflect very specific and context-bound ways of how humans and animals interacted with each other and how humans experienced a certain activity.

The overall experiences connected to daily activities at phase 2 Eskilstorp must have been striking, as the preserved contexts provide us with an abundance of clues about the sensorial qualities in lived social spaces. Despite being situated in the south-western most corner of the farmstead, the well would have most probably represented a foundational pillar of life since this would have been the main source of fresh water on-site. The fact that in following Early Medieval and Early Modern phases this wetland area was continuously used to dig new wells, and maintained through the creation of ditches implies that a long-lasting awareness of this place as a source of water existed (*ibid.*, p. 235f.). Thereby the inhabitants in phase 2 were equally aware of the significance of such a source and went to great lengths to maintain the well. One can imagine the laborious efforts needed to repair a well by climbing down a ladder and wading through the mud, all to ensure the sufficient supply of water for humans and animals. While farmhands would be working on the well, the household-heads could have simultaneously welcomed guests which arrived in the potential gathering space in house 1. We might not know how visitors would have experienced house 1 or potentially even house 38, but from the evidence gathered it seems they would have noted a garden with a variety of plants

surrounding the hall, open fields to the east with livestock moving about and around the byres and storage houses. And while preoccupied with social interactions one can imagine that several people must have accidentally dropped several coins, clasps and other metal-fittings which surrounded the hall. Yet most importantly the guests would have been offered beer, as would have been expected per hospitality from an invitation to visit one's farmstead. Yet the beer was most probably prepared elsewhere, far off from the eyes of the visitors in pit-houses to the north. The pit-houses and associated features in the dense activity areas to the north and north-east would have offered an image of bustling daily life within and around the houses. Almost all pit-houses would have been equipped with hearths and benches, indicating that people confined to their interior working spaces were in need of some degree of comfort. Naturally, a hearth would have been important for the preparation of food as in pit-house 39, yet it would have equally offered a source of light and heat in an otherwise enclosed space which was small and dark. The hearths recorded in for example pit-house 20 or 39 and the traces of post re-settings in other pit-houses shows us that the inhabitants were keen on prolonging the lifespan of said structures, so that they could go about their activities such as processing wool, brewing beer, preparing food, butchering animals, processing plants to create fodder or even medicinal remedies. While in their pit-houses, sitting on wooden or earthen benches – certainly even on woollen blankets produced from the farmstead's sheep-wool – people would have been accompanied by the light of a hearth and at times by accident dropped some daily objects which went unnoticed. Optionally some objects were simply left in place or found their way into a pit-house when it went out of use, as it was abandoned and filled up with waste from other activities around the farmstead. And sometimes they would have even quite intentionally deposited some very special objects such as the pair of gilded silver pendants in pit-house 34 to mark an act of closure. While the exact motivations behind such an act are difficult to reconstruct, it most certainly constituted some meaning.

At the same time, life outside of both pit-houses and longhouses would have been characterised by a variety of activities and accompanied by various senses: To the far East of the farmstead one or several individuals were apparently working in a workshop dedicated to the small-scale production and repair of small metal objects. The inhabitants of phase 2 Eskilstorp would have not only known this area to be where the household members versed in metalworking were going about their daily routines, this knowledge would have simultaneously been interwoven with the affective qualities inherent to said activities. We can imagine the following hypothetical situation: While perceiving from afar or when passing by, the sound of hammering, the smell and the sight of smoke would have signalled to another household-member that this was the

place of crafting and it would have been remembered accordingly. That this activity area was an open-air smithy-workshop amplifies the sensorial experience for the surrounding area. Similarly pit A106764 would have been known and sensorially experienced as the place where smoked herring was made in an open space. Smoke-columns wafting over the farmyard would have represented significant olfactory and visual stimuli. Both places as distinct activity areas would have held specific memorial and sensorial associations with the people involved and passers-by. Especially people directly interacting with the interior spaces of pit-houses or the smithy would have had differing yet significant sensory experiences; the experience of being enclosed in the small space of a pit-house while going about an activity such as weaving, cooking, crafting etc. would have been strongly amplified by the light, sound and smell generated from a single hearth, and the experience of non-involved household-members experiencing stimulating open-air activities from the workshop and smoking-pit may have been striking (Dowd, 2020, p. 202). Is it therefore possible to assume that the placement of such features towards the east was influenced by prevailing winds, which in Scania have been recorded to come from the West (Ekström, 2002)? Could the general orientation of longhouses even be understood accordingly, as Eskilstorp lay quite close to the sea-shore?

To the west someone was seemingly processing the large amounts of herring fished from the Baltic Sea around pit A113317 and deposited the waste from processing the fish and other animal remains in the pit, surely an altogether smelly matter, and the proximity of such a feature to the main longhouse was seemingly not of any concern to the inhabitants. It begs the question if both pits were even potentially connected in an overarching chain of practice in the processing of herring. Every inhabitant would have been aware of which pit or feature was a fitting designated place to dump waste, as the evidence shows us that many kilograms of animal bones stemming from butchering and food processing were deposited exclusively in pits and pit-houses. It would have surely been an act considered as part of daily routines, yet it also reflects the way in which humans interacted with animals, their remains and eventually the way in which a designated place is chosen to deposit the remains. The deposition of an animal cranium in the wall ditch of house 38 and of a horse-cranium in pit A113317 are suggested to have been intentional, and additionally reflect a specific shade of human-animal interaction.

Altogether, various lines of evidence from phase 1 and phase 2 indicate an inherently multispecies coexistence: Already in phase 1 the inhabitants of the farmstead create dedicated spaces for domestic animals, and possibly even adapt the overall farmstead structure, i.e., the arrangement of longhouses, to allow for animal movement out of the farmyard. While the built

environment in phase 2 does not elicit as clear indications of dedicated spaces for human-animal interaction, the significant amount of animal bones retrieved from various contexts clearly shows that the daily interactions between humans and domestic and wild animals became much more pronounced. As the types of animal bones found in phase 2 indicate, the interactions went beyond livestock and domestic animals, since finds of deer, owl, goose, seal and fish imply that the inhabitants of Eskilstorp moved far and beyond through the surrounding landscape in South-western Scania to fish and hunt, and by extension to integrate these animals into the social fabric of daily life on a farmstead. Activities observed such as animal husbandry, hunting, fishing, the processing of animal remains and plant cultivation mirror how both humans and their living natural environment became intertwined through direct interaction. If we extend the view to phase 3, it is striking to note that the position of the phase 2 fish-smoking-pit corresponds with two phase 3 pit-houses which contained the most significant numbers of fish-bones in that phase (Magnell and Hellgren, 2024, p. 209). This implies that certain activities characterised by human-animal interactions such as the processing of fish retained a lasting spatial and social significance for the household-members of Late Viking Age and Early Medieval Eskilstorp.

On a macro-scale the inhabitants in phase 2 were well-connected with their surrounding social landscape, since the many finds show connections to trade and communication within Scania and to modern-day Denmark. Connections and trade-relations which were potentially upheld at the local market place in the nearby Hököpinge, and the potential Trelleborg-Uppåkra road passing through it.

6. Discussion – Lively homes and social spaces

Reviewing the applicability of the framework

In response to the research questions formulated in the introduction, several key findings can be summarised. While the three selected case studies generally fit into the broad structure of settlement processes known from Late Iron Age southwestern Scania, the analyses have more so illustrated their respective unique site-biographies that are reflected in the diverse household activities identified in the course of the analysis with the help of the theoretical framework through its practical application.

The methods chosen by the excavators to date the sites and their individual features, i.e., typology of house forms, ¹⁴C-analysis and typology of pottery-types and other artefacts, and

the preservation of the record which these methods are dependent on, only allowed for relatively broad phases of around 100 to 200 years. Yet in reality the inhabitation of single phases would have been much more differentiated than it is visible nowadays. The creation and inhabitation of a farmstead was a constant process of erecting buildings, living in and around them, establishing features and areas for dedicated activities, interacting with said spaces, maintaining buildings and spaces and deconstructing them after abandonment or reusing them. The meaning of a structure or feature for its inhabitants set in the context of a farmstead-space would have thus depended on where in its individual biography it stood and how this determined an intended use (Beck, 2025, p. 72), such that human, animal, household and house histories became intimately connected (Eriksen, 2019, p. 177f.).

Even though the presentation and analysis of the case studies followed the phase-sequencing and broad functional interpretation established in the referenced excavation reports, it could be shown that by re-examining the archaeological record the underlying complexity of household activities becomes apparent. The individual farmstead-assemblages can be seen to follow contemporary definitions of the archaeological household concept as outlined in chapter 2, i.e., a relational assemblage comprised of diverse actively and passively interacting components. The various material and immaterial components of the farmstead-assemblages comprised fundamental temporal and multiscalar qualities inherent to the nature of specific features and finds. The household as a concept must thus be understood as a diverse assemblage which effectively bound said qualities to the individual components.

As all sites lacked the necessary preservation of indicative material to identify precisely dated sequences or precise functions, it became apparent that most structures and features of a single phase could have neither logically existed at the same time, nor have been in use for single purposes. Therefore, our understanding of how significant multitemporality and multifunctionality truly would have been to follow the dynamic processes of daily household activities on each individual farmstead is limited. It has to be assumed that in reality each structure and each dedicated feature was established, in use and abandoned at differing points in time within the individual phases, even though there is an empirically measurable contemporaneity of several structures and features over the span of 100 to 200 years. The phases and developments identified in the reports and re-examined in the analysis are after all merely approximations of life on Late Iron Age farmsteads.

The applicability of the proposed integrated theoretical framework has been shown to generate overall positive results, although challenged by each site's individual state of preservation,

thereby presenting a mixed picture of said household activities. Even though most features could be identified in broad terms such as ‘post-built longhouses’ or ‘pits’, more detailed characteristics such as internal divisions of space or securely identifiable functions were not directly visible but hypothetical at the least. In this sense the theoretical framework can be seen to have helped reconstruct such missing links.

Reconstructions of the sensorial experience for example have been quite fragmentary, as the present material did not lend itself to the direct identification of senses such as smell, sound and taste, which have instead been approximated from certain features’ overall properties – i.e., a hearth is an obvious direct source of light and warmth, yet would have afforded further hard to trace, albeit affective experiences such as smell and taste from food cooked over it or of the smoke it produces. Similarly, various wooden and textile objects generally not preserved would have possessed significant material properties sensible through haptic touch and generated deep emotional connotations (Harris, 2020). Multispecies interactions have been equally as challenging to observe: While human-animal-environmental interactions are unmistakably reflected in the deposition of significant amounts of processed animal bones and traces of macrofossils stemming from plant- and food-processing, more embodied activities such as animal movement and habitation within byres, enclosures or farmyard-spaces are less clear due to the lacking precision of interpretations of such spaces and features. Depending on the varying resolution of identified architectural remains, space syntax theory aided in the analysis of hypothetical movement patterns, the clearest of which could be observed in interior spaces, and more broadly in exterior spaces through the relative position of structures and features with respect to one another. Assemblage theory might not have directly lent itself to a practical application during the analyses, but rather supported the interpretational process during the identification of household-activities. Considering all components of farmstead-assemblages to be relationally connected begins during the study of a site’s recorded material and comes to full fruition during discussions as will be seen in the following. In order to enable a fruitful discussion of household-activities, assemblage theory must be actively considered during the study of the archaeological record prior to interpretations, and the record’s components regarded as relationally connected.

In the case of Eskilstorp, the preservation of architectural features was lacking and did not offer any detailed insight into the use of interior spaces of individual structures. Yet the preservation of faunal material, artefacts, macrofossils, and deep-dug features such as pit-houses and pits allowed for a better understanding of overall activities within potentially dedicated areas of

human practice and multispecies engagement. The nature of said features and their spatial relation on the other hand could reveal broad aspects of spatial use and sensoriality. Västervång on the contrary lacked noteworthy finds assemblages yet excelled at presenting individual paths of movement within structures and among different farmstead spaces, additionally resulting in the curated development of long-term spatial languages. The fragmented picture at Hjärup similarly contained limited finds numbers and virtually no relevant amount of macrofossil remains, yet overall presented a differentiated picture of both internal and external movement patterns, activity foci and sensorial experiences generated through interactions with the built environment and its affective properties. The case-studies complement each other in the sense that one site revealed certain aspects of daily farmstead life more clearly which the other could not. We can therefore create a reconstructed image of lived social spaces through the synthesis of several core themes generated from the analyses' results, which can be outlined as follows:

Continuity/temporality: The intentional placing of houses and activity areas within farmsteads on top of previously occupied areas implies the wish to retain a sense of continuous habitation at each site. Most structures, both large elaborate longhouses, smaller and less orderly built houses, pit-houses and even individual features such as pits and hearths have shown traces of maintenance activities. The direct interactions of inhabitants with their built environment in the shape of post re-settings or other repairs of the timber structure show us the continued efforts of maintaining their dwellings, byres, storages, fences etc. The social implications vary depending on the degree of rebuilding or repair, i.e., what the reproduction of an entire farmstead, or simply the re-digging of a hearth-pit meant to the household-members would have varied drastically. The experimental reconstructions of houses and farmsteads as outlined in chapter 3.4. have proven to underline such realistic concerns.

