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Starigard/Oldenburg in the West-Slavic Area and Tissø, Avaldsnes and Borg in Northern Europe in AD 700–1050

Imitatio Imperii of Royal Frankish/Post-Frankish Architecture of Power or Domestic Development?

ABSTRACT

The present paper takes a long look back into the history of research by pinpointing wide-ranging scholarly considerations about northern and central northeastern European representative architecture in the period AD 700–1050 (Starigard/Oldenburg, Tissø, Avaldsnes). Notably, in the contributions in question, central European so-called *Pfalzen* (royal Frankish/Post-Frankish centres of power) were also taken into consideration, with Aachen being one of the sites in question. For the architecture of West-Slavic Starigard/Oldenburg, an *imitatio imperii* of Frankish architecture has been suggested but in the end, no such imitation can be proven, there was rather a domestic line of continuity (seen in Borg, northern Norway). Architecture set aside, other elements of courtly culture should be discussed, as regards a Frankish influence; courtly riding, courtly feasting using proper tableware and courtly falconry. This is best seen in Starigard/Oldenburg.

KEYWORDS

Architecture of power / *imitatio imperii* / centre vs. periphery / Frankish and Post-Frankish *Pfalzen* / manorial seats of northern Europe

Remains of a royal stone architecture dating to c. 1000–1300 have long been known in northern Europe, and ruins still exist (older synthesis in Nissen Jaubert 1993). In contrast, it is only in recent decades that an earlier high-status (chieftains') wooden architecture, mainly from the last third of the 1st millennium AD, has come to light through large-scale settlement excavations, using mechanical excavators, all over northern Europe (see Herrenhöfe 2010 for a number of such sites). The areas in question also often display a wealth of metal objects, which is why metal-detecting has played a vital role in the localisation of such places. Now, there is substantial evidence at hand for hall buildings with a restricted number of posts: smaller ones in the context of cult and larger ones for holding gatherings (see below on Tissø, *locus classicus*). It is, however, somewhat astonishing that the actual residential buildings still seem to be absent. The situation for the West Slavonic area is somewhat different inasmuch as representative architecture pre-1000 AD was known for decades; this is mostly wooden but, remarkably, in the case of Great Moravia, stone buildings of the 9th century have been recorded (synthesis on the West-Slavic representative architecture in the period from the 8th to 13th centuries in Wesuls 2006; see also Poláček et al. 2020 on Mikulčice, one of the strongholds of Great Moravia).

The present paper takes a long look back into the history of research by pinpointing wide-ranging scholarly considerations about northern and central northeastern European representative architecture in the period AD 700–1050, in relation to central European so-called *Pfalzen* (royal Frankish/

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Fig. 1 Sites mentioned in the text: **1** Starigard/Oldenburg (Schleswig-Holstein, northern Germany). – **2** Tissø on Zealand (Denmark). – **3** Avaldsnes (southwestern Norway). – **4** Forsand (southwestern Norway). – **5** Borg (northern Norway). – (Map M. Bolte, LEIZA).

Post-Frankish centres of power), with Aachen being one of the sites mentioned (see different papers, this volume). This relates to the magnate's farms at Starigard/Oldenburg in the northwestern Slavic area (Gabriel 1986), in present-day northern Germany, Tissø on Zealand in Denmark (Jørgensen 2002; 2005) and Avaldsnes in southwestern Norway (Gauert 1968), while for Borg in the far north of Norway a local development of high-status architecture has been suggested (Løken 2001b) (**fig. 1**).

In the following, emphasis will be laid upon a sketch of the overall arguments – pertaining to

northern and central northeastern sites in relation to Frankish royal architecture – put forward in the respective contributions, though it is impossible to follow up any later research on the sites in detail. We owe to I. Gabriel, excavator of Starigard/Oldenburg, the still most elaborate attempt so far to bring together representative architecture from the »periphery« with Frankish sites and to suggest an *imitatio imperii*. When discussing Tissø and Avaldsnes, Frankish architecture was also addressed, but – as we will see – in a different manner.

It also needs to be underlined that the excavation of high-status architecture in Starigard/Oldenburg during the excavations of 1973–1984 preceded the detection of comparable sites in northern Europe (Borg in the 1980s, Tissø: 1990s and Avaldsnes: 2010s). Notably, the *status quo* of research is quite different for the sites in question; a thorough publication on the vast settlement-archaeological investigations in Starigard/Oldenburg is needed, whereas one is in preparation for Tissø in Denmark (J. Bican, pers. comm.). In turn, Avaldsnes has seen recent excavation and publication (Skre 2018, 2020) whereas, in the case of Borg, it is only considerably later that the investigations of the late 1980s have led to a worthy monograph (Stamsø Munch et al. 2003).

The Northwestern Slavic Seat of Power in Starigard/Oldenburg – *imitatio imperii* of Frankish Architecture (I. Gabriel)

The very essence of the paper by Ingo Gabriel (1986) is rooted in the article title itself. Translated into English it reads thus: »*imitatio imperii* at the Slavic princely seat of Starigard/Oldenburg (Holstein) – on the importance of Carolingian ›Königspfalzen‹ [royal seats] for the rising of a *civitas magna slavorum*«. And this is the hypothesis: »The fascination of imperial magnitude in general and Frankish court culture in particular cannot have remained without impact (on the West Slavs, my addition). We thus have to ask if traces of this can be found in the archaeological material. This is the case in three instances, as I see it, namely the architecture, courtly tableware and, respectively, spurs and (spur) straps« (English translation after Gabriel 1986, 360).

I. Gabriel's contribution first presents a historical sketch (Gabriel 1986). According to the Royal Frankish Annals (*Annales regni Francorum*), there were close contacts between the Franks and the Northwest Slavs in the period from 780 to 840. As for the West Slavs, this group prominently included the Obodriti, who resided in the fortress of Mecklenburg, and probably the Wagri, too, a part of the Obodriti tribe, with their seat of power at Starigard/Oldenburg. As an overall pattern, there were changing contacts and conflicts between the Franks, the Saxons, the Danes and the West Slavs. Layer 1 of contact, until 814, is characterised by meetings and confrontations at sites along the Elbe in the period of Charlemagne whereas, in layer 2, Northwest-Slavic delegations participated in royal councils in the period of Emperor Louis the Pious (until 840), in Paderborn (815) but also in Aachen (819/826), Ingelheim (826), Frankfurt (822/823) and Compiègne (816/823). Apart from this and still based on the *Annales regni Francorum*, an investiture of Slavic princes by the Frankish emperor can also be suggested. It is most important that Northwest-Slavic delegations had actually seen Frankish »*Pfalzen*« and thus knew about that architecture, but does this mean they also adopted it?

The fortification of Starigard/Oldenburg (Starigard meaning »old castle« in local Slavic dialect) is situated at the edge of moist lowland with numerous water courses (Müller-Wille 1988, 17–18; Bleile 2018, 1310). Earlier, these were navigable and led to the Baltic Sea. The site has two ovals that merge into one another in an area measuring 4 ha overall, 260 m east to west in length and 130 m north to south, with a total circumference of 650 m (**fig. 2**). Any attacker had to face a height of 10 m from the bottom of an outer ditch to the top of the rampart (Struve 1985, 133–150). Thus, a considerable amount of work hours had to be invested in building the fortification (see more on this below).

