Small Freestanding Buildings with Two Trestles in the Vicinity of Uppåkra

– Halls or Outhouses?

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Abstract

The central place of Uppåkra, in southern Sweden, is the largest, artefact-richest and longest-lasting Iron Age settlement in the country. The functions and the importance of the central place surely differed during the Iron Age, but there is no doubt that it was a centre of power and a residence of the highest in the societal hierarchy. At the centre of the central place was a freestanding hall, sometimes referred to as a ceremonial building. One feature of the Uppåkra hall that makes it stand out from other contemporary halls is that it has just two trestles. Other features of the hall are the big and deep postholes for the roof support, the curved walls and its small size. The hall was constantly rebuilt and used from the third century AD to the early tenth century.

I propose that some of the small houses with two trestles for inner roof support on bigger farms in south-west Scania, especially from the Roman Iron Age, may be interpreted as halls. The hall at Uppåkra was the unattainable model that every hall owner of the nearby elite, allied with the paramount chief, tried to copy. How successful they were depended upon their wealth. The meaning of the hall/ceremonial building at the central place was thus translated to a more local context.

Furthermore, it is suggested that by trying to find copies of the Uppåkra hall in the surrounding landscape one can get an idea of how far the political, cultural and religious influence of the Uppåkra chief extended in the region. It can thus give us an idea of the political landscape during different periods of the Iron Age. To build a hall of Uppåkra type hence signals identity and affiliation.

Uppåkra

The central place of Uppåkra outside the city of Lund is a unique and an exceptional Iron Age site. This is in virtue of spectacular artefacts, the number of artefacts, the size of the habitation area, the thickness of the cultural layers, the long continuity of the site and also some of the buildings. It is reasonable to believe that the central place filled multiple functions, such as being a residence of a chief or petty king, from the Roman Iron Age until the late Iron Age. Current research suggests that Uppåkra, already during the Roman Iron Age/early Migration Period had superior central functions. This is suggested by, among other things, a major weapons deposition from the site as well as the existence of a small freestanding hall sometimes referred to as a cult building or ceremonial building (Helgesson 2004, 223 ff.; Larsson & Lenntorp 2004, 7; Larsson 2006). This particular building calls for special attention and will henceforth be referred to as the hall.

The central place can be considered as a chieftain residence around the beginning of the Common Era (Helgesson 2002a, 34). During the Roman Iron Age in Scania the power was presumably in the hands of several chieftains, each with his own chiefdom, all with a military capacity to back up their political position (Helgesson 2002a, 134 ff.; Anglert *et al*. 2006, 31 ff.). There can be no doubt that the leaders in Uppåkra, regardless of what title they might have had through the years, were the paramount chieftain or overlord among the elite or aristocracy in south-west Scania during most of the Iron Age from the beginning of the Common Era, even more so from 300 AD onwards with the appearance of first a supposed tribal confederation and later a petty kingdom in the area (cf. Helgesson 2002a, 143 ff.; Helgesson 2002b, 37). In that regard both he and his residence were the model that the rest of the magnates tried to emulate according to their means and ability. Hypothetically, it is likely that especially the symbolically manifest "hall" was the raw model of the halls that his followers, the magnates in his realm, built on their own farms. It set the standard. The hall at the central place of Uppåkra was in use from the 3rd century AD to the mid-10th century (Larsson 2006; Larsson & Söderberg 2013, 239). The building was repeatedly rebuilt according to the same ground plan. The rebuilding of the house according to the same concept through the centuries underlines its symbolic value concerning supremacy, continuity, legitimacy and power. Every new chieftain presumably rebuilt or embellished it – although there is only evidence for rebuilding on six occasions – as a way to show that they were heirs with a historical mythological right and that they stood for the stability that held the society together (cf. Herschend 2009, 396; Larsson & Söderberg 2013, 245). It is thus over a long period that we should be able to trace similar buildings in the surroundings on large farms in a landscape characterized by a hierarchical settlement structure. The area in which such hall buildings can be found may also reflect the hypothetical area that the Uppåkra ruler influenced and to some extent exerted dominion over. As point of departure I suggest that the hall in Uppåkra of ceremonial type with two trestles was an important arena in the creation and maintenance of social relationships and networks within the area surrounding the central place (cf. Olsen 2003, 2006; Webmoor & Witmore 2008). A search to find farms with similar "non-residential buildings" interpreted as halls is thus a way to create a settlement hierarchy that is not only based on farm size or exclusive artefacts. Farms with halls, situated around the central place, might also hypothetically reflect the organization of both the army and the society of the time.