Spatiality: In all three cases it could be seen that by building on top of immediately preceding phases of occupation, an intentional choice was made to re-use spaces and refer back to older farmsteads. The placing of houses and other features was carefully orchestrated, adhering to a spatial language of which the governing norms are unfortunately not entirely clear to us. Yet it is obvious that in all three cases the memory of the physicality of formerly occupied or seemingly empty spaces determined the location of successive structures and features.

Relationality: Through the explicit reference of buildings and features to each other in terms of spatial placement, and through the embodied interactions of humans and animals within, among and with these curated spaces, the agential significance of these diverse interactions is emphasised. As an assemblage, each farmstead with its animate and inanimate, material and

immaterial components is held together and transformed through such relational and reciprocal ties, which are reified, reaffirmed and broken continuously. While we cannot observe such complex and diverse symbioses within individual structures as Lucas (2016; 2018) has suggested, we can more so understand entire farmsteads to have functioned in that sense.

Affectivity: The above-mentioned themes are set within the context of the affective qualities of their involved components. The relational ties that bind all components of a farmstead assemblage come to full fruition as they both radiate and receive affective qualities, determining the nature of household-activities. As a red thread running through said relational ties, senses, memories and emotions breathed life into the materially traceable remains and thereby constituted meaning for all involved household-members.

Results in the light of LIA households and society

Since the material analysed above provided an understanding of multi-faceted household activities, and the role of built space and other diverse material components with their affective qualities was laid out, it remains to be discussed how said aspects are to be understood with respect to what is known of Late Iron Age society, and who the actors were that enabled farmstead life and household composition.

The Late Iron Age in Scandinavia and its bordering regions was depending on the social status of a person comprised of different members of society which held manifold identities. Studies have illustrated distinct identities such as those formed by members of a Viking warrior-band, multicultural identities held by Scandinavian settlers in the diaspora of the North Atlantic, or those held by inhabitants of trading towns (Abrams, 2012; Raffield et al., 2015; Williams, 2013). Yet at its core, society in Scandinavia was characterised by the identities of an agricultural household in the context of a farmstead. Among a farmstead-household's agents stood for example heads of a household that owned a farmstead, children, relatives, dependant workers, slaves, temporary guests and domestic animals (Boyd, 2024, p. 11-15; Eriksen, 2019, p. 69-77). Depending on the region and the societal context, an agricultural household would have been in constant change and composed of differing constellations "as people are born and die, guests arrive at the doorstep, and new farm hands are taken in" (ibid., p. 69). The same can be said of the various domestic animals which coexisted alongside humans, as cattle, pigs, sheep, chicken, horses and others lived and died in and thereby shared the same social space as their human contemporaries.

The interaction of said LIA household-members unfolded in embodied experiences set in the context of the most common type of settlement, the farmstead, and through the intrinsically embodied connection of more-than-humans with the built environment, the physical farmstead was both subject to the changes governing the inhabitants' lives and itself an agent of change as it afforded a certain way of life. Thus, the *spatial* and *multitemporal* properties of the built environment, such as growth in total area, the increase in elaborate structures and finds, the continuity of its spatial language and the socio-cultural values and meanings it held can be understood to reflect changes in household-organisation. Importantly, these properties are *relationally* bound and loaded with *affective* qualities, consequently reified through the performance of daily activities observed in the analysis. Yet even those activities, interactions, beliefs and emotions that we cannot observe directly must be understood as fundamental to these lived social spaces: Domestic Old Norse religion and Christianity would have accompanied human household-members throughout their entire lives on a farmstead and shaped the cosmology of agricultural farmstead life (Nordberg, 2019, p. 345ff.). As part of the ritualisation of daily farmstead activities, household-members seem to have engaged in construction offers as they have been observed at all three sites, both in connection to large longhouses and pit-houses. While the exact intentions are highly debated in Late Iron Age studies, these diverse deposits seem to have been integrated into the material fabric of a living space in order to evoke a certain meaning (Eriksen, 2019, p. 170f.; Carlisle and Milek, 2016). A suggestion has been to see them as acts of ensuring “prevailing social, economic or ideological order” (Carlie, 2004, p. 221) when the household-members of a farmstead faced significant changes in their lives or to negotiate the use of social spaces (Carlisle and Milek, 2016, p. 262). Thus, integrating animal-remains – as has been recorded most notably at Västervång and Eskilstorp – into these important acts can be seen as fundamental multispecies interaction, since those animals held both a relationally important role in life, and carried that significance into death through an incorporation into lived social spaces (Eriksen and Ratican, 2025, p. 10-13). More striking is the identification of dedicated hall spaces on all three sites, which were created at each farmstead's zenith in the Late Viking Age, considering overall size, complexity and finds assemblages as indicators. Apart from providing the necessary living and interior working space for parts of a large farmstead-household, from various written accounts halls and hall-rooms are also known to have been significant social arenas where guests were received, feasts and celebrations held, social bonds forged, communal tensions relieved and rituals conducted (Mainland and Batey, 2018, p. 782f.; Eriksen, 2019, p. 66ff.).

Against the background of the grand socio-political developments of the Late Viking Age in Northern Europe and most notably in Southern Scandinavia, with the spread of Christianity, the extension of Danish royal power, intense trade, and the last Viking raids being held out (Zori, 2024), daily life as seen at all three case studies presents itself as an almost decelerating alternative of small-scale farmstead-life, where it mattered most to tend the relationships between household-members, their neighbours, and their accompanying animals, as well as maintaining their farmsteads as liveable places.

From the end of the Vendel Period and throughout the Viking Age all of the sites developed from simple agricultural into large farmsteads, of which even two resulted in the establishment of the historically known and still existing villages of Hjärup and Eskilstorp. These lived social spaces of the Late Iron Age past can be seen as just one significant component in a deep-time perspective, as the developments of the historical villages and consequently the lives of their current inhabitants were shaped as a result.

7. Conclusion

Having went through previous research concerning household archaeology, its role in Late Iron Age and specifically Viking Age studies, and developments in Scanian settlement archaeology as the scholarly background to the presentation of a theoretical framework, the three settlement sites of Hjärup, Västervång and Eskilstorp were each presented and analysed according to the framework's practical applications, in order to attempt a reconstruction of daily household activities in the context of a farmstead. The identification of said activities followed an inspection of the diverse material traces recorded at each respective site and succeeded to varying degrees, as certain theoretical approaches applied solely to clearly identifiable feature-categories, which themselves hinged on the condition of preservation. Thus, each site constituted different shades of household activities in a farmstead context, focusing on either spatial, multispecies or sensorial properties.

Concludingly, the effort in this thesis has shown to provide an attempt to generate a fruitful understanding of lived social spaces, as it enables the reconstruction of daily household activities not directly visible in the archaeological record. The clarity of the reconstruction and the following precision of its interpretational quality for discussions concerning the societal composition are entirely dependent on the state of preservation. The preservation of Late Iron Age settlement material from Scania and Southern Scandinavia as a whole complicates the

suggested approach, insofar as that our reconstructions build upon hypothetical suggestions, despite being based on the material and real, though fragmented remains of once meaningful activities and interactions.

A theoretical framework by itself should nevertheless not be understood as the single useful approach to study material of the kind presented in this thesis, but as a supportive tool during the interpretational process. Alongside traditional methodologies of archaeological practice, such as typological, archaeobotanical, osteological etc. analyses, it can help illuminate the material and immaterial relations and affectivities which once bound the material culture with the animate agents in a farmstead assemblage, resulting in lived social spaces.

8. Appendix

8.1. Hjärup 21:38 and 9:8

General information

Throughout the past four decades several infrastructure projects triggered multiple archaeological investigations carried out by *Riksantikvarieämbetet's UV Syd* and *Arkeologerna* in the area of the historical village centre of Hjärup, which revealed settlement remains dating from the Roman Iron Age to the Middle Ages (Larsson, 1995; Schmidt Sabo, 2011; Schmidt Sabo, 2013). The investigated area lies ca. 4 km south-east of Lund, ca. 10 km north-east of Malmö and most notably near the Iron Age central place at Uppåkra approximately 1,3 km to the east (see fig. 20). It lies on the highest point – 16 m a.s.l. – in a surrounding flat plain.



Fig. 20. Location of Hjärup 21:38 and 9:8 (Riksantikvarieämbetet, Forssök 2026).

The combined archaeological pre-investigations and full excavations in three main areas neighbouring each other, with the two site-designations 9:8 and 21:38 revealed the remains of multiple post-built structures belonging to a Viking Age large farmstead. For the sake of clarity in this analysis, a simplified designation of the respective areas as A, B and C is chosen (fig. 8). The site was originally identified during excavations between 1986-1987 in the eastern-most area A (Larsson, 1995), its central farmstead space in area B was uncovered in 2009 (Schmidt Sabo, 2011) and the site's eastern edge in area C was revealed in 2015 (Schmidt Sabo, 2016).

The present data at hand unfortunately offers a limited and fragmentary picture, as most features ran beyond the trench areas and could not be documented in their entirety. Hence, the maximum extent of the farmstead must be assumed to have been greater than the current picture suggests.

Site development and features

Settlement activities in area B are divided into 7 phases, of which the first three date to prehistoric times and phase 3 specifically dates to the Late Viking Age (Schmidt Sabo, 2011, p. 19). Settlement in area C is divided into four main phases, of which phase 2 dates to the middle and Late Viking Age (Schmidt Sabo, 2016, p. 20). And settlement in area A is divided into three phases, of which phase 1 contains the Late Viking Age features (Larsson, 1995, p. 28). The earliest traces of sparse settlement can be found in area B in the shape of a single longhouse dating to the Pre-Roman Iron Age and following this a pit-complex and a well dating to the Early Roman Iron Age (Schmidt Sabo, 2011, p. 19ff.). Following this, settlement activity continued in area C with a longhouse and a clay-processing-pit dating to the Migration to Vendel Period (450 to 600 AD) (Schmidt Sabo, 2016, p. 20ff.). While this presentation is mainly concerned with the Viking Age remains, it has to be noted that settlement activity continues well into the Early Medieval and Post Medieval Period as the village of Hjärup was established and developed into its historically known form.

Middle to Late Viking Age – 850 to 1050

Following a slight gap in activity the earliest Viking Age features can be identified in area C, including four post-built longhouses, a pit-house and a pit (fig. 21). Due to the proximity of houses 13, 16 and 14 it has to be assumed that these represent multiple consecutive sub-phases of settlement in area C. House 13 runs outside of the trench-border, yet seems to have been a one-aisled post-built longhouse, which additionally deviates slightly with its WNW-ESE orientation; a possible hearth-reast lay against its southern wall (Schmidt Sabo, 2016, p. 22).

Immediately bordering house 13 against its eastern gable is house 16, a badly preserved three-aisled longhouse, and running parallel with it is house 14 to the north, which possibly runs outside the trench-border. While Schmidt Sabo (2016, p. 22; 68f.) notes that even here the proximity between house 14 and 16 makes it less likely that both houses were contemporary and no further elaboration on this topic is given, I would argue that as long as no stratigraphically and chronologically specific distinction exists a contemporary or temporarily overlapping use cannot be ruled out. To the south of house 16 lies the comparatively short house 17. Due to the state of preservation the present post-built longhouses in area C do not offer any

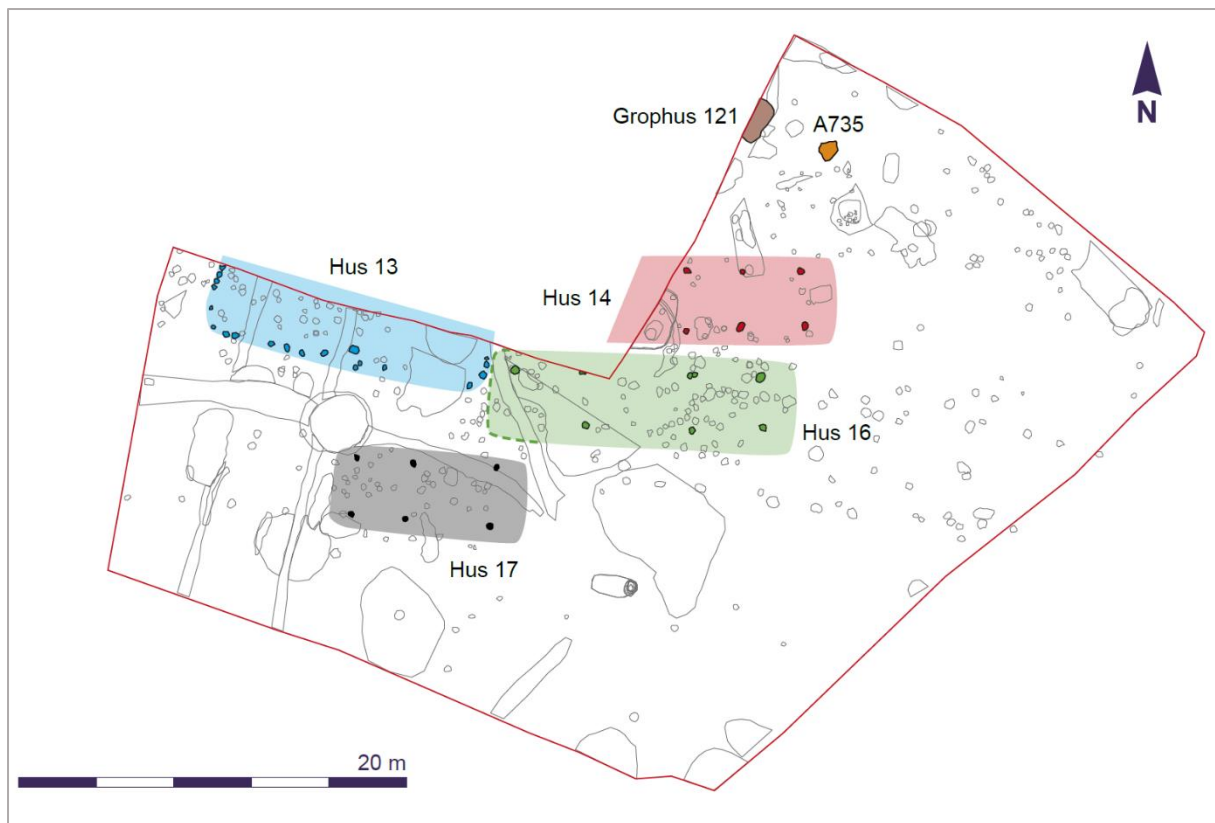


Fig. 21. Hjärup 21:38 (C) phase 2 remains (850 to 1050). (Schmidt Sabo, 2016, p. 23).

