

IRON AGE BUILDING TRADITIONS IN EASTERN NORWAY: REGIONS AND LANDSCAPES

LARS ERIK GJERPE

*Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo
l.e.gjerpe@khm.uio.no*

ABSTRACT

Iron Age building traditions in Eastern Norway show clear regional and local characteristics, to the extent that it is difficult to talk about a unified Eastern Norwegian building tradition. At the same time, these building traditions also share clear similarities with contemporary, general Scandinavian building trends. The most common building type was the three-aisled building with internal support posts dug into the ground, but there were also four-post structures as well as two-aisled buildings. There are clear differences between building traditions in the southern and northern areas of Eastern Norway. In northern Eastern Norway, all identified/registered building entrances belong to Herschend's central Scandinavian type, and 80% of the three-aisled buildings are oriented east-west. In southern Eastern Norway, building entrances of both central and southern Scandinavian type appear, and 80% of the buildings are oriented approximately north-south. This distinction is evident throughout the Iron Age. In both regions, buildings whose orientations differ from the predominant orientation seen in their respective regions are on average shorter than those with the predominant orientation. Two-aisled and four-post buildings are absent from northern Eastern Norway, highlighting the existence of regional differences. There are also some indications of local buildings traditions. These, however, are difficult to clearly define as relatively few buildings from each area and each period have been found

INTRODUCTION

This article presents an overview of local and regional building traditions from Eastern Norway in the Iron Age (500 BC–AD 1030). Three-aisled houses with internal, roof support posts dug into the subsoil were the most common house type throughout the entirety of the Early Iron Age and into the Late Iron Age both in Eastern Norway and Scandinavia in general;

these seem to have been gradually replaced by other building types in the Viking Age or Early Medieval Period (Pedersen and Widgren 1999; Myhre 2002; Øye 2002; Jensen 2004, 2006, 2009; Martens 2009; Eriksen 2015). A general analysis of building traditions would therefore suggest that Eastern Norway was an integrated part of the larger Scandinavian world. There is significant geographic variation in

building styles within Eastern Norway, such that a unified Eastern Norwegian building style, distinct from more general Norwegian or Scandinavian trends, cannot be demonstrated. Instead, I will show that building traditions in Eastern Norway can be divided into two regions, which can, in turn, be divided into various landscapes each with local building traditions.

The data set is limited to buildings associated with agriculture, and is initially comprised of c. 300 examples from an area bordered by Sweden to the south and east, Skiensfjord to the west, and the northern border of Oppland (Table 1, Fig. 1)¹. The modern county borders are used to define individual analytical geographic units for practical purposes only. It is not intended to imply that these borders are in any way reflective of Iron Age political divisions. The variables used to identify different building traditions are the placement of the entrance, the orientation of the building and the architectonic design of the gable, as indicated by any offset gable-posts. Although the purpose of this article is, first and foremost, to describe geographic variation in building traditions, it must be emphasized that the house was not merely a building, but a central social institution, at the same time both mirroring and shaping society (Hastrup 1990; Carsten og Hugh-Jones 1995; Norr 1996; Gerritsen 2003: 31 Webley 2008; Herschend 2009; Eriksen 2015; Gjerpe in prep.;).

Recently, Marianne Hem Eriksen (2015) published an overview of Late Iron Age buildings in Norway. There is, however, no typology or general overview of Iron Age building types from Eastern Norway (Martens 2007; Gjerpe 2016). Furthermore, very few diagnostic artefacts from secure contexts within houses have been found. The dating of houses thus relies, to a great extent, on radiocarbon dating

and the chronological resolution is necessarily rough. Radiocarbon dates from c. 2450 BP always calibrate to the period 800–400 BC (Becker 1993; van der Plicht 2005). In other words, datings from this period are not precise, and I have chosen to assign all houses with datings within the period 800–1 BC to the Pre-Roman Iron Age. The radiocarbon calibration curve is also flat at the transition between the Roman Period and the Migration Period, as well as for the periods AD 700–930 and AD 1050–1200. The relatively narrow plateau at the Roman–Migration Period transition leads to an artificial decrease in the number of Roman Period datings and a corresponding artificial increase in those from the Migration Period. I have therefore chosen to treat the transition between the Roman and Migration periods as its own period. The following divisions will be used in this study: Pre-Roman Iron Age (PRIA, c. 500–1 BC) Roman Period (RP, c. AD 1–400), Roman–Migration Period transition (RP–MiP, c. AD 350–450), Migration Period (MiP, c. AD 400–550), Merovingian Period (MeP, AD 550–800) and Viking Period (VP, AD 800–1030). I have attempted to identify the construction phase of the buildings rather than their occupation phases, and the datings of individual houses according to my overall judgment of radiocarbon dating results, artefact finds and stratigraphic relationships.