This is not the first attempt to locate halls in south-west Scania, but previously the halls have been sought among the larger Iron Age buildings (Andersson 2001). In these, as at the Viking Age Borg in Northern Norway, there might be a hall room, but often, at least during the early Iron Age, these were the big main buildings on the farm that contained living quarters, storerooms and stables. During the late Iron Age, on the other hand, very big halls were built on farms and central places that belonged to the highest aristocracy, the royals, as Lejre on Zealand, Gamla Uppsala in Uppland and Järrestad in Scania. The world is seldom simple. To complicate things, in Järrestad, for instance, there is a sequence of large buildings with public hall functions north of a freestanding hall/cultic building. At Uppåkra there is also a sequence of large buildings west of the original freestanding hall. These are dated from the 6th century up to the Viking Age (Larsson & Söderberg 2013). Uppåkra and other royal residences could thus be considered as hall complexes. Be this as it may, the large halls are not within the scope of this article.

A distinctive feature of the Uppåkra hall is that it only has two trestles in its inner roof construction, while the early freestanding halls at other magnate farms, dated from the 5th century to the 7th century, often have three, for instance house Vb Dankirke in Jutland, house 16 at Vallhagar on Gotland, Övetorp on Öland, Skeke house 2 (400–550 AD), Uppland and Helgö husterrass 1, Uppland (Hansen 1990; Herschend 1993; Herschend 1995; Larsson 2014). Other features of the Uppåkra hall are its convex long sides and straight gables, the wall trenches, and the large and deep postholes. It also has two entrances on the south long side and one in the north. The entrances are located on the side of the central room formed between the inner roof posts.

There was a great variation of social power and wealth among the elite in the late Roman Iron Age, so much so that we may speak of a hierarchy within the stratum. There was also social mobility. The organization of the Germanic army by different ranks points in that direction, as does the settlement hierarchy and also the testimony of the variety of valuables, weapons and so on in contemporary graves (Pauli Jensen *et al*. 2003, 327; Carlie 2005; cf. Hedeager 1992, 123 ff.). We might therefore expect that the hall owners' farms can vary in size according to this stratification. The hall is most likely, however, to be found on the largest farm in the village, belonging to the village leader, but this need not be the only farm in the village with a hall (Herschend 2009, 253; cf. Widgren 1998, 290). Of course we may expect the halls of the highest elite to be lavishly adorned and well built, as in Uppåkra. Frands Herschend argues, with reference to the poem *Hávamál* and the archaeological record, that belonging to the social elite presupposed being the owner of a hall and ship. Verses 36 and 37 shows that some hall owners had economic problems in living up to this and that some halls were far from the ideals enshrined in the myths (Herschend 2001, 47 ff.). In the Roman Iron Age hall ownership could be found in a broader spectrum of society than later when they become more exclusive (Herschend 2009, 203).

The characteristics of the hall

The hall as a phenomenon has attracted most attention in the archaeological discourse from Frands Herschend, who also laid down the criteria for what distinguished a hall archaeologically (Herschend 1993, 182; Herschend 1998a; Herschend 1998b, 16; Herschend 2009):

- They belong to big farms.
- Originally they consist of one room with a minimum of posts.

- They are singled out by their position on the farm.
- Their hearths were not used for cooking or for handicraft.
- The artefacts found in the houses are different from those found in the dwelling part of the main house on the farm.

Herschend has subsequently further developed the concept of the hall. The hall is connected to the hall owner and the social reproduction of the upper stratum. What separates it from the main building of the farm with its kitchen dwelling, apart from the criteria listed above, is that it is located in a secluded position on the farm, for example, on a terraces in a monumental position. Furthermore it is spacious, in particular the room where the fireplace is located; it is built with few closely spaced posts and therefore strikingly high pairs (Herschend 1999, 98).

The hall developed through time, and three types are recognizable (Herschend 2009, 252 ff.). At the beginning, in the early Roman Iron Age, the hall was just an extra room in the multifunctional main building with its kitchen dwelling, byre and storerooms. In the next stage, around the late Roman Iron Age and the early Migration Period, it became the freestanding one-room hall, the kind of building that is our main focus here. When the freestanding hall was introduced it lacked characteristics such as a special ground plan, construction or position. It was small like an outhouse and since usually only the postholes remain they are difficult to recognize (Herschend 2009, 253). During the first and second generation of halls, they could be found on a broader range of prosperous farms. However, the halls imply the presence of an economically and socially discernible upper social stratum. The hall grew more exclusive from the Migration Period onwards. In this third generation of halls, the hall became a room in a dwelling house that was also the living quarters of the farm owner and his household. Here the aristocrat resided separated from the daily substance production (Herschend 2009, 254 ff.).

