

## **AT HOME WITH HERIGAR: A MAGNATE'S RESIDENCE FROM THE VENDEL- TO VIKING PERIOD AT KORSHAMN, BIRKA (UPPLAND/S)**

*In memoriam Lars Jørgensen  
1955-2016*

The site of Korshamn is situated on the northern shore of the island of Björkö (Adelsö parish, Uppland/S). Together with the main harbour, the Black Earth Harbour at the western side of the island situated in front of the fortified trading town of Birka, and the site of Kugghamn in the northwest, it is counted as one of the three major harbour areas of the island (**fig. 1**; e. g. Dahlin 2001; Holmquist/Kalmring 2015, 21). However, how Korshamn exactly was related to the Viking town of Birka itself has remained somewhat of an enigma. It was not only situated outside the town boundaries as indicated by the ramparts, but it was even further separated from it by one of the town's major burial grounds, Hemlanden, stretching with an immensely dense occupation from the town ramparts almost towards the bay of Korshamn itself. Thus hitherto suggestions have ranged from being a spare harbour when the Black Earth Harbour was too frequented (Lindqvist 1926, 14) to a grain harbour («*Kornhamn*») for peasants supplying the town during the trading season (Arbman 1939, 55-56) or as a harbour for vessels with more draught (Lofterud 1970, 4). Archaeologically little has hitherto been known about Korshamn situated rather at the rear of the Viking town of Birka. Visible on the surface there are a few stone assemblages that once belonged to stone box constructions as the foundations to otherwise wooden harbour facilities met at different ground levels (cf. Hermodsson 2004; Heamägi 2006). None of them had been excavated so far. Diving surveys in the remaining part of the former harbour basin at Korshamn gave no noteworthy results (cf. Ingelman-Sundberg 1972). Sediment cores taken in all three harbour areas could demonstrate that exclusively in the Black Earth Harbour area cultural deposits were prevalent (Risberg/Björck 1997). Even in terms of burials – about 1100 out of 3000 estimated graves have been excavated already in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (cf. Arbman 1940/1943) – almost no burial had come to light in just the immediate vicinity of Korshamn. The only noteworthy structure close to Korshamn is a substantial, artificially built-up terrace or raised plateau in a little distance towards the east of the bay on «Erik Steffanssons hemland» at all times recognised as a plateau to a house structure (e. g. Hallström 1913, 14. 77; Lindqvist 1926, 15) (**fig. 2**). As a solitary surrounded by the burial ground scholars were very aware of its exceptional position; yet even here archaeological surveys have never been conducted. Besides the house terrace, there are two parallel rows of stones at Korshamn itself, even visible on the surface, which are pointing from the shore towards the harbour bay. Among many other sites on the island – such as at the seaward foot of the town rampart (cf. Ambrosiani 2005, 21 fig. 12), at Kyrkvreten in prolongation of the surviving part of the town rampart (Wadstein 1936, 122; cf. Arbman 1939, 72; 1940/1943, pl. XIX), at the outer margins of the Black Earth settlement area (Ambrosiani 2005, 23 fig. 13), next to the burial ground of Grindsbacka (Arbman 1939, 80) or else on top of the hillfort Borg (Zachrisson 2012) – even here, according to an oral tradition, a church should have been situated (Sjöborg 1830, 16; Stolpe 1888, 5; Hallström 1913, 14; Lindqvist 1926, 15). However, later on this structure had been assessed as rather constituting an ordinary house foundation (Arbman 1940/1943, pl. XXI). At a more general level since early researchers agreed upon that the island of Björkö was poor on decent harbours



**Fig. 1** Birka (Uppland/S). The island of Björkö with place names, fortifications (green), burial grounds (blue) and excavation trenches (yellow). Note the bay of Korshamn in the upper centre of the map. – (After Kalmring 2012, fig. 1).

(Hadorph 1687, in: Ambrosiani/Eriksson 1994, 63; Stolpe 1873, 85). Particularly the Black Earth Harbour, being the town's main harbour (!), was judged to be a bad harbour site (Stolpe 1872, 106; Arbmán 1939, 52-53). On that background, it seems quite noteworthy that, concerning the general role of Korshamn, already in 1976 B. Arrhenius pointed out that »Korshamn is one of the best sheltered bays on Björkö. Today





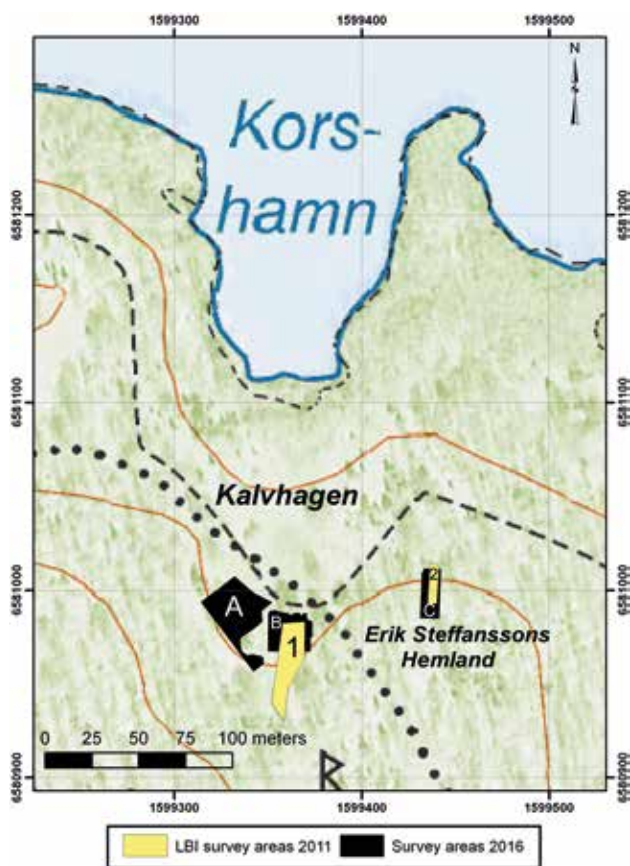
**Fig. 2** Korshamn, Erik Steffanssons hemland. The raised plateau as seen from the south. – (Photo J. Radon, 17.9.2016).



**Fig. 3** Korshamn, Kalvhagen. The recently identified terrace rims as seen from the north. – (Photo J. Radon, 18.9.2016).

it is being used to a great extent by yachtsmen, who want to moor in a calm haven. Outside Korshamn towards the east the old sailing route towards Uppsala passes by; vis-à-vis the church of Adelsö with its great prehistoric mounds is situated. It always surprised me that not Korshamn was about Birka's main harbour, since it was situated considerably more central as Kugghamn as well as the inner harbour bay [of the Black Earth Harbour] on the western side« (Arrhenius 1976, 191; our transl.).

At the southern end of the former harbour basin at Korshamn, at Kalvhagen, two distinct terrace rims with steep slopes that face the harbour were identified by the authors (fig. 3). The easternmost terrace is about 25m long in east-west. The terrace curves to the west, and makes a rim also towards the western terrace, that is situated about 0.5m below. The western terrace stretches about 30m in southeast-northwest. Both terraces make up the northern end of meadows that stretches to the south. These meadows show clear signs of having been used for agriculture in later times. They are separated by ditches, and clearance stones



**Fig. 4** Korshamn. Map showing the location of the 2016 survey areas **A**, **B** and **C** and their relationship to the previously surveyed areas by the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Archaeological Prospection and Virtual Archaeology (areas **1** and **2**) as presented in Trinks et al. 2013, © Lantmäteriet, I2014/00691. – (Illustration A. Viberg, all illustrations of the site Korshamn with coordinates in RT 90 2.5 gon V).

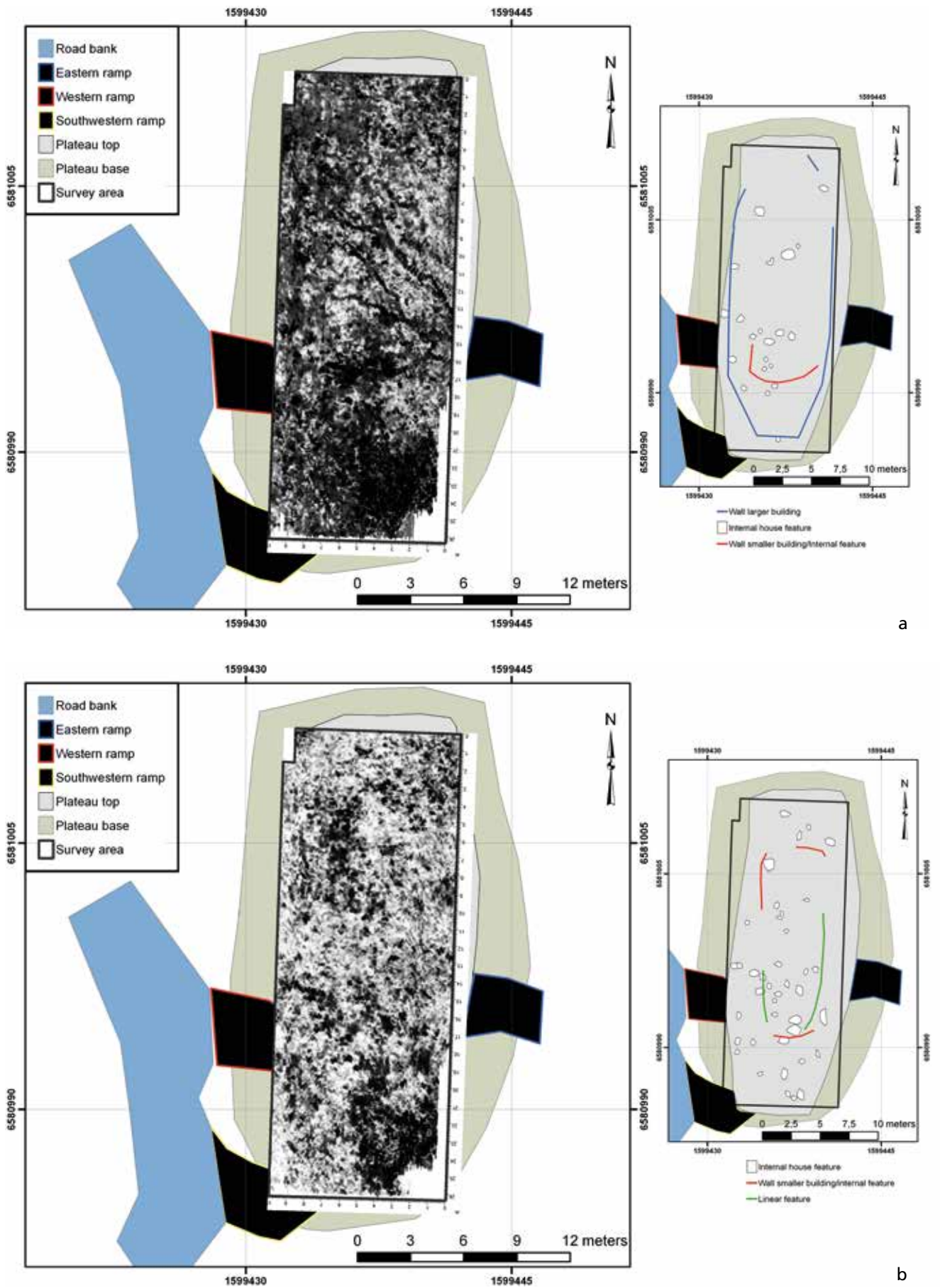
have been piled at the meadow's edges towards Hemlanden, and in the centre of the larger western meadow, there is a larger clearance cairn overgrown by old trees. Except for the terrace rims facing the harbour area to the north, the meadow area is on all sides delimited by the Hemlanden grave field. It is obvious that the grave field has been affected by the later farming. To the southern end of the most eastern meadow a halved grave mound is recognisable. Towards the north and on the meadow is the residual of a grave in the form of a stone cairn with a larger raised stone in the middle. Centrally in the area, and in the western part are still standing grave mounds (see **fig. 6**). The meadows have a slight northern slope, but become distinctly flatter towards