Extensive excavations took place in the years 1953–1958 (Karl Struve) and 1973–1984 (Ingo Gabriel), with trenches in both ovals (Gabriel 1986; see also Gabriel/Kempke 1991, 149–180; 2011, 13–19; Wesuls 2006, 140–147; Bleile 2018, 1313–1315; and, for the West Slavs more broadly, Brather 2008). The princely seat was unearthed by I. Gabriel in the northeast in the trenches 1–8 and 11–12. The stratigraphy and history of the use of this place is complex. It was erected in the late 7th century (this early date has been contested; see Kleingärtner 2014, 262) and yielded high-status architecture from the late 8th century onwards, first with a population that followed the traditional faith and then a Christianised one (with an end in the first half of the 10th century). Then control shifted between Slavic rule or Ottonic diocese (second part of the 10th century and onwards) before

Fig. 2 Rampart in Starigard/Oldenburg, northern Germany. Seen from the east, with the pre-modern seat of power excavated in the foreground oval. – (Photo © Oldenburger Wallmuseum).

Slavic dominion came to an end in 1147/1149, when the rampart was destroyed by Danish forces. Finally, there was a partly Danish and partly German reuse, from 1200 onwards, until the destruction of the stronghold in 1261 (Struve 1991).

When considering the assumed *imitatio imperii*, Gabriel focused on the period c. 780–830, the earliest phase with a pronounced high-status architecture (translation into English after Gabriel 1986, 360–361). »In Starigard/Oldenburg the excavations have led to the discovery of magnificent wooden buildings of the 8th and 9th centuries. It used to be a complex of representative manorial architecture: large buildings for dwelling and economy, a reception hall, a courtyard with buildings in wing-arrangement, potentially an atrium, in addition storage buildings. In the older phase (c. 780–830) the princely hall was 24 m long and 7 m broad, with the actual hall for assembly being 9–11 m long«. Suffice it to add here that the actual hall had a longitudinal hearth and the fenced-in area of the manorial seat measured 45 m × 45 m (**fig. 3**). For the princely hall, assemblies of a secular and religious nature (with the prince as cult leader) have been suggested. The other hall of that phase, situated to the north, of the same length and also with a longitudinal central hearth, has only been partly excavated. It is not described and interpreted any further, except for the term »reception hall« (see here Gabriel/Kempke 1991, 154–155, with more detail than Gabriel 1986). The hall to the north was erected first and then the other one, but both were in use simultaneously in the late part of the early phase. It is important to underline that, in the article of concern, only the excavation plan and the house use are mentioned, with no argument for these interpretations provided, except for the princely hall.

As a matter of fact, two kinds of comparison are made between Frankish and Starigard/Oldenburgian architecture: overall layout and, respectively, hall architecture and hall size. As it turns out, two types of Frankish »*Pfalzen*« must be distinguished: on the one hand, the spacious and representative sites in Aachen and Ingelheim that yielded substantial one room halls with apses (Aachen: 45 m × 20 m, Ingelheim: 30 m × 15 m) in the Late Antique tradition (cf. Heimerl, this volume, on Trier as a reference point, being one of the Imperial Roman centres of power in the 4th century) and, on the other hand, a new type, known from Paderborn and Frankfurt, being much more compact, less representative and with smaller halls (Paderborn: hall of 26 m × 10 m as part of a larger building; Frankfurt: hall of 26 m × 12 m, likewise as part of a larger building) (cf. different authors, this volume, and see also, more generally, Binding 1996 and Zotz 2002).

Ultimately, I. Gabriel comes to this conclusion about the assumed Frankish influence on the architecture of Starigard/Oldenburg: »Despite all associations with Carolingian royal seats we have to come to the conclusion that the details of use were different, thus the forms of noble representation – at least in the excavated buildings – had a different shape than at Frankish royal seats. However, one may argue that some traits of courtly culture were adopted even though it is difficult for the moment to name pieces of evidence« (English translation after Gabriel 1986, 362).

If at all, the moderate sized »*Pfalzen*« in Frankfurt and Paderborn can be compared with the seat of power at Starigard/Oldenburg; in contrast, Aachen and Ingelheim were simply too large and complex. One could also argue that princely architecture already existed in Starigard/Oldenburg before the Northwest Slavs had direct contact with the Franks; so, at best, the Frankish example could have had an impact on already existing architecture. In this respect, two more factors come into play: First, the actual building of the stronghold demanded considerable energy and time (Struve 1985, 133–150; see also Gabriel/Kempke 1991, 149–153). Was this the work of West Slavs with no social stratification yet, or rather the outcome of work ordered by a prince/leading family? Second, it is somewhat astonishing that, for the earliest period of settlement, there are hardly any traces of buildings, only vague indications for flat pit houses and log houses (Gabriel/Kempke 1991, 154). This again raises the question of equality vs. inequality among the local population (see here Biermann 2014 on stratification among the early West Slavs).

As regards broader elements of Northwest-Slavic courtly culture and the question of *imitatio imperii*, tableware and horse-riding equipment have been introduced into the discussion, too, which cannot be detailed any further here (see quotation above,