conclusive evidence on possible use, the exception being house 13. Its tightly spaced wall-posts might indicate consecutive events of re-setting posts to maintain the structure and ensure a longer lifespan, and the presence of a possibly associated hearth-bottom could indicate a broad domestic function (Schmidt Sabo, 2016, p. 68). Several meters north of house 14 lay the partially excavated pit-house 121 which contained the remains of a hearth and several potsherds (*ibid.*, p. 71), and several meters east of the pit-house lay the pit A735. Apart from the context-less finds of a Danish coin dating the first half of the 11th century and a perforated needle made of antler, no noteworthy finds or macrofossil-samples could be made (*ibid.*, p. 23f.)

The archaeological record dating to phase 3 (950 to 1050) in area B offers a more detailed picture of the main farmyard-space and the associated farmstead structures (fig. 22). In total six post-built structures, a well, ditch, three fences, two hearths, two pits and other features are associated with this phase. Of the six houses, only one longhouse could be excavated in its entirety, wherefore it can be assumed, that the actual farmstead expanded beyond area B. At the area's southern end lies house 12, a rectangular and one-aisled post-built longhouse of at least 10 m length and 5,4 m width which runs outside the trench-boundary in the west (Schmidt Sabo, 2011, p. 24). Three posts in the gavel and south-eastern corner were re-set and most notably

two post linings (A19 and A20) run diagonally from the northern longitudinal ca. 4,5 m towards the north, yet no entrance could be detected. Also set against the northern wall was a large pit in the structure's interior which contained 2,5 kg of animal bones and a single pot-sherd. Ca. 15 m north-east of house 12 lay house 11, also a one-aisled longhouse of similar dimensions as house 12 (Schmidt Sabo, 2011, p. 22), the dense spacing of wall-posts indicates several maintenance activities. Immediately south of house 11 lay the large hearth A1006 which

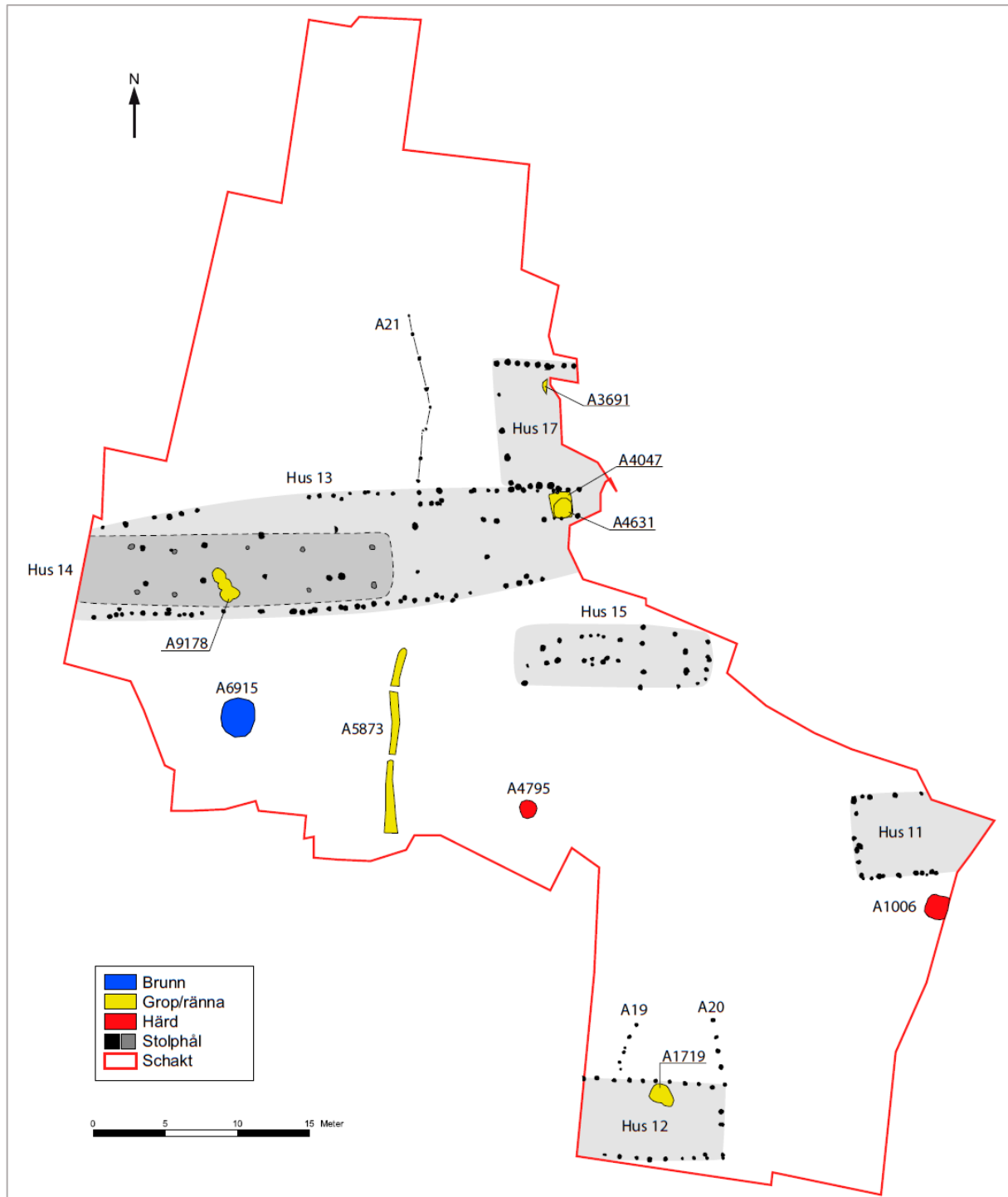


Fig. 22. Hjärup 9:8 (B) phase 3 features (950 to 1050). (Schmidt Sabo, 2011, p. 23).

contained 1 kg of burnt clay and clay lining, 74 g of animal bones and two iron-nails (Schmidt Sabo, 2011, p. 31). North-west of house 11 lay the small three-aisled house 15 which is badly preserved in its western end, wherefore it most probably has not been identified in its entirety, and 9 m to the south of it lay the second and last hearth A4795 identified in area B which was filled in with sand, charcoal and fire-cracked stones and contained 21 g of animal bones, few pot-sherds and burnt clay (ibid.).

At the centre of area B lay house 13, a large three-aisled longhouse measuring at least ca. 42 m in length and a maximum width of 8 m at its centre while both gable-ends lying outside of the trench could not be recorded (ibid., p. 24-28; fig. 23). Due to its dimensions and the quality of the internal construction it can be seen as the main dwelling-structure of the Hjärup farmstead. With slight disturbances the longhouse is well preserved, it consists of convex longitudinal walls with a definite entrance marked by inwards-receded posts at the northern wall's eastern end. The internal space is divided into multiple possible rooms, with denser spaced trestles in the western half and the largest space existing between the trestles in the central section close to the entrance – the possible hall room. There are no clear indications of internal partitioning

walls between trestles, yet they can be assumed to have existed to some extent. The division of space in the house's eastern end is less clear due to it being cut off here. In this area lay a large rectangular pit A4047, tightly spaced between the northern wall and the roof-bearing posts, which initially

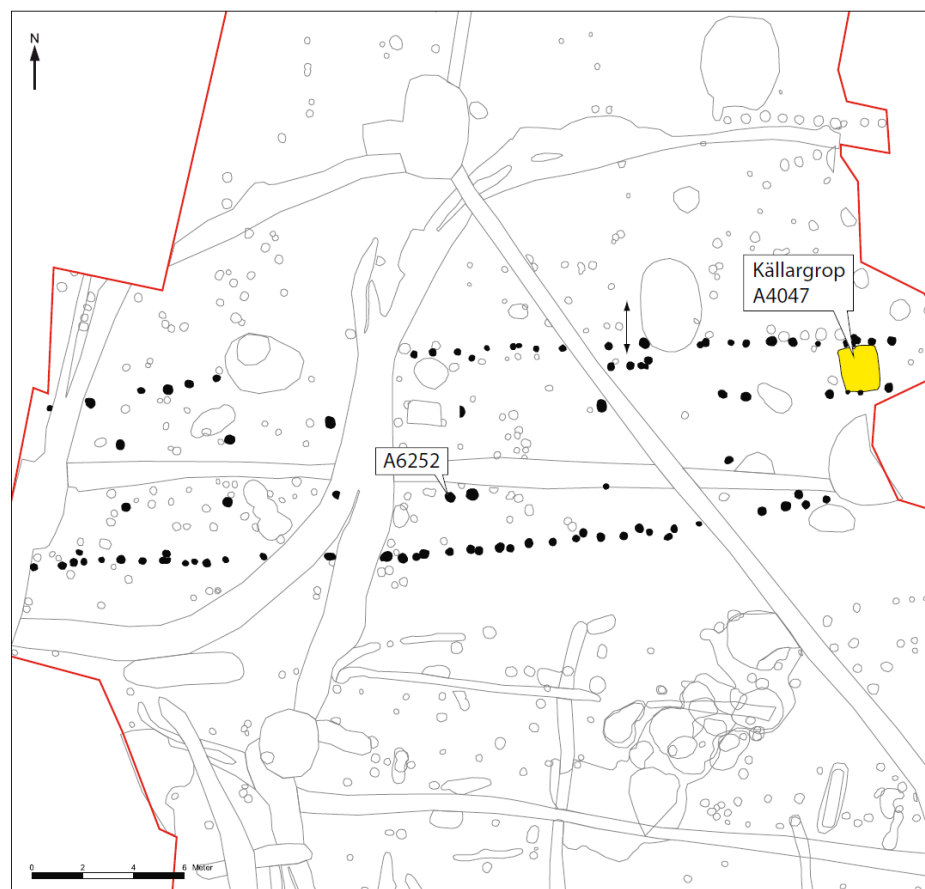


Fig. 23. Hjärup 9:8, House 13. (Schmidt Sabo, 2011, p. 25).

could have been used as a storage pit – four small postholes at the pit's bottom most-probably

made up a timber-frame. The oven A4631 was placed inside it at a later stage as indicated by a clay lining that separates the younger feature from the older pit, and additional finds of burnt clay, charcoal, fire-cracked stones, 1,5 kg of animal bones, several loom weights and fragments of quern-stones support an according interpretation (Schmidt Sabo, 2011, p. 27; 31). Placed close to one of the central roof-bearing posts was the small pit A6252 that resembled a posthole, yet contained an additional filling of charcoal, sand and small amounts of worked animal bone (ibid., p. 25ff.). Observing the longitudinal walls, it becomes apparent that several densely spaced posts can be explained by recurring re-settings, possibly motivated by efforts to maintain the timber-structure. Finally, the 12 m long post-row A21 was recorded running in an irregularly shaped line from house 13's northern entrance to the north.

A significant portion of house 13 overlaps with another smaller three-aisled longhouse, which possibly predates the large longhouse, yet cannot be interpreted further due to its lacking preservation (ibid., p. 28f.). Placed in the area of both house 14 and house 13 lay the large pit A9178, which contained pot-sherds, an iron knife, a pin, and animal bones, yet could not be stratigraphically associated to any of the longhouses.