the northern terrace rims, that face the former harbour basin. Here are also no indications of earlier graves. In effect, this makes up what looks like two very likely terraces for houses. The larger to the west being about 15 m × 30 m, the smaller around 15 m × 25 m. In order to find and determine possible houses, a geophysical survey was conducted in September 2016.

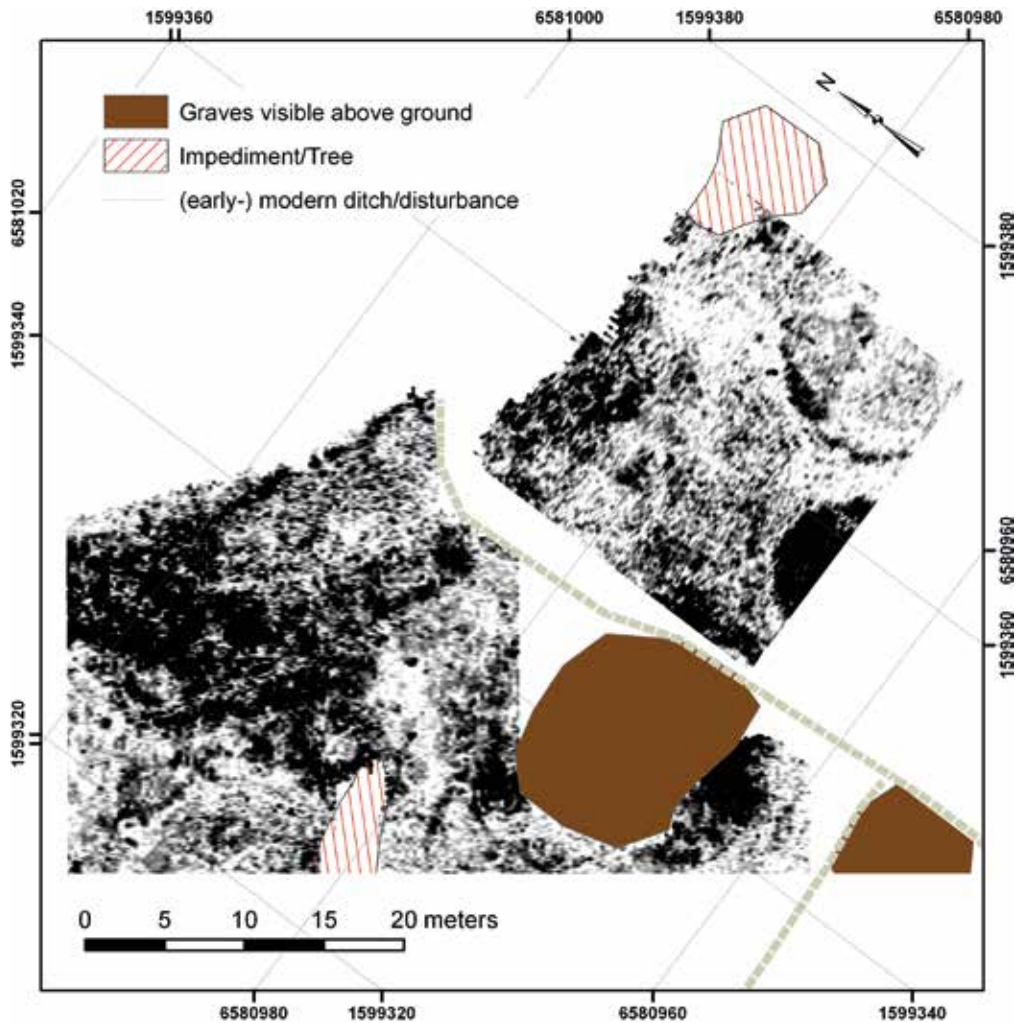
## THE GEOPHYSICAL SURVEYS

Ground-penetrating radar (GPR) has been used for the detection of archaeological remains since the mid-1970s (Vickers/Dolphin 1975) and is now used frequently within archaeological projects worldwide (e.g. Trinks et al. 2008; Conyers 2013; Goodman/Piro 2013; Wilken et al. 2016). The first surveys in Sweden were carried out in 1979 but it was not until the mid-2000s that the method experienced a rise in popularity (Viberg/Trinks/Lidén 2011). The method has, time and again, proved an invaluable tool for detecting settlement structures in Scandinavia such as, for example, Iron-Age longhouses (e.g. Trinks et al. 2007; Anderson Stamnes 2010; Rundkvist/Viberg 2015). Several geophysical surveys have been carried out on Birka from the 1990s and onwards (cf. Viberg/Trinks/Lidén 2011 for a complete list), but few surveys have specifically targeted the Korshamn area. Most recently, the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Archaeological Prospection and Virtual Archaeology (LBI) together with the Riksantikvarieämbetet (RAÄ) carried out large area GPR and magnetometer surveys combined with a high-resolution LIDAR mapping of the island. At present, two conference papers have been published describing the campaign (e.g. Trinks et al. 2013). Even though none of the conference papers includes any results from the 2011 surveys a coverage map is included which indicates that a small part of the Korshamn area has indeed been surveyed. On the basis of





**Fig. 5** Korshamn, Erik Steffanssons hemland: **a** compilation of 5 cm thick GPR depth slices (25-50 cm below the surface) from area C (left). Archaeological interpretation of the visible structures in the depth slices (right). – **b** compilation of 5 cm thick GPR depth slices (45-85 cm below the surface) from area C (left). Archaeological interpretation of the visible structures in the depth slices (right). – (Illustrations A. Viberg).



**Fig. 6** Korshamn, Kalvhagen. GPR depth slice (5 cm thick) at a depth of 60-65 cm below the surface at areas A-B. – (Illustration A. Viberg).

this coverage map as well as a previously conducted inventory of the Korshamn area carried out by the authors in April 2016 a survey area (area A) at Kalvhagen was selected as our main target. This area was, according to the published coverage map, apparently not surveyed by the LBI in 2011. Additionally, the area contained the remains of a probable terraced surface, identified during the 2016 inventory. As a complement, and to provide further proof of possible houses in the area the northernmost tip of LBI's area 1 at Kalvhagen (area B of our survey; **fig. 4**) was resurveyed along with the complete survey of LBI's area 2 at Erik Steffanssons hemland (area C of our survey).