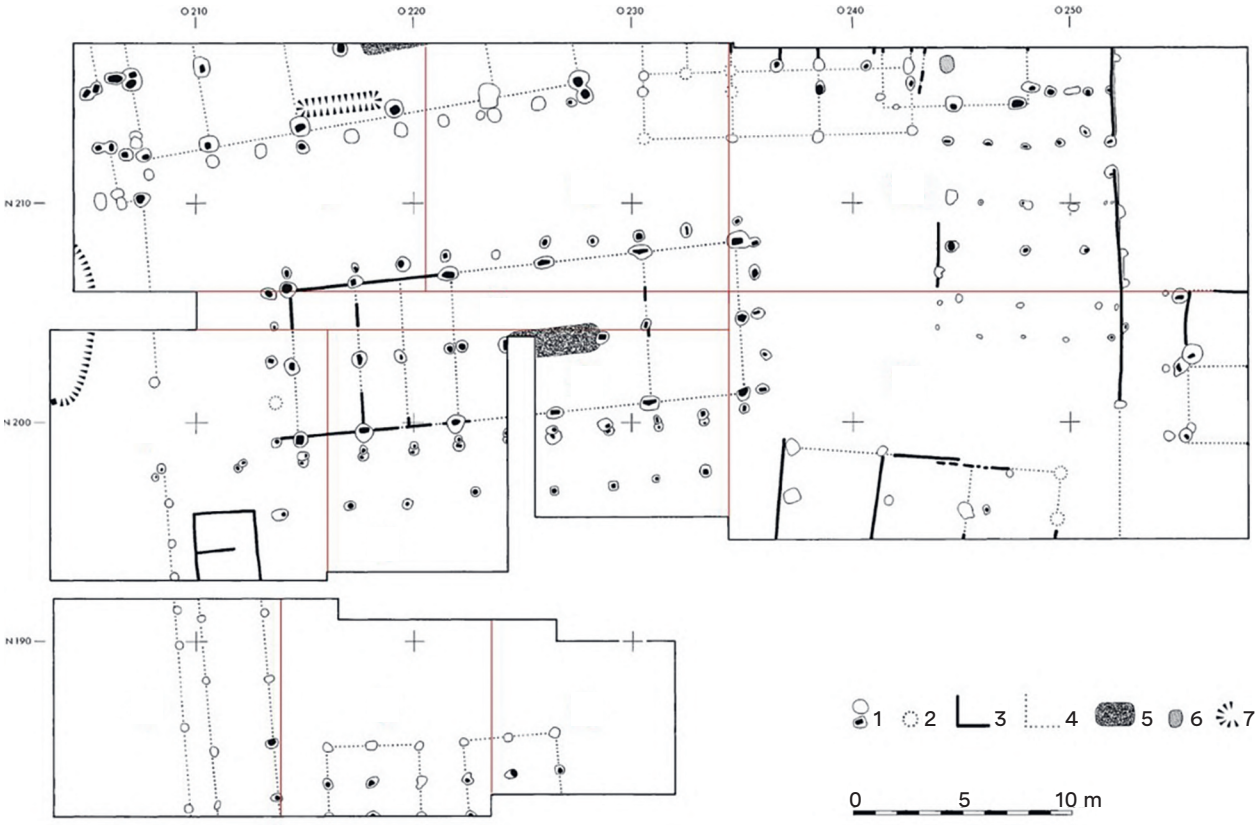

Fig. 3 Magnate's seat in Starigard/Oldenburg. Earliest phase, dated AD 780–830. Hall in the midst of the central building (24 m × 7 m) and yet another hall to the north, only partially excavated. Beware, in this plan, the central building measures 20–21 m in length, not 24 m, as stated in the paper (Gabriel/Kempke 2011, fig. 5). – **1** Posthole. – **2** Destroyed posthole. – **3** Sill beam (ascertained). – **4** Wall line (assumed). – **5** Longitudinal hearth without clay bord. – **6** Hearth with clay bord. – **7** Pithole. – (Drawing after Gabriel 1986, fig. 2).

taken from Gabriel 1986). Concerning tableware, glasses of Frankish origin and so-called Tatinger Ware from Starigard/Oldenburg stand side by side with so-called High Quality Oldenburgian Pottery (»Oldenburger Prachtkeramik«), which was made locally (Gabriel 1991, 195–197; Messal 2011). When it comes to horse-riding, Frankish spurs and (spur) straps with mounts of noble metal or bronze are rare finds in the West-Slavic area but there was a local production of iron spurs in Starigard/Oldenburg that followed Frankish forms (Gabriel 1991, 183–190; see Košta et al. 2020, 268, briefly on the question of West-Slavic spurs and more broadly on the princely court of 9th century Mikulčice in Great Moravia and its material culture). As an aside, we know that a smithy was part of the magnate's seat, situated in the northeast, and the finds point to workmanship of gold, silver, tin and lead (Gabriel 1991, 193–195). However, information is needed about the dating of that smithy; did it belong to the early period considered by I. Gabriel?

It was only after Gabriel's 1986 publication that the animal bones from Starigard/Oldenburg were examined and published (Prummel 1993; see also Teegen 2018). As it turns out, sparrowhawks, goshawks and peregrine falcons from the site represent a minimum number of 41 individuals (!), including partial or entire skeletons. This is by far the most numerous find to that effect for Europe on the whole (and even beyond). Two explanations could be suggested (see Bleile 2018 for a broad consideration): One would be the trading of birds of prey used in falconry, perhaps indicated by finds of raptor bones, but much more so the partial skeletons in the 8th century trading site of Groß-Strömkendorf in the West-Slavic area, the forerunner of Haithabu (Schmölcke 2004). The second would be the local knowledge and practice of falconry: the hunting with trained birds of prey as a pastime of an upper class (overviews: Grimm/Gersmann 2018; O. Grimm 2020). Since all the bird of prey bones in Starigard/Oldenburg were found in the area of the magnate's seat, the second interpretation seems more plausible (**fig. 4**).

It has often been suggested that falconry originated in the Eurasian steppe area, from where its knowledge spread to the west (south and east). In both Sweden and central Europe it was taken up in the middle of the 1st millennium AD but it seems to have caught on later in the Slavic world (see the aforementioned overviews). This, again, brings

Fig. 4 Magnate's seat in Starigard/Oldenburg. The prince as falconer (late 1st mill. AD). Displayed in the Oldenburger Wallmuseum. – (Photo © Oldenburger Wallmuseum).

Frankish court culture to the fore. We know as a fact that royal falconers were attached to »*Pfalzen*«, such as Aachen (Dusil 2018). Thus, the Northwest-Slavic delegations at royal Frankish councils might well have seen raptors and falconry at a place like this. Apart from Starigard/Oldenburg, which stands out for the large-scale excavation of the actual seat of power and the many salvaged raptor bones, there is otherwise little evidence that would suggest the knowledge of falconry among West-Slavic elites in the late 1st millennium AD; just a few raptor bones have come to light at the princely seat of Mikulčice in Great Moravia (Mlíkovský 2003; 2005) and likewise a few in different (manorial) sites of early Piast Poland (Bochenski et al. 2018). Finally, a well-known mount that depicts a rider with a bird of prey on the fist, a grave find from the princely seat of Staré Město in Great Moravia, has often been regarded as proof for falconry (most recently in Profantová 2020), but according to an alternative interpretation, based on a broader range of materials, this imagery is rather a metaphor or symbol of legitimation or succession of rule (Bleile 2020).

The Danish Seat of Power in Tissø – Structural Comparison with the Frankish Site in Aachen (L. Jørgensen)

The strategically well-placed seat of power at Tissø, named after the local lake, was situated along its western shore and in the west of Zealand, 7 km away from the coast (in the following: Jørgensen 2002 in Danish; Jørgensen 2005 in German; see also Jørgensen 2009, more broadly, in English). As Halleby Å was a navigable river that provided access to the open sea and could accommodate larger ships, the site was well within reach.

When the water level of the lake was lowered by 2 m in the 19th century, tools, jewellery but in particular weapons (altogether 50 objects) came to light in the former lake bed (Jørgensen 2002; 2005). Based on the lake's name, the »Lake of Tyr« (a warrior god of the Viking Age), these objects have been considered as offerings that date back to c. AD 600, roughly the period in which the earliest settlement was established.

In 1977, a heavy gold neck ring of almost 2 kg was found, which prompted further investigation (Jørgensen 2002; 2005). Excavation in the same area unearthed a 50 m long Viking-Age bridge over the Halleby river. At the river crossing, two burials of executed men were found, which date to the very end of the settlement in the first half of the 11th century. Metal detecting, systematically since 1993, and the excavations have brought to light all in all 12,000 metal objects, mostly nails, but also four silver hoards and one of gold. During excavations in the years 1995–2003, an area of 80,000 km² was covered, while the overall settlement area was 1.6 km in length and 200–300 m in width (all in all 500,000 m²), with a dating to the period from the middle of the 6th to the first half of the 11th century. New excavations and re-excavations took place as part of the project on »Pre-Christian Cult Sites – Førkristne kultpladser« (National Museum of Denmark, 2012–2016), but there is no summary at hand. All the excavations will be addressed in a future book about Tissø (J. Bican, pers. comm.).

The older manorial site in the north, Bulbrogård, which covered 10,000–12,000 m², dates to the period from c. 550–650 (Franck Bican 2010). It featured a ship-shaped hall of 40 m × 7 m, accompanied by other buildings and some pit houses; the area in question was partly fenced-in. The number of metal finds is restricted, but they include two gold suspensions with inlaid garnets in the cloisonné technique. The place burned down in the middle of the 7th century and was relocated further to the south.

The later magnate's seat, Fugledegård, was built 600 m to the south in the second half of the 7th century and fell out of use in the first part of the 11th century (in the following Jørgensen 2002; 2005). All four phases yielded a representative ship-shaped hall, which in the first three phases measured around 35 m × 10 m, while the area of the magnate's seat grew from 10,000 to 18,000 m² (**fig. 5**). The fourth phase saw changes in construction and overall layout, with a hall of 48 m × 12.5 m and an extension of the magnate's seat of at least 25,000 m².