SOURCE CRITICISM: BIASES IN THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD

The buildings are divided into four groups according to what I have termed the “Diagnostic degree”. The diagnostic degree is an overall assessment a structure’s ability to provide information about building traditions, based on documented remains of roof support structures, walls, hearths, entrances as well as datings (Gjerpe 2008). The assessment is based on the plan drawings. Ideally, the preservation level should be estimated on the basis of each building’s original

1 This material will be presented more thoroughly in my doctoral thesis, currently in progress.

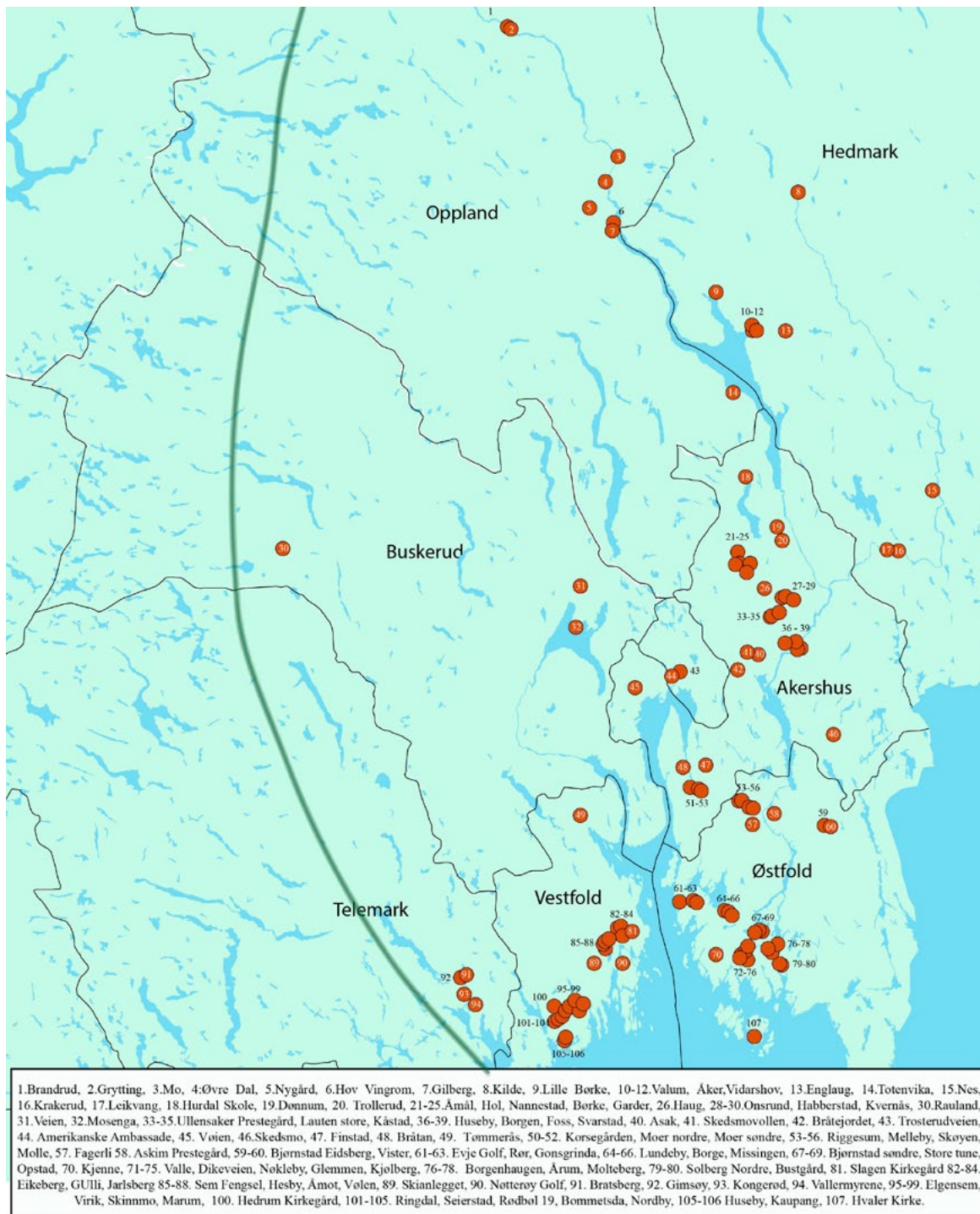


Figure 1. Map of the study area with sites of house finds labelled.

construction, but this is not possible, for obvious reasons. The diagnostic degree is rated on a scale from 1 to 4. 1 indicates that only parts or fragments of the house has been identified or that the dating is unsecure. These houses can only be used to a limited extent as evidence of building techniques, but can be useful for more precisely defining the settlement's geographical extent and period of occupation. They are not included in the statistical analyses presented in this article. Houses assigned to Group 2 are those where the basic features of the roof support structure have been identified, for example whether the building is a two- or three aisled construction; other characteristics, such as length or width, are occasionally identified. The dates for these houses are generally relatively secure, although not to the degree of Group 3 houses. In Group 3, the length, width and roof support structure have been identified, and the dates are relatively secure. The final group, 4, indicates that the length, width, entrance, fireplace and roof support structure have been defined, and the building well dated. These assessments can easily be

criticized for being subjective, but they do provide a means of differentiating between buildings that can further our understanding of building techniques/traditions, and those which merely help us to define the extent of a settlement. Furthermore, a number of buildings cannot be assigned to a specific period and must be generally dated to the Iron Age, or Early Iron Age. These only appear in the analysis to a limited extent.