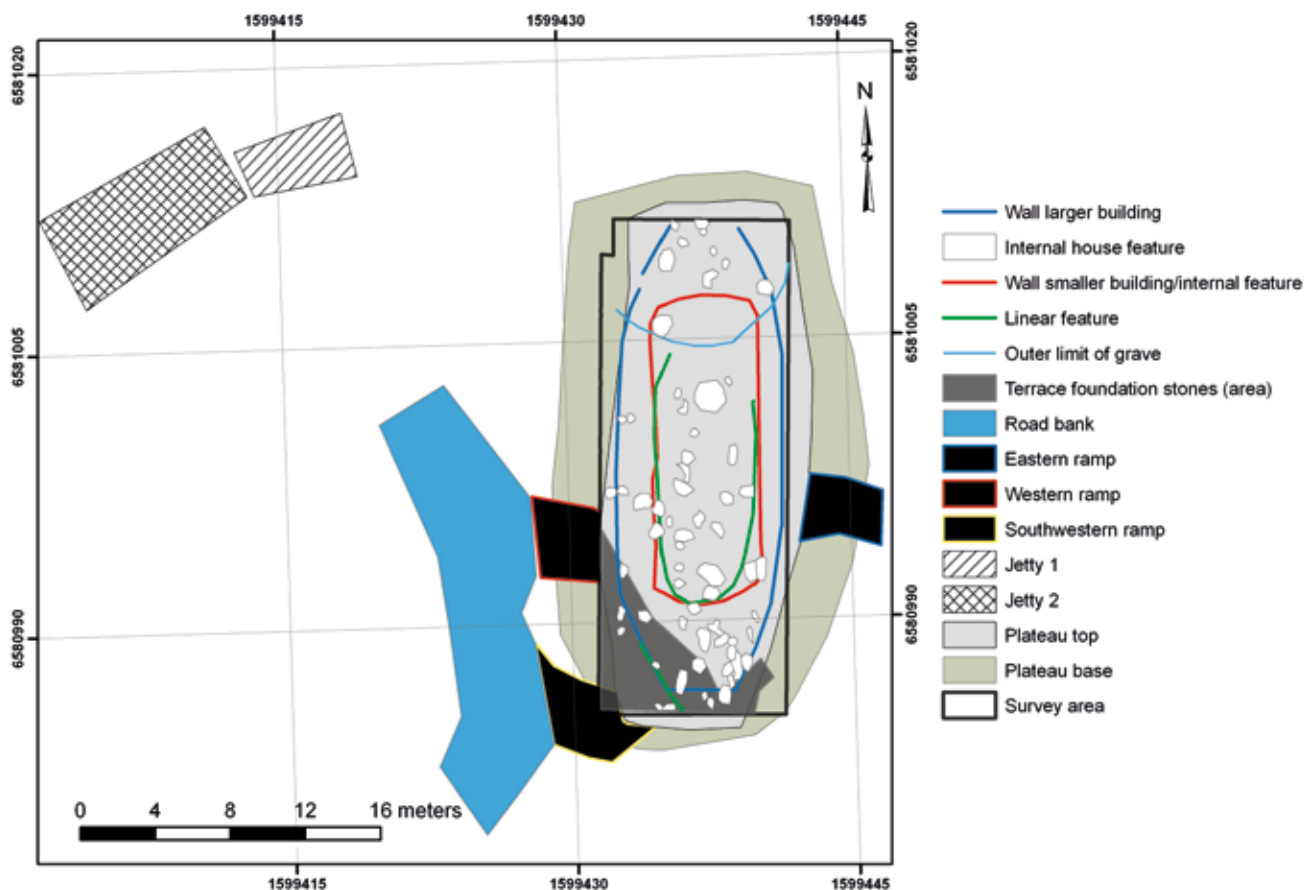
The surveys on Birka were carried out in three separate smaller parts in the Korshamn area between the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> of September 2016: area A (46.5m wide and between 1.5 and 30m long depending on the availability of surveyable land), area B (23m wide and about 22m long), both at Kalvhagen, and area C (26m × 10m) at Erik Steffanssons hemland. Area C was placed on top of the large house plateau in the eastern part of the Korshamn area with the purpose of detecting house related features (**fig. 5a-b**). An underlying purpose was also to date the foundation based on the spatial layout of walls, gables and roof-supporting postholes, if present. Survey areas A and B were established to test whether the apparent plateaus in the landscape were a result of historical farming or whether they may be possible foundations for houses (**fig. 6**). The instrument used during the Birka surveys was a Noggin smart cart GPR with a 500 MHz antenna by the

Canadian manufacturer Sensors and Software. In areas A and B data were collected every 3<sup>rd</sup> cm inline, in transects separated by 0.25 m within a 60 ns time window and a trace stacking factor of four. For area C, where house remains were anticipated, the resolution was increased with a profile spacing of 0.1 m. Measurements were collected in a zig-zag mode in all surveyed areas. The resulting data were filtered and time slices produced using the EKKO Project 3 software by Sensors and Software. The post-survey filtering included first arrival alignment, background subtraction, dewow, envelope and migration. The average velocity of the radar wave was estimated at 0.1 m/ns using the hyperbola fitting function of the software. Subsequent interpretations of the georeferenced depth slices were carried out using ArcMap 10.4.1.

## THE LARGE HOUSE ON THE RAISED PLATEAU

According to B. Hjulström (2008), there are five major types of foundations that were aimed to display a house. During construction natural features were used, and it is not always obvious to which of these types a foundation should be attributed. According to his definitions, a general difference between »raised plateaus« and »plateaus« is their placing and height. Whereas plateaus often are placed on rather flat surfaces and up to 0.5 m high, raised plateaus are higher and often placed on crests (Hjulström 2008, 47-48). The raised plateau is the largest and most impressive of all types among Iron-Age house foundations. They were connected to the very highest social strata in society (Hjulström 2008, 48). The raised plateau was to give the house an elevated position, thus visibly signalling its prominent significance. Raised plateau houses are rare and have hitherto been seen as an almost exclusively Swedish phenomenon, with a concentration to the Mälars Valley. Among the most prominent examples are the three house plateaus on the royal seat of Gamla Uppsala, including the southern plateau with its exceptionally large Vendel-period hall (Ljungkvist/Frölund 2015, 11-14), the two raised plateau halls in Fornsigstuna (Håtuna parish, Uppland; Hedman 1991), and the large Vendel-Viking-period hall on the so-called Aska mound (Hagebyhöga parish, Östergötland; Rundkvist/Viberg 2015).

The raised plateau at Korshamn is c. 1 m high. It stretches in north-south and measures c. 30 m × 15 m at the base, and the flat top has an area that is about 27 m × 10 m (cf. **fig. 2**). The sides of the plateau are gently curved. Two ramps are rather symmetrically placed at the opposite sides of the plateau, and at its south-west end is a third ramp. The geophysical survey indicates that the plateau is built from earth and stone around what is probably an older grave, situated under the northern part of the plateau (**fig. 7**). The grave has a diameter of around 10 m. On the plateau the outline of the walls of a larger house (house 1), with curved outer walls, could be identified. The house has an estimated size of 26 m × 9 m. The Swedish raised plateau foundations have hitherto been dated to the Vendel- and Viking period, whereas the lower plateau foundations start already in the Migration period. The earliest plateau houses in Sweden were often landscaped within walled manors, situated in elevated positions (cf. Olausson 2008). But the Migration-period plateau houses existed also on more ordinary farms. An example is the house plateau for the Migration-period hall at Skeke (Rasbo parish, Uppland; Larsson 2014). The plateau, measuring 22 m × 10 m, was built at the beginning of the Migration period, around 400. It is, following the definition given by B. Hjulström (2008), a raised plateau. It had a frame of kerbstones at the base and was built out of mud as an extension of a natural crest, surrounded by flatter land (Larsson 2014, 62. 65. 112. 211-215). Based on the geophysical survey, it has hitherto not been possible to say anything conclusive about the internal structure of the raised plateau house at Korshamn, but some preliminary assessments can be made. A rounded feature, about 1.5 m in diameter, is centrally placed in the northern part of the house and may be interpreted as a hearth. There are also indications of one or two other, smaller and shallower house-like features within the



**Fig. 7** Korshamn, Erik Steffanssons hemland. Interpretation of the GPR results from area C. »House 1« and their relationship to the jetties situated north-west of the surveyed area. – (Illustration A. Viberg).

outline of the large house. One measures about 16 m × 5.5 m and the other is a bit smaller. The features fit symmetrically into the plan of the larger house, which may indicate that they are not younger buildings but rather about internal structures. Maybe they are traces of earthen fundamentals (*sv. mullbänk*) for fixed benches or other wooden structures? The two almost symmetrically placed ramps joining the raised plateau do probably indicate where the entrances to the house were, whereas the third ramp enters the plateau on the house's southern end.

The foundation in form of a raised plateau does indicate a dating for the house at Korshamn to the Vendel-Viking period. Most comparable examples from this period are, however, of much larger halls. The smaller of the raised plateaus in Fornsigstuna has an appearance and size that is comparable to the Korshamn plateau, measuring 34 m × 18 m at the base and 30 m × 14 m at the top. The height varies between 0.3 and 1 m (Hedman 1991, 59). Two sections of the plateau have been excavated, revealing parts of a longhouse with a size and design that seem close to the house in Korshamn. The maximum width between the walls in the middle is 9.55 m, whereas the excavated north-eastern gable is about 5 m long (cf. Hedman 1991, 59-62). The house has been dated to the period 800-950 (Hedman 1991, 67). Another raised plateau of comparable size where the house have been dated to the Viking Age is Karsvik (Bromma parish) situated 20 km east of Birka. The raised plateau foundation here is about 32 m × 14 m at the base, and 0.8-1.5 m high. The plateau measures about 25 m × 10 m (Arnberg/Runer 2012, 29). The house construction here is unfortunately not known well enough to enable further comparisons.



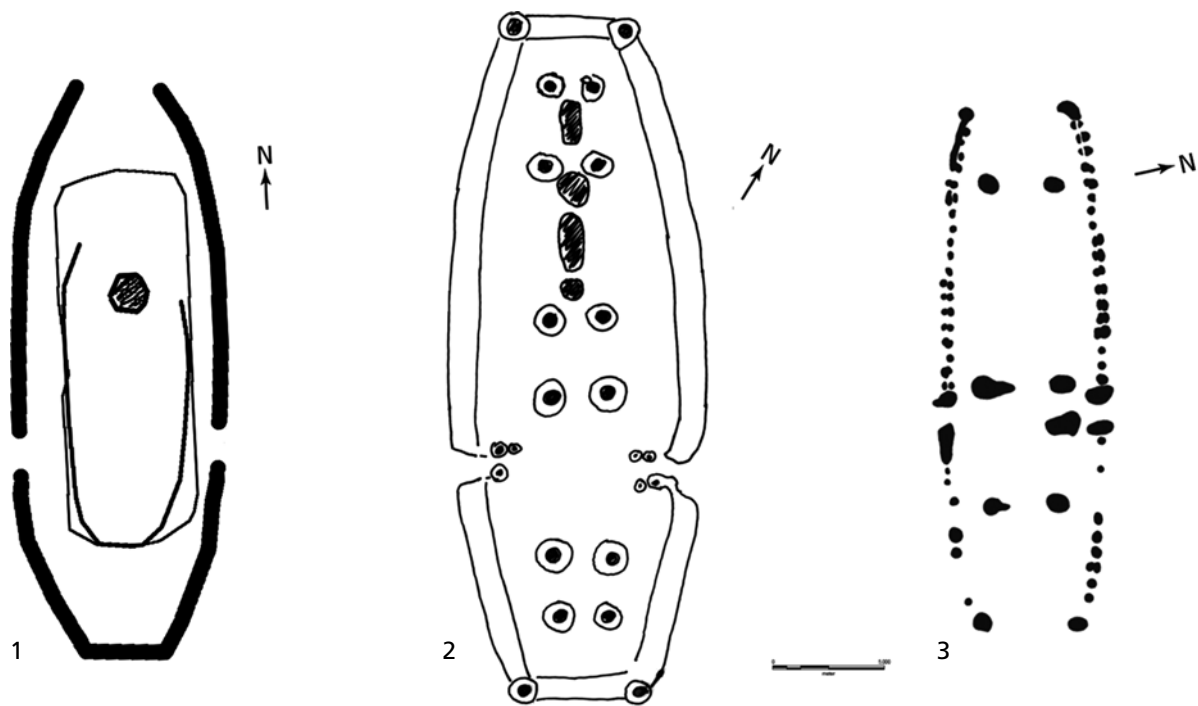
## A VENDEL-PERIOD MANOR COMPLEX?

