

Military Artefacts from the Medieval Villages of Södra Sallerup and Bunkeflo

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Abstract

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During the excavations of Södra Sallerup in 1998, in connection with the construction of the Outer Ring Road (Yttre Ringvägen), I often discussed the results of the excavations with my former directors, Anders Reisnert and the late Ingmar Billberg. At that point the discussions mostly was about the methodology of the excavations and the origin of the medieval village, the Viking Age nobility and the possibility of a hall building in Södra Sallerup. Later, during the years of my employment at Malmö Kulturmiljö we began to talk about the objects of military origin that were found in waste pits from the medieval farm and what they could represent. Were the finds the belongings of a medieval nobleman or just rubbish from a pit? This article is an attempt to bring clarity to some of the results from Södra Sallerup and those military finds in particular and put them into context.

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Introduction

During the last decade or so, a large number of archaeological excavations have been undertaken near Malmö, in southern Scania. Several of these have concerned rural villages of medieval origin. The aim of this paper is to present some military finds recovered from two of these excavations. The starting point are parts of gauntlets found in the medieval villages of Södra Sallerup and Bunkeflo. The western parts of the village of Södra Sallerup were excavated in connection with the construction of the Outer Ring Road during the summer of 1998 (Heimer 2006). In the village of Bunkeflo parts of the northern village tofts were excavated in connection with the City Tunnel Project during 2000–2002 (Lövgren *et al.* 2007).

Södra Sallerup

The activities in the excavated western parts

of Södra Sallerup have been dated to the period from the Bronze Age up to historical times. The character of the features suggests that in the Bronze Age the site functioned as a resource and activity area located beside wetland in the southern part of the area. In the latter part of the Bronze Age the wetland was filled in and the area was drained. The reasons for filling in the wetland are uncertain. It may be that people wanted a dry, level activity area. In view of the differences in level, however, it is also possible that it is a result of natural soil movement. During this period the area was mainly used for extraction of natural resources such as silt, clay and water.

During the Late Bronze Age and the Pre-Roman Iron Age an enclosed farm was built, consisting of at least two long-houses. The establishment of yet another long-house in the same place as the earlier one indicates site continuity. The later house has been typologically dated to the Pre-Roman Iron Age.

Around the farm was a stout fence. Parts of the fence were probably of the kind known as “saddleback fencing”. A bone lance-head was retrieved from a well. Lance-heads of the same type have been found, for example, by dredging of the River Segeå and in large weapon sacrifices in Denmark. The find of the lance-head suggests that someone who lived in Södra Sallerup in the Pre-Roman Iron Age had a military connection.

From the Viking Age there were remains of a large farm unit with at least seven buildings. These consisted of a long-house of Trelleborg type, four outbuildings, a four-post barn and a sunken-floor hut. Finds of slag from houses show that there was a smithy on the farm. Finds of hack-silver, which are small pieces of silver hacked or cut from coins and jewellery, are evidence of trade or silver craft.

In the Middle Ages the site was the western part of a farm unit. The excavated remains consisted of an occupation layer and three houses. The houses consisted of two ranges running north–south and a building of unknown extent.

In historical times the area was used as arable land, part of the village’s west field. In the southern part of the site the excavation found the remains of the ditch marking the boundary between the south and west fields, and a road that ran alongside the ditch. Traces of this road can still be seen today in the form of planted willows.

Bunkeflo

In the excavated parts of Bunkeflo the first remains of human activity go back to the Middle Neolithic, when the area was sparsely used, possibly as a hunting station. During the late Neolithic and Early Bronze age the area was more permanently populated, with remains of both houses and graves.

During the Late Bronze Age and the Pre-Roman Iron Age the area was occupied with at least five farms with different kind of hous-

es. Those farms are probably part of a larger settlement.

From the Viking Age there were remains of one large farm unit, a manor with at least fourteen buildings. These consisted of long-houses, a hall of Trelleborg type, pit-houses and other farm buildings. The manor was situated on a topographically prominent place with an overview of the rest of the village.