South of house 13 the 14,5 m long and 0,65 m wide ditch A5873 could be recorded running north-south and ending several meters in front of house 13's south wall (ibid., p. 31f.). It contained a considerable amount of burnt clay and fragments of clay lining, possibly from a dismantled oven. The author's note how both the ditch and fence A21 to the north seem to follow one and the same alignment, potentially dividing the exterior space around the main longhouse into two distinct areas (ibid.). 6 m south of house 13 lay the only recorded well dating to the Viking Age in area B; with a diameter of 2,5 m and a depth of 1,63 m. The last recorded structure in area B is the near to rectangular and one-aisled house 17 bordering tightly against the north-eastern end of house 13 (ibid., p. 30). Since it ran outside of the trench area and could not be recorded in its entirety, it is unclear what its exact dimensions were. The northern and southern wall consisted of dense rows of large postholes, while the eastern wall was constructed less extensively. In its northern end lay the hearth A3691 with a charcoal-rich infill that contained little amounts of animal bones and burnt clay. Comparisons of ¹⁴C-dates indicate that house 17 was raised in the early 11th century while the main longhouse 13 was still in use, meaning that it was intentionally built into the north-eastern structure of house 13.

Macrofossil-samples stemming from structures and features in area B show that cereals were processed on the farmstead as would be expected from a large Viking Age farmstead (Larsson, 2011, p. 70f.). Rye, barley and wheat were cultivated and thus imply various uses such as food

processing and the creation of animal fodder, and other plant-remains such as flaxseeds indicate textile working.

The earliest excavations at Hjärrup 21:38 carried out in 1986/87 revealed settlement remains dating from the Late Viking Age to the Late Middle Ages, i.e., 950 to 16th century (Larsson, 1995).

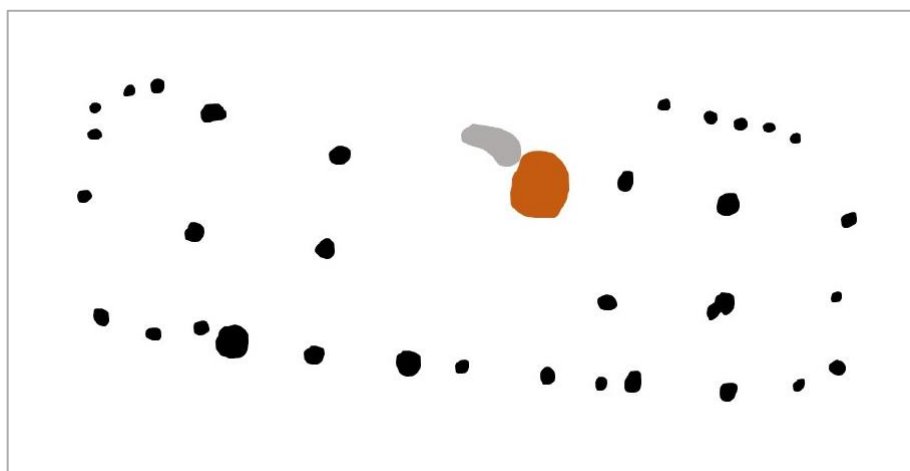


Fig. 24. Hjärrup 21:38, house I. (Redrawn by the author after Larsson, 1995, p. 9).

The relevant Viking Age remains date to phase 1 in area A, which consist of two post-built and three-aisled longhouses. The east-west oriented house I was recorded as a 19 x 7 m rectangular longhouse with rounded corners and was generally well preserved apart from several northern wall-posts missing (*ibid.*, p. 9; fig. 24). Its trestles were symmetrically placed, creating a larger open room at its centre, where the large hearth A59 – measuring 1,50 m in diameter – was placed at its northern edge. Bordering the hearth was the filled-in pathway A61 that might indicate the original entrance of the structure. This feature measured 1,60 x 0,60 m and its infill contained remains of a ceramic-oil lamp and additional pottery and iron objects. Seven metres north of house I lay house II in the same east-west orientation (*ibid.*, p. 10). It measured ca. 17,5 x 7 m and was less well preserved, with most of the wall-posts and only one trestle at its eastern gable-end preserved, but in general it closely resembles the construction seen in house I. Placed centrally lay two hearths – A12 and A142 – which cut each other. Finds from the house – although not specified from which features by the author – include 126 g of animal bones, a flint flake and a single potsherd.

Apart from the built environment at Hjärrup, several noteworthy loose finds were recorded in the farmstead's vicinity, generally associated to the Viking Age top-soil layer. Said finds include fragments of a scale, two Urnes-style clasps, a golden bird-brooch, a perforated coin minted under Sven Estridsen and other artefacts of unknown function (Schmidt Sabo, 2011, p. 36-41). Most notably a runestone (DR 266) stands just to the north of the Viking Age farmstead, although in secondary position (Schmidt Sabo, 2011, p. 10). The stone describes Navne who

cut the stone in memory of their brother Toke who died out west. It has been suggested that it was originally erected somewhere in the south of the historical village near a ford passing the creak. As the runestone was created in the 11th century, thus being contemporary with the farmstead which would have stood not far from the stone's original position, it can be assumed that there exists a connection between the inhabitants and the runestone.

Concluding remarks on Hjärup 21:38 and 9:8

All the investigated areas were aligned according to the same east-west orientation and cohered to one another spatially. While it is difficult to discern which houses and features were contemporary and in use simultaneously – the close placing and overlapping of some structures speak for nuanced sub-phases within the suggested time spans – it is clear that most-probably in the middle of the Viking Age and certainly during the Late Viking Age, a large farmstead was established on top of the remains of earlier sparse Iron Age settlement, and inhabited for at least one to two hundred years in a time-span between 850/950 to 1050 until the foundation of the historical village in the Early Middle Ages. The maximum extent of the present farmstead might not have been discovered due to the restricted investigation areas, nonetheless the preserved remains of a large longhouse with a possible hall-room, multiple additional buildings of varying functions and the surrounding finds constitute an extensive farmstead with high-status connotations (ibid., p. 43). When compared to other contemporary large farmsteads in south-western Scania it is possible that the farmyard at Hjärup was similarly divided into multiple activity areas: The ditch and fence alignment could therefore have acted as separating the eastern and western area – the presence of open-air hearths and 'economic' buildings potentially indicating one activity zone in the west and the two domestic longhouses and the main longhouses as a potential 'representative' area in the east, as suggested by Schmidt Sabo (ibid.). Since a precise designation of function is due to the lack of context-bound finds difficult at Hjärup, such a generalising separation is impossible. Therefore, all areas of the present farmstead at Hjärup are considered to be roughly multifunctional with some exceptions where a domestic or economic use is clear. The continuity seen at Hjärup is also noteworthy, especially the continuous use of space in area A and C throughout the entire Medieval Period and into Post-Medieval times. Ultimately, the placename Hjärup – in its first recorded form named as *Hyathorp* – the runestone and the existence of a Late Viking Age large farmstead coincide with other contemporary village formation processes observed in south-western Scania in this period (Schmidt Sabo, 2011, p. 10).

8. 2. Västervång 3:14

Prior to the construction of a residential quarter by the municipality of Trelleborg Riksantikvarieämbetet's *UV Syd* conducted excavations in 2005 at the northern city-limits of Trelleborg, uncovering a settlement site dating back to the Bronze Age with regular activities throughout the Iron Age and into the Late Iron Age. The site Västervång 3:14 lay on the highest point in an originally flat agricultural plain at 15 to 23 m a.s.l. and 2 km north of the Baltic Sea coast (Ericson and Carlie, 2006, p. 4; see fig. 25). The site lies in a rich prehistoric landscape, most notably on the western edge of the presumed prehistoric road between Trelleborg and Uppåkra, just 130 m north-east of the contemporary Late Iron Age large farmstead site Västervång 2:25, and just a few kilometres north of the contemporary ring-fort in Trelleborg and in a neighbourhood that was densely settled and contained several grave-fields (Björk, Lenntorp and Skoglund, 2009, p. 33; Carlie, 2008, p. 112-116).

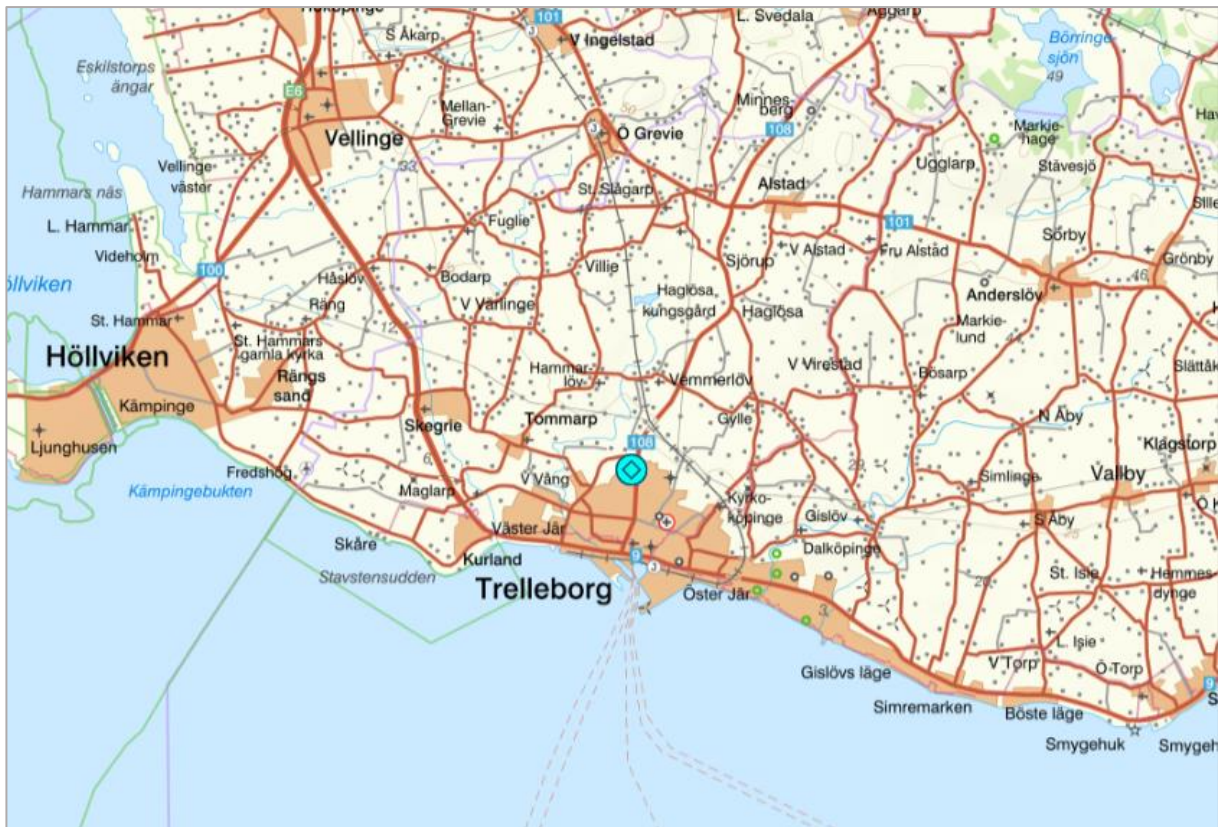


Fig. 25. Location of Västervång 3:14. (Riksantikvarieämbetet, Fornsök 2026).

Site development and features

Västervång 3:14 is characterised by a settlement continuity reaching back multiple centuries and covering most of the Iron Age. The settlement activity is structured into six main phases, of which the last two are of relevance for the thesis. The earliest traces of settlement date to the

Early Bronze Age between 1500 and 1400 BC including an extensive area of a Bronze Age topsoil-layer that filled out a natural hollow, followed by a gap in activity until the Early Pre-Roman Iron Age between 400 to 150 BC (Carlie, 2008a, p. 5ff.). From the Roman Iron Age and into the Migration Period the regular settlement activity in the shape of at least two farmsteads and additional activity areas can be observed, regularly shifting but remaining within the investigation area. During the last phases 5 and 6 dating to the entire Late Iron Age from 770 to 1050 AD, the site's complexity in terms of the number of present structures and the extent of the settled area increase considerably, resulting in the establishment of a permanent village. These phases are characterised by at least two to three farmsteads which each consist of at least one to two post-built longhouses and additional features in their immediate vicinity.

Phase 5 – 770 to 900

During the phase 5 the Västervång settlement initially consisted of an arrangement of two or possibly three farmsteads, the biggest of which, farm I:a, was located in the farthest western corner of the investigation area (Carlie, 2008b, p. 134; fig. 26).