Circumstantial evidence indicates an early dating for the raised plateau house (house 1) at Erik Staffanssons hemland to before the Viking Age. The two ramps at the raised plateau's western side join up to a road bank that to the north leads towards the former harbour basin. The road bank points directly at two rectangular stone constructions, that lie adjacent to each other about 20 m north-west of the raised plateau at a marked former shoreline. The constructions may be interpreted as the land foundations for jetties, situated at the harbour basin's eastern shore. The shoreline has a height above sea level of about 7.75 m, and the surface beneath the foundations varies between 7.48 and 8.11 m above sea level. This indicates the earliest dating for the jetties to the Migration period since the water still stood at 7.75 m above present sea level at the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century (Risberg/Alm, pers. comm. 18.10.2016).

The geophysical survey indicates at least two succeeding buildings on the one-sided terrace at Kalvhagen. The youngest is the large hall building that supposedly was built during the early Viking Age (house 3; cf. below). Beneath are traces of an older house (house 2), whose appearance is as yet rather unclear. The outline for the walls of this house is indicated on **figure 9**. The house has been at least 23 m long and 8.5 m wide. The eastern ending, as well as the northern long wall of the house, could not be established. The southern long wall has a rather orthogonal connection to the straight west gable. The southern wall is very slightly convex except for its eastern part, where the curve seems to be markedly steeper. House 2, which subsequently may be dated to before the Viking Age, was situated about 80 m west of the raised plateau. There is a possibility that this house was contemporary with the raised plateau house (house 1), in effect making up a manorial site that may have been established prior to the 8<sup>th</sup> century. However, the evidence for the houses being contemporary is as yet very circumstantial. The marked former shoreline at around 7.75 m, where the jetty foundations are situated, runs directly beneath the one-sided terrace at house 2. Also, the road bank connected to the raised plateau that to the north leads towards the jetties, to the south makes a westward turn in direction towards the one-sided terrace (cf. **fig. 7**). Its further course to the west cannot be established since the area is covered by (younger) grave mounds.

In the Viking Age, it is evident that the Korshamn manor shared in architectural expression and outlay with several very high-status manors of southern Scandinavia, among them the manors at Gammel Lejre (Allerslev parish, Sjælland/DK) and Tissø (Sæby parish, Sjælland/DK) (see below). This certainly was based on a mutual ideological view. It is obvious that Gammel Lejre and Tissø had such a connection already from the very beginning, before the Viking Age, and there is nothing yet to say that this was not also the case for a presumed first manor at Korshamn. Gammel Lejre on central Sjælland, situated some 7.6 km towards the south-west of Roskilde, has been identified as the seat of the royal Skjoldunger dynasty (cf. Christensen 2016, 15-29). The site develops around 500 at Fredshøj. Here, the oldest manor consisted of two larger houses/halls, and a smaller house (Christensen 2016, 81). The smaller of the two large houses (*Hus VIII*) has been interpreted as founded on a plateau built out of earth. A part of the plateau here was unfortunately probably destroyed by search trenches. The remaining part of the plateau was about 50 cm thick. The fragmentary remains of the house reveal a three-aisled building with slightly curved outer walls. The size has been interpreted as 14.5 m × 6 m (Christensen 2016, 61. 351).

The beginning of the exceptional manorial site west of lake Tissø, western Sjælland, is to be found at Bulbrogård. During the beginning of the Vendel period (*ynge germansk jernalder*) around 550 a manor, consisting of two halls and a smaller building, came into existence (Bican 2010). The larger of the halls might have been connected to a surrounding terrace or a platform, the traces thereof being postholes that surround the house in a more or less regular pattern (Bican 2010, 150). The manor has been interpreted as a direct parallel to Gammel Lejre's earliest manor at Fredshøj (Jørgensen 2009, 344). The structure, with one



**Fig. 8** The large house of the raised plateau (»house 1«) at Korshamn, Erik Steffanssons hemland (1), compared to the great house at Runsa (2 [first phase]) and the smaller hall at Bulbrogård (3). – (1 after A. Viberg; 2 after Olausson 2014, 175 fig. 3a; 3 after Bican 2014, 47 fig. 4).

large and one small hall building and a smaller house, is identical (Bican 2014, 50). And the large houses/halls at Fredshøj have been seen to have close similarities in the large houses/halls at Bulbrogård (Bican 2014, 50-51; Christensen 2016, 107). F. Herschend perceives the architecture at Bulbrogård as being of central Swedish origin (Herschend 2009, 239). J. F. Bican elaborates this in seeing the closest constructional parallel to the halls of Bulbrogård in the great house at the Swedish hillfort manor of Runsa (Eds parish, Uppland; Bican 2014). Runsa is the largest hillfort manor on mainland Sweden according to the area, and probably had supra-regional significance (Olausson 2011, 6). The heavily fortified site, which was established in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, was placed on a mountain crest situated on a small island that was strategically positioned at the only waterway from the Baltic to inland Uppland (cf. Risberg 2011, 50. 54). The manor's great house was built on a saddle terrace foundation and had a size of about 30 m × 10.5 m. Its outline was rather »modern« since its convex walls are primarily found in Merovingian or Viking-Age buildings (Olausson 2014, 174). The house has been interpreted as divided into three separate departments, where the northern part served as the actual hall, marked by centrally placed hearths. The entrance part of the house was situated south of the hall, with the two entrances on opposite sides. The southern part of the house may have been used for storage (Olausson 2014, 174-176). The hilltop and the house were burnt and the manor abandoned in the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> century (Olausson 2014, 202).

There are similarities in outline and size between the raised plateau house (house 1) at Erik Staffanssons hemland, as it is understood after the geophysical survey, and the great house at Runsa and the smaller hall at Bulbrogård (fig. 8). For house 2 at Kalvhagen, as it is understood after the survey, comparison becomes more problematic since none of the sites above has a similar house. But the information on the house is yet much too limited to make a clear assessment. The house's eastern end is yet unknown, even if it seems to make a sharp curve possibly indicating its conclusion. However, it might also be that the sharp curve, in fact,

is related to that this is the centre of a hall with a pronounced rhombic outline, and that this is where the wall curves around, i. e. the centre of the house. That would mean a hall building with a length of at least 40 m, making its size comparable to both the large hall at Fredshøj (46-48 m) and Bulbrogård (38 m).

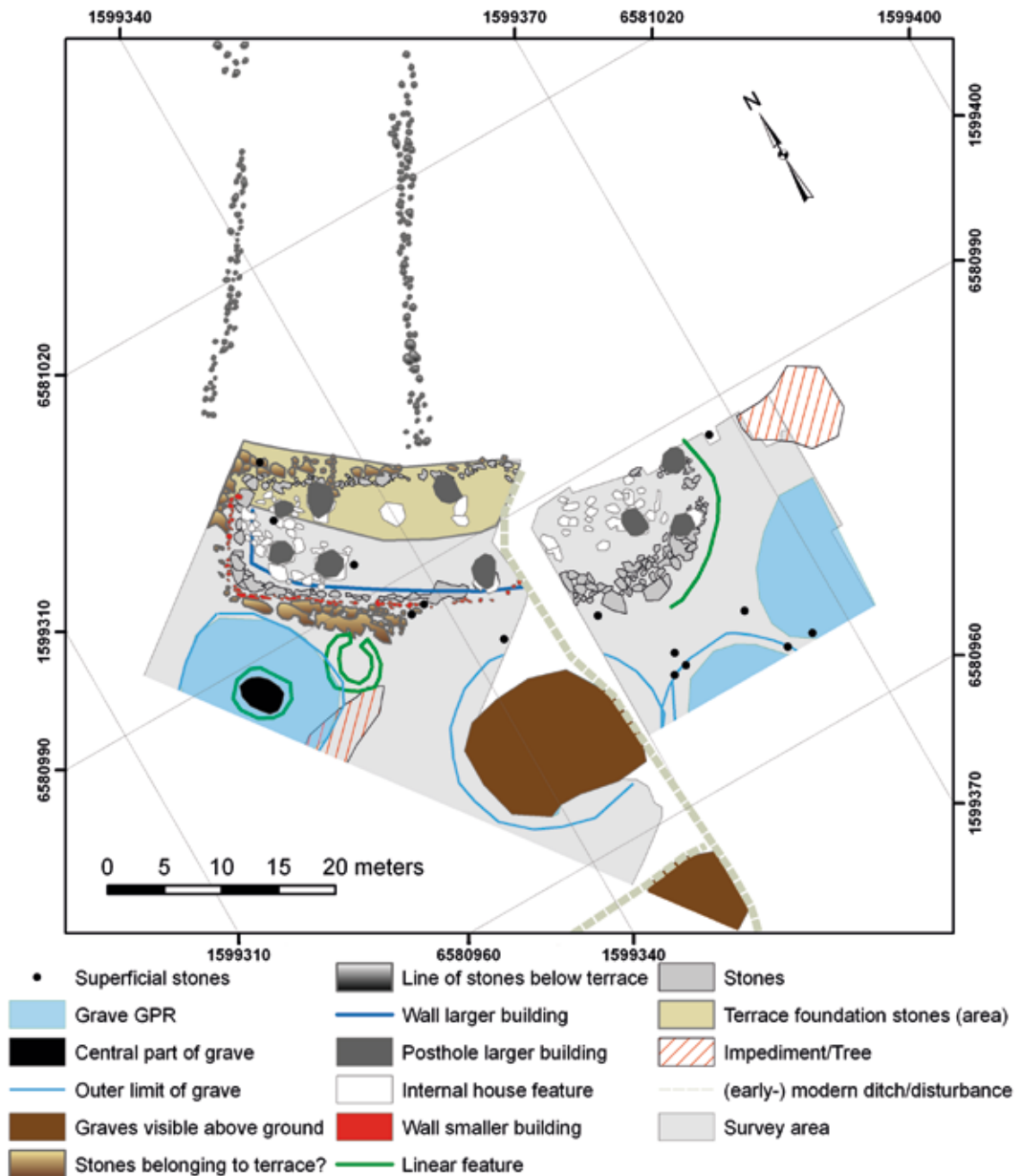
If the two houses at Korshamn made up parts of a coherent Vendel-period manor, the site at Fornsigstuna also makes a good comparison, not least for its sea-bound placement immediately along the harbour's boundaries. Fornsigstuna has an old tradition as an exceptional site, as it is mentioned by Snorri Sturluson in the Ynglinga saga as the place where Oden took his seat (*»þar sem nú eru kallaðar fornu Sigtúnir«*; Ynglinga saga cap. 5). On the location remnants of an unfortified Iron-Age manor have been found and partly excavated (Allerstav 1991). The establishment of the manor has been dated to the Vendel period, and it has been interpreted as a royal estate. There are indications of even earlier building activities, going back to the Migration period (Damell 1991b). The estate supposedly ceases to exist when the town of Sigtuna, situated some 4 km south-east of Fornsigstuna, comes into being around 980 (Damell 1991c). The central part of the manor was situated on a steep hill facing a harbour bay. On different levels at the hill slopes, starting directly above the former shoreline, are at least eight terrace foundations for houses, which face the former harbour. The largest measures as much as 44.5 m × 15.5 m. The houses have been oriented with their long sides facing the harbour. Between some of the terraces are connecting road banks, and earthen ramps connect the higher terraces (as well as the hilltop) with the harbour. One ramp ends at a stone foundation for a jetty, and one other probable jetty foundation has also been identified. More house foundations are situated at the top of the hill (Damell 1991a). Here is also a large mound with a flat top, interpreted as a thing mound (Sjösvärd 1991, 46). A bit further inland to the west are the two raised plateaus. They have been dated to the 8<sup>th</sup> century (Hedman 1991, 71). The complex at Helgö (*»the holy island«*), situated across the Södra Björkfjärden bay about 10 km south-east of Birka, existed from the Roman Iron Age to the 10<sup>th</sup> century (Arrhenius 2011, 37). The general outlay, with several scattered building clusters, is different from the Korshamn manor, and also the comparably small major buildings on Helgö have few obvious resemblances with the proposed buildings at Korshamn (cf. Herschend 1995; Arrhenius 2011). Based on the extensive traces of cultic activities, B. Arrhenius has made a summarised interpretation of Helgö as a heathen cult-centre, lacking a resident aristocratic elite, that ended with the final introduction of Christianity (Arrhenius 2011, 37-38). None the less, the trace of extensive and high-status handicrafts makes it reasonable to see the site as under royal control (cf. Lamm 2011, 165).