The archaeological evidence is, with few exceptions, found by machine topsoil stripping performed after 1990. Espen Uleberg (1990a; 1990b) was the first archaeologist in Eastern Norway to identify an Iron Age house using this method (Østmo 1991; Martens 2007; Gjerpe 2016). The houses are generally from rescue/development-initiated excavations. The geographical distribution therefore does not necessarily reflect the reality of Iron Age settlement. Rather, it reflects the current trends in infrastructure development. It appears that transport development has been a major factor in the identification of houses (Berg 1997; Helliksen 1997; Bårdseth 2008; Gjerpe

Period	Total	Akershus	Buskerud	Hedmark	Oppland	Oslo	Østfold	Telemark	Vestfold
PRIA	77	12	1	2	1	2	46	3	10
RP	63	22	3	6	8		16	1	7
RP-MiP	41	14	1		2		7	3	14
MiP	36	12		6	2		7		9
MeP	18	5		4	2		3		4
VP	6	2			1		1		2
VP-MP	5	1	1	1	2				
IA	64	28	1	4	1		13	5	12
IA?	1							1	
Total	311	96	7	23	19	2	93	13	58

Table 1. Total numbers of buildings from Eastern Norway, irrespective of construction type, divided by county and date. PRIA=Pre-Roman Iron Age, RP=Roman Period, MiP=Migration Period, MeP=Merovingian Period, VP=Viking Period, MP=Medieval Period, IA=Iron Age, ?=Unsecure dating.

2008; 2013; Simonsen and Martens 2008). This is obviously due not only to the fact that much of this development focuses on large areas of farmland, but also that the development is relatively inflexible. Motorways will not be diverted for the sake of preserving a prehistoric settlement site. At the same time, such development has great economic consequences, and thus developers accept the cost of excavation. The overall lack of Iron Age buildings from Telemark, Oppland and Buskerud can be most readily explained by the lack of modern development on farmland in these areas after 1990, not their lack of Iron Age settlement. This point is highlighted by the fact the first traces of three-aisled buildings in Oppland, an area rich in other types of Iron Age evidence, were only recently identified during work on the E6 road project (Gundersen 2016).

The sheer number of grave monuments from the Late Iron Age and Viking Period suggests that most of Eastern Norway was inhabited (Løken 1974; Gudesen 1980; Forseth 1993; 2003; Stylegar 2004). And yet, relatively few Late Iron Age buildings have been found (Table 1, Eriksen 2015). This may reflect a combination of current development conditions and the actual Iron Age settlement pattern. Houses without support posts dug into the subsoil will not be identified by machine topsoil stripping, and it may be that this is the case for a large portion of the houses in the Viking Age. If the Viking farmsteads are located under the modern farmsteads they will similarly not be found, as these areas are rarely excavated and prolonged activity on these sites will make it difficult to identify whatever traces do remain.

A SHORT INTRODUCTION TO THE BUILDINGS

The building evidence is spread unevenly across time and space (Table 1). As mentioned, this may be attributed, to a great extent to the nature of the source material, but may also reflect conditions

in pre-history. The greatest number of buildings are found, by far, in Akershus (96) Østfold (93) and Vestfold (58), with only 64 total in Hedmark, Oppland, Buskerud and the southeastern part of Telemark. The material is, as previously described, largely collected through development-initiated excavations since 1990, and particularly after 2000. The buildings are therefore mainly found in areas with high development activity, particularly in connection with major infrastructure developments in Østfold, Vestfold and Akershus.

The criteria for arable land was different in the Iron Age than today, yet I believe the relationship between the number of houses and the current farmed area strongly supports the suggestion that the buildings from Vestfold, Akershus and Østfold are best represented, in addition to being the most frequent (Table 2). It is, perhaps, wrong to oversell the buildings in Vestfold as well represented, with only one building examined for every seven square kilometers of farmland. Nevertheless, the situation is better than for the other counties. Buildings in Buskerud, where only one building is excavated for every 74 square kilometers of farmland, are particularly poorly represented (Table 2).

Since most buildings are found through machine topsoil stripping of arable land, only features extending or buried beneath the plow-depth are recovered. Any buildings without such elements are therefore not represented. Buildings can generally be divided into three groups based on the structure. The 225 three-aisled houses, characterized by the fact that the roof is supported by two rows of posts dug into the subsoil, are found in all periods and all areas, and were, as mentioned, the dominant house type. It is primarily this building type which is used to illustrate regional variations in construction practices. Eleven two-aisled buildings, characterized by a single row of internal roof support posts, have been found in Østfold and Akershus and are, with one exception, all

from the EIA. It is uncertain whether this building type functioned as a dwelling. Twenty-nine four-post structures, probably used for storage, have also been investigated. Only 15 of these are dated to the period in question all of which, apart from one MeP construction, are from the EIA. Most of these are found in Akershus, Vestfold and Østfold, while one is found in Oslo and one in Telemark. A group of 46 buildings do not fit into any of these categories, either because they are constructed in other ways, or because the method of construction cannot be adequately determined. These buildings will be used infrequently in the analyses of building techniques presented here. Pit-houses are excluded from the study.

As mentioned, the buildings are not distributed evenly across periods or counties (Table 1). It is worth noting that as many as 46 of the 77 PRIA buildings are from Østfold. Otherwise, Akershus distinguishes itself with 98 of the 311 surveyed buildings. Approximately one-third of the dated houses in Oppland are from the LIA, a high percentage, and roughly ten percent of the total number of LIA buildings in the study area. Nearly 90 percent of the buildings from Eastern Norway are thus from Pre-Roman Iron Age, Roman Period and Migration Period. Granted, the EIA (500 BC–AD 550) is more than twice as long as the LIA (AD 550–1030), but there are far more buildings per century in the EIA (around 20 per century) than in the LIA (roughly 5 per century).