In the early thirteenth century the manor was divided into two separate units, which later became the historical known farms no. 1 and 2. The division of the manor continued during the fourteenth century when farm no. 2 was divided to become farms nr 2 and 3. Prepared toft boundaries shows that there were plans for further changes to the tofts, but they were never realized. After that the tofts were unchanged until the great land reforms of the nineteenth century.

The military artefacts

Two waste pits yielded finds showing that the farm in Södra Sallerup belonged to a soldier, possibly to a mounted soldier. The finds consisted of parts of a gauntlet, a part of a crossbow and personal equipment in the form of spangles, mountings and a buckle from a spur. Whether this belonged to a knight or a squire, or possibly came from some other person in the knight’s retinue, is uncertain (Heimer 2006).

In Bunkeflo the finds were more widely spread. They were found both in cultural layers from all over the excavated farms and from floor layers in houses. The military artefacts consisted of parts of two gauntlets, a sword pommel, crossbow bolts and spurs. As at Södra Sallerup, the finds also consist of spangles and mounts (Lövgren *et al.* 2007).

Gauntlets

The gauntlet found in Södra Sallerup was the

outer part of a finger (Fig. 1). This gauntlet is of a type that has previously been found in mass graves at Korsbetningen (Thordeman 2001). Korsbetningen is an area outside the walls of Visby, Gotland, that hides several mass graves from a battle that took place in July 1361. The Battle was fought between Valdemar Atterdag, the King of Denmark, and his skilled soldiers against common people of Gotland. The battle was won by the Danes and Gotland became a Danish province until 1645, when the island fell to the Swedish realm through the peace treaty of Brömsebro.



Fig. 1. Part of gauntlet found in Södra Sallerup. From Heimer 2006, p. 76, fig. 50. Scale 1:1.

The gauntlet from Södra Sallerup can be compared with gauntlets 3, 4, 8 and 9 from Korsbetningen. According to Bengt Thordeman this type of gauntlet is both of technical and artistically of the highest quality (Thordeman 2001 (1939), pp. 230 ff).

The gauntlet found in Södra Sallerup also resembles a gauntlet found at Alsnöhus outside Stockholm, Sweden (Thordeman 1920, fig. 27:11). Alsnöhus was the royal manor, the crown's estate located on the island of Adelsö. Probably the manor was destroyed by the Vitalian Brotherhood during the last decades of the fourteenth century. The Vitalian Brotherhood was a company of "pirates" who fought to restore the Swedish crown to Albrecht of Mecklenburg, which he had lost to the queen of Denmark, Margareta, after the battle of Falköping in 1389. During the excavations

of Alsnöhus the hill that was the site of the royal manor was covered with crossbow bolts (Thordeman 1920, p. 7).

The gauntlets found in Bunkeflo consist of parts of a finger and a part of a cuff. The finger part consists of three plates and is of the same type as the one from Södra Sallerup (Fig. 2). This gauntlet was found in a building dated to the first half of the fifteenth century. The cuff part is from a gauntlet that can be compared with gauntlet no. 2 from Korsbetningen; was found in a building dated to the fourteenth century (Fig. 3).



Fig. 2. Part of gauntlet found in Bunkeflo. From Lövgren *et al.* 2007, p. 268, fig. 261. Scale 1:1.

Figure 3. Part of gauntlet found in Bunkeflo. From Lövgren *et al.* 2007, p. 268, fig. 261. Scale 1:1.

There are only two earlier finds of medieval gauntlets from Malmö. One of these was found in a building dated to the fourteenth century and consists of a finger part (MHM 6724:234) (Fig. 4). The building was situated in the area of the Söderport block located near the south town gate and was dated to the fourteenth century (Andersson 1986). The other gauntlet (MM 4660) is of unknown origin and consists of a plate that covered the back of the hand (Fig. 5).



Fig. 4. Part of gauntlet found in the Söderport block in Malmö. Photo Olle Heimer. Scale 1:1.



Fig. 5. Part of gauntlet of unknown origin, found in Malmö. Photo Olle Heimer. Scale 1:1.