In conclusion, we can assume that the reconstructed Vendel-period manor at Korshamn may have similarities with some of the primary elite manors in Scandinavia. The archaeological record proposes that the very nearby royal manor at Adelsö's Hovgården was established contemporary with the town of Birka in the 8<sup>th</sup> century (Carlsson 1997, 84). This opens for a suggestion that the Vendel-period manor at Korshamn, in fact, may have been the precursor for the royal manor at Hovgården.

## THE VIKING-AGE HALL WITH A FENCED SPECIAL AREA

The younger hall building (house 3) on the one-sided terrace discussed above was erected right on top of its predecessor (house 2), but stretches considerably further towards the south-east and can even be traced, nowadays separated by a recent ditch, on the adjacent pasture (area B) of Kalvhagen. As for the great halls of the first three phases at Mysselhøjgård, it seems to have been built upon an additional raised plateau surrounded by kerbstones (cf. Christensen 2016, 115-117 fig. 6, 9. 29). The dimensions of the building emerging from the GPR surveys seem to suggest a great hall of approx. 37 m × 11.5 m with slightly curved side walls (**fig. 9**). In terms of the internal pattern, the emerging massive postholes from roof-bearing posts





**Fig. 9** Korshamn, Kalvhagen. Interpretation of the GPR results from areas A-B. The smaller building (red) refers to the older »house 2« and the larger building (dark blue) refers to the younger »house 3«. – (Illustration A. Viberg).

indicate a three-aisled building construction. On further particulars of the interior structure such as doorways or the position of hearths no final conclusions can be drawn yet. The closed parallel to this hall of this size might just be found on the opposite side of the Södra Björkfjärden at the royal manor of Hovgården on the island of Adelsö – and therewith in a direct visual axis with Korshamn on Björkö. It is generally expected that a Viking-Age hall as a predecessor was situated underneath the 13<sup>th</sup>-century brick palace of Alsnö hus erected by king Magnus Ladulås. Most recently, B. Ambrosiani (2016, 16-21) puts forward a new reconstruction suggestion for the Viking-Age hall multiplying the dimensions of earlier cautious estimations (cf. Brunstedt 1996, 29-30). B. Ambrosiani suggested that Alsnö hus with its artificial hill only partially exploited

**Fig. 10** Korshamn, Kalvhagen. Stone rows of the recently identified fenced special area leading to the Viking-Age hall »house 3« as originally documented in 1821. – (After Sjöborg 1830, pl. 34 fig. 109).



an earlier, far larger house plateau and proposes – based on the probable dimensions of the gable – a roughly 40m × 12m large, royal hall (Ambrosiani 2016, 20-21 figs 7-8).

More, even supra-regional parallels open up when taking the closer local topographical situation at Korshamn into account. By its specific placement, the younger hall at Kalvhagen coincides with the two parallel rows of stones visible on the surface situated right beneath the nowadays banked rim of the terrace itself. As observed earlier the parallel rows of stones are about 33.5m in length and are running at a distance of almost 17.5m to each other (fig. 10; cf. fig. 9; Sjöborg 1830, 16 pl. 34; Hallström 1913, 14). A rectangular closure towards their seaward end is not recognisable by mere sight. Interesting, however, is the way they connect to the identified great hall: While the eastern row seems to run straight to the longitudinal side of the hall's rear third, the western row of stones seems to bypass the western gable. If the latter stone row at a certain point even bends towards the gable respectively the rear of the building and by that connecting to it is not clearly apparent by the current results from GPR only. This kind of fenced special areas in combination with great hall buildings is meanwhile known from a whole range of aristocratic manors in southern Scandinavia. However, it was above all the achievement of Lars Jørgensen that directed the attention of the scientific community to this phenomenon which became so clearly apparent at Tissø on western Sjælland.

After the first Vendel-period complex at Bulbrogård ceased to exist (Bican 2010) the Tissø manor shifted some 600m towards the south at Fugledegård around 700. The second manor at Fugledegård, surrounded by a palisade with storage buildings and smithy, can be divided into four main phases of development. And even if the affiliation details of the single elements to the phasings can change in the respective interpretational drawings over the years (cf. Jørgensen 2003, fig. 15, 15-17. 20; 2008, fig. 7.1.2; 2009, fig. 14) the general proposition stays the same: While the structure of the manor complex changes radically in the concluding phase 4 – allotted to the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century – the phases 1-3 are rather characterised by conservatism and a recurrent pattern consisting of central hall buildings laterally connected by a fenced special area containing a small additional building (Jørgensen 2003, 191-200). Phase 1 from the 8<sup>th</sup> century features a three-aisled central hall measuring 36m × 11.2m with convex, and apparently even double walls as well as massive pairs of roof-bearing posts. In almost a right angle a fenced special area of approx. 31.5m × 17m connected to the walls of the hall. Within its south-eastern corner, it contained a small building of 6m × 5m with a somewhat odd linguiform entrance situation towards its west. In phase 2, dated to the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> century, the central hall is being rebuilt, now measuring 36m × 10m, and the fenced special area is enlarged by about 5.7m towards the south reaching a total length of more than 37m. Even the smaller in-fenced building gets replaced by a larger one. This novel, rectangular building positioned more central but somewhat offset to the west, according to the 2003-interpretation, had four pairs of roof-bearing posts and measured 20m × 6m. Finally, in phase 3 from the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> century the central hall gets merely repaired, but for the first time also detached from the fenced special area. Moreover, the in-fenced building inside gets replaced by a compact, more »classic« building with slightly curved outer walls of about 14m × 8m and becomes completely axial positioned. The subsequent phase 4, in contrast, is characterised by a »spectacular large hall« of 48m × 12.5m in size slightly shifted to

the north in comparison to the placement of the previous hall buildings. It no longer features internal roof-bearing posts, but external supporting posts instead. The special fenced area disappears completely and gives room for a »small, cross-shaped building« (?) of about 8 m × 8 m which seems to be »one of the most important buildings of the complex« (Jørgensen 2003, 197-199 fig. 15, 20-21). While L. Jørgensen likes to equalise the hall building with a feasting hall *salr* or *hof*, the small in-fenced building from phases 1-3 as a cult building might be about a *hörgr* (Jørgensen 2008, 79; 2010, 279). The models for this kind of representative architecture, combining the manorial hall with a (private?) sanctuary, seem to copy, with a heathen twist, the Carolingian *Pfalz*-architecture with the *aula regia* and Palatine chapel with prefixed *atrium* as their – structurally linked – core elements (Jørgensen 2003, 204-207).

Meanwhile, there is a whole range of south Scandinavian sites where comparable structures with a manorial hall in connection to a fenced special area could be discovered or else recognised in hindsight. These confirm L. Jørgensen's initial observations from Tissø, turning this formerly individual case into a downright pattern of an aristocratic language of power (cf. Jørgensen 2009, 337-347; 2014, 132-139; Christensen 2016, 133-149). North of present-day Aarhus in eastern Jylland is the site of Lisbjerg. Here, underneath the present 12<sup>th</sup> century Romanesque stone church, traces of a stave church from the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century were found. The stave church in its term had been erected on top of a three-phased manorial hall building of which an about 9 m long wall section could be traced. The manorial hall could not be dated any closer and was generally placed into the Viking Age. Towards the south, right outside the graveyard walls, the ending of a fenced area of approx. 27.5 m × 19 m was discovered which, by its alignment, obviously was directly connected to the central hall building. The whole complex of Lisbjerg addressed as a »nobleman's farm«, was fenced-in by a palisade and featured smaller longhouses aligned along its inner course (Jeppesen 2005; cf. Jeppesen/Madsen 1995/1996; 1991; 1988/1989).

