

Expanding the Household

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Abstract

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Studies on households can be divided into three major trends: a functional view focusing on hierarchical households, an economic view, and a demographic view. Recent research has shown that the normal household in pre-industrial agrarian societies was based on the nuclear family. The Scandinavian ideal appears to have been the stem-family. The extended family was very uncommon in practice. Different kinds of households are discussed on the basis of three different sites: a 13th-century castle, a deserted medieval forest farmstead and a deserted farmstead of the Finns practising forest swidden in early modern times.

The outland use of the forest farmers required several adjustments from the households in order to preserve the ideal stem- and nuclear-family-based households. The strategies of the forest farmers included seasonal planning, the participation of women in non-traditional activities and organizing the work in cooperation or through division of labour.

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Households, families and cooperation labour

People who live under the same roof, share a number of activities and are related either by blood or by marriage make up a (family-based) household. Sometimes there are also some non-related persons living in the same house, but it is debatable whether these persons should be considered as a part of the household or not (Laslett 1972, pp. 24 f.).

The household was (and is) one of the most important social institutions in which people's actions and interactions in daily life took place. It was also through the household unit that most of the production and reproduction was organized. Within research three major approaches to households can be detected (according to Wennersten 1995, pp. 88 f.):

1. The household as a functional unit. The members of the household are connected through mutual ties of dependence and the household is ruled by a head.
2. The household as a demographic unit. The main focus is placed on the composition of the household and the number of its members.
3. The household as an economic unit. The household is mainly viewed as a unit of production and consumption.

The first definition has been used in connection with studies concerning the feudal structure, in which household or familia has been given a wide meaning, including also persons related to

the lord not by blood or marriage but by dependence (e.g. Duby 1981, pp. 185 f.). This kind of family structure is also relevant in connection with the Lutheran ideology of patriarchal hegemony in the families (the ideology of the *hustavla*) in early modern Sweden, although there has been debate about how influential this ideology actually was in the realities of daily life (e.g. Österberg 1992, pp. 90 ff.; Wennersten 1995, p. 91). It should also be mentioned that anthropological studies have indicated that households applying more democratic patterns of decision-making appear to be more economically successful than comparative households with patriarchal hegemony (Wilk 1989).

The demographic emphasis on households pays special attention to the composition of the household and the number of its members. There are three main types of family-based households: the nuclear family, the extended family, and the multiple family. The nuclear family consists of a couple and their offspring (if any) or of one parent with child(ren). The extended family consists of a nuclear family and one or more relatives apart from children. The multiple family includes two or more nuclear or extended families related by blood or marriage. Of special interest in this case is the stem-family, i.e. a household where one offspring is selected to take over the farm and therefore stays on in the household and establishes a family. The prospect of a stem-family system is to produce a series of nuclear families, but it can belong to different household definitions during its lifecycle (Laslett 1972).

Often families larger than the nuclear family (Swedish *storfamilj*), i.e. extended or multiple families, have been considered as the valid household system in ancient times in Scandinavia and the development of the nuclear family a relatively late phenomenon. This evolutionary view is not grounded on empirical data, and critical studies of demographic material have shown that the nuclear families, sometimes with additional farm-hands and maids, appear to have been the most common household structure in

agrarian settings in pre-industrial periods as well. This situation was mostly due to the high mortality rate and low average life expectancy, because the stem-family represented the ideal household structure in Scandinavia (Gaunt 1976; Andersson Palm 1993, especially app. B; Benedictow 1993; Gaunt 1996, pp. 85 ff.). It is possible that the ideal of the stem-family is connected with landed property and was a demarcation against non-propertied social groups. In Österlen, southern Sweden, the household ideals and structures were clearly changing during early modern times. During the 17th century the farmer-families appear to have been fairly equal nuclear families, and it was a part of the normal farmer's career to start off as a farm-hand. During the 18th and 19th centuries patriarchal landed stem-families emerged parallel with an increasing number of poor and non-landowning people (Hanssen 1976).

According to the economic approach to households, it is more important to find out what households do than what kind of size and structure they have. There are five activities normally attributed to households: production, distribution, transmission, reproduction and cohabitation (Wilk & Netting 1984). Usually the patterns of production and consumption are discussed in connection with this aspect of household studies. These patterns range from domestic modes of production, i.e. production for direct consumption, to households involved in specialized production for sale on a market. The production and consumption of the households are also to different degrees dependant on authorities like the state and/or the lord (Cornell 1993, p. 86).

However, the demographic and economic aspects of households can benefit from one another, because there are several examples of connections between the size and structure of the households and their roles in production and consumption. Two examples are of interest here. In Lule Parish in northern Sweden, written sources indicate the existence of extended family households in the middle of the 16th century.

This kind of household structure was connected with a varied economy in which several different resources and large territories were exploited (Åkerman 1990; Åkerman 1996, pp. 152 ff.; this interpretation of the existence of an extended household has been challenged, see e.g. Andersson Palm 1993, especially app. C). A slightly different case is the household structure practised by the forest Finns, whose large-scale swidden cultivation was organized within an extended, mostly hierarchical household, e.g. in northern Värmland in early modern times. In this case the household could include several persons not related to the landowning family and both “house Finns” (Swedish *husfinnar*), i.e. more permanently employed persons, and “unattached Finns” (*lösfinnar*), i.e. occasional labourers. These households were not of a permanent character, however, and the size and structure of the individual households among the forest Finns were constantly changing (Bladh 1995, pp. 105 ff.).