The halls have also been dealt with from a social, ritual and mythological perspective (Thompson 1995, 4; Hem Eriksen 2010). The aristocrats distinguished themselves as a group by wealth and lifestyle, with lavish consumption of food and drink, but also by giving gifts to their followers. The hall was a room for their self-presentation, a scene for social display, a place to entertain guests, a place of drinking and extravagant consumption, but also for ceremonies and religious rituals. The halls thus filled several functions that are not always possible to distinguish, and hence there is some confusion in the terms hall/ceremonial house/cultic building. The functions may also have shifted depending on the occasion. The problems with the interpretation of the functions of halls are particularly evident concerning places where there are several contemporary hall buildings, which might be termed hall complexes, as Järrestad, Tissø and the central place in Uppåkra (Jensen 2004, Söderberg 2005, 211 ff.; Larsson & Söderberg 2013).

The settlement pattern in the area in brief

The settlement development and pattern in the area around the central place is poorly understood, but can based on the current state of knowledge, briefly described as follows: In the Uppåkra area one can see an expansion and agglomeration of farms and settlements during the end of the Pre-Roman Iron Age when the central site was established. The early Roman Iron Age is characterized by continued expansion and agglomeration of settlements, with hamlets and farms of varying size lying close to each other in the hinterland

of the central place, interpreted as a sign of a denser population. During the second half of the late Roman Iron Age one notices a settlement regression. Houses and farms in general become fewer and smaller, although some larger farms further away from the central place remain. At the same time a few new farms and hamlets are established at new places. The reduction of settlements continues during the Migration Period, although there is an example of at least one large farm that grew (Aspeborg *et al*. 2013, 110 f.). There is also an example of a large farm or magnate farm that was established in new locations at the transition between the Migration Period and the Vendel Period (Runcis 1998). Generally speaking, however, there are fewer settlements than before, and the main picture is that of contraction of settlements. During the early Viking Age there are still a few settlements that can demonstrate a continuity back in history, all the way from the early Roman Iron Age to the Vendel Period. After that, they seem to be relocated, probably to the site of the medieval village. An uncovered magnate farm at the village site of Hjärup from the late Viking Age seems to underline that presumption.

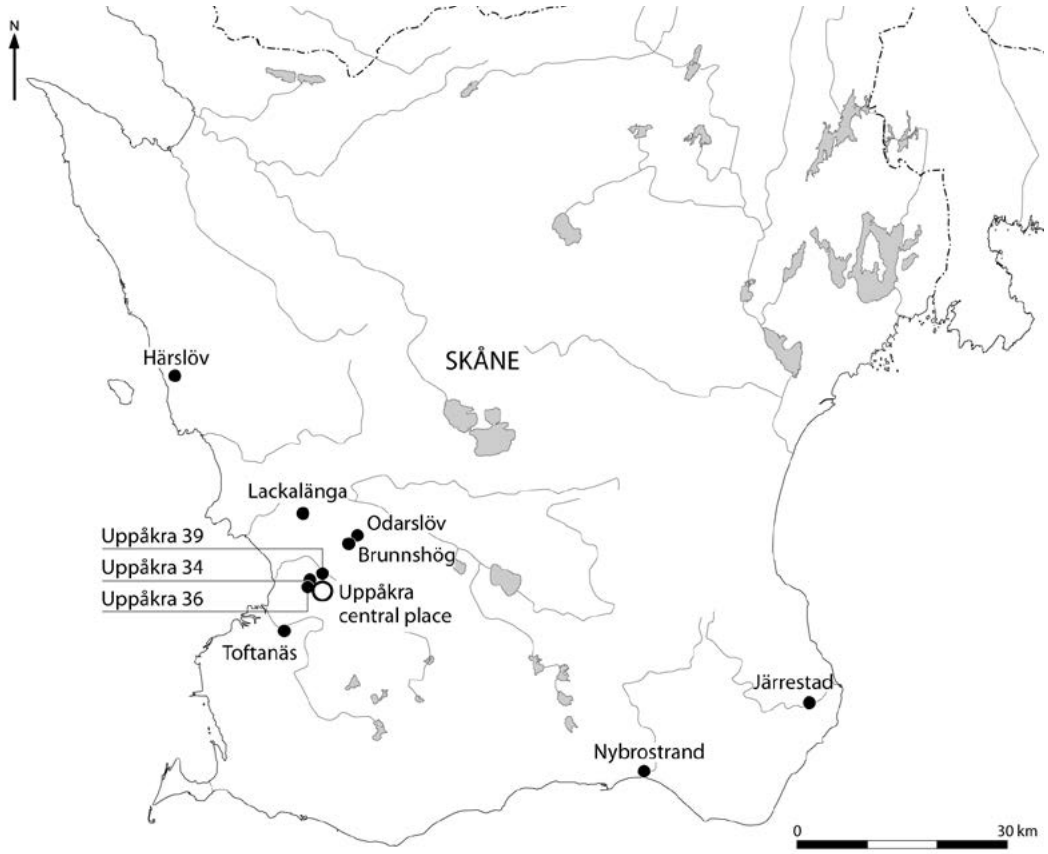

Fig. 1. The sites discussed in the article.