SOUTHERN OR MID-SCANDINAVIAN BUILDING TRADITIONS IN EASTERN NORWAY

Frands Herschend (2009: Fig. 1a-c) identifies two different building traditions in Roman and Migration Period Denmark, parts of southern Sweden and southern Norway. The most striking difference between the two building types is the location of the entrances. In the southern Scandinavian house,

the entrance room is located between the byre and the living space, with entrances on both long sides. The entrance room is approximately centrally placed in the house, depending on the relative size of byre and living quarters. Viewed from one end to the other, the rooms are ordered living space-entrance room-byre. The mid-Scandinavian house, however, has two entrance rooms, one in the byre and one in the living space. These entrance rooms are located at opposite ends of the house, in some cases with a small room or storage between the entrance room and the short end of the house. The byre and living space are adjacent to each other, with no entrance room in between. Herschend (2009: 13-15, Fig. 11a-c, note 11) assumes that the outer Oslofjord area, Østfold and Vestfold built in the southern Scandinavian tradition, while Hedmark and Buskerud followed the mid-Scandinavian tradition. He stressed, however, that there is little material and the data set under constant development.

In the material from Eastern Norway, byres and living spaces are rarely identified, so my division between southern and mid-Scandinavian building techniques takes the placement of the entrance as a starting point. Unlike Herschend, I am looking at buildings from the entire Iron Age, not merely from the Roman or Migration periods. Entrances that can be characterized as southern or mid-Scandinavian were identified in 77 buildings (Table 3, Fig. 2). They have roughly the same chronological and geographic distribution as the identified and dated three-aisled houses, with the exception of the eight Merovingian and Viking Period houses from Akershus, none of which have identified entrances. Therefore, there is reason to believe that the houses with identified entrances provide a fairly representative picture. Altogether I find 31 of Herschend's southern Scandinavian house types with common entrance rooms for humans and animals, and 46 of the mid-Scandinavian house types with separate