Crossbow

The part belonging to a crossbow found in Södra Sallerup consist of the axle of a *krihake* (Fig. 6). The *krihake* or pulley was used when

spanning the bow (Fig. 7). In Bunkeflo four crossbow bolts were found. All these were four-sided and were found in layers that can be dated to the eleventh century to the fifteenth century.



Fig. 6. Axle of a crossbow bender (*krihake*), found in Södra Sallerup. From Heimer 2006, p. 77, fig. 52. Scale 1:1.

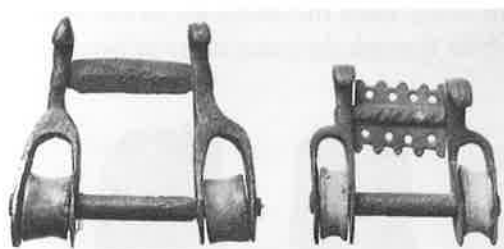


Fig. 7. Examples of crossbow benders (*krihakar*). From Cederström 1942, p. 82, figs. 2 and 3.

The oldest recorded use of a crossbow in Europe dates from the fourth century AD. During the first crusade the crossbow was in general use. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries important improvements were made which led to the further spread of this weapon. Among other things the stirrup was fixed to the stock and served for spanning the bow. Although not a fast-shooting weapon, it was powerful and versatile (Ayton 1999, p. 205).

In the thirteenth century further improvements were made to the crossbow. The wooden bow, up to that time the usual type of bow, was replaced by the much more effective composite "horn bow". Instead of pulling the bowstring by hand, they now used a belt with a metal claw. In the fourteenth century further devices to aid spanning the bow, such as the cord and pulley (*krihake*), goat's foot lever, wooden lever and windlass were introduced (Ekdahl 1998, p. 137) (Fig. 8).



Fig. 8. A medieval soldier spanning his crossbow with a crossbow bender (*krihake*). From Ekdahl 1998, p. 142, fig. 11.12.

In the fifteenth century, to compete with the English longbow and the emerging use of firearms, the crossbow was equipped with a steel bow. The strong steel bow could be spanned only with the special help of mechanical devices such as a windlass, the “English winder” or the ratchet winder, the “German winder” or cranequin. Even after 1450 the crossbow was in no way inferior to firearms and was used as a weapon in the sixteenth century (Ekdahl 1998, p. 143)

During the fourteenth century crossbows can be associated with the nobility, and it is not until the fifteenth century that there are proofs that it was part of the weaponry of the common soldier (Dahlén 1995, p. 192).

Sword pommel

The sword pommel found in Bunkeflo is octagonal biconic (Fig. 9). The sword pommel is of Oakeshott type S, which was popular around the year 1300 (Oakeshott 1996, pp.

224, 227 f.). The eight fields are different in size, vary in height and forms a cross. The pommel was found in the topsoil, with a metal detector, in the southern part of farm no. 1. Swords with similar pommels have been found both in Lund, Scania, and in Uppsala, Uppland. The sword from Lund was found in the River Højeå just south of Lund. This sword can possibly be associated with a battle fought on 7 April 1525, when Scanian peasants and burghers were defeated by the nobility of Scania and Zealand under the command of Johan Rantzau and Tyge Krabbe (Blomqvist 1937, p. 139). The sword can be dated on artistic evidence to the end of the fifteenth century.



Fig. 9. Sword pommel found in Bunkeflo. Photo: Johan Ingwald. Scale 1:1.

Spurs

The finds from Södra Sallerup consists solely of a spur buckle (Fig. 10). The frame of the buckle is slightly trapezoidal. Similar buckles



Fig. 10. Spur buckle found in Södra Sallerup. From Heimer 2006, p. 77, fig. 51. Scale 1:1.