Fig. 5 Reconstruction of the magnate's seat in Tissø (Fugledegård) on Zealand, Denmark. Phase 3 from the 9th and 10th centuries AD. In the foreground: fenced-in area with a house, used for cult, behind it the hall (35 m × 10 m). – (Model © Arkikon/The National Museum of Denmark).

In the first three phases, Tissø had halls with inner subdivisions, and its eastern half, as has been argued, was used for assemblies (with recovered animal bones and some finds), while the western one served as the magnate's accommodation (with hardly any finds) (Jørgensen 2002; 2005). In addition, there was a fenced-in area with a smaller building immediately to the south of the hall; in phases 2 and 3 this building, with only two pairs of posts, measured 20 m × 6 m. To the north, there was an iron forge. Phase 3 saw four parallel buildings to the west of the magnate's seat, aligned east to west (16 m × 7 m: for storage?) and another one further to the north (25 m × 7 m: dwelling house?).

The final phase of the 10th and early 11th century saw, as already mentioned, major changes in construction and overall layout (Jørgensen 2002; 2005). The hall was substantially enlarged to 48 m × 12.5 m, while the fenced-in area with its house disappeared. Instead, there was a building at a right angle to the hall and another one, which was small and cross-shaped (church [?]). The iron forge in the north was replaced by other buildings (two carriage houses [?] of 10 m × 4 m and two ship-shaped buildings, 15 m × 7 m, of the Trelleborg-type: dwelling houses for retinues [?]). To the south, there was a house of 35 m × 4 m, whose function is unknown.

Among the finds from the magnate's seat, there are sword mounts and spurs with inlaid silver or brass, further bridles and finds of Carolingian or Insular provenance that date to the late 8th or 9th century. Among the 100 coins, there is a dominance of finds from the Arab world. The numerous amulets and jewellery with motifs from Nordic mythology, which were found in the area of the magnate's seat, may indicate that the fenced-in area with its own house served a cultic purpose. In this respect, the famous ceremonial building in Uppåkra in southwestern Sweden with the same kind of house construction comes to mind. This small hall building had a religious use, as is shown by finds of tiny gold-foil figures (so-called guldgubber; more on this below) and fire-cracked stones with animal bones (remains of cultic feasts?) just outside the building (Larsson 2004; 2011).

To the south and north of the later magnate's seat in Tissø (Fugledegård), there was a considerable area with workshops (iron forges, bronze casting) and, as can be assumed, a market place (Jørgensen 2002; 2005). The thousands of postholes do not form any system, owing to damage by deep ploughing. However, 85 pit houses were investigated, and the south also saw small buildings with only one pair of posts. Judging by the quantity of finds, when compared to Viking-Age trading sites in Ribe, Haithabu and Birka, there was only seasonal workshop use and a seasonal market (with a general distribution of weights, hacksilver and Arabic coinage over all the workshop areas).

The animal bones from Tissø – around 80,000, with a weight of 250 kg, and mostly from farm an-

imals – are also worth a mention (Gotfredsen 2006; see also Gotfredsen/Gebauer Thomsen 2011). They originate from the pit houses and thus represent animals kept by the craftsmen, but bones also, to some extent, come from the central area with the magnate's seat. Among the dogs that were found, a greyhound type might have been used for hunting, and also some of the horses with an unusually strong build and shoulder height, although these horses may also have seen a use in war. A remarkable number of boar bones were found in the eastern part of the hall (9th century), which are possibly the remains of a feast. and as regards the central site with the halls, the presence of salmon testifies to an upper class diet, and the truly exotic Eurasian spoonbill was perhaps a status symbol (Schmölcke 2022).

To sum up, the manorial seat of power in Tissø had its roots back in the middle of the 1st millennium AD. In its younger phase, there was one line in continuity until the final phase 4, which saw major changes in construction and overall layout. The site was in use only periodically – by an ambulatory kingdom? –, as is shown by the general lack of houses and missing evidence for agriculture and husbandry (lack of byres). But even for a site used only periodically, one would have to assume a farm that operated permanently; has this remained undetected so far in Tissø? It is also worth mentioning that, on location, the central site has yielded considerably fewer finds than the surrounding areas with their workshops; a result of deliberate cleansing just before the abandonment of the site?

In his articles from 2002 and 2005, L. Jørgensen has presented a functional-structural comparison between the manorial site in Tissø and the Frankish seat of power in Aachen, captured in a well-known table (cf. also Reichert, this volume, on a comparison of Aachen and Karakorum):

- hall in Tissø for representation: *aula regia* in Aachen (the foundations are preserved beneath the town hall)
- fenced-in area with house as cult area in Tissø: »*Pfalz*« church in Aachen (which still exists)
- offerings in the lake at Tissø as an expression of cultic deeds: church ceremonies at Aachen
- weapons and horses at Tissø as expression of a retinue: retinue at Aachen
- executed men at Tissø as expression of jurisdiction: the same function at Aachen
- pit houses and workshops as expression of a market: the same function at Aachen

Suffice it to state that some of functions mentioned for Aachen could only be proven by written records, which would need a closer look. Remarkably, no attempt is made by L. Jørgensen to deduce the representative architecture at Tissø from the classical site at Aachen, which had actually been seen by Danish delegations in the early 9th century (years 817 and 825, due to the *Annales regni Francorum*). This, however, is by no means surprising. In its beginnings, the site at Tissø is pre-Carolingian and it reflects domestic architecture that can be traced even further back to the famous site of Gudme/Lundeburg on southeastern Funen, whose halls had already emerged in the 3rd century (Østergaard Sørensen 1994; 2010). This erection date is also in line with the early period of use of the aforementioned ceremonial building in Uppåkra, southwestern Sweden.

In the comparison made by L. Jørgensen, one important feature remains unconsidered: the actual living quarters of the magnates in Tissø and the emperors (kings) in Aachen (Jørgensen 2002; 2005). This, however, does not come as a surprise as we simply do not know. L. Jørgensen has made three suggestions for Tissø: (1) the living quarters may have occupied one half of the hall; (2) they were situated on the first floor of the hall; in phase 1, there were already colossal roof-bearing posts that were 3 m in length with a diameter of 0.60 m (!); (3) they lay to the north of the hall (phase 3). As for Aachen and all Frankish/Post-Frankish representative architecture, it consisted of at least three different buildings: residential house, hall and church (classical: Gauert 1965; see also Binding 1996 and Zotz 2002). In Aachen, however, it is not clear where the emperors actually resided (see Binding 1996 on older suggestions to that effect, and A. Schaub/J. Ley, pers. comm.).

Finally, one may point out that the royal Frankish seat of power in Aachen is not comparable with that in Tissø. It was too large, and other places are more suitable for consideration. L. Jørgensen has rightly drawn attention to the Post-Frankish, in fact Saxon, (fortified) seat of power in Tilleda at the edge of the Harz mountains in northern Germany, which was erected in the 10th century and used until the 12th century (P. Grimm 1968; 1990; Dapper 2007). Tilleda, which has been entirely excavated, was only a second class royal seat which, in its early phase, had, to some extent, a wooden representative architecture. Also, in line with Tissø, substantial workshops with pit houses have been unearthed. In the framework of the present volume, the case of Zutphen in the Netherlands is instructive, too; in Carolingian times, it was one of the most important strongholds of the counts of Hamaland. After the Viking raid of 882, a circular fortress was built around 890 with a central square for open air jurisdiction and a market, on which stood a wooden church and hall (cf. Groothede, this volume).