Possible freestanding halls of Uppåkra type in the vicinity of the central place

A review of several reports of settlement excavations in the surroundings of the central place shows that there are several houses displaying traits of the Uppåkra hall ground plan and also of about the same size. The number of major settlement excavations of Iron Age sites in the area is, however, relatively small if compared to other areas such as the Malmö district. It is very difficult to identify a hall in relation to small outhouses identified only by the traces left in the ground – even more so since the presumed halls presented here lack exceptional artefacts. These might be missing because they remained in the plough layer that was removed. In most of the excavations this was done without previous metal detection being undertaken. But there may be other explanations. The hall owners at this level of society would probably not have had access to a significant amount of exclusive items, at least not in comparison to the chieftain at the central place. Exclusive and unusual status objects are seldom found on settlements from the Roman Iron Age or the Migration Period in Scania, except for those belonging to the absolute highest class that might be termed central places. Because the presumed hall owners dealt with here, although high up, were far from the top of the social hierarchy, there was no reason politically speaking to burn down their halls and loot them. Before the halls were abandoned they were probably cleaned before being torn down. In some cases the houses have no hearth, but that could have been ploughed away since the area lies in a fully tilled landscape. All the houses discussed here have been found in fields that have been ploughed for ages. In those cases where the fireplace remains it is still hard to tell whether the hearths were used for cooking or for

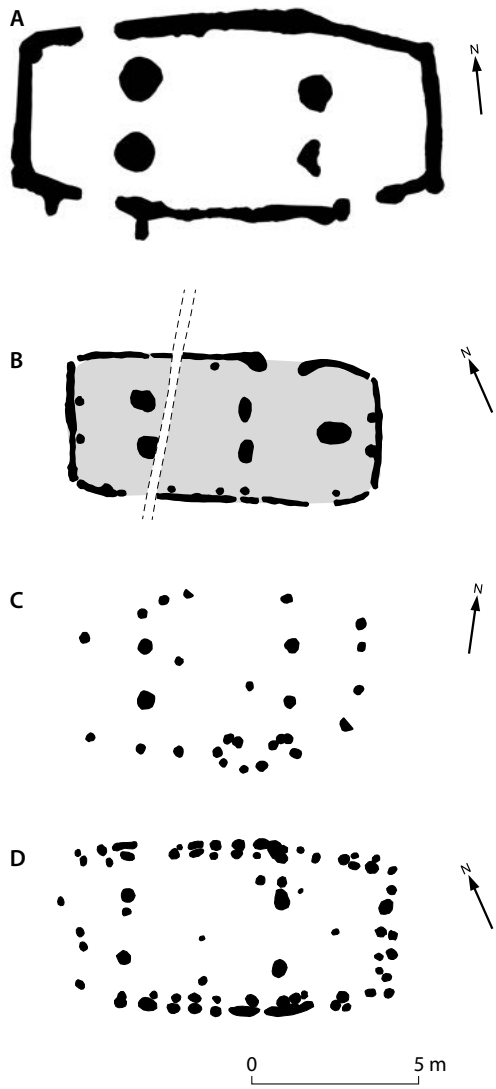

Fig. 2. The Central place hall (a) and three examples of some of the other two trestles halls on big farms in the vicinity of the central place, Uppåkra 39 (b), Odarslöv 51 (c) and Lindängelund (d) (Larsson & Lenntorp 2004, 34; Aspeborg et al. 2013, 200; Helgesson forthcoming; Strömberg et al. 2014, 202).

handicraft, or neither. Thus, it is only the first three of the hall criteria that we can consider for the potential halls, besides their similarity in ground plan to the hall at the central place.

Let us now discuss whether a number of smaller building on Iron Age settlements in the proximity of the central site, as well as some from the rest of Scania, can be reinterpreted as halls (Fig. 1). Many of these buildings have been interpreted as storehouses or workshops, but a few as halls. The presentation does not claim to be complete, but should be viewed more as a proposal for a different interpretation. Hopefully it will contribute to new interpretations of the political and social landscape, mainly during the early Iron Age in Scania.

The hall at the central place of Uppåkra was just over 13 metres long and 6.6 metres wide. The internal dimensions were shorter (Fig. 2a) (Larsson 2006, 144). Postholes were very large and up to 1.7 metres deep. The find material was rich in exclusive objects (Larsson & Lenntorp 2004). It is a small one roomed building, but the size of the postholes suggests that it probably was high, stately and impressive (Herschend 2009, 370). At ceremonies and feasts there should have been room for about 30 people.