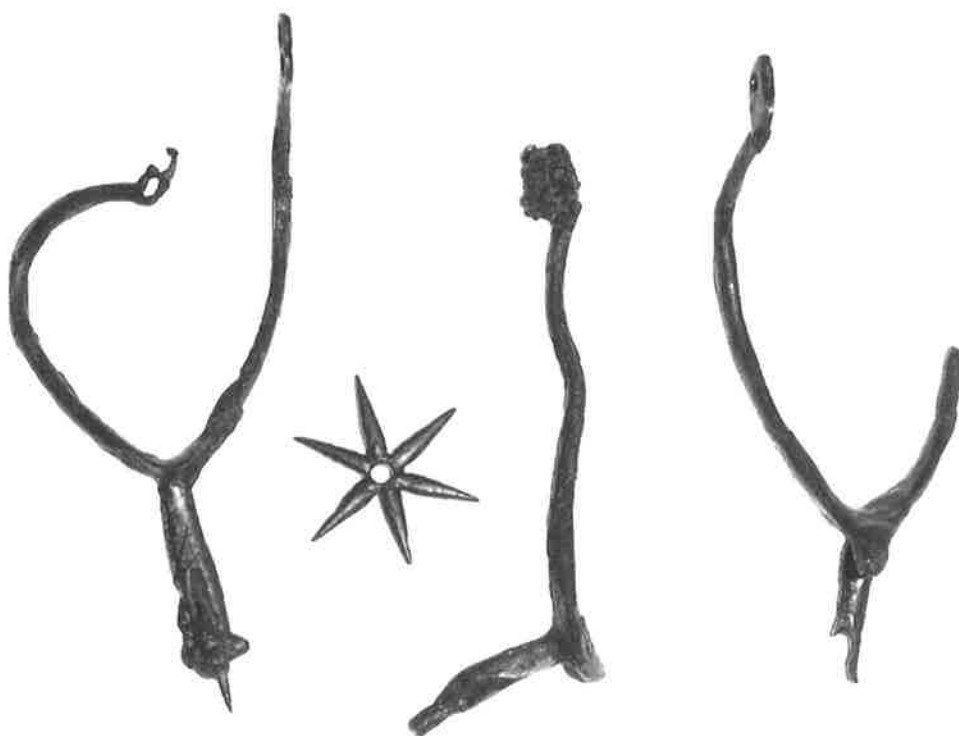


Fig. 11. Spurs found in Bunkeflo. From Lövgren *et al.* 2007, p. 269, fig. 262.

have been found in Lund and are dated to the fourteenth century (Eriksdotter 1994, pp. 34 ff., 79; Metropolis fynddatabas Kulturen Km78415:132). The find is, however, proof of a mounted warrior in Södra Sallerup.

In Bunkeflo parts of five spurs were found (Fig. 11). They consists of four rowel spurs and one prick spur. The prick spur was found in the topsoil by metal detector. One of the rowel spurs is especially well preserved. The appearance of the rowel with its six spikes and the design of the spur, with the straps placed over the rider's foot, suggest that the spur can be dated to middle of the fourteenth and the fifteenth century. That corresponds well to the dating of the house where it was found, which was dated to the fourteenth century.

Another of the spurs consists only of the rowel. The rowel has six spikes that are slightly longer than the previous spur. More nu-

merous and longer spikes are common on the younger rowels (Ellis 1995, pp. 127 ff.). The rowel was found in a building dated to the fourteenth century. The other two rowel spurs were found in younger demolition layers and cannot be associated with any context.

Personal belongings

Several finds from the excavations have been categorized as personal belongings. These could, for example, be objects worn on the clothes such as mounts and spangles or objects of belonging to a person such as coins or jewellery.

Mounts and spangles

From the waste pits in Södra Sallerup several personal belongings such as mounts and span-

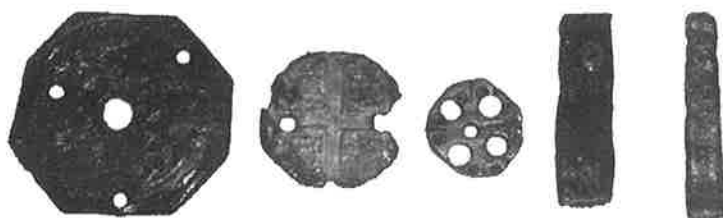


Fig. 12. Mounts and spangles found in Södra Sallerup. From Heimer 2006, p. 78, fig. 54. Scale 1:1.