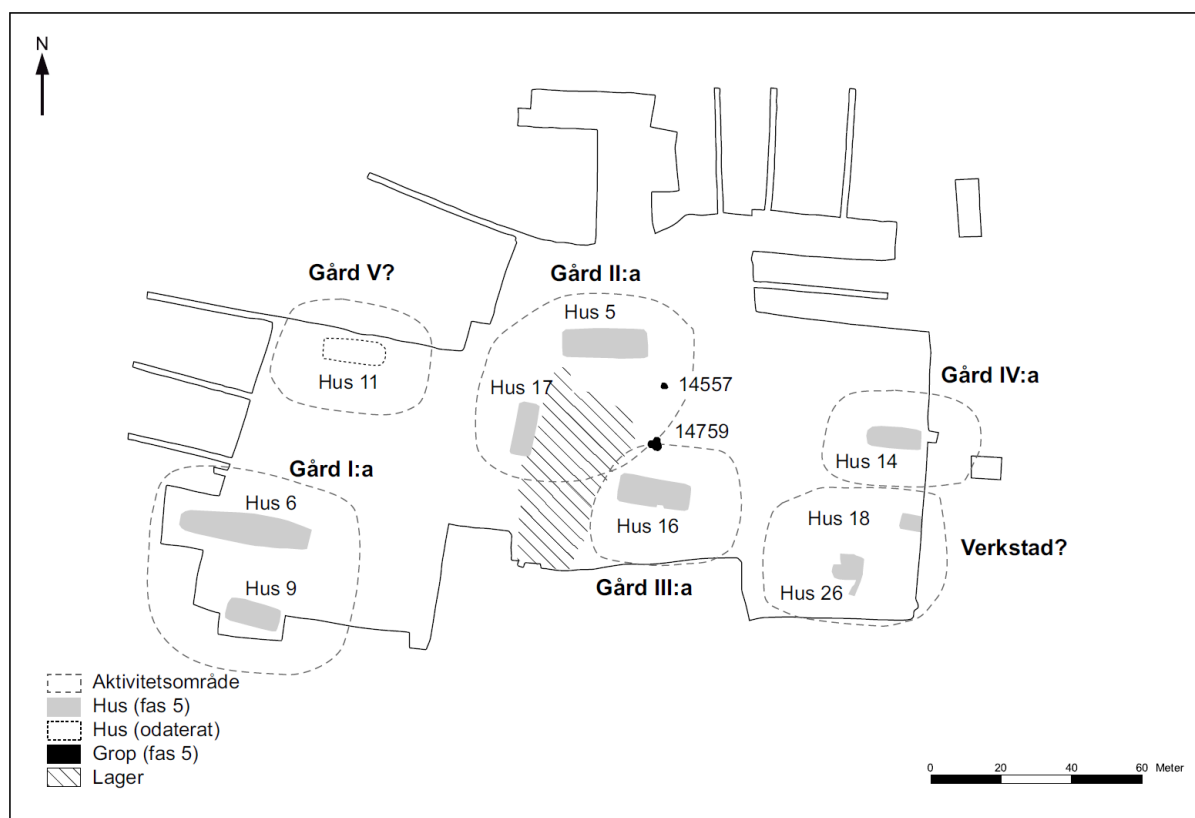


Fig. 26. Västervång 3:14, phase 5. (Carlie, 2008a, p. 12).

Farm I:a consisted of two well-preserved three-aisled and post-built longhouses, both oriented WNW-ESE (fig. 27). In this constellation house 6 has been interpreted by the authors as the main structure, due to its size and construction details, resembling similar contemporary longhouses in Southern Scandinavia termed as ‘Sædding-types’ (Carlie, 2008b, p. 119). House 6 measured 37 m in length and 8,7 m in width at its widest point (Ericsson and Carlie, 2006, p. 22). Its longitudinal walls were bowed and constructed of post-lines, and while the western gable-end was rounded its eastern gable was straight. The internal roof-supporting post-lines consisted of 10 or 11 trestles that were unevenly spaced. At least three entrances in the form of inwards-receded post-pairs can be observed within the wall-construction, two centrally placed in the north – of which the western entrance seems to have been blocked up during the house’s lifespan – and one entrance in the south which had been moved aside by several centimetres (ibid., p. 134). Carlie (2008b, p. 122) suggests that the eastern gable in house 6 was open,



Fig. 27. Västervång 3:14, phase 5 and 6 farmstead I:a. (Carlie, 2008a, p. 13)

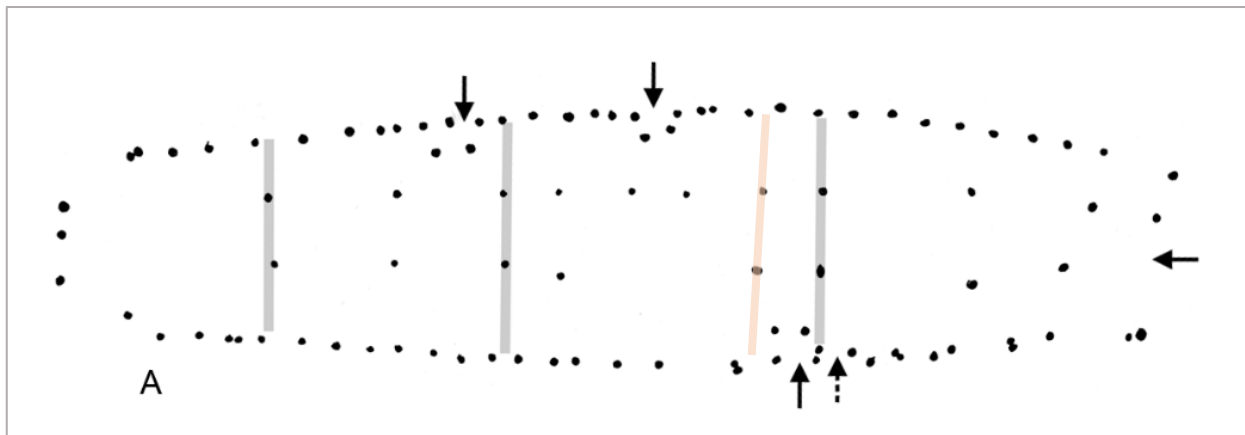


Fig. 28. Västervång 3:14, house 6. (Carlie, 2008b, p. 124; Beige line added by author)

although without elaborating why this was necessarily the case. The longhouse was potentially divided into at least four rooms, which I would add by an additional transitory room connected to the southern entrance, as this has been observed to be a phenomenon in contemporary Scandinavian longhouses – especially elaborate high-status longhouses – where two trestles align with an entrance forming a corridor-like space, separating the adjoining room-units (Eriksen, 2019, p. 62; 94ff.; fig. 28). Several wall-posts had been replaced following maintenance activities. In one of the roof-bearing postholes (A11606) in the entrance-room a spindle whorl, smoothing stone and a rib-fragment seem to have been intentionally deposited (Carlie, 2008b, p. 135; fig. 29).

House 9 lay ca. 16 m south of house 6 and is considerably smaller measuring ca. 15 x 7 m (Ericson and Carlie, 2006, p. 26). This small rectangular longhouse had an entrance to the south marked by two deeper wall-posts and a hearth placed its eastern interior half. Just north-east of house 9 lay a pit containing a small number of animal bones and an indeterminable iron object, possibly connected to this farmstead's activity area (Carlie, 2008b, p. 136).



Fig. 29. Västervång 3:14, house 6, deposition from posthole A11606 (Västervång 3:14 Figurbilaga, 2006).

Centrally in the investigation area and surrounding the former filled in Bronze Age hollow lay the second farmstead of phase 5, farm II:a which also consisted of two longhouses (fig. 30). The largest structure house 5 was three-aisled, rectangular and measured ca. 20,5 x 8,5 m yet cannot be interpreted in more detail due to the poor preservation (Carlie, 2008b, p. 136). In an angle to house 5 lay house 17, a smaller three-aisled longhouse in an equally bad state of preservation. Notably, the pit A14557 lay ca. 10 m south-east of house 5 and it is due to the dating of its contents – remains of four vessels, and 150 g of cattle and sheep/goat bones – associated with farm II:a (ibid.). South of farm II:a and immediately east of the hollow lay house 16, a rectangular three-aisled longhouse measuring ca. 20,6 x 7,5-8,4 m (Carlie, 2008a, p. 14). It had an entrance to the south, and if the trestle in front of it is interpreted as part of a potential partitioning wall, it would consist of at least three rooms with one large central room. Carlie (2008a & b) argues that house 16 was its own farmstead, yet does not elaborate on the reasons for this interpretation. The ¹⁴C-dating of both the farm II:a houses and house 16 do not indicate any differing phasing (Ericson and Carlie, 2006, p. 32). As discussed above in previous sections, neither the proximity of houses, nor the existence of multiple dwelling units per farmstead necessarily rule out any connection to one farmstead-unit. Therefore, pit A14759 containing fragments of five vessels and 816 g of cattle and sheep/goat bones could be seen to have lain within this hypothetical farmstead area (Carlie, 2008b, p. 136). At the farthest eastern edge of the investigation area lay three post-built structures that are interpreted by Carlie (2008b, p. 136) as two separate areas, yet following the above outlined argumentation, I argue that they can also very much be understood as part of one and the same activity area. Nevertheless, it must be noted that additional unknown

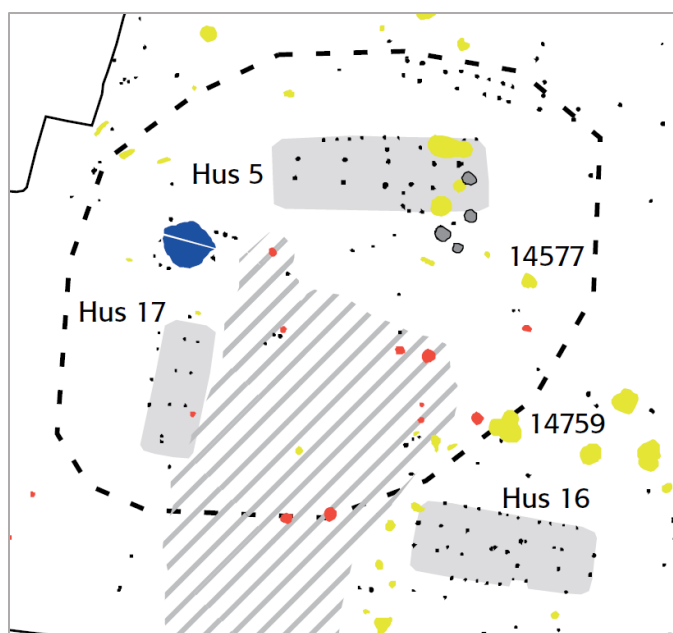


Fig. 30. Västervång 3:14, phase 5 farm:II a and house 16. (Västervång 3:14 Figurbilaga, 2006).

buildings may lie beyond the boundaries of the investigation area. In the north of this farmstead-area lay house 14, that was constructed in a combined, three- and two-aisled technique. Due to lacking further investigation and preservation it is hard to discern any internal layout. Ca. 20 m south of house 14 lay the small rectangular house 18, which ran into the trench-boundary in the

East. While its construction is not significant, the contents of the associated pit A8363 in its interior space is more so as it contained finds such as a bone needle, a comb, fragments of worked deer antler, 327 g of unburned cattle, pig and sheep/goat bones, a single herring jawbone and an iron knife; altogether indicating both craft activities and waste disposal (Carlie, 2008b, p. 137). Lastly, several metres south-west of house 18 lay the post-built house 26. This structure consists of an irregular layout and most notably possesses a narrow and elongated post-‘arm’ running south that is interpreted as a windbreak and a potential associated hearth, as well as an open southern wall (Ericson and Carlie, 2006, p. 38f.). While no associated finds indicate this, Carlie (2008b, p. 136) suggests that the unusual shape might indicate a function as a possible workshop or smithy.

Phase 6 – 900 to 1050

During the Late Viking Age in phase 6 the total number of known buildings decreases and two settlement foci respectively in the West and the East remain, while the farmstead around the centre is abandoned (fig. 31). The most striking indication of continuity can be observed in the development of farm I:a in the western area, termed farm I:b in phase 6. The main building complex consisted of a large longhouse and an additional smaller longhouse to the immediate north of the phase 5 house 6 (fig. 27). The large longhouse 7 is in terms of its general exterior

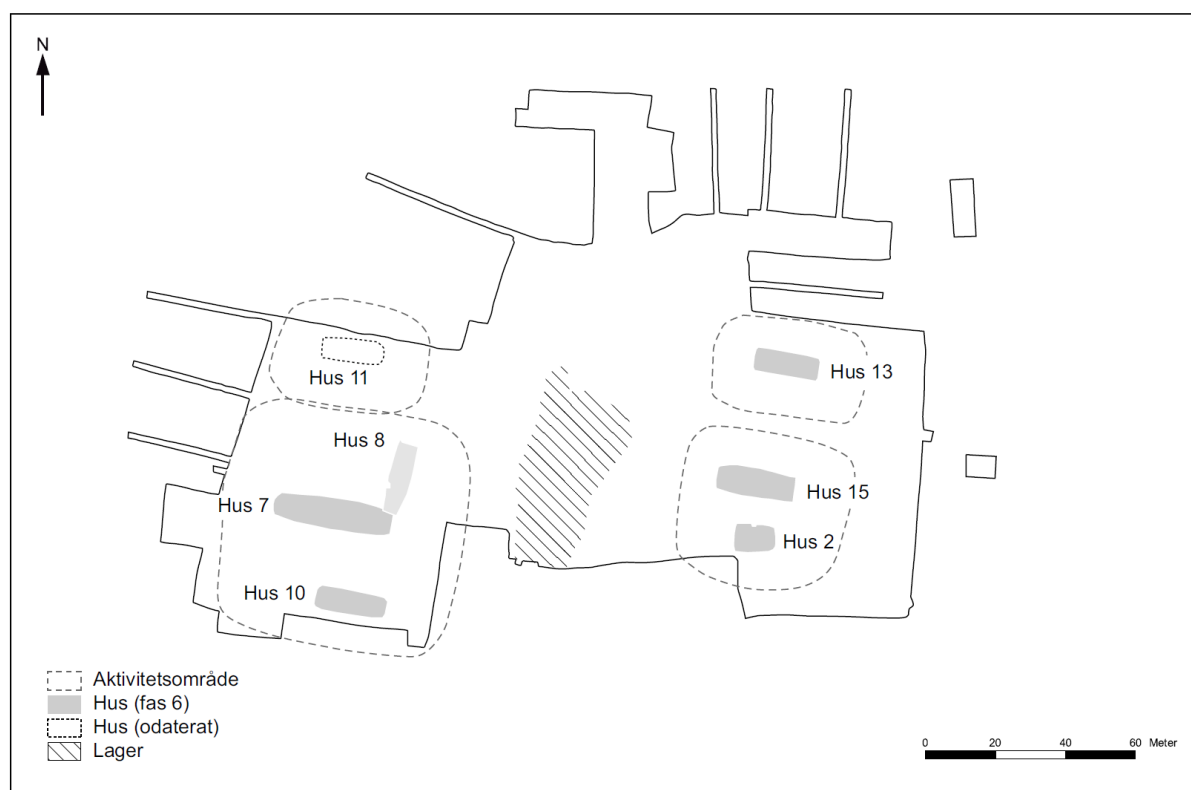


Fig. 31. Västervång 3:14, phase 6. (Carlie, 2008a, p. 17).