At a few farms in the vicinity dating back to the Roman Iron Age there are small buildings that more or less resemble the hall at the central place. The settlement Uppåkra 39 is situated a few hundred metres north of the central place. It was a hamlet from the early Roman Iron Age up to the Migration Period. The size of the hall at Uppåkra 39 was 9.3 × 4.3 metres (Fig. 2b). The house had wall trenches, two entrances on the south long side and one on the north side. No extraordinary artefacts were found in the house despite intensive metal detecting of the topsoil. It also lacks the curved long side walls of the hall at the central place. Furthermore, the fireplace is not in the middle of the house but in the eastern

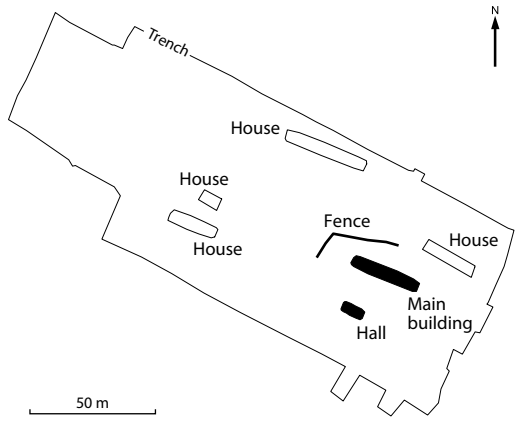

Fig. 3. The fenced big farm with a hall from the late Roman Iron Age at Uppåkra 39 (Aspeborg et al. 2013, 124).

part. The hall lay separate from the almost 30-metre long and well-built main building of the farm. The farm which was the biggest in the hamlet during this phase was fenced (Fig. 3). The house is dated by two ^{14}C datings, both ending up with 2 Sigma accuracy within the same range, 250–420 AD (Ua-30450, 1696±30 BP; Ua-30451, 1693±30 BP). It is interpreted as a hall mainly because of its secluded location within the courtyard south of the main building (Aspeborg *et al.* 2013).

During the early Roman Iron Age the settlement Uppåkra 36 was a hamlet with two farms. It is situated just a few hundred metres west of the central place. During the late Roman Iron Age there was only one farm left and after that the settlement ceased at the site. House 15 on the eastern farm is a presumed early hall of modest dimensions (Fig. 4a). The house is >7.9 metres long and 4.8 metres wide. It belongs to a phase dated to the early Roman Iron Age (0–150 AD) but is not ^{14}C-dated (Becker 2012, 26). The presumed early dating of the house is problematic for the interpretation of the house as a hall. The house is placed in a secluded position away from two long main buildings which may be contemporary with the hall, one that is 30

Fig. 4. Other small buildings with two trestles, halls or outhouses, in the hinterland of the central place of Uppåkra. (a) House 15 Uppåkra 36, (b) House 9 Uppåkra 36, (c) Uppåkra 34, (d) Brunnshög, (e) Lackalänga, (f) Härslöv, (g) house 1 Järrestad (Becker 2012, 68, 74; Ericsson 2007, 10; Carlie 2012, 45; Olsson et al. 1996, 57; Strömberg & Thörn-Pihl 2000, 62 f.; Söderberg 2005, 212).

metres long and one that is at least 42 metres long. A cup made of fine ware was found in a posthole of the tentative hall building. House 9 on the western farm may also have been a hall (Fig. 4b). The house is ^{14}C-dated to 80–240 AD (Cal 2 σ) (Ua-29585, 1848 ±30 BP). This house also has a somewhat secluded position from the main building, which might be a 37-metre long main building or a somewhat smaller building only 22 metres long later on. Four postholes were all that was preserved of the house. The distance between the trestles was modest, only 2.5 metres. Interestingly, a cup of fine ware was found in one of the postholes and it is suggested that the sherd is from the same cup as the one found in house 15 (Becker 2012, 69). In spite of that, the house is dated to a phase 150–300 AD. With

the poor preservation of the house in mind it is hard to interpret it as a hall. The hamlet disappears from the site around 300 AD.

A hundred metres north of the settlement previously mentioned lay Uppåkra 34. It might be interpreted as a single farm or perhaps a farm that was moved away but belonged to the hamlet of Uppåkra 36. On the farm there was a small house, 8 metres long and 5 metres wide, with two trestles (Fig. 4c). It had slightly curved walls that in some places were built with double rows of wall posts. The house had a hearth placed in the centre. The house is dated on typological grounds to the transition between the Pre-Roman and the Roman Iron Age (Ericson 2007, 12 f.). This early dating of the houses is problematic with regard to an interpretation of the house as an early freestanding hall, but the dating is debatable. The house was placed 20 metres south of the 22-metre long main building. No exclusive artefact can be associated with either the house or the farm as a whole. The small size of the main building suggests that this is not a farm where the farm owner had the means to have a hall. The early dating of the farm, although debatable, is also problematic.