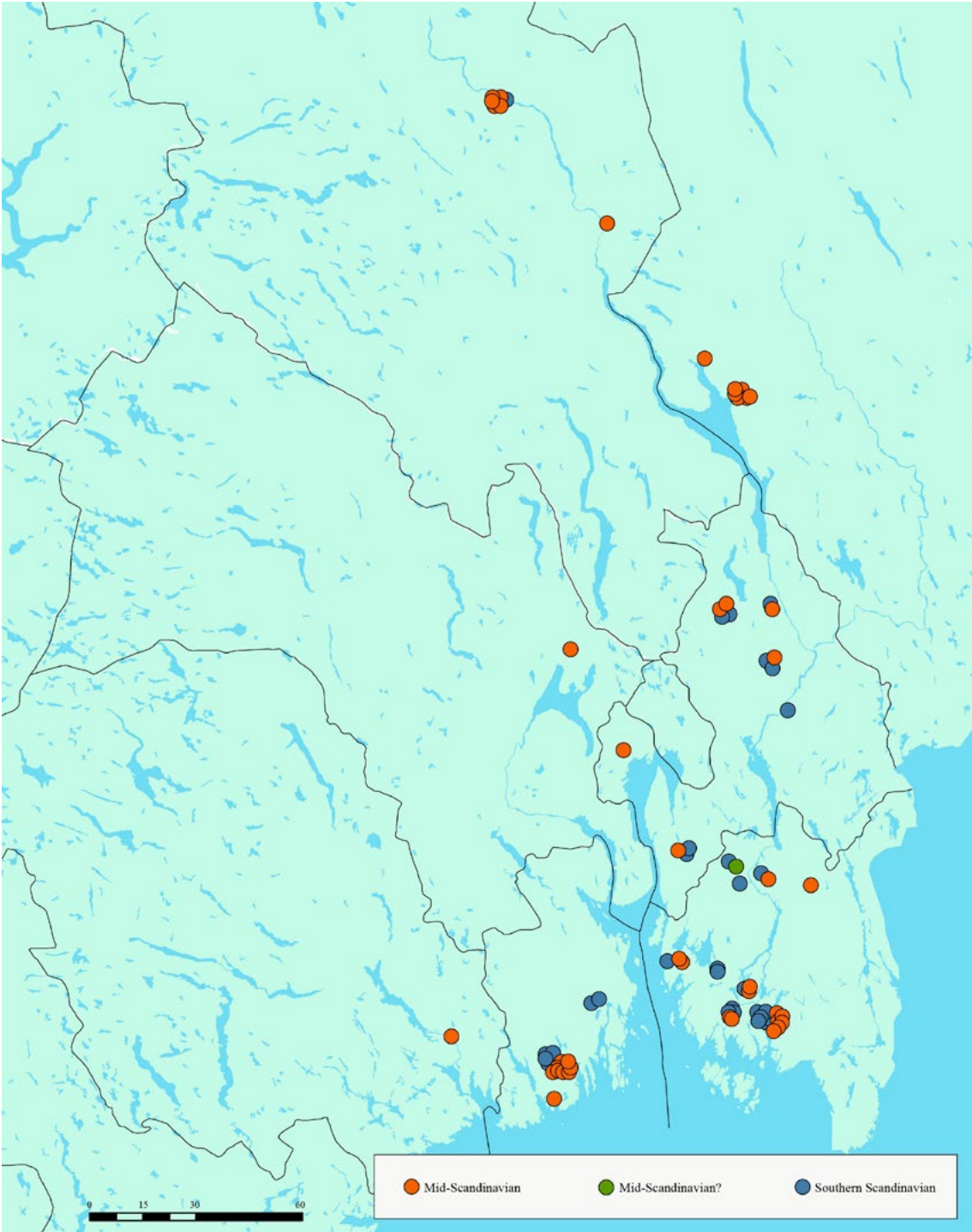


Figure 2. Distribution of houses with southern and mid-Scandinavian entrances.

County	Mid-Scandinavian	Southern Scandinavian
Hedmark	7	
Oppland	6	1
Akershus	6	8
Østfold	15	16
Vestfold	10	6
Telemark	1	
Buskerud	1	
Oslo		
Total	46	31

Table 3. Number of southern and mid-Scandinavian buildings divided by county.

4 a)

Period	Total	Akershus	Østfold	Vestfold	Buskerud	Hedmark	Oppland	Telemark
PRIA	14	1	12	1				
RP-MiP	4	1	1	1			1	
RP	5	4	1					
MiP	4	2		2				
MeP	2		1	1				
VP	1			1				
IA	1		1					
Total	31	8	16	6			1	

4 b)

Period	Total	Akershus	Østfold	Vestfold	Buskerud	Hedmark	Oppland	Telemark
PRIA	8	1	7					
RP	13	2	4	1	1	2	3	
RP-MiP	6	1	1	3			1	
MiP	12	2	2	4		2	2	
MeP	4			1		3		
VP	1		1					
IA	2			1				1
Total	46	6	15	10	1	7	6	1

Table 4. Number of houses with southern Scandinavian (a) and mid-Scandinavian (b) entrance types divided by county and period.

County	Mid-Scandinavian	Southern Scandinavian
Hedmark	27	-
Oppland	24	14
Akershus	28	15
Østfold	21	17
Vestfold	24	28
Telemark	-	-
Buskerud	45	-
Oslo	-	-

Table 5. Average length of houses with southern and mid-Scandinavian entrances dated to the Iron Age and assigned to diagnostic degree 2 or higher, divided by county.

entrance rooms for humans and animals (for an overview of entrances in LIA buildings in Norway, see Eriksen 2015). There appears to be a pattern in the spatial distribution of the entrance types. The southern Scandinavian type occurs in all periods, but only in Østfold, Vestfold and Akershus, with one possible exception (Table 4a), a building with a weakly identified entrance in Oppland. It is thus possible that the boundary between mid- and southern Scandinavian house types, such as Herschend defines them, runs between Hedmark, Oppland and Buskerud on the one side, and Vestfold, Østfold and Akershus on the other. The absence of southern Scandinavian entrances in Buskerud, however, will not be accorded too much weight, since there is only one house with an identified entrance in this area. The distribution of houses with southern Scandinavian entrances coincides with that of four-post structures, supporting the idea that there is a distinction between the two building traditions. Two-aisled buildings exist in some sections of the southern Scandinavian distribution area, but not in the mid-Scandinavian area. The mid-Scandinavian type occurs in all periods and throughout the study area (Table 4b), but is limited to Østfold during the Pre-Roman Iron Age (with the possible exception of a poorly identified houses that can be from

Pre-Roman Iron Age in Akershus). Thus, there does not seem to be any pattern in the spatial distribution of the mid-Scandinavian houses. Accordingly, it is the absence of southern Scandinavian entrances more than the presence of the mid-Scandinavian type that defines the mid-Scandinavian area. The houses with mid-Scandinavian entrances are generally longer than those with southern Scandinavian entrances (Table 5, note that only well-identified and dated buildings are included, 69 of the 77 buildings with southern or mid-Scandinavian entrances). However, two southern Scandinavian houses each over 40 meters long suggest that house length and entrances are not completely correlated. Entrance types can therefore indicate that there are two regional building traditions in Eastern Norway, where the mid-Scandinavian type predominates in the north Eastern Norway, while the mid- and southern Scandinavian types are used interchangeably in the south. It is also interesting that while Herschend originally identified this distinction in the Roman and Migration periods, in Eastern Norway it can also be seen in the Late Iron Age and probably in the Pre-Roman Iron Age.