Fig. 13. Examples of mounts and spangles found in Bunkeflo. From Lövgren *et al.* 2007, p. 272, fig. 265. Scale 1:1.

gles were found (Fig. 12). A spangle is a small plate of shining metal, often gilded, used for ornamentation, especially on clothing, belts and spur fittings. One of the spangles, an octagonal spangle, was decorated with flowers arranged in the shape of a cross. Several

of these spangles have been found in Sweden, for example in the medieval castle of Skanör, in the monasteries at Alvastra, Gudhem and Vreta, in medieval towns such as Linköping and Lödöse and as offerings in Västannortjärn outside Leksand in the province of Dalarna.

There are also finds from medieval farms, for example at Sommaränge Skog in Uppland (Rydbeck 1935, pp. 190 f., fig. 105:36; Eersgård 1995, pp. 87 f.; Schmidt Wikborg 2006, pp. 63 f.). Another spangle was gilded and decorated with a cross. This spangle was probably from the end of a knife handle. From the same waste pit parts of a finger ring were recovered as well. The gilded bronze ring was 2 cm in diameter and was decorated with small fields of diagonal lines, not shown on Fig. 12 (Heimer 2006, pp. 77 f.).

From the village of Bunkeflo several of these mounts and spangles were found as well (Fig. 13). There are 95 objects categorized as mounts or brass plates from the finds of the village of Bunkeflo. The majority of these finds, 59, are from the medieval phase of farm no. 1 (Lövgren *et al.* 2007, pp. 265 f.).

Seal stamp

This find could not be regarded as a military artefact, but it was certainly an object owned by a nobleman. The stamp was found in the topsoil, with a metal detector, just north of the medieval farms. It is round and about 2.4 centimetres in diameter (Fig. 14). On the back of the stamp there is a part of a link. Around the stamp there is the inscription *Iohanis de Rosfalt* and in the middle there is a spur projecting. On the basis of the style the stamp is dated to the fourteenth century. There are several stamps at the National Mu-



Fig. 14. Seal stamp found in Bunkeflo. The stamp is shown to the right. From Lövgren *et al.* 2007, p. 261, fig. 249. Scale 1:1.

seum in Copenhagen that resemble the find from Bunkeflo. Those stamps belonged to Danish burgers, so it is not impossible that *Iohanis de Rosfalt* was a burger of Danish origin. Attempts have been made to trace *Iohanis de Rosfalt* to ascertain who he was, but without result (Lövgren *et al.* 2007, p. 261).

Artefacts of religious character

During the excavations in both Bunkeflo and Södra Sallerup several artefacts of religious origin were found, such as a figurine, a rosary, a knife handle and a badge. Medieval society was embedded in a Christian superstructure. Medieval society defined and structured itself in terms of Christian ideas (Hansson 2006, p. 25). Finds of military origin occurring together with Christian objects is not a contradiction.

Madonna with child

In the same building in Bunkeflo where the finger part of the gauntlet was found, there was a find of a figurine of Mary with the baby Jesus (Fig. 15). The figurine is made out of carved ivory and was found in a building dated to the early fifteenth century. The figurine shows Mary holding up Jesus, just after giving birth. She turns her face towards the beholder and it looks as if she is showing off the infant. The function of figurine is not determined, but it could have been one picture, one scene in a travel altar, that tells about Jesus' life. It can also have been used in connection with that prayer that was directed to Maria, about protections in all dangers, about help during disease or in the face of death, or giving birth (Ingwald & Lövgren in press). On the basis of her appearance and her clothing, the figurine was made during the fourteenth century (Lövgren *et al.* 2007, pp. 263 f.).



Fig. 15. Ivory figurine of Madonna with child. From Lövgren *et al.* 2007, p. 263, fig. 251. Scale 1:1.