A magnate farm dating from around 250–650 AD has been excavated at Odarslöv 51. On the farm three successive halls have been detected. The oldest of those halls is a parallel to the one at the central place with two trestles by virtue of its similar ground plan, size and proportions (Fig. 2c). It may therefore be characterized as a hall. House 116 was 8.5 metres long and 5 metres wide. Although exclusive artefacts were lacking, in spite of metal detecting, and no hearth was found in it, it has the peripheral placement on the farm site that a freestanding hall often had. One ^{14}C dating comes from the house, 220–375 AD (Cal 2σ) (Beta-372286, 1760±30). In this phase of the farm the main building was 33 metres long (Helgesson forthcoming).

In the following Migration Period phase of the farm, the hall is interestingly replaced by a new bigger hall of another kind with four trestles. This hall would soon be replaced by more or less a copy. The houses are reminiscent of the hall in Østergård in Jutland from the 6th century, but also a hall in Gudme (Østergaard Sørensen 1994, 28 ff.; Ethelberg 2003, 312 ff.; Herschend 2009, 257). For some reason they stopped using the central place hall as a model. These halls are examples of hall buildings that, apart from their function as a hall, also included the living quarters for the farm owner and his family. This change, when the halls also included the living quarters of the owner's family in addition to the hall room, is supposed to have taken place around the middle of the first millennium (Herschend 2009, 259). At Odarslöv the new kind of hall was introduced already some time between 325 and 400 AD. These halls are larger buildings, over 20 metres long. The choice to construct the new hall type might have to do with dynastic changes at the central place. Be this as it may, the central place was actually attacked when the hall was burnt down and a large number were killed (Larsson & Söderberg 2013, 239 ff.; Herschend 2009, 369 ff.). No spectacular artefacts were found in any of these halls at Odarslöv either. However, in a grave at the farm's cemetery, ^{14}C-dated to 240–395 AD (Cal 2σ) (Beta-376219, 1720 ± 30 BP), a golden ring and a gold disc were found (Tony Björk *et al.* forthcoming). During the Migration Period the farm was at its largest and had a total floor area of about 500 m² (Helgesson forthcoming).

At Brunnshög a single farm with many phases, dating from the Pre-Roman Iron Age to the Vendel Period, has been excavated. The farm reached its maximum size in the late Roman Iron Age. Building 15 on the farm represents a hall candidate (Fig. 4d). The house has two inner trestles and a size of 9

× 4.5 metres. The house was slightly convex with straight gables and had two opposing entrances in the western part. Postholes belonging to the wall were found all around the house and they were often in double rows. The posts had stood in long but shallow wall trenches. The house is interpreted as having an inner wall. The house was interpreted by the excavators as an outbuilding or workshop, perhaps a smithy (Ericson & Lagergren 2009; Carlie 2012, 45). The house is dated to the early Roman Iron Age and belongs to a farm with a main building a little more than 20 metres long and a four-post barn. The possible hall building is somewhat secluded from other two buildings on the farm site. The fact that the house has a sturdy construction suggests that it would not have been a simple outbuilding. On the other hand, the dating of the house is problematic, as is the small size of the main building in this phase of the farm, if one would like to interpret it as a hall.

At the Lackalänga 33 site there is a farm belonging to an extended and unregulated hamlet from the early Roman Iron Age. On the farm there is a house that is a weak candidate as a hall (Fig. 4e). House IV was 8 metres long and 4.5 metres wide. In the middle of the house there was a hearth. In the eastern part there were two opposing entrances on each long side. No extraordinary artefacts were found in connection with the house, which was situated in an ordinary outbuilding position, close and parallel, beside the 30-metre long main building. Furthermore, the short distance between the trestles in the house speaks against an interpretation of the house as a hall. The house is dated to the early Roman Iron Age by typology (Olson *et al.* 1996, 57 ff.). Charcoal from the hearth has been dated to 40–240 AD (Cal 2 σ).

Other examples of possible Uppåkra-type halls in Scania

There is reason to believe that freestanding halls of Uppåkra type are also is to be found in the Malmö area. House 35 at Lindängelund fits the model. It was 10 by 5.5 metres in size (Fig. 2d). However, the four inner postholes were of moderate size. The walls were slightly convex and consisted on three sides of double rows of closely placed postholes and trenches. There had also been posts standing in the trenches. Three entrances could be found in the house. The house has been dated to in between 150 and 300 AD. The house stood aside on the settlement and was difficult to associate to any particular farm in the hamlet (Strömberg *et al.* 2014, 201 ff.). It has been suggested it was used collectively by all contemporary farms in the hamlet. A similar building is also to be found at Toftanäs, during the second phase of farm number 1. A small house with two trestles had a remote position in the fenced farmyard, far away from the almost 40-metre long main building (Persson 1998, 67 ff.; Carlie & Artursson 2005, 180 ff.). Unfortunately there are no ^{14}C-dating from the house, but it has been dated typologically to the early Roman Iron Age. The ^{14}C dates from the main building of the farm are within that time span (Persson 1998, 67 ff.). No hearth was found in the house, but they were not preserved in the long houses either. The excavator interpreted the building as an outhouse for storage.