BUILDING ORIENTATION

To investigate further whether the distinction between the two regions can be substantiated, I

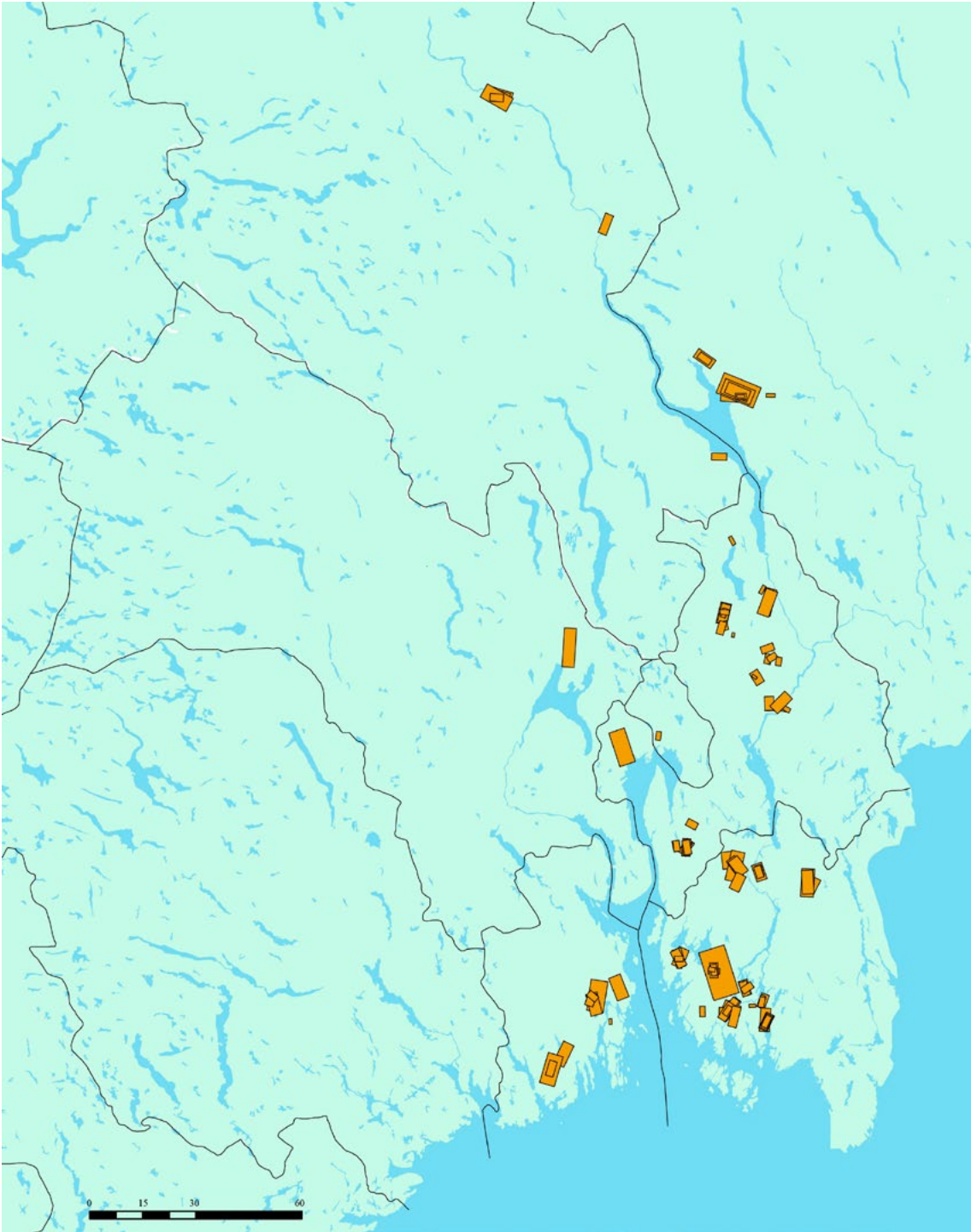


Figure 3. Map displaying the length and orientation of the houses.

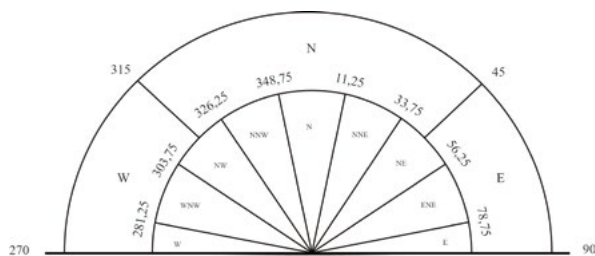


Figure 4. Basis for identifying the houses' general (gray) or more precise (black) orientation. Numbers presented are degrees.

will consider both the orientation and the length of the houses (Fig. 3). Three different ways to define a building's orientation are used in this work, each of varying precision and all based on the building's northernmost end (Fig. 4). In absolute degrees (0-360), the orientations in the data set vary from 270 to 90 degrees. No attempt has been made to identify living spaces or byres. There are three main groups of house orientations, either North (315-45 degrees), East (45-90 degrees) and West (270-315 degrees). These are further divided into eight different orientations (Fig. 4). Providing the orientations at varying levels of precision allows the data to be comparable with other sites, often with less precise measurements, while still maintaining the appropriate level of precision (Lindström 1997: 112).

Securely dated, well-defined three-aisle buildings are aligned on different orientations (Table 6, Figs. 5 and 6). In Oppland and Hedmark, E-W is the dominant orientation, while in Østfold, Vestfold, Akershus and Buskerud N-S dominates. We thus have two areas each with a different dominant orientation, each of which corresponds well, although not perfectly, to the two regions where mid-Scandinavian entrances and a mixture of mid- and southern Scandinavian entrances dominate. The houses in Buskerud stand out in that N-S is the dominant orientation, while the only house with identified entrances in this area

is of the mid- Scandinavian type. If, in future surveys, a building with southern Scandinavian entrances is found, something I believe may happen, Buskerud will be assigned to the southern region, where both southern and mid-Scandinavian entrances are used.