The Southwest Norwegian Seat of Power in Avaldsnes – Similar Development in Society Leads to Similar Architectural Solutions (A. Gauert)

Avaldsnes, in the north of the island of Karmøy, occupied a strategic position in relation to the main seafaring route, in a country for which the waterways were elemental for travel and communication (introductory Skre 2018; 2020). Following that route by ship, one had to pass Avaldsnes via the inner passage between the mainland and the island whereas the outer route, facing the North Atlantic, could get very rough and had to be avoided. The strategic position at a bottleneck in the north of the island, which allowed traffic control, together with fertile soils, made Avaldsnes a very important place in deep history (Hernæs 1997; O. Grimm 2009; more nuanced Løken 2001a).

This status is reflected by large burial mounds as indicators for persons of rank, once almost 20 in number and up to almost 50 m across but mostly destroyed today (Ringstad 1986). Furthermore, it relates to actual »princely« burials, found in excavations. The sequence starts with a Bronze Age burial but this is disregarded here and we begin instead with the burial in Flagghaug (period C2, Roman Iron Age), which is among the richest of northern European Iron Age graves, owing to a gold neck ring of almost 600 g (Slomann 1964; 1968; O. Grimm 2014; Stylegar/Reiersen 2018). Yet another gold item, an arm ring (43 g), originates from Storhaug, one of the two ship burials known from Avaldsnes (Opedal 1998, 13–21). These latter finds have long been overshadowed by the ship graves of eastern Norway. According to recent research, however, the finds from Avaldsnes are the earliest ship burials in Norway, with a dendro-dating to the very beginning of the Viking Age (Bonde/Stylegar 2009; Bill 2020). These burials have been taken as evidence that the earliest Norwegian kingdom had its base in southwestern Norway, as is also highlighted by the saga literature and its naming of early royal sites in the southwest of the country, including Avaldsnes (Krag 1995 for an older synthesis, from the perspective of a historian; most recent: Skre 2018; 2020).

In recent settlement-archaeological excavations (survey in 2005–2006, actual investigation in 2011–2013), two important discoveries were made to the south of St Olav's church of Avaldsnes: a possible Late Roman Iron Age wooden hall (see Østmo/Lindhart Bauer 2018, 108–117) and a stone building of 51 m × 10 m (excavated in 2012 and 2017), with two building phases (1250/1300), for which the question has been raised whether it was a *palatium* of the king or a residence for his canons (Lindhart Bauer 2018; Sand-Eriksen/Nordlie 2020; Hommedal 2020) (**fig. 6**). The Viking-Age/early medieval seat of power, however, remains to be found. Parts of it may have been situated beneath the stone church, which was erected in the middle of the 13th century, or elsewhere in the surroundings.

In a little known contribution, the well-known German »*Pfalzen*« expert A. Gauert has considered Norwegian royal seats of the Viking Age, and he also looked at Avaldsnes. His introduction reads thus (Gauert 1968, 289, English translation by the author): »Who deals with the Frankish and the medieval German kingdom […], has also to look on the topographical instruments used by kingdoms of neighbouring areas in order to create the needed bases for their dominion. As it turns out, these principles are not always that recognized, as one would assume […]. This includes the Norwegian sites, named residences in Scandinavian research, […] for which there is no firm definition as to my knowledge […]. Since, however, the Old Norse tradition makes the basic elements of such sites visible when also related to […] continental Pfalzen, I see reason to engage myself in the discussion of this topic«.

Without further detail, the author introduces two saga accounts from Snorri Sturluson's Heimskringla, written down in Iceland in the 13th century (see also Mundal 2018 for the saga accounts on Avaldsnes, with no mention of Gauert). What is described in these accounts is said to have taken place in the first half of the 11th century in Avaldsnes. As Gauert has pointed out, these accounts may have implications for buildings that once existed at the location (the following saga extracts in English translation, after Heimskringla 2011 and 2014).

In the saga of the king Olav Tryggvason (995–1000) the following description can be found in chapter 64: »It is said when king Óláfr was at the banquet on Qvaldsnes, an old man, a clever talker with a hood hanging down over his face, came there one evening. He was one-eyed. This man could tell about all lands. […] And when they were sitting long into the night, then the bishop reminded the king that it was time to sleep. The king then did so. And when he was undressed and was lying in bed, then the guest sat on the footboard and went on talking with the king for a long time further. The king wanted to hear more, whatever was said. Then the bishop spoke to the king, saying that it was time to go to sleep. Then the king did so, and the guest went out.

Fig. 6 Johan Christian Clausen Dahl (Romantic painter, 1788–1857), The ruined church at Avaldsnes on Karmøy (1820). Seen from the north, with the church dating to the 13th century. The remains of a wooden building (hall) of the Late Roman Iron Age and of a stone building of 51 m × 10 m, erected in 1250, came to light during recent excavations to the south of the church. – (Photo Nasjonalmuseet/Høstland, Børre; © Nasjonalmuseet, Oslo, Norway).

[…] The next morning the king had the cook called to him, and the man that looked after the drink, and asked whether any stranger had been to see them. They said that when they were about to prepare food, some man had come there and said that they were cooking surprisingly poor meat for the king's table. […] Then the king says […] it could not have been any man and it must have been Ódinn, whom heathen people had long believed in, and said that Ódinn must not be allowed to do anything to deceive them.«

Taken as a whole, this account may indicate three different kinds of building. As is also known from saga literature more broadly, banquets took place in halls (Meulengracht Sørensen 2003; Carstens 2016), while the mentioned bedroom of the king may represent a part of a building (Tissø; one half of the hall or the first floor of the hall?) or a residential building on its own (Tissø; house north of the hall in phase 3?). The existence of a church may also be suggested by the mention of a bishop. Further, we learn about a farm for the king and his men, including a cook and a cupbearer.

In the saga of St Olaf (1015–1028), chapter 118 yields these descriptions. »And as he [Asbjørn Selsbane, the chieftain from northern Norway] got to a certain height, when he could see over the farm at Qgvaldsnes and so on to Karmtsund, then he saw a movement of many people on both sea and land, and these people were all making for the farm at Qgvaldsnes. He thought this strange. After that he went up to the farm and towards where the servants were preparing food. He could soon hear them and understand what they were saying, which was that King Óláfr was come there to a banquet, and also that the king had sat down to the table. Asbjørn turned then into the reception room, and when he came into the anteroom, there was one man coming out and another going in, and no-one took any notice of him. The reception room door was open. He saw that Þórir selr [the king's steward] was standing in front of the high seat table […].«

Here, again, we learn about a royal farm with food preparation for the king and his men and a banquet in a hall. In addition, it is twice mentioned that the king went to meetings (chapter 120): would this relate to the hall or yet another building? Furthermore, there was a paved road that led from the church to the banqueting hall (chapter 120) and a priest who was in charge of the church (chapter 119). So, as above in the saga on King Olav Tryggvason, a hall and a church are described for Avaldsnes, while there is no mention of a third building: the residential house (by itself or only as part of another building).