There are also hall candidates of the central place type on younger farms. One is on a farm from the Vendel Period/Viking Age. It was found almost 40 kilometres north of the central place of Uppåkra, at Härslöv 143 (Strömberg & Thörn-Pihl 2000). There was a small building here with two internal trestles and of approximately the same size as the ceremonial house at the central place. The house was just over 14 metres long and

6.6 metres wide and had curved exterior walls on its long sides (Fig. 4f). The house lay close to and at 90 degree angle to the more than 30-metre long main building. Others have noted that the house is not only a parallel to the hall at the central place of Uppåkra, but also to a cult building/hall at the magnate farm at Järrestad, especially on account of the convex walls. It has therefore been cautiously suggested to have been a hall (Carlie & Artursson 2005, 226).

House 1 on the magnate farm Järrestad, phase 2 (Fig. 4g), is interpreted as a cultic/ceremonial building (Söderberg 2005, 209 ff.). It is located within a fenced area south of the main hall, and the whole can be described as a hall complex of a magnate farm of the highest order. It is therefore not surprising that exclusive artefacts are associated with the house. A polished amethyst, glass beads and sherds of a glass beaker were found in the building. This separate cult building with ritual function is dated to 700–950 AD (Söderberg 2002, 54 ff.; Carlie & Artursson 2005, 218 ff.). This hall is described as having four trestles, but because the two of them standing in the gable, as indeed in all the houses, also to some extent bear the roof, the house can be considered as a hall with only two trestles. The house was bigger than the hall at the central place. With its four posts at the gables it indeed gives more of an impression of being more influenced by houses from the Mälaren area than by the hall at the central place (Herschend 2009, 239; Franck Bican 2014, 60). The farm in Järrestad with a hall for feasting and a separate fenced building for the cult has a direct parallel in Tissø, Zealand (Jensen 2004, 301; Söderberg 2005, 209 ff.). But the clear-cut dichotomy between the profane and the sacred might be called into questioned when it comes to Iron Age feasting (Andersson 1998, 243).

Discussion

The relatively modest little houses with a ground plan that resembles the freestanding hall at the central place, discussed here as possible halls, have often been interpreted as small outbuildings. Apart from the Järrestad case there are no artefacts to indicate that they even belonged to an aristocracy or social elite. Furthermore, some of the examples discussed previously are somewhat too old to be freestanding halls, but in some cases the dating could be contested. It is through the similarity to the hall at the central place in Uppåkra and the fact that they often belong to a large dominant farm that one may assume in some cases that they filled a function as a mead hall for aristocratic entertainment and lifestyle. Most of them, but not all, also have a somewhat secluded position on the farmstead in relation to the main building. But there are exceptions to this elsewhere, as for instance concerning the hall at Övetorp on Öland (Herschend 2009, 255). Some of the better preserved halls also had double wall posts and wall trenches. Those with double wall posts may have had interior walls. Some also had large postholes where the roof posts once stood. It may be taken as a sign that the building was high. Some of the buildings would thus appear far too well constructed to have been simple outbuildings.

The hall owners in the vicinity of the central place, according to their economic capacity, tried to emulate the central place hall and manifest their affiliation to the aristocratic class. The preceding analysis shows that there are possible halls from the Roman Iron Age in the area which could have been inspired by the freestanding hall of residence at the central place, with two roof-bearing trestles. The most striking examples were found on the sites of Uppåkra 39, Odarslöv 51 and Lindängelund. Concerning the others, a function as a simple outhouse cannot be ruled out. It therefore

