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## Abstract

Artursson, Magnus. 2009. *Bebyggelse och samhällsstruktur. Södra och mellersta Skandinavien under senneolitikum och bronsålder 2300-500 f. Kr.* ISBN 978-91-7209-524-3, ISBN 978-91-85245-39-9

The main focus of this thesis is a comparative study of the structure and organisation of Late Neolithic and Bronze Age (2300-500 BC) settlements across the southern and middle part of Scandinavia. Variation in size and associations of long-houses and farmsteads are used to analyse economic, social and political complexity. The materials and energy invested in residential housing and in the complexity of the farmsteads illustrate the social stratification and centrality of different regional societies. Settlements range from single farmsteads to hamlets and small villages, and form networks of community structures. The internal organisation of these different settlements is used to discuss the economic specialization and social stratification that formed the basis for polities in the form of chiefdoms of different size and complexity.

The existing model is based on the presumed existence of a “*standard*” long-house and farmstead in combination with a simple and one-dimensional model for how farmsteads and settlements were structured and organized. This model must now be considered inadequate, especially when compared with models based on burials and offerings for how society was organised. Early Bronze Age (1700-1100 BC) society has traditionally been considered stratified and relatively complex, based on small and medium-sized chiefdoms, while the level of stratification during the Late Neolithic (2300-1700 BC) and Late Bronze Age (1100-500 BC) has been under considerable debate. However, recent research based on a number of large-scale studies has shown that the transformation of society towards a more stratified organisation started already in the beginning of the Late Neolithic, and that the level of stratification increased gradually over time. Therefore, the existing model for farmsteads and settlements need to be re-evaluated, as it does not match the expected structure and organisation in a stratified and relatively complex society.

Based on a revision of old material and studies of settlements recently excavated, and a comparative study of several hundred long-houses where  $^{14}\text{C}$ -dates from the individual buildings play a crucial role for establishing a typology and chronology for southern and middle Scandinavia, it has been possible to show that there has been a clear variation in size of contemporary long-houses and farmsteads. The range in variation changes over time, but according to comparative historical and anthropological studies this variation must be interpreted as a clear sign of social stratification during the whole time period. The degree of variation seems to have been closely connected to the availability of important natural resources and the centrality in the long-distance networks of the different regions in southern and middle Scandinavia. A greater variation in settlement structure and organisation is also apparent. By analysing the  $^{14}\text{C}$ -dates, stratigraphy and alignment of long-houses in large, multi-phased settlements, it has been possible to show that a greater complexity existed in the structure and organisation of farmsteads. The range in variation, from isolated to clustered farmsteads, hamlets and small villages, seems to have the same connection to important natural resources and centrality as the range in size of long-houses and farmsteads. The new view presented in the thesis on how farmsteads and settlements were organized has several similarities with a centre-periphery model, both in a regional and intraregional perspective. It supports a hierarchical interpretation of society during the whole time period, based on chiefdoms controlling the distribution of prestige goods.

*Keywords:* long-house, farmstead, settlement, hamlet, village, Late Neolithic, Bronze Age, Scandinavia, Skåne, neo-marxism, structural marxism, chiefdom, hierarchy, heterarchy, centre-periphery model, prestige goods, aggrandizer, entrepreneur, house-based society, corporate group, long-distance contacts

**Bebyggelse och samhällsstruktur**  
Södra och mellersta Skandinavien under senneolitikum och  
bronsålder 2300-500 f. Kr

av  
Magnus Artursson

Akademisk avhandling som för avläggande av filosofie doktorsexamen i arkeologi vid institutionen för arkeologi och antikens kultur, Göteborgs universitet, offentlig försvaras av Magnus Artursson i sal 302, Arkeologen, Olof Wijksgatan 6, fredagen den 24 april 2009 kl.13:00, efter godkännande av humanistiska fakultetsnämnden som även utsett betygsnämnd, opponert och ordförande vid disputationen.

Dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy submitted by Magnus Artursson, April 24<sup>th</sup> 2009, 13:00 in room 302, Arkeologen, Olof Wijksgatan 6, Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, Göteborg University, Sweden.

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