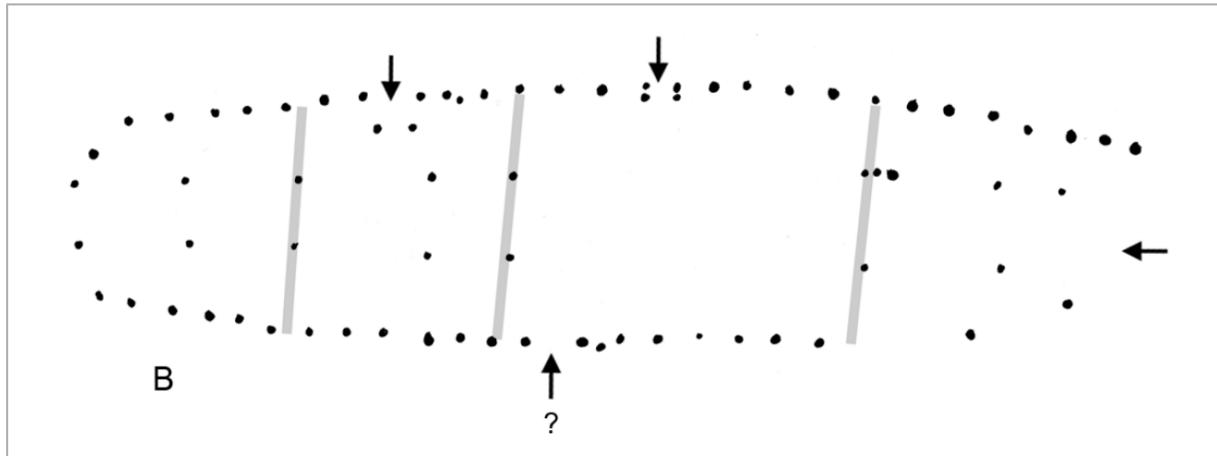


Fig. 32. Västervång 3:14, house 7. (Carlie, 2008b, p. 124).

layout, dimensions and orientation near identical to house 6, measuring 37 m in length and 8,7 m maximum width (Carlie, 2008b, p. 138; fig. 32). Equally similar to house 6, house 7 possesses two centrally placed entrances in the northern wall, the western one being much farther inwards receded, and a potential third entrance in the southern wall as indicated by a larger gap in the wall line (Ericson and Carlie, 2006, p. 24). It is also here suggested that the eastern gable was open as in house 6, although it is difficult to ascertain the original construction of the eastern gable end since any wall-posts at the south-eastern end are absent (Carlie, 2008b, p. 138). A notable difference can be observed in the slight change in the internal layout of house 7, as it possessed less roof-bearing posts and therefore was possibly divided into four rooms. The absence of internal posts allowed for a significantly larger hall-like room at the centre.

Situated perpendicularly to house 7 was house 8, a ca. 20 m long one-aisled longhouse with convex longitudinal walls, straight gables and a clear entrance in the western wall (Ericson and Carlie, 2006, p. 25f.; fig. 27). Its southern gable was joined in to the south-eastern corner of house 7. As no associated finds were recorded and an internal layout is absent it is difficult to interpret the role of house 8 in farm I:b, although a suggestion is a broad function pertaining to animal husbandry or storage. Ca. 15 m south of house 7 lay house 10 oriented in the same WNW-ESE direction. It measured ca. 20 x 6,8 m, was rectangular in shape and possessed a three-aisled post-construction (ibid., p. 27). While the walls are not well preserved and an entrance could not be identified, the internal placing of roof-bearing posts indicates several maintenance events, as well as one partitioning wall as indicated by a line of four closely spaced posts at the house's centre. The finds of small numbers of unburnt animal bones in several postholes, ranging between 7 to 28 g respectively, could indicate possible food-processing or

consumption in or around house 10, since animal bones are a rare sight in this type of context at Västervång (Carlie, 2008b, p. 139).

To the east of farm I:b lay farm III:b consisting of two post-built houses, of which the three-aisled house 15 is the largest. It measures 22 m in length and 8 m at its widest as it possesses bowed longitudinal walls and straight gables (*ibid.*, fig. 33). The south-eastern portion of the house shows traces of repair or rebuilding events: While the authors do not specify on the rebuilding, I suggest that the doubled row of posts in the southern wall can be seen as an effort to extend and straighten the building's general layout (Ericson and Carlie, 2006, p. 31; Carlie, 2008b, p. 140). While the original wall seems to have ended and aligned with the eastern-most roof-bearing trestle, which might have acted as the original eastern gable, the rebuilt wall runs beyond and aligns with the north-eastern most wall post. As no posts in the 'new' gable seem to have been recorded, it is difficult to ascertain how this re-shaping looked like, or what its intended purpose was. The internal space is divided into three distinct spaces, with two rooms at the gable-ends and one large and open hall-like room. A post-lining at the central room's southern edge was observed, which could indicate a bench-construction. Additionally, all roof-



Fig. 33. Västervång 3:14, phase 6 farm III:b. (Carlie, 2008a, p. 19).

bearing posts of the southern row are doubled, indicating significant repairs. A few metres to the south lay the smaller structure of farm III:b, house 2. This three-aisled structure measured 11,5 x 8 m and had a slightly rounded rectangular shape with a pair of retracted posts indicating an entrance that faced house 15 (Carlie, 2008b, p.140). Several closely spaced posts in its interior indicate repairs, yet a row of three regularly spaced posts along the southern wall may suggest some kind of internal furnishing such as a bench, which would mean that this house possessed a single large room. Despite no finds having been made, the infill of some of the postholes contained burnt clay and charcoal (Ericson and Carlie, 2006, p. 19f.).

Finally, several metres north of farm III:b lay house 13, which may have been standing alone or part of a farmstead whose other structures are beyond the investigation area. As no walls were preserved and no finds were made, house 13 cannot be discussed in further detail.

Concluding remarks on Västervång 3:14

Continuing in the line of earlier Iron Age settlement activity the site develops into its most complex and diversified form at the beginning of the Viking Age, with multiple farmsteads and connected activity areas being established. Despite the limited amounts of finds, the nature of the built environment – an elaborate longhouse, reproduction of spatial language, creation of a hall-room – speaks for the development of at least one possible high-status farmstead, one regular farmstead with a large central farmyard space, and an activity area focused on craftsmanship. Turning to the Late Viking Age a consolidation of the large farmstead in the west can be observed (Carlie, 2008b, p. 141). The fact that house 7 possessed very similar dimensions as and lay tightly against the earlier house 6 and that the spatial relationship between house 7 and house 10 to the south mirrors the practically identical placement of house 6 and house 9 indicates that there was a deliberate choice made to maintain not only the existing use of space and reproduce the spatial relationships between buildings, but also to maintain the older house's layout and its internal accessibility. Carlie (2008b, p. 141) also notes that no pottery or any other household objects – apart from the single comb fragment in house 10 – were recorded during phase 5, which could be understood as a shift in the handling of waste produced by the household. On the other hand, some subtle traces could certainly indicate rough household-activities such as the processed animal bones in pits A14577 and A14759 in phase 5 or in the posthole infills of house 10 in phase 6.

While the exact number of farmsteads is difficult to ascertain with the given limited amount of precise dating and the restrictions set by the extent of the excavation area, it can be said that the site did in fact form an extensive area of settlement activity. It is possible to extend this picture

even further if we consider the contemporary settlement at Västervång 2:25 just 130 m to the south-west. Discussing said site in comparison with Västervång 3:14, Björk, Lenntorp and Skoglund (2009, p. 33ff.) go as far as to consider both settlements as part of one village that might have even continued in to the un-investigated areas between and around both sites.

8.3. Eskilstorp 2:26

General information

Prior to planned constructions of a new residential area, *Arkeologerna* and *Sydsvensk Arkeologi* carried out excavations north of Vellinge and east of the village Eskilstorp, situated ca. 10 km south of Malmö and ca. 12 km northwest of Trelleborg, which revealed settlement remains dating from the Early Neolithic, through the Bronze Age and Early Iron Age, and into the Late Iron Age (Brink, Ohlsson and Söderberg, 2024, p. 9ff.; fig. 34). The site is located in a flat fully agriculturally exploited landscape in a flat plain, situated ca. 5 km East from the Baltic Sea coast (Brink, 2024a, p. 43). The site is divided into the two research areas 1A and 1B, with the relevant Vendel Period to Viking Age features and material primarily stemming from 1A to the west.



Fig. 34. Location of Eskilstorp 2:26. (Riksantikvarieämbetet, Fornsök 2026).

Site development and features

The earliest traces of human activity in the investigation areas 1A and 1B consist of two Late Neolithic graves in 1B, and additionally several finds and features dating to the Bronze Age in both 1A and 1B (Brink, 2024, p. 218-223). Later on, a farmstead consisting of several post-built longhouses, additional buildings and partially preserved fences is established in the Late Pre-

Roman Iron Age and potentially continues into the Early Roman Iron Age (Brink, 2024, p. 223ff.). The features dating from the Late Iron Age to Early Medieval Period – i.e., the period from ca. 700 to 1150 AD – are the most extensive settlement remains at Eskilstorp that have been documented primarily in area 1A and have been divided into 3 main phases of activity (Ohlsson and Söderberg, 2024, p. 226f.), thus the following presentation of the site's development will be presented accordingly in a chronological manner. While I will not present phase 3 of the farmstead, the fact that a continuity of the site into Early Medieval times existed will be discussed partly in the concluding remarks. Said periodisation is based on various ¹⁴C-dates and typological dating of finds, most notably pottery (ibid., p. 228). It has to be noted though that the present periodisation and dating of phases is quite broad and consequently does not allow for detailed reconstructions of the site's development, meaning that not all structures of one phase were necessarily contemporary and simultaneously in use. The features dating between ca. 700 and 1150 range from post-built longhouses, other post-built structures and pit-houses to pits, ditches and wells. The general preservation of features, especially of the post-built houses varies, such that some longhouses are preserved with an extensive layout while others merely remain in the shape of load-bearing central posts.

Phase 1 – ca. 700 to 950

Most structures dated to this phase are situated in area 1A while two structures lie at the eastern edge of area 1B. The latter structures consist of pit-house 15 and the badly preserved post-built longhouse 6 (ibid.). Since 1B is situated several hundred metres southeast of 1A said structures cannot be understood to be in an immediate relationship to the farmstead, and will thus not be discussed any further. The phase 1 farmstead in 1A consists of four three-aisled post-built longhouses: A small post-built enclosure adjoining one of the longhouses, as well as a pit-house situated more than 50 m east of the farmstead (ibid., p. 229; fig. 35). Since most structures of this earliest Late Iron Age farmstead are preserved quite badly and they often overlap each other they are generally interpreted as multiple construction and habitation phases within this phase's timespan of ca. 250 years. Most notably the structures are clearly built in relation to one another to form a coherent farmyard space.