Regrettably, in the short but very instructive paper by A. Gauert there is no source criticism of the descriptions in the saga literature, which are instead taken as reflection of historical reality. However, the mentioned narrations from Snorri Sturluson's Heimskringla have different levels (see also Mundal 2018). In the first case, Olav Tryggvason's saga (chapter 64), an encounter between Olav Tryggvason and a one-eyed person is described for Avaldsnes. It is only later that this one-eyed person is recognised as Odin. In the second case, the saga of Olaf the Saint (chapters 118–120), the narration is centred around the northern Norwegian petty king, Asbjørn Selsbane, who travels to Avaldsnes and commits a murder in the hall right in front of the king. Thus, the narration is mythological (encounter with a god) in the first case but it happens at a real place, whereas the second is historical, if we take as given that the chieftain from northern Norway was a real person who had actually come to Avaldsnes (see below on the chieftain's farm in Borg, erected in the 5th century and abandoned in the 10th century).

Saga literature was written down in Iceland from the 13th century, in a Christian context (Würth 2000). Older narrations were being drawn on, and there were recollections of Norway, from where most of the new settlers on Iceland came (see here the provenance of the settlers named in the 11th century Landnámabók; Rafnsson 2001). But how reliable are the details in sagas, for example with regards to the architecture in Avaldsnes? Are the details correct with a narrative core that was passed on orally for centuries before being written down? Or were the same elements described again and again, as stereotypes, possibly influenced by knowledge of existing royal architecture in Norway and, preferably, Bergen? (See an older synthesis on the royal stone architecture of the North in that time by Nissen Jaubert 1993.) This leads to the question of the historicity of the sagas more broadly: how trustworthy are the details given for the reported period of time? This issue, however, can only be dealt with by experts in saga analysis (Pesch 1996; Würth 2000; Nielssen 2003).

The evidential value of sagas for real architecture remains doubtful but, interestingly, what are mentioned as main buildings coincide with the nucleus of representative »*Pfalz*« architecture, as described in a classical paper by Gauert (1965): residential building, hall and church (see also Binding 1996; Zotz 2002) and, in addition, a royal farm must be considered. As a sidenote, Avaldsnes is not an isolated case, since there is a mention of similar buildings in Nidaros (Trondheim), again for the first half of the 11th century (Gauert 1968, using saga accounts one more time).

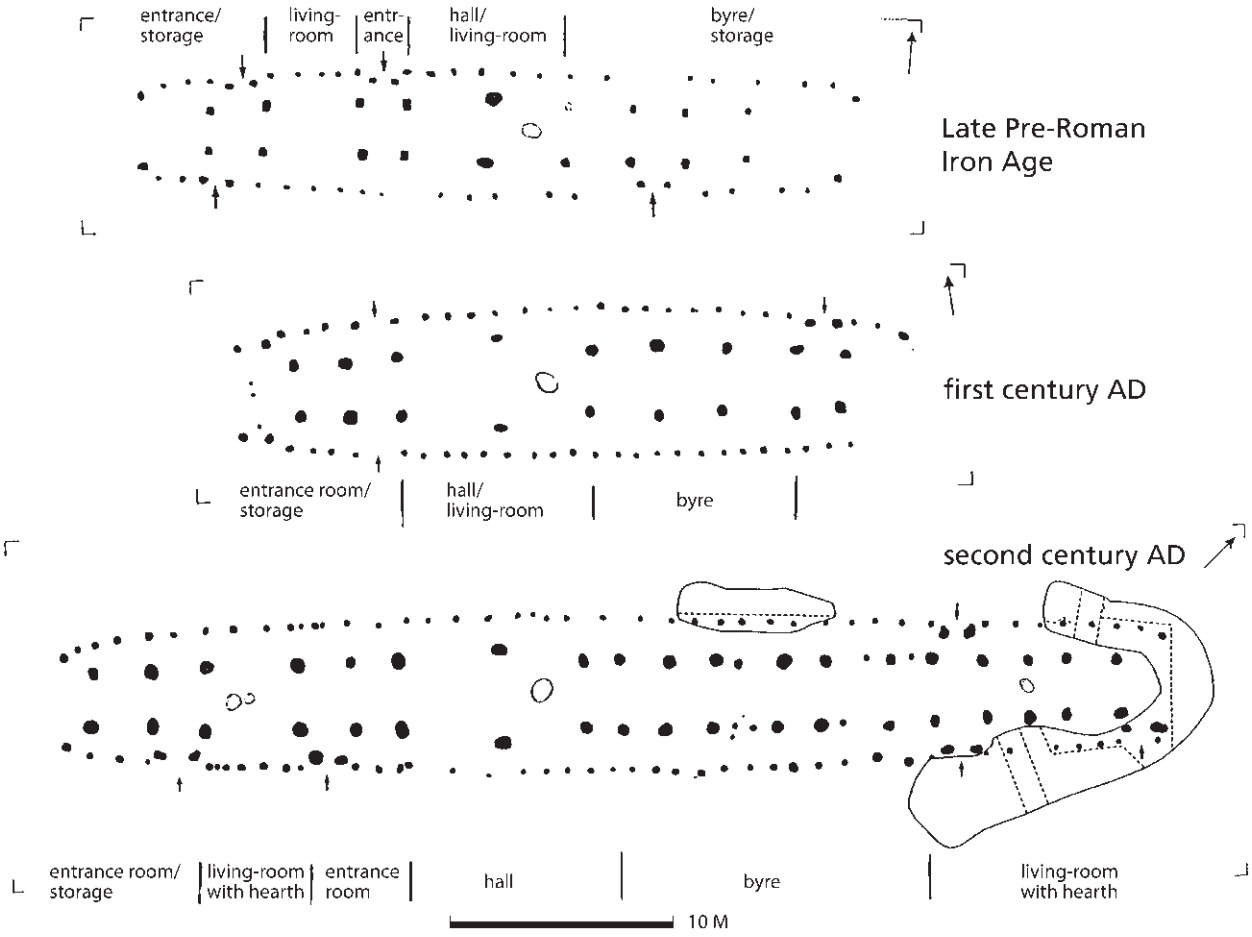

Fig. 7 Plans of three long houses in Forsand, southwestern Norway, which date to the late pre-Roman and early Roman Iron Age. They yielded the customary living section (west) and byre (east), but in these cases a central room was added that is notable in its construction; its one pair of posts is placed closer to the outer wall than in the rest of the building, and the distance to the regular pairs of posts is greater than usual. – (Plan after Løken 2001b, fig. 3).

In the end, most importantly, Gauert (1968, 294) expresses this opinion, which is worth highlighting in the context of the present paper: »However, it would be inappropriate to consider [...] ›Pfalzen‹ as model, as for similar economic and social structures similar solutions can be expected.«

The North Norwegian Seat of Power in Borg – a Peripheral Site with a Central Message about the Domestic Development of High-Status Architecture (T. Løken)

In the framework of the present paper, the interpretation of the chieftain's farm in Borg as put forward by T. Løken (2001b) is important but, in order to understand the argument, the prehistoric Forsand settlement site must first be introduced. This once lay at the mouth of the Lysefjord, c. 40 km to the southeast of Stavanger, and was situated in inner Rogaland (Ryfylke), southwestern Norway. Due to its strategic placement at two fjords that lead further inland and the amount of arable land, Forsand had an outstanding position for that part of inner Rogaland (Løken 1991).