At Erritsø, situated on a prominent moraine ridge south-west of Frederica, in a controlling position at the Lillebælt and the passage to Fyn, little has been published yet. Unlike the other sites of this type the central manor area was surrounded by a distinct, up to 3 m wide, square and V-shaped ditch of 110 m × 110 m with a wooden palisade on its inside. The central, three-aisled sturdy hall measured 34 m × 13 m and became elongated to 39 m in total in the second phase of construction. Neither of these two building phases could be dated more precisely; a general chronological placement into the Viking Age is suggested, but even a somewhat older date considered (Mohr Christensen 2009, 12). Even in Erritsø the central hall was laterally connected by a fenced special area which only became partially uncovered. The fenced special area of approx. 28 m in breadth contained a small, two-phased additional building at the western longitudinal side of the structure, aligned orthogonally to the central hall. Towards the north-west outside the ditch and orthogonally to it, three additional workshop buildings of about 14 m × 7 m in size were encountered.

The site of Järrestad is situated west of Simrishamn on the south-eastern coast of Skåne. The place name itself might be derived from »the settlement of the jarl« (Söderberg 2006, 156). The manorial hall, located on the edge of a slope towards the Tommarp river, was part of a much bigger, about 30 ha large Iron-Age settlement stretching from the manorial hall towards the north-west. The great hall develops in five consecutive building phases of which the oldest goes back to the time around 600. It is building phase 2 from 700/800 to 950/1000 which shows the well-known pattern of a manorial hall integrated into a rectangular fenced special area. The hall measured 37 m × 8.5-9 m, connecting to an in-fenced area of 37 m × 20-22 m in size. Within the latter, situated with a slightly inclined orientation towards the western longitudinal side of the fence, there was a small outbuilding. It was interpreted as a 21 m × 7 m three-aisled »cult house« with four pairs of roof-bearing posts, curved walls and straight gable ends (Söderberg 2003; 2006).

Gammel Lejre holds an exceptional position among the examples with fenced special areas since it is not about a *Pfalz*-like site connected to itinerant kingship, but most probably the very seat for the royal Skjol-



	Viking-Age hall (m)	fenced special area (m)	in-fenced building (m)
Birka Korshamn	c. 37 × 11.5	33.5 × 17.5	?
Tissø (phase 2)	36 × 10	37 × 17	20 × 6
Lisbjerg	?	27.5 × 19	?
Erritsø (phase 2)	39 × 13	? × 28	? × 6
Järrestad (phase 2)	37 × 8.5-9	37 × 20-22	21 × 7
Gammel Lejre (phase 2)	61 × 12	c. 30 × 40	20 × 6.5

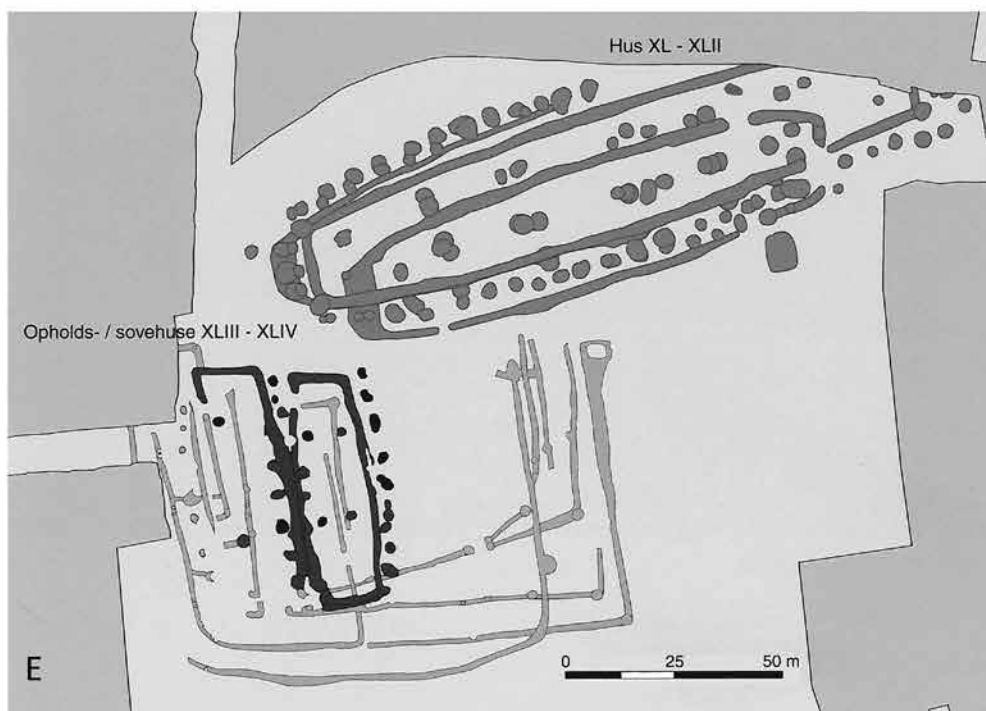
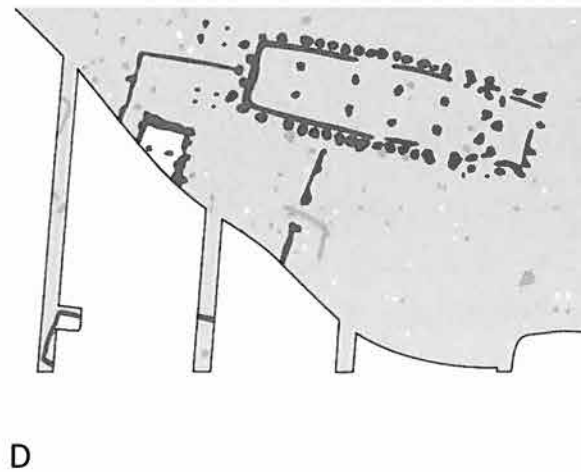
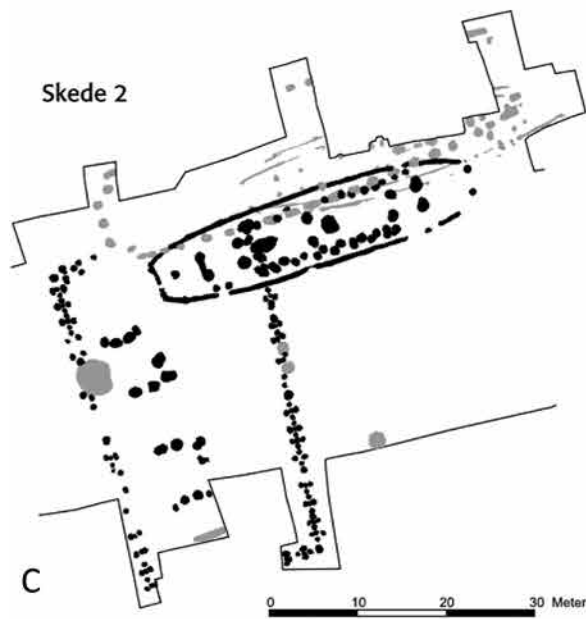
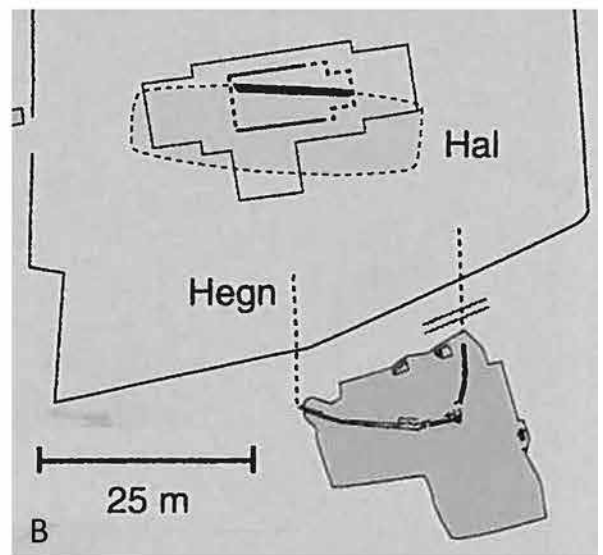
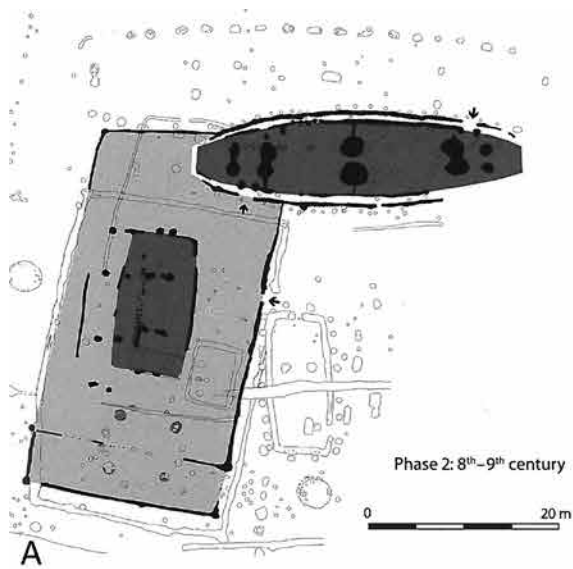
**Tab. 1** Basic dimensions of major manorial halls with fenced special areas and in-fenced cult buildings in comparison to the recently identified Viking-Age complex at Korshamn-Kalvhagen.

dunger dynasty. Mysselhøjgård is characterised by a grand, central hall surrounded by a large palisade on the northern part of the Mysselhøj hilltop. In the beginning, at least two more longhouses, situated along the inner southern course of the palisade, belonged to this complex. On the southern flank of the hill and aligned parallel to the course of the palisade additional multi-phased longhouses, minor auxiliary buildings and a few pit-houses were situated. From settlement phase 4 from the 10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> century onwards the main settlement activities shift to this southern area while the northern part of Mysselhøj seems to become abandoned (Christensen 2016, 62-78. 81-93). The central hall building, erected in the 7<sup>th</sup> century on the northern part of the hilltop, stood on the artificially raised earthen plateau with kerbstones (Christensen 2016, 115-117. 440) and shows all-in-all three phases of construction. In settlement phases 2-3 it features a laterally connected fenced special area with a small additional building. In the 9<sup>th</sup> century (phase 2) the enormous, three-aisled hall *Hus XLI* with inclined outer supporting posts measured 61 m × 12 m. In the 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century (phase 3) it became rebuilt on site and still measured 57 m × 11 m thereafter (*Hus XLII*; Christensen 2016, 71-74). The fenced special area towards the south-west of the grand hall measured about 30 m × 40 m and shows four phases of construction which unfortunately chronologically could not become discerned any closer (*Hegn D, E, G, H*; Christensen 2016, 459. 461). Towards the fences' inner western side and at a right angle to the hall, a two-phased auxiliary building was placed (*Hus XLIII-XLIV*) which remained unexcavated. It was about a sturdy, three-aisled longhouse with inclined outer supporting posts of 20 m × 6.5 m in size (Christensen 2016, 74. 448-449). However, in contrast to the former scholars, T. Christensen (2016, 126. 130-131. 147) likes to interpret the latter as »lodges/accommodation- and residence houses«.