Rosary

In the same area, in a layer dated to the sixteenth century, parts of a rosary were found. The find consists of 47 beads made out of bone (Fig. 16). All the beads are simple and smooth except for one that is carved and three others that are slightly bigger. The rosary (from Latin *rosarium*, “rose garden”), is a traditional popular Roman Catholic devotion and also an Anglican devotion. The term denotes both a set of prayer beads used in the devotion and the devotional prayer itself, which combines vocal (or silent) prayer and meditation centred around sequences of reciting the Lord’s Prayer followed by ten recitations of the “Hail Mary” prayer and a single recitation of “Glory Be to the Father”; each of these sequences is known as a decade (Wikipedia). The dating of the find is in accordance with the Reformation in Denmark, and it is possible that the rosary was thrown away during the Reforma-

tion and the subsequent change in religious practice (Lövgren *et al.* 2007, pp. 264 f.).



Fig. 16. Beads belonging to a rosary. Found in Bunkeflo. From Lövgren *et al.* 2007, p. 265, fig. 253. No scale.

Motif of a saint

Mounts from the upper part of a knife handle were found in undated layers in the area of farm no. 1 (Lövgren *et al.* 2007, pp. 264 f.). The mount has punched motifs on both sides. One of the motifs appears to show a building with a woman in the foreground. On the other side there appears to be a portal and an animal lying down, possibly a horse or a mule. The animal’s head is looking back over its body (Fig. 17). This animal may be the symbol of Jesus riding into Jerusalem. The building is possibly a church and the woman is probably Saint Gertrud. Saint Gertrud was the patron saint of the sick and of travellers, both on land and at sea. Institutions built in her honour were often located near roads and in towns, so that travellers and the sick could use them. At the foundation in Malmö there were probably a hospital and a chapel (Bager 1971). The chapel is known from the early sixteenth century (Rosborn 1984: 20). She is often depicted with her attribute, a church. It became a tradition before departing on a

long journey to empty a goblet of water to her memory – later wine was accepted. She was a very popular saint, especially in northern Ger-



Fig. 17. Mounts from a knife with the motif of Saint Gertrud on one side and an animal head on the other side. Found in Bunkeflo. From Lövgren *et al.* 2007, p. 265, fig. 254. Scale 1:1.

many and in Scandinavia.

Similar knife mounts have previously been found both in and around Malmö. In Malmö one knife with the motif of Saint Gertrud on one side and Saint Katarina (Catherine) on the other side was found in the area of the Söderport block. The knife is dated to the fifteenth century by the resemblance to a knife from Lund (Billberg 1982, p. 34). The attributes of Saint Katarina are a book, a sword and a wheel. She is said to have visited the Roman Emperor and to have attempted to convince him of the error of his ways in persecuting Christians. She succeeded in converting his wife, the Empress, and many pagan wise men whom the Emperor sent to dispute with her, all of whom were subsequently martyred. Upon the failure of the Emperor to win Katarina over, he ordered her to be put in prison; and when the people who visited her were converted, she was condemned to death on the breaking wheel (an instrument of torture used in the Middle Ages). After being tortured on the wheel she was spared and beheaded instead, hence the sword.

During the excavations of a manorial farm in Lockarp, two more of these mounts were

found (Heimer, Ifverson & Persson 2006). They were both gilded and show the two saints, Gertrud and Katarina. One shows Saint Katarina holding a sword, on the other side there is a pair of compasses, another of Katarina's attribute. On the other knife mount it is possible that the motif is Saint Katarina with a wheel behind her; the other side is more difficult to interpret, but it could be a stylized church tower. If that is the case it is probably Saint Gertrud that is shown (Fig. 18). What is difficult for us to see today was obvious to the holder. The interpretations are



Fig. 18. Mounts from knives with the possible motifs of Saint Katarina above and Saint Gertrud below. Both mounts were found in the village of Lockarp. Scale 1:1.

now uncertain.

Further mounts have been found in several of the medieval villages around Malmö. Apart from the finds from Bunkeflo and Lockarp, finds are known from Hindby, Hyllie, Klagstorp and Östra Skrävlinge. The mount that was exceptional twenty five years ago is now almost common in the material from excavations in medieval villages around Malmö.