In archaeological terms, Forsand is well-known for the use of mechanical excavators for extensive settlement-archaeological investigations and for parallel natural-scientific analysis (Løken at al. 1996 on the excavation technique and see also Løken 2020 in his monograph about the site). Based on phosphate measurements, the once settled area has been calculated to around 12 ha (550 m SSW-NNE to 250 m ESE-WNW), most of which were excavated in the main campaign from 1980–1990 (74,000 m²) and, following local development plans, in additional excavations in the years 1992, 1995 and 2007 (15,000 m²).

During the investigations, no less than 275 houses were found and, in the absence of chronologically well-defined finds, these were radiocarbon-dated by a series of organic samples (Løken 2020). The entire settlement was in existence from 1500/1400 BC (Bronze Age period II) to c. AD 600–700 (Merovingian period). This makes Forsand a true place of »deep history«, with nothing comparable in Norway, or in northern Europe on the whole.

The settlement had only 1–2 farms in the Bronze Age but grew to 5–6 farms in the pre-Roman era, 8–10 in the early Roman period and 12–13 in the late Roman Iron Age before the climax was reached in the Migration Period with 17 farms and their 30 houses, which could accomodate 150 persons and 260 animals (Løken 2020). Dwelling/byre houses were the main element throughout the entire period, and they increased in measurement over time, from 10–25 m in length in the Bronze and pre-Roman Iron Ages to 25–50 m in the Roman Iron Age and the Migration Period.

The emergence of a new house type in the late pre-Roman Iron Age deserves our attention (the special architecture of the Bronze Age is not considered). This had not only the customary living section (west) and byre (east) but a third central room (Løken 2001b; see house type 7 in Løken 2020). Its one pair of posts was placed closer to the long wall than was the case in the rest of the building, and the distance to the nearest pairs was also larger than usual in order to create a free space. Seven such buildings have been recorded, one or two at a time (**fig. 7**). The last in line of these buildings, in the very east of the settlement and dated to the end of the early and the beginning of the late Roman Iron Age, measured not less than 50 m × 7 m, with a living and other rooms to the west (15 m long), a middle room (10 m), a byre (15 m) for 34 cattle, which was also remarkable, and possibly another (subordinate) living room to the east (15 m). This building was by far the largest of its time in the settlement, and the neighbourhood has yielded the most substantial burial mounds in Forsand (round, almost 20 m across, and longitudinal, 30–35 m), and also the richest burial (man and woman) of the site, dated to the Migration Period (Hemdorff/Kjeldsen 1992; Gellein/Skjelstad 2001; see also Løken 2020).

In the late Roman Iron Age, a special farm was erected, this time situated in the west (Løken 2001b but with no mention in Løken 2020). It stood out by the number of houses: three parallel to each other. It had a main dwelling/byre house of the usual size (35 m × 7 m) and, typical for that period, a likewise ordinary workshop building (18 m × 4 m), but in the middle there was a ship-shaped building

Fig. 8 Reconstruction of the Migration Period so-called Guild Hall in Forsand, southwestern Norway. – (Photo © T. Tveit. The Museum of Archaeology, University of Stavanger, Norway).

(30 m × 9 m). It was outstanding by its width, its mere eight pairs of substantial posts, the absence of any internal subdivision, the two hearths in the area with the maximum distance between two opposite pairs of posts, and the largest cooking pit in Forsand, placed outside the house and with an outer diameter of 2.5 m. Remarkably, this building was reconstructed in Forsand, with an internal height of 6 m under the roof (!) (**figs 8-9**; cf. Bakkevig et al. 1999).

Interpretation of the findings at Forsand on a local level leads to the conclusion that the central third room (»internal hall«, providing free space), but much more so the ship-shaped house (a hall in its own right), served for gatherings of local persons, controlled by a leading family, but also for others who travelled to Forsand since it was a central place for parts of Ryfykle (see above) (Løken 2001b). The interpretation for Forsand has been likened to outstanding contemporary buildings from other sites in southwestern Norway (Rogaland) and Norway and, in a yet broader perspective, settlement sites in Jutland with indications for the emergence of leading families (chieftains) in the architecture (such as Hodde, for the late pre-Roman Iron Age; see Hvass 1985; 2000). The famous »Wurtensiedlung« in Feddersen Wierde (northern Germany), erected in the same period as Hodde, and its »Herrenhof«, which became more and more distinct before the settlement went out of use in the middle of the 1st millennium AD, are also worthy of attention (Haarnagel 1979; Schmid 1994; 2010). There is no room here, however, for any further elaboration.

The findings from the Forsand settlement have also been seen in the light of upper classes in burials as known from Rogaland but also the country in general (Løken 2001b). As regards the Iron Age (with the Bronze Age disregarded here), the earliest

Fig. 9 A look at the reconstructed Migration Period so-called Guild Hall in Forsand, southwestern Norway. – (Photo © S. Bakkevig. The Museum of Archaeology, University of Stavanger, Norway).

such burials occur in the late pre-Roman part but the source situation becomes increasingly dense until the Migration Period (Pilø 1989 and – classical – Myhre 1987; see also Reiersen 2017). Forsand, notably, was not among the areas of Norway that are known for the most outstanding burials (see above on Avaldsnes); rather, it had a middle position between the dominant areas along the coast and marginal ones further inland. All in all, only 50 burial mounds are known in Forsand, some with a Migration Period date and meagre furnishings (with the one aforementioned exception), whereas thousands of burials from the settlement population remain to be found. These were probably cremations, which have left little or rather no trace (Hemdorff/Kjeldsen 1992; Gellein/Skjelstad 2001; see also Løken 2020).

To sum up, Forsand yields evidence for the emergence of a leading family, with its own particular style of architecture, first houses with »internal halls« and then, ultimately, a hall of its own. This argument is strong for the last building with an »internal« hall (2nd to 3rd century AD), which stood out for its sheer size, placement (isolated in the east) and overall archaeological records (substantial burial mounds, richly furnished burial), whereas it seems to be weaker for the final phase. Only the leading family had a farm of three buildings, including a hall in its own right, yet their living quarters were of ordinary length, and this farm in the remote west was placed among others, with no associated burial mound(s) of exceptional quality.

The important thing here is the chieftain's seat in northern Norwegian Borg seen from the perspective of the Forsand investigation (Løken 2001b). The remains of the chieftain's farm on Vestvågoy (Lofoten Islands) in the far north were discovered in 1981, in the form of shallow, longitudinal earthen walls once placed to the outside of the building. Full excavation took place in the years 1986–1989 (see as final publication Stamsø Munch et al. 2003; on the chieftain's house see also Stamsø Munch 2007). With the early date of its field work in the 1980s, Borg marks the beginning of the modern northern European investigation of wooden halls or, rather, representative architecture (see above).

The elevated position of the Borg farm was probably chosen because it allowed a wide view of, and access to, a sheltered bay to the east (Johansen 1990). Two phases of the main house can be distinguished, as in Forsand, with three major rooms; the living area to the west (with hearth), an inner room with a reduced set of huge posts in the middle (substantial hearth), and a considerable byre to the east (Herschend/Mikkelsen 2003; Stamsø Munch 2007). The first house, erected in the 5th century, had inner measurements of 64 m × 7–8 m while the second one, in use from the 7th to the 10th centuries, amounted to not less than 80 m × 7/9.5 m (inner measurements). In the latter case, the living area was around 20 m long, the entrance room 4 m, the central hall 15 m, a storage room 10 m, and the byre around 33 m which, as in Forsand, indicates a considerable number of animals kept in the house. As a matter of fact, this later house has been rebuilt on location, with a height of 8 m under the roof (!) (**fig. 10**; cf. Jakhelln 2003).