The approximately North-South oriented and 20,5 m long and 6,5 m wide house 25 consists of three roof-supporting trestles and a possible entrance in the eastern longitudinal wall, which is marked by the absence of posts and a pit containing several metal-artefacts, pottery and charcoal (ibid., p. 229f.; Grehn and Ohlsson, 2024, hus 25; fig. 33). The general dimensions and spacious

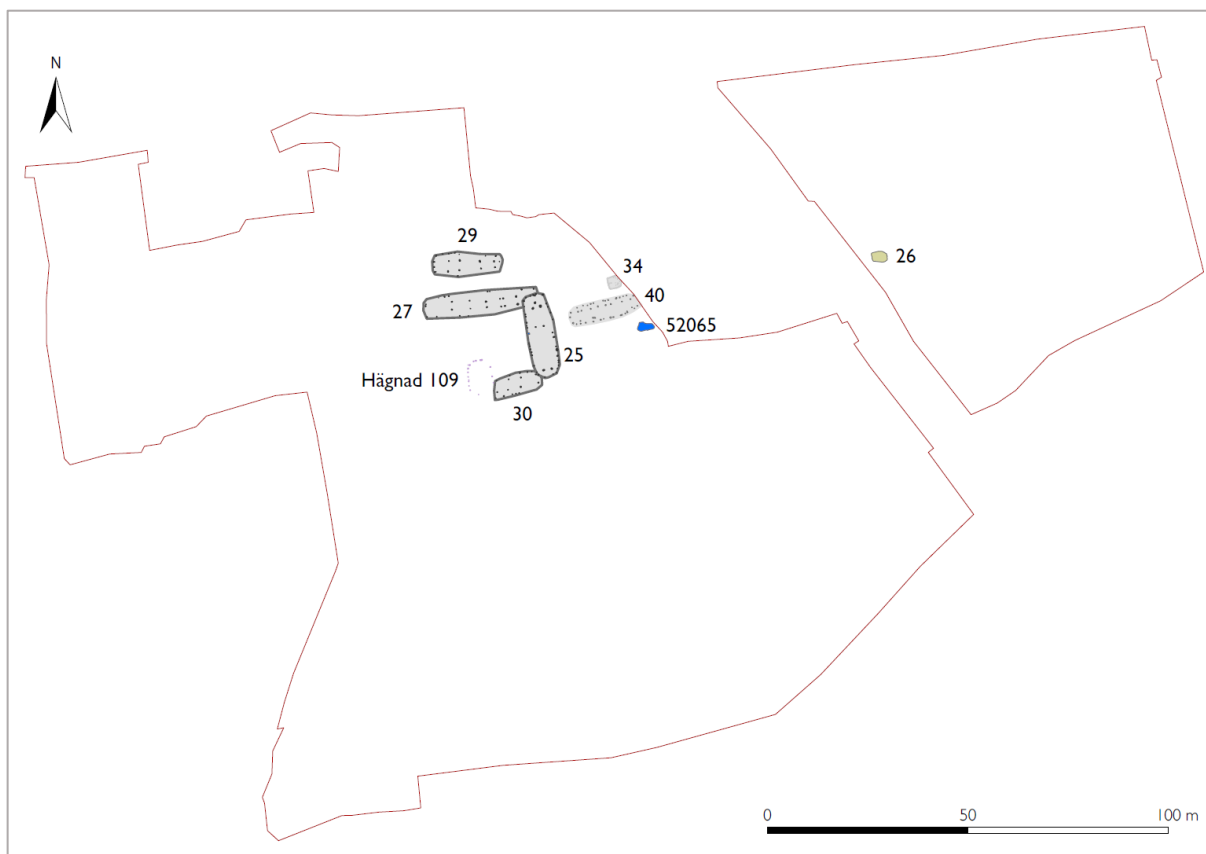


Fig. 35. Eskilstorp 2:26, Phase 1 farmstead in area 1A. (Ohlsson and Söderberg, 2024, p. 229).

internal layout might indicate that house 25 was a dwelling, as it possessed a large hall-like room and two additional smaller rooms to the north.

Tightly spaced against house 25 in a right angle is the ca. 10 m long and east-west oriented house 30. While the house itself does not offer any clear indications in terms of its general function, its association with the possibly contemporary post-structure 109 might offer more information. Structure 109 is interpreted as an enclosure or pen and can be seen to be built directly against the western end of house 30, therefore I follow the interpretation of Ohlsson and Söderberg (2024, p. 229) and carefully consider this as a building related to animal husbandry or storage. Partially overlapping the north-end of house 25 is the east-west oriented and 27 m long house 27. In addition to its overlap with house 25 its complex internal construction of asymmetrically placed trestles, most notable two tightly spaced trestles, possibly indicates extensive maintenance work or more realistically two construction-phases of one and the same building (ibid., p. 230f.). The finds of various different macrofossil-types in

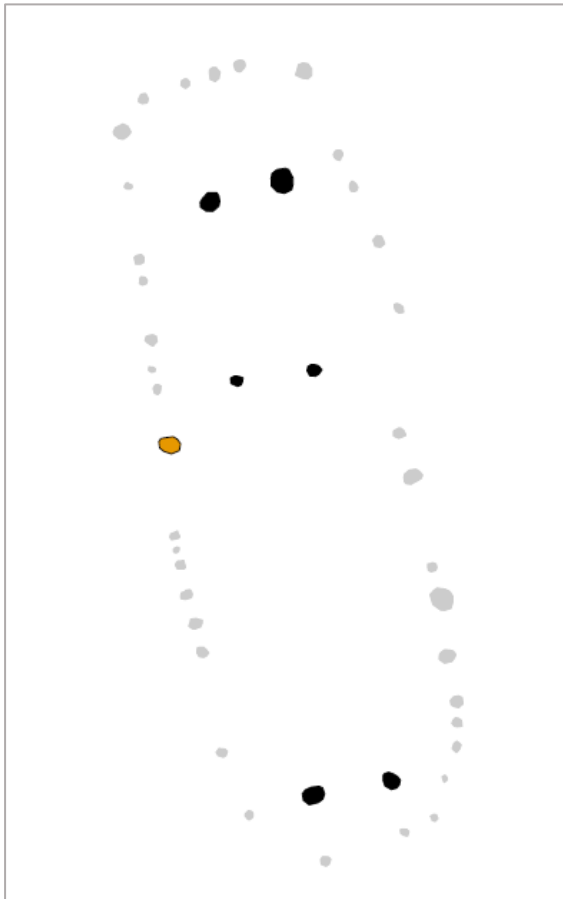


Fig. 36. Eskilstorp 2:26, House 25. (Grehn and Ohlsson, 2024, hus 25).

the western area could indicate that either within this structure or its immediate vicinity there were activities related to food-processing, yet any further precise interpretation – such as a byre suggested by the authors due to the irregular construction – can in my opinion not be supported. Several meters north of house 27 lies the slightly smaller house 29 following the same orientation, which can only be seen as some additional building with an unspecified function (Ohlsson and Söderberg, 2024, p. 231). Ca. 85 m east of this farmstead lies pit-house 26, which due to the large unexcavated area separating 1A could have possibly been part of unidentified settlement remains to the East of the recorded farmstead (ibid., p. 232). This small pit-house was disturbed by later waste disposal events, yet in its original context contained a spindle whorl, an iron pin and a deposited horse's jaw bone. The authors note

that conditions during excavation, and the fact that the phase 1-features were set in an older occupation layer, complicated the identification of further possibly associated structures (ibid., p. 233). It has additionally been noted that the post-built longhouse 40 and pit-house 34 could not be ruled to exist in both phase 1 and 2, wherefore both structures are seen as transitory (ibid.). An analysis of the macrofossil-record indicates, that the establishment of the phase 1 farmstead coincides with the introduction of barley, rye and oat cultivation as a main staple which persists into the later phases (ibid.).

Phase 2 – ca. 950 – 1050

The area used by the phase 2 farmstead can be seen to expand considerably as the number of recorded structures is more than doubled and settlement is spread out evenly in the investigation area 1A (ibid., p. 234; fig. 37). Additionally, a general diversification of building types can be

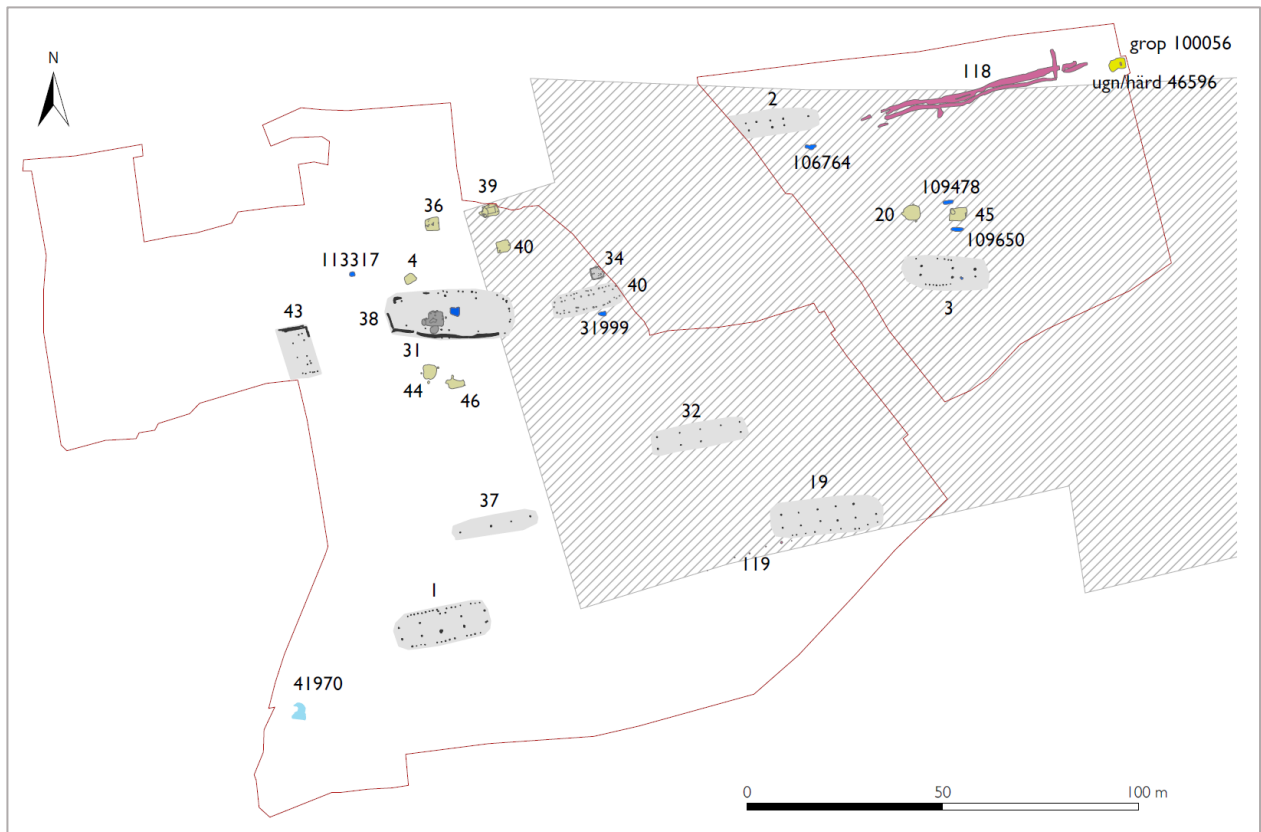


Fig. 37. Eskilstorp 2:26, Phase 2 farmstead in 1A. (Ohlsson and Söderberg, 2024, p. 234).

observed with the appearance of three-aisled longhouses, pit-houses, both in varying sizes and forms, as well as a two-aisled longhouse and a well.

The densest settlement can be observed in the north-western part of 1A, nevertheless it has to be noted that some buildings run outside of the investigation area, wherefore the picture remains incomplete. At the centre of this concentration stands house 38, a 30 m long and 11 m wide post-built longhouse oriented east-west which due to several complexities during field-work could not be recorded in its entirety, explaining its overall poor preservation (Grehn and



Fig. 38. Eskilstorp 2:26, house 38. (Grehn and Ohlsson, 2024, hus 38).

Ohlsson, 2024, hus 38; Ohlsson and Söderberg, 2024, p. 242; fig. 38). The longhouse's outline is partially marked by a deep-dug ditch which follows a potential lining of outer buttresses that continues in the North and East and an

interruption in the South suggests a possible entrance. A small number of inner posts suggest a wall-construction, and the absence of any noteworthy internal posts makes an interpretation of internal layout challenging. In stark contrast the central space of the house consists of a pit-complex containing several significant finds. Said complex consists of a rectangular hollow with two connected pits, consecutive re-dug hearths and several posts, and the finds stemming from said complex can be connected mainly to food-processing, additionally to metal- and textile-working (Ohlsson and Söderberg, 2024, p. 242f.). In essence, due to the dimension, and related features and finds house 38 is interpreted as the main longhouse of the phase 2 farmstead.