Lily of purity

In one of the waste pits in Södra Sallerup a tin badge was found. The badge consists of two circles, an outer and an inner circle. Between these circles there are six fleur-de-lis (Fig. 19). During the fourteenth century, individual badges representing the Purity of the Virgin Mary appear to have followed the more traditional symbolism of the formalized lily flower – the fleur-de-lis. Fleur-de-lis badges were made from the thirteenth century through to the Reformation (Mitchiner 1986 p. 100). A large number of comparable badges have been found in England, several of which have been interpreted as religious badges (Mitchiner 1986 p. 100; Spencer 1990 pp. 30 ff.). Many of these originate from Walsingham, where England's foremost shrine to the Virgin stood. The badge from Södra Sallerup is probably a secular badge and not a badge acquired during a pilgrimage to Walsingham. This badge was probably worn on the clothes or perhaps on a saddle bag and just for decoration.



Fig. 19. Lead badge with motifs of fleur-de-lis, found in Södra Sallerup. From Heimer 2006, p. 77, fig. 53. Scale 1:1.

Conclusion

So who were these people that owned and used these artefacts? We have no record of a knight or squire in written sources that specifically styled himself as being of any manor or farm in the village of Södra Sallerup from the time of the military finds. There is one squire, Åge Truelsen Falk, known between 1460 and 1502 who styled himself as both of Ingelstorp in Ingelsta county and of Sallerup. This Sallerup is probably not Södra Sallerup but Östra Sallerup in the county of Frosta. All

the members of his family are connected to the eastern parts of Scania and the counties of Ingelsta and Onsjö (Raneke 1982b, p. 446; Reinsnert 2008). There is, however, one person that can be connected to Södra Sallerup, the squire Nils Gagge. He took his name from his manor of Fårabäck in the parish of Södra Sallerup. It is possible that he owned farms in the village of Södra Sallerup but it is not certain (Raneke 1982a, p. 259; Reinsnert 2008).

The archaeology, the excavations of the area where the artefacts were found, can give some indications of the kind of origin the inhabitants had, that owned the farm. As shown above, the area where the medieval farm was located could trace its origin back to the Iron Age and an enclosed farm and later on a Viking Age farm, probably of a high status. The presence of a farm with a house of Trelleborg type and the find of hack-silver is evidence that the farm belonged to the highest nobility. The architecture in Södra Sallerup had clear aristocratic key signatures. The choice to build houses of Trelleborg type can be interpreted as an expression of the proprietor's status and strong connection to the royal power. These buildings constituted an important architectural component of the formulation of the Viking Age fortresses (Söderberg 2005, p. 219). Houses of Trelleborg type were built in southern Scandinavia more or less immediately after the fortresses were constructed in the late tenth century. It was probably natural and desirable for local magnates to want to elucidate their own position by using the royal way of building (Wranning 1999, p. 48). Building these houses required considerably more resources than normal. The buildings were complex constructions that required handcraft and large quantities of building material (Heimer in press). Hack-silver is normally connected to hoard finds. It is rare in the material of ordinary excavations. The silver is probably remains from the production of prestigious objects.

We have no evidence that the medieval farm succeeded the Viking Age farm in Södra Sallerup, but the continuity of the farm, on the tofts in the western parts of the village gives us some clues about the inhabitants of the farm. Probably the finds from the waste pits are finds from a mounted warrior who traced his ancestry back to Viking Age nobility. The crossbow was a weapon primarily for the foot soldier, but we know that there were mounted soldiers who used crossbows. Mounted crossbowmen are to be found in the armies of the Angevin kings (Ayton 1999, p. 195). The First Angevin Dynasty, also-called the House of Plantagenet, ruled England in some form or another from the reign of Henry II, beginning in 1154, until the House of Tudor came to power when Richard III fell at the Battle of Bosworth Field in 1485.

It is possible that he was a knight or a squire connected to the Danish king, a nobleman belonging to the king's retinue. We cannot know if the nobleman was tied to the farm by his ancestors, or if he was placed there by the king. Another scenario is that the military artefacts are remains after the disarmament of a peasant soldier. Before and during the revolts against the union king Eric of Pomerania, in the middle of the fifteenth century, there were large-scale protests that resulted in the peasants refusing to be summoned to arms. After this the Danish king was unwilling to use this right during the rest of fifteenth century, and immediately after the big revolts there were statutes that consisted of a general disarmament of the peasant soldiers. They were no longer allowed to carry crossbows, swords or other weapons, and in Denmark the peasants were no longer permitted to assemble (Cederholm 2007, p. 138). It is possible that the finds from Södra Sallerup are the trace of this disarmament. That they simply dug these two pits and tossed away the military equipment.