seems possible to localize the farms of an elite of lower level allied to the chieftain at Uppåkra in the proximity of the central place by studying the settlements. It is likely that the number of such farms will increase as more large farms from the late Roman Iron Age are excavated. The search for hall buildings on larger farms might help to give a new picture of the area affected by and under the influence of the Uppåkra chiefs. A hall of the same type has been found, for example, at Kårarp in the south of the province of Halland (Carlie 2011, 73). One may also notice that the second hall, house 4, at the central place/magnate farm of Vittene in the province of Västergötland is very similar in layout and size to that of Uppåkra (Fors & Gerdin 2009, 110 ff.). Interestingly enough, it seems that one can also find the hall of Uppåkra type in Zealand across the sound and in Jutland. On Zealand we are probably dealing with the same kind of hall on a magnate farm Torstorp Vesterby: It is dated to the Migration Period (Fonnesbech Sandberg 1992, 29 ff.). In Jutland on the other hand there is a larger version of the type on a magnate farm in Præstestien (Siemen 2000, I 38, II 142; Herschend 2009, 260 f.). How common his type of hall is in Denmark is an interesting question, but it is beyond the scope of this article. During the Pre-Roman Iron Age and the early Roman Iron Age the army in southern Scandinavia was composed in a manner reflecting the Hjortspring find, with privates (free men), NCO (lower elite), officers (nobles), and a commander (chief) (Kaul 2003, 218). The army reflects a society of free aristocrats in the making (a warrior class) and chieftains. At the local level there probably also was the elite of village leaders in every village. But the large group and backbone of the society was the free men, the farmers. This ranking of both the army and society was probably about the same during the late Roman Iron Age, with the exception that a large group of professional warriors also supplemented the previous order. The south Scandinavian armies during late Roman Iron Age appear to have been well organized with a clear hierarchy, with officers at different levels (Pauli Jensen *et al*. 2003, 327; Boye *et al*. 2009). It is probably among the group of officers on different levels that we should look for those who lived on hall farms of different sizes. This group is unfortunately not distinguishable in the grave material. Late Roman Iron Age graves in western Scania are sparsely furnished with grave goods, and even more seldom weapons, imports, silver or gold (Nicklasson 1997, 102 f.; Björk 2005, 124 ff.). This is particularly obvious concerning the graves around Uppåkra, where the equipment of the few graves from the late Roman Iron Age is modest (Carlie 2005, 442). With our present knowledge it seems that some of these farms disappeared, some already in the late Roman Iron Age, others during the Migration Period. This occurred while a major change in settlement structure was taking place. Possibly the lower elite level of society could not maintain their position as landowners and hall owners. The disappearance of hall farms in the vicinity of the central place suggests that something disruptive happened within the elite level of society, and in society as a whole, during this period. Maybe the professionalization of warfare played some part in it. Whether it should be attributed to internal competition or external factors we leave unsaid.

A question that we may ask ourselves is whether to disqualify small houses with two trestles as halls because they seem older than the hall at the central place. Perhaps it was indeed the other way around, so that it was the hall at the central place that was built using a model of what a hall would look like that had already been established among the elite in the south-west of Scania in the early Roman Iron Age. In the present state of knowledge, with no clear signs of such

early halls, however, it is best to view them as outhouses and the freestanding hall as a late Roman Iron Age invention that mainly spread from the top down.

The area around Uppåkra shows a decline of houses, settlements and hall farms during the Migration Period. Nevertheless some magnate farms a bit further away from the main site survive, and not only that, they seem to prosper more than ever, like the hall farm at Odarslöv 51. This situation implies a concentration of power in the hands of the remaining aristocratic families and a takeover of the land of inferior neighbours (Gräslund 2007, 114). During the last building phase of Odarslöv 51, there is no longer a hall at the farm. The farm and its owner seem to have declined in importance.

The existence of tentative magnate farms during the Migration Period and at the beginning of the Vendel Period shows that there were still a few left of a prosperous upper social stratum of putative allies at strategic places in the hinterland of the central place, but a little bit further away than before (Runcis 1998; Helgesson forthcoming). Certainly both exclusive objects and graves in the hinterland show this (Helgesson 2002a; Helgesson 2002b; Larsson 2013). During the late Viking Age a magnate farm was once again established close to the central place, Uppåkra 26 (Schmidt Sabo 2011). However, there was not even any tentative hall belonging to the big late Viking Age magnate farm at the village of Hjärup, Uppåkra 26 (see Schmidt Sabo 2011, 24 ff.). The halls during the Viking Age seem almost exclusively to occur at residences of the royal elite, such as the central place of Uppåkra and Järrestad. In the current state of knowledge, it appears as if the number of farms with halls decreased in the area and in Scania as a whole during the late Iron Age. This might be interpreted as a sign of an increased concentration of power and a concentration of land ownership in fewer hands. Maybe the Vendel Period farm at Härslöv is an exception to the rule. It might be interpreted as an example of a local magnate who, by building a hall, tries to show that he has a high social position in the district and is a loyal follower of leader at the central place.

The most convincing examples of freestanding halls in this study, Uppåkra 39, Odarslöv 51 and Lindängelund, are all contemporary with the first freestanding hall at the central place in the late Roman Iron Age. This time can be regarded as an early stage in the history of central place and important to its formation. Studies of settlement hierarchy can give us clues to what the social and political landscape looked like and the conditions for the rise of the central place. That is more important in the case of Uppåkra, since other source material such as richly furnished graves from the early Iron Age are missing here and are rare in the late Iron Age. The archaeological source material is constantly increasing, and it is likely that future excavations and studies will nuance and perhaps alter the picture of how common halls were on the larger farms in the vicinity of the central Place. This will contribute to our knowledge of the social organization in Scania and how it developed during the Iron Age.

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