In both regions, there are exceptions to the dominant orientations. In Østfold, Vestfold, Akershus and Buskerud this includes 26 of 125 houses. All of these, apart from 4 examples, are between 7 and 18 meters long, and are on average shorter than the other houses (Figs. 7 and 8). The longest houses with divergent orientation differ slightly from the other E-W houses. The longest house, Borgen 1 (27.5 m) is aligned at 47°, only two degrees away the limit of the N-S group. Two other houses, Dikeveien 2 and Glemmen 2, both date to the Bronze Age-Pre-Roman Iron Age transition, and may be from the Bronze Age. If so, it makes it even clearer that houses with an E-W orientation in the area of a dominant N-S orientation are shorter than those with the N-S orientation. Furthermore, two houses in Akershus with divergent orientation and length of 18 meters can distort the picture somewhat, but these buildings are not securely identified and are possibly composed of several buildings. In other words, it is primarily, perhaps entirely, short houses that have a divergent orientation in southern Eastern Norway.

In Oppland and Hedmark a majority of the buildings are oriented E-W, but 5 of the 26 houses are oriented N-S. The data set is small, but in the periods where both orientations are present the N-S oriented houses are the shortest. The average length of E-W oriented houses is 23 meters and the N-S oriented houses 13 meters (Fig. 5). Four of the N-S oriented houses are between 5 and 18 m long, with one longer, 23.5 m example. The relationship between length and orientation can thus help to strengthen the assertion that there are two regional building traditions in Eastern Norway, with a clear distinction between the northern and the

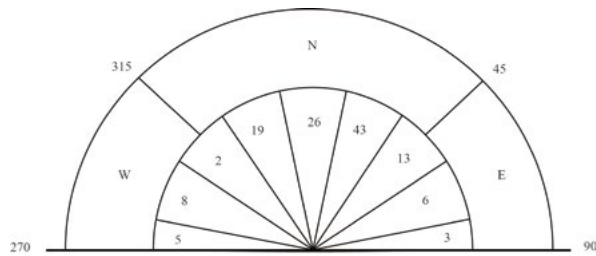


Figure 5. Securely dated three-aisled buildings from Vestfold, Akershus, Østfold, Buskerud and Telemark with a diagnostic degree of 2 or higher, divided by precise orientation.

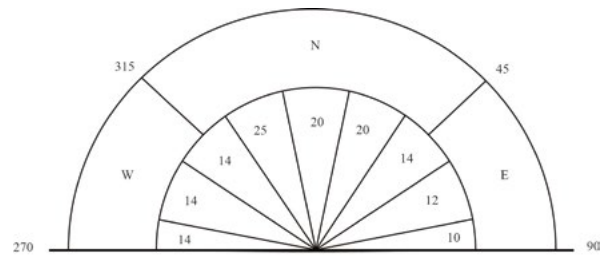


Figure 7. Average length of three-aisled buildings from Østfold, Vestfold, Akershus, Buskerud and Telemark with diagnostic degree of 2 or higher, divided by precise orientation.

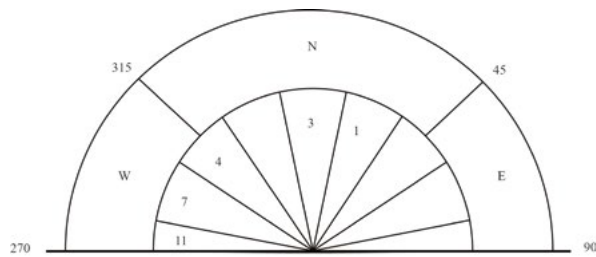


Figure 6. Securely dated three-aisled buildings from Oppland and Hedmark with diagnostic degree of 2 or higher, divided by precise orientation.

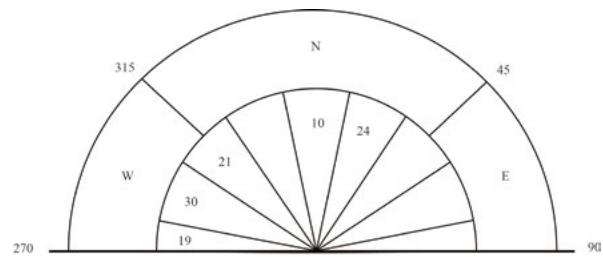


Figure 8. Average length of three-aisled buildings from Oppland and Hedmark with diagnostic degree of 2 or higher, divided by precise orientation.

	Hedmark and Oppland	Østfold, Vestfold and Akershus
	Nr.	Nr.
E-W	21	26
N-S	5	99

Table 6. Securely dated three-aisled buildings with a diagnostic degree 2 or higher, divided by general orientation.

southern areas of this region. The houses in Oppland and Hedmark are mainly oriented E-W and have exclusively mid-Scandinavian entrances. Houses in Oslo, Akershus and Østfold are mainly oriented N-S and have both southern and mid-Scandinavian entrances. The few houses from Buskerud share a N-S orientation those in the southern Scandinavian

area, however the only house with clearly identified entrances belongs to the mid-Scandinavian group.