To the immediate north and south of house 38 several pit-houses are located, of which some are preserved exceptionally well and indicate various activities on this Late Viking Age phase 2 farmstead (fig. 37). Pit-house 39 contained potential in situ remains of a weaving stool indicating traces of textile-work, an oven in the south-western corner containing macrofossils indicating food-production, and other noteworthy aspects such as an entrance 'chute' immediately next to the oven. Various everyday-objects found in 39 included grinding stone fragments, pottery, an iron knife and a bone-needle (ibid., p. 236f.). The aforementioned transitory pit-house 34 from phase 1 and 2 consists of an elaborate construction of roof-bearing posts and pins in the wall-lining, and most notably contained a potential deposition of two gilded silver pendants alongside additional finds of iron knives, iron pins, spindle whorls, bone pins pottery etc. (ibid., p. 237; Grehn and Ohlsson, 2024, hus 34). Pit-house 36 presents the well-preserved remains of a simple two-post timber-structure with additional pin-holes indicating a wall- and potential bench-construction along the edges, a potential southern entry (see fig. 7) and various finds such as animal bones, a bone-comb fragment, metal-objects including a cross-pendant, pottery, burnt clay, a spindle whorl and slag (Ohlsson and Söderberg, 2024, p. 238f. Grehn and Ohlsson, 2024, hus 36). Pit-house 41 which lay several metres south of 39 was comprised of a simple two-post roof-bearing construction, a hearth and a potential bench construction along its northern edge. Among the various finds stemming from pit-house 41 which include pottery, metal-objects, a dirhem-fragment, the striking amount of 5 kg of animal bones stands out (Ohlsson and Söderberg, 2024, p. 240). The remains are mostly interpreted as both food- and butchering-waste including pig, sheep/goat, cattle and horse and many fish-bones. Among said remains were additionally bones stemming from a type of lap-dop and cat. Pit-house 4 was mostly recorded during the 2015 pre-investigation and lay immediately north of house 38 (Brink and Ohlsson, 2016, p. 25). The rectangular structure consisted of a pin-hole lining running along the interior edge and an entrance at its western edge

and a hearth in its south-western corner. Apart from few animal bones consisting of domestic animals, worked red deer antler and fish, samples from the pit-house's infill revealed macrofossils consisting of groats, wheat, and other seeds. To the immediate south of house 38 lay two neighbouring pit-houses 44 and 46 (Ohlsson and Söderberg, 2024, p. 243f.). The poorly preserved 46 contained subtle traces of a hearth and its finds consist of pottery, metal-objects and two spindle-whorls. 250 g of animal bones consisting of domestic animals and fish indicate food- and slaughtering-waste. Pit-house 44 was similarly poorly preserved, yet revealed traces of a two-post timber structure, a hearth and few finds including iron needles, slag and a comb-fragment (ibid.).

In the eastern portion of area 1A two pit-houses were identified to the immediate north of house 3, of which pit-house 20 contains the most extensive remains from the phase 2-farmstead. Along the western edge a pit-like protrusion marks a potential entry, four posts at the cardinal directions carried a roof-construction – of which one post was repaired – and along the southern edge stood a bench (ibid., p. 247). At the centre of pit-house 20 a hearth lay in the plane floor-surface, which contained rich amounts of macrofossils – grain and bog-myrtle – indicating food-production and possibly brewing-activities within the structure or in its vicinity (ibid., p. 248). Large amounts of animal bones (13,3 kg) were recovered from the pit-house's infill – apart from regular domestic animals even significant amounts of horse bones, and smaller amounts of cat, dog, seal, boar, red deer bones and various bird bones. Finds from pit-house 20 include a spindle whorl and various metal objects. In essence, pit-house 20 is believed to have been a structure which housed everyday activities significant to the farmstead – food-preparation/-production and possibly brewing (ibid.). The second pit-house 45 is comparatively less well preserved, yet a hearth could be identified and finds including an English silver coin, metal-objects, pottery, spindle whorls and bone needles. Within pit-house 45 1,8 kg of animal bones were recovered, dominated by domestic animals (ibid., p. 248).

Other structures of the phase 2-farmstead vary in preservation: Among the less well preserved post-built houses are for example the hard to interpret house 43 west of the main longhouse, house 32 to the South-East which was identified by its roof-bearing posts, and the enigmatic house 37, a possible two-aisled structure that nonetheless cannot be ruled out to represent the remains of an enclosure (ibid., p. 244). While house 19 in the farthest south-eastern area is similarly difficult to interpret, its dimensions and proximity to the phase 3 house 28 has led the authors to interpret it as the probable candidate for the possible main economic building of the farmstead (ibid., p. 245f.). Bordering house 19 and following its orientation was a post-lining

and possible fence 119, which might have acted as a spatially confining element at the farmstead area's southern edge (*ibid.*, p. 246). Among the better-preserved structures is the 17 m long and three-aisled longhouse 40, which is together with pit-house 34 interpreted as stemming from a transitory phase.

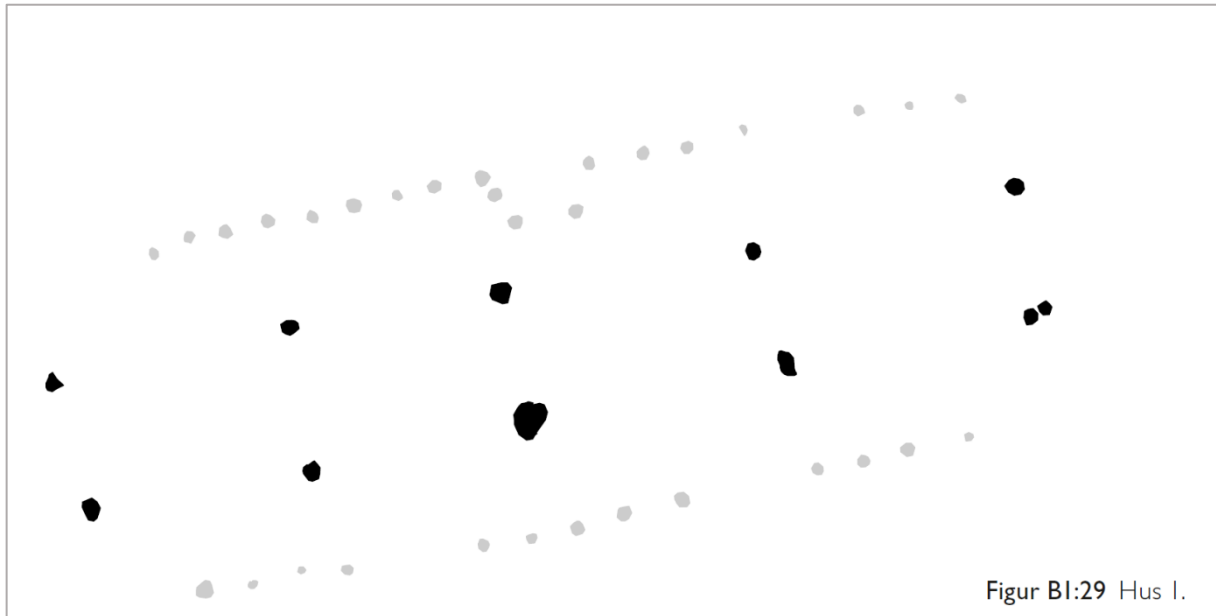


Fig. 39. Eskilstorp 2:26, house 1. (Grehn and Ohlsson, 2024, hus 1).

Especially noteworthy among the better-preserved structures is house 1. The 23 m long and 8,5 m wide longhouse consists of five evenly spaced roof-supporting trestles and straight longitudinal post-built wall linings which are not preserved in the gavel-ends (Ohlsson and Söderberg, 2024, p. 244; Grehn and Ohlsson, 2024, hus1; fig. 39). Centrally in the northern wall two inwards-receded posts clearly mark an entrance, while entrances to the south could potentially but not surely be indicated by gaps in the wall. Several roof-bearing posts were repaired and set anew and some showed traces of stone-packed fillings, which could both indicate maintenance work to extend the houses life. Archaeobotanical analyses of soil-samples from house 1 indicate some form of garden-plant cultivation in the vicinity as well as possible beer-brewing (*ibid.*, p. 245; Lagerås, 2024, p. 174). The authors note that house 1's general distance from the denser activity areas around then main longhouse and its proximity to a well in the south-western corner of the area is supportive of the previous claim. Additionally, a concentration of various metal-objects was recorded in the vicinity of house 1, including various coin-mints and jewellery-objects (Ohlsson and Söderberg, 2024, p. 245; Söderberg, 2024, p. 99f.).

Looking towards the eastern part of area 1A, two three-aisled post-built structures appear: At the northern edge lies house 2, with an approximate length of at least 16,5 m, aligned in the same ENE-WSW orientation as most other structures in the western part of 1A (Ohlsson and Söderberg, 2024, p. 246). It was mostly recorded in pre-investigations in 2015 with two roof-bearing postholes clearly standing out as they contained sheep/goat and fish-bones and little amounts of slag (Brink and Ohlsson, 2016, p. 26f.). Close by both postholes lay a potential hearth, indicating general dwelling activities within house 2. To the South-East lay house 3, possessing the same dimensions as the aforementioned structure, the incomplete remains of bowed longitudinal walls, and most notably having a pit in its eastern end which contained an impressive iron sword-pommel, of which the authors note that it could not be definitely associated with house 3 or even phase 2 (Söderberg, 2024, p. 133). Apart from the built environment, other features such as pits provide an insight into further activities on the phase 2-farmstead. A113317 north-west of house 38 contains significant amounts of various domestic and wild animal bones amounting to 3,7 kg of which a large amount stem from herring. They most probably represent the remains of food-preparation and consumption (Ohlsson and Söderberg, 2024, p. 239). Interestingly, among the remaining animal bones which consisted of cattle, pig and sheep/goat a horse-cranium with cut-marks was recorded as well as further horse bones. Other finds from the pit include a pin, pottery, iron needle and remains of bog-myrtle as identified in macrofossil-analyses (Ohlsson and Söderberg, 2024, p. 240). Ca. 30 m south-west



Fig. 40. Eskilstorp 2:26, wooden ladder F1276 in well A41970. (Ohlsson and Söderberg, 2024, p. 148).

of house 1 lay an irregularly shaped and ca. 1,6 m deep well among other pit-features and later wells (Ohlsson and Söderberg, 2024, p. 246). Most strikingly a preserved wooden ladder lay in situ against the well-wall (fig. 40). This and the sequence of multiple fill-layers indicates several events of re-digging undertaken to maintain the well.

In the eastern part of 1A several significant features were recorded: Some meters south of house 2 the irregular ca. 3 x 1,3 m large pit A106764 was recorded, which apart from finds of various animal bones, slag, flint, burnt clay, pottery etc. contained significant amounts of fish-bones, especially herring (Grehn and Ohlsson, 2024, A106764; fig. 41). The pit's infill contained layers of ash as well as remains of snail- and seashells, and in the light of the aforementioned observations the authors suggest this pit to have among other functions been used to smoke herring (Ohlsson and Söderberg, 2024, p. 246). East of pit A106764 and house 2 the ditch-complex 118 ran in an ENE-WSW direction for ca. 55 m and ended in a pit complex. Said complex included an oven and a hearth, that was most probably connected to metalworking activities as indicated by finds of hammer-scales, nails, burnt clay, an iron knife and more (ibid., p. 247). The composition and condition of the finds indicate that this complex was used as a workshop where small metal-objects were created and/or repaired.

The osteological analyses conducted on the total bone assemblage stemming from phase 2 shows that domestic animals represent the most significant category of species. There is an overall prevalence of equal numbers of bones stemming from food



Fig. 41. Eskilstorp 2:26, pit A106764. (Ohlsson and Söderberg, 2024, p. 247).

consumption and from butchering (Magnell and Hallgren, 2024, p. 208). An overall slightly higher number of domestic animals – cattle, sheep/goat and pig – could be noted in the western portion of area 1A (ibid., p. 209). However, the spread of bones stemming from food consumption and butchering does not speak for any preferred type of interaction in any of the areas. Most notably, the high number of butchered calves indicates a surplus of young cattle,

which by extension implies a focus on dairy, as calves are needed to make cows produce milk (Ohlsson and Söderberg, 2024, p. 235). The slaughtering-age of sheep/goat in the material indicates a focus on meat, and less so on wool or dairy. Other notable animals detected in the assemblage are horse, chicken and fish - especially herring – and cat with traces of cut-marks. The considerable number of frog-bones indicates that the overall farmstead-area was wet, most notably the south-western area surrounding the well was characterised by finds of molluscs (ibid., p. 236).

Concluding remarks on Eskilstorp 2:26

During the preliminary assessment of the archaeological record in pre-investigations, and prior to the extensive excavations the site had been interpreted as a large farmstead dated to the Late Viking Age and Early Medieval Period (ibid., p. 225f.). Following full excavation this picture had been confirmed at least for the later phases 2 and 3. The most significant development in phase 2 is an extensive differentiation of building styles and an increase in overall activities in the farmstead-space. While the fundamental style of cultivation is established during phase 1, it is expanded upon in phase 2 with an intensification of additional activities such as diverse food-preparations for large households, textile-working and signs of sporadic metal-working on site (ibid., p. 261f.). Despite the authors' note that it remains unclear if this intensification of activities was geared towards self-sustenance or distribution beyond the farmstead, the sheer number of various coins suggest some kind of economic activity on the farmstead and potential over-regional trade-contacts (ibid., p. 262). What can be surely said, is that especially during phase 2 the farmstead housed a considerable amount of people and animals as part of one extensive household. It is worth emphasising the importance of the investigated large number of pit-houses at Eskilstorp which seem to have often contained largely undisturbed infills and partially even occupation layers.

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