The picture of Bunkeflo is totally different. Here we have evidence of at least two families

of aristocratic origin from the time discussed (Ingwald & Lövgren in press). From three villages in the parish of Bunkeflo – Bunkeflo itself, Naffentorp and Vintrie – there is clear evidence for the presence of lower nobility. In the written sources two families appear to have strong connections to the parish. They are the families surrounding a member of the cathedral chapter in both Roskilde and Lund, Niels Bunkeflo, and a branch of one of the oldest noble families in Denmark, Gagge. It is possible that they had family connections, but the proof is not unambiguous.

Niels Bunkeflo himself was possibly born and raised in the village of Bunkeflo, as is implied in his last will and testament from 1346. But during his time in Lund the chapter was his residence. In the testament the parish and the village of Bunkeflo are mentioned no less than five times. This could be additional indications of the importance of the village for the family and their continuity back in time. Another thing that is clarified in the will is his connection to Malmö. He held several estates in the town and he also had relatives who were burgers in Malmö. Contemporary with Niels was Jens Bunkeflo. He is mentioned among knights and squires in connection with the King Erik Menved in 1302. It is very likely that Niels and Jens were related and that they had their origin in Bunkeflo. A short summary of the Bunkeflo family shows that they probably go back as far as early medieval time in their connections with the parish of Bunkeflo. Probably the early medieval manor was the family manor and was an expression of a family with high social position and ambitions. During the growth of Malmö it is possible that the family increased their interests in the city. They now became part of the highest nobility in Malmö (Ingwald & Lövgren in press).

The Gagge family was one of the oldest known noble families in Denmark. They were especially connected to Scania. The family

had several branches, one of which can be connected to the parish of Bunkeflo and the village of Vintrie, through Niels Gagge Senior during the fourteenth century, and Niels Gagge Junior during the fifteenth century. This is the same Niels Gagge who took his name from the manor of Fårabäck in the parish of Södra Sallerup. When Niels Bunkeflo died in 1346 some of the properties had to be sold so that the inherit could be divided. The squire Niels Gagge Senior was one of the four heirs who took the responsibility for selling the property. In the will there is no mention of any relations between the two, but one interpretation is that they were childhood friends. This makes it possible that the Gagge family also operated in the parish, at least since the thirteenth century, but possibly since early medieval times (Ingwald & Lövgren in press).

These two families belonged to the aristocracy in Danish society. In order to understand the medieval aristocracy one also has to understand the nobleman's role as a warrior. Regardless of what social position he had, if he had higher or lesser ancestry, the origin of his existence was his role as a mounted warrior. A major part of his life was devoted to war or preparations for wars. This military side of the aristocracy was always present (Hansson 2006, pp. 30 f.).

During the fifteenth century the violence from the landlords against the peasants led to a need for increased protection, which strengthened the landlord's role as protectors. Violence, quarrels and local feuds became the basis for increased taxes. This led to local feuds where peasants were used as fighting men and the bailiffs and noblemen unlawfully demanded taxes. This uncertainty led to the use of large retinues by the noblemen, with huge expenses as a consequence. Many noblemen paid for large retinues to be able to travel safely through the country, to display their status and to inspire respect. In Swedish

literature from the time we can read that "No man can ride through the country without a hundred men at his side" (Cederholm 2007, p. 225).

The military finds from Södra Sallerup and Bunkeflo probably reflect the political currents during this turbulent time in Scandinavian history. It was during this time that the three kingdoms of Denmark, Norway and Sweden were reconciled in submission to one ruler in what was called the Kalmar Union. It is possible that the finds from Södra Sallerup and Bunkeflo could be seen in the light of this revolutionary process, which ultimately led to its dissolution.

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