OFFSET GABLE-POSTS AND OTHER LOCAL VARIANTS

The orientations and entrances of three-aisled houses demonstrate that Eastern Norway has had two

overarching and differing regional building traditions. I will now consider whether these two regions each consisted of minor landscapes with local variations in building traditions. The use of offset gable-posts is one example of local variations in building techniques. A small percentage of the houses in Østfold show offset gable-posts, and the feature does not occur later than the Roman-Migration Period transition. In Oppland and Hedmark, there is a large percentage of houses with offset gable-posts from Roman Period to the Viking Period. There are no clearly identified houses older than the Roman Period in these counties, and thus the absence of this feature during these earlier periods cannot be given much weight. However, that offset gable-posts do not appear later than the Roman-Migration Period transition in Østfold may be significant.

In Akershus and Vestfold, offset gable-posts also appear in the LIA, in spite of the few houses from the period. Two-aisled buildings from the Iron Age are only found in Østfold and Akershus. As mentioned earlier, there is great variation in the number of houses identified, the counties they have been identified in, and the periods to which they date. For instance, Pre-Roman Iron Age Østfold stands out as having a high number of houses. A total of 46 buildings date to this period, while only 16 date to the Roman period. In the other counties, there are either more buildings from the Roman Period than from the Pre-Roman Iron Age, or the differences are small. It is difficult to imagine that modern development or archaeological research in Østfold has somehow preferentially affected areas of Pre-Roman Iron Age settlement in comparison to areas of Roman Period settlement. Therefore, this unequal distribution reflects settlement patterns in prehistory. The numerous Pre-Roman Iron Age houses as well as the use of offset gable-posts in the Pre-Roman Iron Age and Roman Period distinguishes Østfold from the other counties. Furthermore, it is only in

Østfold and Akershus that two-aisled buildings are known. It can thus be inferred that Østfold, and perhaps Akershus as well, had its/their own unique building tradition, at least in the Early Iron Age.

REGIONS AND LANDSCAPES

Eastern Norway can thus be divided into northern and southern regions, of which the latter can be divided into several landscape (Fig. 9). There appears to be a marked distinction between the northern region, consisting of Oppland and Hedmark, and the southern region, consisting of Østfold, Akershus and Vestfold, while the data set from Buskerud and Telemark is currently too small to determine to which group they belong. The houses in Oppland and Hedmark are primarily oriented E-W with mid-Scandinavian entrances. In Østfold, Akershus and Vestfold they are primarily oriented N-S and show both southern and mid-Scandinavian entrances. There are also many four-post structures from this southern region. In line with Herschend's (2009) assertion of a separation between southern and mid-Scandinavia, I have demonstrated that the northern limit of the southern Scandinavian building techniques runs roughly between Akershus in the south, and Oppland and Hedmark in the north. As mentioned above, the house was the central social institution in the Iron Age, and in line with Herschend (2009), I suggest that different building traditions reflect different cultural conditions. Although all the houses in this analysis belong to the rural/agricultural environment, there is a significant difference between the two regions.

Outland activities such as iron extraction and hunting must have played a significantly larger economic and cultural role in the northern region of Eastern Norway than in the southern. This may have influenced cultural contacts or preferences with respect to both house orientation and building style in general. The border between northern and



A)



B)

Figure 9. Eastern Norway with the two regions and two to four landscapes drawn in.

southern Eastern Norway, at least as defined by the building tradition, goes far back in time, and it is therefore tempting to see whether it can be detected in written sources from the Medieval Period. In future work, I will examine the boundary between the political or cultural territories of Viken and the Uplands, and between the areas under the jurisdiction of the Eidsivating law and the Borgarting law. The Uplands and the Eidsivating law cover large parts of northern Eastern Norway, as well as Romerike in Akershus (Holmsen 1979; Halvorsen 1987: 37). The houses in Romerike are oriented N-S and use both southern and mid-Scandinavian entrances, thus belonging to the southern region of building traditions. Viken and the Borgarting law covers nearly the entire southern region of Eastern Norway. This is a complex topic, which will be treated much more thoroughly, in future work (Gjerpe in prep).

The southern region of Eastern Norway also contains smaller landscapes with local building traditions. In all likelihood, there are local traditions in the northern region as well, but currently there is not enough material to address this question adequately. In Østfold, a large percentage of the houses date to the Pre-Roman Iron Age, and offset gable-posts disappear earlier than in the rest of the region. At the same time, two-aisled buildings are only found in Østfold and Akershus. I would therefore suggest that Østfold and perhaps the southern part of Akershus is one landscape. Furthermore, I would suggest that Vestfold and perhaps the northern part of Akershus stand out as a different landscape. The houses in this landscape may appear to be less homogeneous, but are distinct from those in the northern region, while offset gable-posts were in use much longer than in Østfold. There are no two-aisled buildings known from Vestfold, something which argues against Vestfold and Akershus being seen as a single landscape. Previous studies of burial customs also supports that there are differences

between the different landscapes in the southern Scandinavia region (Hougen 1924; Løken 1974; Forseth 1993; 2003; Stylegar 2004; Wangen 2009; Rødsrud 2012; Skogstrand 2014). The topographic and climatic conditions in Østfold and Vestfold are so similar that the differences in building traditions cannot be explained through an eco-functionalist approach. Thus, there is no unified eastern Norwegian architectural style, but regional and local building traditions, all of which were well integrated into the general Scandinavian trend of three-aisled buildings with posts dug into the subsoil.

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