The lately identified example from Korshamn on Björkö can easily be added to this group of manorial halls with fenced special areas formerly exclusively known from southern Scandinavia (fig. 11; tab. 1), turning it into a prime example of elite communication and political contacts across Northern Europe reaching all the way to Lake Mälaren in east middle Sweden. Concerning the general chronological placement of the (younger) structure at Korshamn-Kalvhagen, the examples discussed above suggest a dating to the Viking Age, probably rather to its earlier than its later phase. For the fenced special area, too, the visible ends of the stone rows towards the waterfront have a height above sea level of about 5.75 m, which, due to the land upheaval, makes a dating long before around 800 rather improbable (Risberg/Alm, pers. comm. 18.10.2016). If the Viking-Age manor at Korshamn as such once was also surrounded by a palisade and contained additional contemporary buildings, as proven for Tissø, Lisbjerg, Erritsø or Lejre, has to remain a task for future surveys.

## VENDEL-PERIOD BJÖRKÖ

The raised plateau and hall at Erik Steffanssons hemland (house 1) together with the contemporaneous building at Kalvhagen (house 2), as a Vendel-period manor complex at Korshamn, could join the ambiguous



**Fig. 11** Major Viking-Age manorial halls with fenced special areas enclosing an in-fenced cult building: **A** Tissoe (phase 2). – **B** Lisbjerg. – **C** Järestad (phase 2). – **D** Erritsø. – **E** Gammel Lejre. – (A after Jørgensen 2009, fig. 14; B after Jeppesen 2005, 55; C after Söderberg 2006, fig. 2; D after Mohr Christensen 2009, 4; E after Christensen 2016, fig. 6, 39).

mist of further evidence for earlier settlement activities on Björkö identified in the past predating the Viking Age. Based on the catalogue of the around 1100 excavated burials on the island (cf. Arbman 1940/1943) already in 1976 B. Arrhenius identified a small group of true Vendel-period burials (group A: Bj. 349 [Borgshage 4B]; Bj. 1009 [Hemlanden 1A (rampart segment 6)]; Bj. 1055 [ad Hemlanden 1A]) next to a row of Viking-Age burials containing reworked spoils from the Migration- and Vendel period (group B). Even in the material from H. Stolpe's excavations 1871-1874 and 1878 in the Black Earth there seems to be a horizon of Vendel-period finds (group C [Sörlings catalogue]). According to B. Arrhenius (1976, 184) group A as early interments of possible smaller early burial grounds is likely indicative of the whereabouts of two contemporaneous farmsteads at Hemlanden and the hillfort Borg, while in the Vendel period all-in-all there might have existed as much as three to four early »merchant estates« (Arrhenius 1976, 193). Later O. Kyhlberg (1980, 54-63), based on the body of coins found in burial contexts, came to develop B. Arrhenius' (1976) approach further. He confirms an existence of a substructure in Birka's cemeteries already from the last quarter of the 8<sup>th</sup> century (Kyhlberg 1980, 81) and locates homestead burial grounds at Hemlanden 1C, Hemlanden 1D next to Kugghamn/Korshamn, at Ormknös A as well as at Borgshage/Kvarnbacka 4A-4D (Kyhlberg 1980, 62-63; cf. even Arbman 1937, 24). The results of a phosphate mapping from 1974 covering large parts of Björkö showed high phosphate values stretching from the Black Earth settlement area beyond the town wall northwards into the Hemlanden burial ground and all the way up towards Korshamn (Arrhenius 1976, 191 fig. 13; cf. Holmquist-Olausson 1993, 41-42). While B. Ambrosiani (1974) likes to interpret this evidence as an indication of a larger extent of the settlement in the early Birka period and before the erection of the town wall, B. Arrhenius (1976, 191-193) comes to the conclusion that they rather have to be seen as evidence for an even older, independent settlement at Korshamn. On that background, it might be even possible to correlate these activities outside of the town rampart to the finds of settlement debris as clay/daub and slag from the banking of the mounds in Hemlanden (Holmquist-Olausson 1993, 40-41 tab. 5, 1; cf. also 1987, 60-63).

Connected to the research of L. Holmquist are also a row of other surveys which delivered further evidence for the transition phase from Vendel- to Viking period as presented in her doctoral study (Holmquist-Olausson 1993). Excavations at the isolated burial ground of Ormknös 7A with two virtually monumental but plundered mounds, ship settings, minor mounds and stone settings demonstrated that it was still in use in the Viking Age, but its origins were considerably older. The primary burial underneath the large eastern mound only raised in the Viking Age could be dated to the Roman Iron Age while two of the minor surrounding cremation graves should be either placed into the Migration- or else early Vendel period (grave 2:b and 3; Holmquist-Olausson 1993, 43-49; Arrhenius 1990). Excavations of one of the house terraces aligned along the inside of the town wall (terrace A100, rampart segment 4) revealed a three-aisled house of 20-22 m in length which by means of thermoluminescence could be dated to  $720 \pm 60$  and thus appears to belong to the transition between the late Vendel- and Viking period. Prior to the erection of that house two burials were installed on site; a mere cremation layer (grave A101:B) from the later Roman Iron Age and a double burial underneath the threshold of the longhouse – the so-called moose-man's burial (grave A129) – accordingly placed to the transition between the Vendel- and Viking period, too (Holmquist-Olausson 1993, 77-120). On the opposite side of the Black Earth at the hillfort Borg, one more early burial was met in a mound that was incorporated in the ramparts. This shaft grave contained a male and a horse as well as a human sacrifice. Even this burial was placed to the first half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century (Holmquist-Olausson 2002, 160-161).

Lastly, the area south of Korshamn and the whole eastern section of the island's coast shall be discussed for its potential role in the emergence of Birka. Concerning its significance for the oldest activities on the island it seems noteworthy that H. Arbman (1937, 24; 1939, 78; 1940/1943, pls XVI. XXIII) suggested that the



mounds of Ormknös, in analogy to other monumental mounds from the Migration period, might have constituted the island's assembly site (*colloquium*) not least mentioned in the Vita Anskarii (Rimbert cap. 11). North of Ormknös G. Hallström (1913, 5 note 5) reported on a so-called domarring, i. e. a »judgement«- or stone circle as otherwise known from Migration-period contexts. More evidence might be added by including the place name evidence: Towards the south-east of Ormknös the place name »Lunden« is attested and with it, towards the lake the names »Lundswyken«, »Lundsskiär« and »Lundsängen«. Amongst others, it might be about a *lund(a)*- name denoting a sacral groove (cf. Vikstrand 2001, 278-291). But even the place name »Salviken« for the adjacent bay south of the raised house plateau at Erik Steffanssons hemland possibly has to be revised. »Salviken« denotes the very bay while two small islands off the coast are accordingly called »Salvikskären«. Generally, this name is explained as deriving from either *Salu*-viken (»sale-bay«) or else from *Salt*-viken (»salt-bay«); yet even a *Sadel*-viken (»saddle-bay«) had been suggested (cf. Hansson 2004, 19). But what if the composite »Sal«- actually does derive from an Old Norse *salr*, a major hall building, as e. g. in Skiringssal as the »shining hall« to Kaupang (cf. Brink 2007, 60-62)? The identification of a Vendel-period manor complex at Korshamn challenges earlier approaches towards allegedly scattered features and toponymical evidence and certainly casts new light on the putative rear side of the island of Björkö and the problems concerning the emergence of the Viking town of Birka.

### HERIGAR'S ESTATE AND THE »CROSS HARBOUR«

The geophysical surveys and the subsequent discussion of the encountered anomalies suggest that the manor at Korshamn features a certain chronological depth stretching from at least the Vendel period up to the Viking Age. Both the identification of the Viking-Age manorial hall (house 3) with its fenced special area as well as the deep roots to the activities at Korshamn itself correlate astonishingly well with the description of the »ancestral property« (*hereditas*) of Birka's *praefectus vici* Herigar as mentioned in Rimbert's Vita Anskarii (cap. 11). As bailiff and counsellor of the king (*consiliarius regis*), Herigar was to pursue the royal interests in Birka in the king's place (cf. Norr 1998, 160-163). And according to the Norse *óðal* right, i. e. the concept of ownership by the right of inheritance, to legally claim the property required the derivation of at least five ancestors (Brink 2002, 103-105). In recent research, a common suggestion had been that Herigar resided at Helgö located about 10 km south-east of Birka (Holmqvist 1980, 60; Hyenstrand 1996, 118; Staecker 2009, 320-322; cf. Zachrisson 2011, 101-103). However, Rimbert's account does not imply that Herigar had his estate away from Birka. Rather, it strongly connects his whereabouts to Birka. The fact that Herigar is mentioned as the prefect of the town does in itself imply that he was residing *in situ*.