In contrast to the respective houses with internal halls and the farm with a hall in its own right in Forsand, Borg has yielded outstanding objects in its two major buildings that make it a true chieftain's farm. The most notable find of the early phase is a horse-mount of gilded bronze that dates back to the late 6th or 7th century and has parallels in finds from Scandinavian and continental petty kings' graves (Stamsø Munch 2003a). As regards the younger phase, the finds from the inner hall need particular attention. This includes fragments of glass vessels of foreign origin, but also so-called Tatinger Ware (Holand 2003),

Fig. 10 Reconstruction of the younger phase (7th–10th cent. AD) of the magnate's seat in Borg on the Lofoten Islands, northern Norway. More than 80 m long. – (Photo © Lofotr Viking Museum, K. O. Storvik).

as well as so-called guldgubber: tiny gold-foil figures dating to the period from the 6th to the 8th centuries, whose depictions – one or two humans, rarely animals – are discussed regarding their meaning and function (for the finds from Borg see Stamsø Munch 2003b; on the find group as such see Pesch/Helmbrecht 2019). Often these figures are found in special houses, small hall buildings in fact, which stand out in other respects, too, and are interpreted as »ceremonial buildings« (see above on Uppåkra, but also Herschend 1993 in his definition of halls). Thus, the mentioned finds from the inner hall in Borg could be interpreted in terms of gatherings (see the glass vessels) and religious deeds (see the »guldgubber«), which also finds support in the descriptions of halls in Old Norse saga literature (Meulengracht Sørensen 2003).

Taken as a whole, the chieftain's house in Borg can be understood as a reflection of a »three-in-one-solution«, with the dwelling house and hall for both worldly and otherworldly affairs under one roof. It is in Borg and not in Forsand that prominent finds have come to light in the inner hall. The building in Borg, and here we have the argument by T. Løken (2001b), reflects the early stage of outstanding architecture in Forsand, with the hall still being part of the chieftain's house. The most accentuated and, at the same time, latest building of that kind in Forsand belongs to the end of the early and the beginning of the late Roman Iron Age, and with its length of 50 m (outer) it comes close to the early Borg farm with 64 m (inner measurement). The next stage in development, the hall as a building in its own right, can only be found in Forsand where it was erected in the late Roman Iron Age. The site in northern Norway could be understood as an expression of a conservative attitude towards house building that kept to the old, traditional »three-in-one-type«, whereas house styles progressed in Forsand and elsewhere in the more southern parts of Scandinavia. The Borg and Forsand case should under no circumstances be underestimated – we can see here the domestic development of a representative architecture with its roots back in the pre-Roman Iron Age of Forsand, and it is in Borg where we see it connected with a chieftain, who was much higher in social standing than the leading family of Forsand.

As a side note, it has been argued that Borg was only a second-class place in the far north of Norway (Johansen 1989; 1990; 2003). Tjøtta, Bø/Steigen and Bjarkøy had a larger amount of arable land, and they were situated more strategically in relation to the

seafaring route, which was most important for transport and communication along the western coast of Norway. They have a more pronounced archaeological heritage (large burial mounds, richly furnished burials, depositions, but also large shiphouses for the sheltering of vessels, and so on) and are also named as chieftain's seats in the saga literature (for the saga accounts see Nielssen 2003). In more recent research, the Iron Age society of the far north has been understood as being much less power-centered than hitherto thought, with the emergence of chieftains and a process of centralisation of power only in the later part of the Iron Age (Storli 2000; 2001; 2006; 2007; 2010). In Borg, however, a chieftain was already in place in the Migration Period, and there was local continuity up to the late Viking Age.

Final Considerations

In the framework of the present paper, four articles have been highlighted, each with an angle of its own on, respectively, Northwest-Slavic (Starigard/Oldenburg) and northern European (Tissø, Avaldsnes and Borg) seats of power and their representative architecture. As a matter of fact, all four can be brought into one line of argument.

I. Gabriel's (1986) analysis on Starigard/Oldenburg is thought provoking and has the broadest range. We know for a fact that Northwest-Slavic delegations did actually see Frankish royal (imperial) architecture. This is why the question of whether an *imitatio imperii* took place in Starigard/Oldenburg is legitimate. In the end, however, it turns out to be impossible to prove any real influence on local representative architecture but, as Gabriel also argues, the question of imitation should be approached more broadly and should include a look at courtly tableware, courtly riding and – as a new aspect that became apparent in later times – courtly falconry.

L. Jørgensen (2002) has made an instructive comparison between the structural-functional aspects of Aachen and Tissø, which has highlighted striking similarities, foremost the existence of halls and cult houses. The question of the residential building, however, is not yet clarified, neither for Tissø nor – surprisingly – for Aachen. Notably, there was no attempt made to deduce the Tissø architecture from Aachen, for a simple reason – the findings from Zealand are pre-Carolingian in their origin.

A. Gauert (1968), the well-known German »*Pfalz*« expert, had an interesting and little-known look at Viking-Age and early Medieval Norwegian royal seats. His brief (too brief) reference to saga accounts reveals the hall and the church as main buildings, but one may also point towards a third one: the actual residence. This relates to Avaldsnes but also Nidaros (Trondheim) in the early 11th century. Whether saga literature really provides reliable information about the actual architecture of royal seats in early 11th century Norway is open to debate. However, what is recorded is in line with the classical three representative buildings of Frankish and post-Frankish sites: residential building, hall and church (classical: Gauert 1965; more recently Binding 1996 and Zotz 2002). Ultimately, A. Gauert has come to the remarkable conclusion that similar developments in society lead to similar architectural solutions, and thus there was no influence from the south, only domestic development.

T. Løken (2001b), in his analysis of Forsand and Borg, provides the key to seeing the representative architecture of Norway (and the North more broadly) as a development of its own. As can be shown, rich burials in parts of the Bronze and Iron Ages in Norway more broadly had a parallel in the outstanding architecture in southwest Norwegian Forsand. We can see a gradual development; it began with usual farm houses which had living quarters and a byre at each end (up to the pre-Roman Iron Age; the Bronze Age is disregarded), then came larger buildings with a »hall-like« middle section (late pre-Roman to late early Roman Iron Age) and, finally, separate buildings were erected for living and assembly (from the 3rd century AD onwards; see above for the same dating of representative architecture in Gudme/Lundeborg and Uppåkra). In this respect, a reference is made to the well-known chieftain's house in Borg with its dating from the 5th century to the 10th century. It still had under one roof the living quarters of a chieftain (west), an extensive byre (east) and a central internal hall for assemblies, probably used in two ways: secularly for the get-togethers of retinues but also religiously, as indicated by the »guldgubber«. Taken together, Forsand and Borg point towards a domestic development of representative architecture; while Borg is conservative in its maintaining of the »three-in-one-solution« in the northern periphery, further to the south this had given way to separate buildings reserved for secular gatherings and cult (as far back as the 3rd century AD; see above), whereas it would seem that the question of living quarters has not yet been clarified (as is also the case in Aachen).

In conclusion, with regard to Northwest-Slavic and Scandinavian courtly culture and a potential external influence on this, attention should not be paid so much to actual architecture but perhaps to other aspects: courtly feasting using proper tableware, courtly riding and courtly falconry. In the case of Starigard/Oldenburg, one could suggest the production of High Quality Oldenburgian Pottery (»Oldenburger Prachtkeramik«) and spurs, following the Frankish example, and this could also include the knowledge and practice of falconry.

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