The two parallel rows of stones at Korshamn as a fenced special area, if we follow L. Jørgensen (2008), seem to demark the limits of a (heathen) cult area connecting to the manorial hall. Even if source critically hardly authoritative in this regard it still seems quite remarkable that the place name registry at the Institutet för språk och folkminnen (SOFI) in Uppsala contains an entry from 1896 by S. Ambrosiani with the note that Kalvhagen was known as the place »where the temple stood« (reg.-no. Ulma 303:250). In the face of the apparently positive identification of Herigar's residence – in fact, one among the few namely known inhabitants of Birka at all – as well as of a pre-Christian cult area connected to the manor, one cannot help to take up the closer context of the historical mentioning of Herigar and his *hereditas*. Chapter 11 of the Vita Anskarii deals with Ansgar's first visit to Björkö in c. 830. It reads: »With great difficulty they [Ansgar and Witmar] accomplished their long journey [...] and eventually arrived at the Swedish port called Birka. They were kindly received here by the king, who was called Björn [at Haugi] [...]. [...] There were many who were well disposed towards their mission and who willingly listened to the teaching of the Lord. [...] These

included the prefect of this town named Herigar, who was a counsellor of the king and much beloved by him. He received the gift of holy baptism and was strengthened in the Catholic faith. A little later he built a church on his own ancestral property and served God with the utmost devotion.«

Ever since the earliest Birka research, as outlined above, it has been discussed where Herigar's estate, and the church, the first one that we know of in Scandinavia, might have been placed. And the quoted chapter at Rimbert's reports of no less than the erection of the very first church building in the whole North; even the church in Hedeby is about 20 years later and dates to 850 only (Rimbert cap. 24), while the first church in Ribe originates from around 860 (Rimbert cap. 32). If we can trust Rimbert's account Birka Ansgar's successor Gautbert built yet another (communal?) church around 836 (Rimbert cap. 14). Yet after a heathen revolt, his companion Nithard was slain and Gautbert driven from Björkö in 845 (Rimbert cap. 17). In the following period Herigar, however, remained faithful and supported the hermit Ardgar sent by Ansgar in 850, who yet had to »celebrate the divine mysteries [in Birka] in public« (Rimbert cap. 17). Once when Herigar became sick »suffering great pain in his leg« and townspeople tried to persuade him to return to the old beliefs Rimbert reports that he »summoned his servants and told them to carry him to [N.B.] his church« (»*at suam eum deferent ecclesiam*«), where he, virtually as a proof of God's existence, recovered quickly (Rimbert cap. 17). Only when Herigar already had passed away (Rimbert cap. 17) Ansgar himself returned to Birka and resumed his missionary work in 852 in person (Rimbert cap. 26). After tedious negotiations at various assembly meetings his companion Erimbert once more got the royal permission »to build a hall to serve as a place of prayer in the town« (»*atrium unum ad oratorium*«) (Rimbert cap. 28). Now if the here suggested allotment of the manorial hall to Birka's *praefectus vici* should be correct Herigar's private church, apparently surviving the heathen rebellion from around 845, should be looked for in its immediate vicinity to it. Maybe, in analogy to Tissø, the manorial church might even been situated right inside the fenced special area itself as a successor to the cult building, if so in close accordance with the scholarly supposition that was made already at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (see above). In any case, the question if a physical identification by means of archaeology will ever be possible must now be a task for future investigations at Korshamn.

In terms of concluding remarks, the place name Korshamn shall be taken up itself. In current research the generally accepted derivation of the name Korshamn on Björkö, as it is true for many other sites bearing the prefix *kors-* (cf. Westerdahl 2010, 120-124), is being connected to a navigation mark indicating seafarers the sailing passage towards the harbour entrance (e.g. Ellmers 1984, 228 note 751). According to Old Norse literature this kind of navigation marks, Old Norse *hafnarmark*, in later times were shaped as crosses, Old Norse *hafnarkross*, which occasionally could become worshipped in themselves by prayers and candles (Falk 1912, 21). As early as in 1830 N. H. Sjöborg suggested that Ansgar might have »debarked at Korshamn [cross harbour], raised a cross there, whereupon the harbour up to today bears its name« (Sjöborg 1830, 16; our transl.). In that light it might very well be, that the »cross harbour« Korshamn even is identical with »the port of Saint Ansgar« (*portus sancti Ansgarii*) mentioned by Adam of Bremen (lib. IV cap. 20 schol. 122) in connection of the whereabouts of archbishop Unni's grave. The latter visited Birka in 935 with the aim to re-establish the Christian mission where »no teacher had dared to go in the seventy years since the death of Saint Ansgar save only Rimbert« (Adam of Bremen lib. I cap. 60), but who died on the site where he was subsequently entombed in a burial mound (*tumulus*) (Adam of Bremen lib. I cap. 62; lib. IV cap. 20 schol. 122). Merely his head was sent back to Bremen where it got buried »before the altar in the Church of Saint Peter« (Adam of Bremen lib. I cap. 62). Here, during excavations in 1973-1976 his tomb almost certainly could become identified (Löhr 1979, 73 fig. 15 [feature no. 66]), whilst already in 1840 during demolition works at the high altar a led plate with the inscription »XV KAL. OCTOB(ri)s O(biit) VNNIS ARCHIEP(is) C(opus)« (The 15<sup>th</sup> before the calendars of October [17<sup>th</sup> of September 936] died archbishop

Unni) was encountered remembering Unni's very day of death (Löhr 1979, cat.-no. 2). Korshamn might thus if this equalisation should be true, even be the place where archbishop Unni's headless bones are placed to rest underneath one of the nearby burial mounds.

## CONCLUSION

The identification of the house terraces at Korshamn and the subsequent geophysical surveys of these, together with the one of the house plateau conducted in September 2016 offers unique opportunities as hardly encountered before – to a deeper understanding of a site, which is not only central to the earliest history of Sweden, but also a key location of the Viking world as such. The measurements suggest an unimagined chronological depth of activities long before the emergence of the Viking town of Birka and lead seamlessly up to the large manorial hall with its fenced special area. The possible connections to the historical accounts would be to the core of what this site is about, mirroring the first Christian mission, the role of royal administration and the origins of urban life in Scandinavia. With the discovery of the grand milieu at Korshamn, it seems that Herigar finally may have found his way home.

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### *Zusammenfassung / Summary / Résumé*

#### **Zu Hause bei Herigar: Ein Magnatensitz der Merowinger- und Wikingerzeit in Korshamn, Birka (Uppland/S)**

Im September 2016 wurden in Korshamn, einem der Haupthäfen der Insel Björkö, gelegen außerhalb des Halbkreiswalles der wikingerzeitlichen Frühstadt Birka, geophysikalische Prospektionen durchgeführt. Die Untersuchungen eines solitären Hausplateaus auf Erik Steffanssons heimat belegen einen bedeutenden merowingerzeitlichen Hausgrundriss. Zusammen mit weiteren Anomalien im Bereich einer einseitigen Terrasse bei Kalvhagen könnte dieser zu einem größeren Hofmilieu gehören, das die wikingerzeitlichen Siedlungsaktivitäten auf der Insel vordatiert. Letztere werden von einer imposanten wikingerzeitlichen Halle überlagert, die an eine »fenced special area« wie z. B. in Lejre und Tissø anschließt und mit Kulthandlungen in Verbindung gebracht wird. Die Strukturen sowie deren chronologische Tiefe scheinen mit der *hereditas des praefectus vici* Herigar zu korrelieren, die in Rimberts Vita Anskarii Erwähnung findet. Sollte sich diese Verbindung bewahrheiten, so wäre Skandinaviens erster Kirchenbau in unmittelbarer Nähe zu suchen. Die Relevanz der Identifikation kann nicht überschätzt werden: für die Entstehung der wikingerzeitlichen Frühstadt selbst, deren königliche Verwaltung und die früheste christliche Missionierung Skandinaviens.

#### **At Home with Herigar: A Magnate's Residence from the Vendel- to Viking Period at Korshamn, Birka (Uppland/S)**

In September 2016 geophysical surveys were conducted at Korshamn, as one of the main harbour bays of the island of Björkö, situated outside the town boundaries of the Viking town of Birka. The investigation of a solitarily raised plateau at Erik Steffanssons heimat revealed the outline of a large Vendel-period house. Together with further anomalies at a one-sided terrace at Kalvhagen a whole manor complex might be seizable predating the Viking-Age settlement activities on the island. The latter dwelling is superimposed by a major Viking-Age hall connecting to a »fenced special area« as known from e. g. Lejre and Tissø and linked to cult activities. Both the structures and the chronological depth correlate well with the »ancestral property« of Birka's royal bailiff Herigar as mentioned in Rimbert's Vita Anskarii. If this assumption is correct even the whereabouts of Scandinavia's first church should be located in the immediate vicinity. The consequences of this identification cannot be overestimated: In terms of the emergence of the Viking town, its royal administration and the earliest Christian mission in Scandinavia.

### **Chez Herigar: la residence d'un magnat de période Vendel à Viking de Korshamn, Birka (Uppland/S)**

En septembre 2016, des prospections géophysiques ont été menées à Korshamn, l'un des ports les plus importants de Birka, à l'extérieur du rempart qui enciint l'habitat principal. L'investigation d'un plateau isolé sur Erik Steffanssons hemland a révélé le plan d'une large maison de l'Âge de Vendel. Avec d'autres anomalies identifiées sur la terrasse de Kalvhagen, il pourrait composer un ensemble d'habitat aristocratique antérieur à l'occupation de la période Viking sur l'île. Ces restes sont recouverts d'une imposante halle viking accolée à une »fenced special area« du type de celles connues à Lejre et Tissø par exemple et qui sont mises en relation avec des activités rituelles. Ces structures comme leur ancienneté peuvent être corrélées avec la *hereditas* du *praefectus vici* de Herigar, mentionnée dans les Vita Anskarii de Rambert. Si cette supposition est avérée, la première église de Scandinavie devrait se situer à proximité. L'importance de cette identification ne doit pas être surestimée, en termes d'émergence de la ville viking, de son administration royale et des premiers missionnaires chrétiens en Scandinavie. Traduction: L. Bernard

#### *Schlüsselwörter / Keywords / Mots clés*

Schweden / Skandinavien / Ostsee / Frühmittelalter / Urbanisierung / Kultplatz / Kirche / Missionierung  
Sweden / Scandinavia / Baltic Sea / Early Middle Ages / urbanisation / cult area / church / Christian mission  
Suède / Scandinavie / Mer Baltique / Haut-Moyen Âge / urbanisation / aire rituelle / église / mission chrétienne

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