These cases are examples of extended households where the unit of production, and their production demanded the participation of a large number of persons and/or the exploitation of large territories. Equal conditions of production were also current elsewhere in pre-industrial Scandinavia, especially among forest peasants. The usual strategy, known from early modern times but probably valid also earlier, was the creation of cooperation involving several households. This cooperation could be based on economy, family relationship or neighbourhood, it could be orientated to a single task or multiple tasks, and it could be vertically or horizontally organized. In pre-industrial Scandinavia cooperation based on equality was the predominant principle in agrarian economies (Granlund 1944, especially pp. 61 f.; Wolf 1971, pp. 116 ff.; Löfgren 1974). The function of cooperation was mainly to facilitate production and other activities that a single household could not perform, and still keep the stem-family ideal intact. But through these forms of cooperation a sense of community was also reproduced within the local communities.

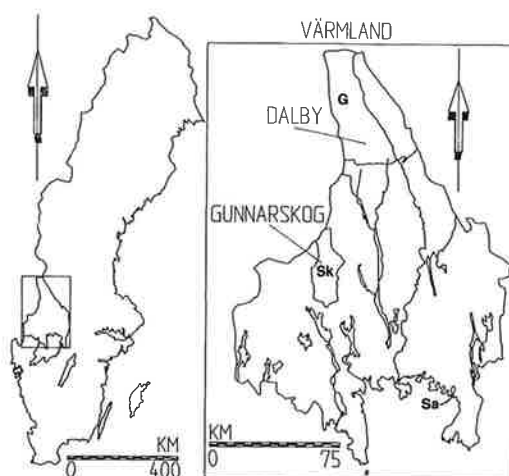


Fig. 1. The location of the presented sites and parishes. G = Gammelvallen; Sa = Saxholmen; Sk = Skramle.

Households and cooperative labour in archaeology – some examples

Archaeology and households should be a fruitful combination. In order to shed some light on this issue I will present a few examples from different projects in which I have been involved. The sites presented here are all located in Värmland in the western part of Sweden, and they represent different settings and different households: a medieval castle, a deserted medieval farmstead and a deserted early modern forest swidden Finn farmstead.¹

Saxholmen

On the island of Saxen in the south-eastern part of Sweden a castle was erected during the later half of the 13th century. The castle was probably deserted at the end of the 13th century or at the beginning of the 14th century. As the castle is not mentioned in written sources, its medieval name is unknown, but today the castle remains are referred to as Saxholmen. During the years 1992–1996 a project involving archaeological excavations was carried out on the site, but the results have not yet been published apart from

annual technical reports (VM Arkiv, see also Pettersson 1996; Svensson 1996; Lind *et al.* 1997). As a publication is planned, references will be given to different articles in preparation by different authors as "X in prep." (not listed among the list of references in the end as the titles of the articles have not been decided).

The structures located on the island are the remains of a square tower, a smithy, a limekiln, two jetties, ten house remains and foundations for a surrounding wooden palisade, as well as the foundations of a smaller wooden tower and the foundations of a larger building used both as part of the defence and as a store. Apart from the structures related to the castle there are also remains of a 19th-century croft on the island of Saxen.

The four house remains situated on the inside of the surrounding walls have been excavated together with a minor part of the foundations of the surrounding wall and its two additional structures, a part of the exterior of the square tower, the limekiln and the smithy. One of the excavated houses had been used for handicraft, work with bronze and horn (not antler). The other three houses had hearths and were probably used as dwellings. One was a hall, one was perhaps the "women's house" (*frustuga*) and one was probably a warming house (*värmestuga*) or a house used also during winter (Nyhlin in prep.; Svensson in prep.). The different functions of the houses indicate that the inhabitants of the castle functioned as one household, and not several separate households with different dwelling houses.

The non-excavated houses outside the surrounding wooden palisade are difficult to evaluate, but some of them could have been outbuildings, stables and cow-houses.

Altogether more than 2000 objects have been found (presented in Pettersson in prep.). The finds strongly indicate the presence of persons belonging to the highest social levels of society, but objects connected with military life are few. The construction of the houses and the finds indicate that the castle was mostly used

during the summer, and probably only a small staff remained on the island during the winter. The finds also show that both men and women stayed at the castle of Saxholmen, and probably entire families were living there.

The osteological material shows that cattle, pigs and sheep were kept and slaughtered on the island (Sigvallius 1995; Sigvallius in prep.), and not brought to the island as meat. As the island is very small and rocky, opportunities for both grazing and winter fodder collection must have been minimal. The animals were probably brought to the island in the summertime when the castle was inhabited by a larger number of persons. According to the results of the osteological analysis, the nearby hinterland of the castle did not function as a provider of supplies. The presence of handicraft activities also shows that the inhabitants of the castle were self-supporting to some extent. The castle was probably anomalous in the landscape and not erected by local magnates.

Of special interest is the find of a heraldic mount, displaying the coat of arms of the Boberg family, one of the most important families in the Swedish nobility during the first half of the Middle Ages. The Boberg family had no real connection with Värmland, but in the late 13th century the knight and king's councillor (*riksråd*) Lars Boberg was acting on the king's behalf in Värmland (Nilsson 1985, pp. 58 f.; Nilsson 1995, p. 8). Lars Boberg is therefore to be considered a strong candidate as lord of Saxholmen castle in the late 13th century. The lady of the castle would then have been his (first) wife Kristin(a), and perhaps a spindle whorl with the runic inscription "Kristin owns me" (*kristin a miK*) bear witness of her presence at the castle (Gustavson in prep.; ÄSE, pp. 22 ff.).

The Boberg connection, and other aspects, strongly indicate that Saxholmen castle was erected on the initiative of the king and of persons in the king's surrounding (Lind in prep.). In reality, however, the castle was probably never inhabited by the king, but by nobles and their households. The household of the castle could

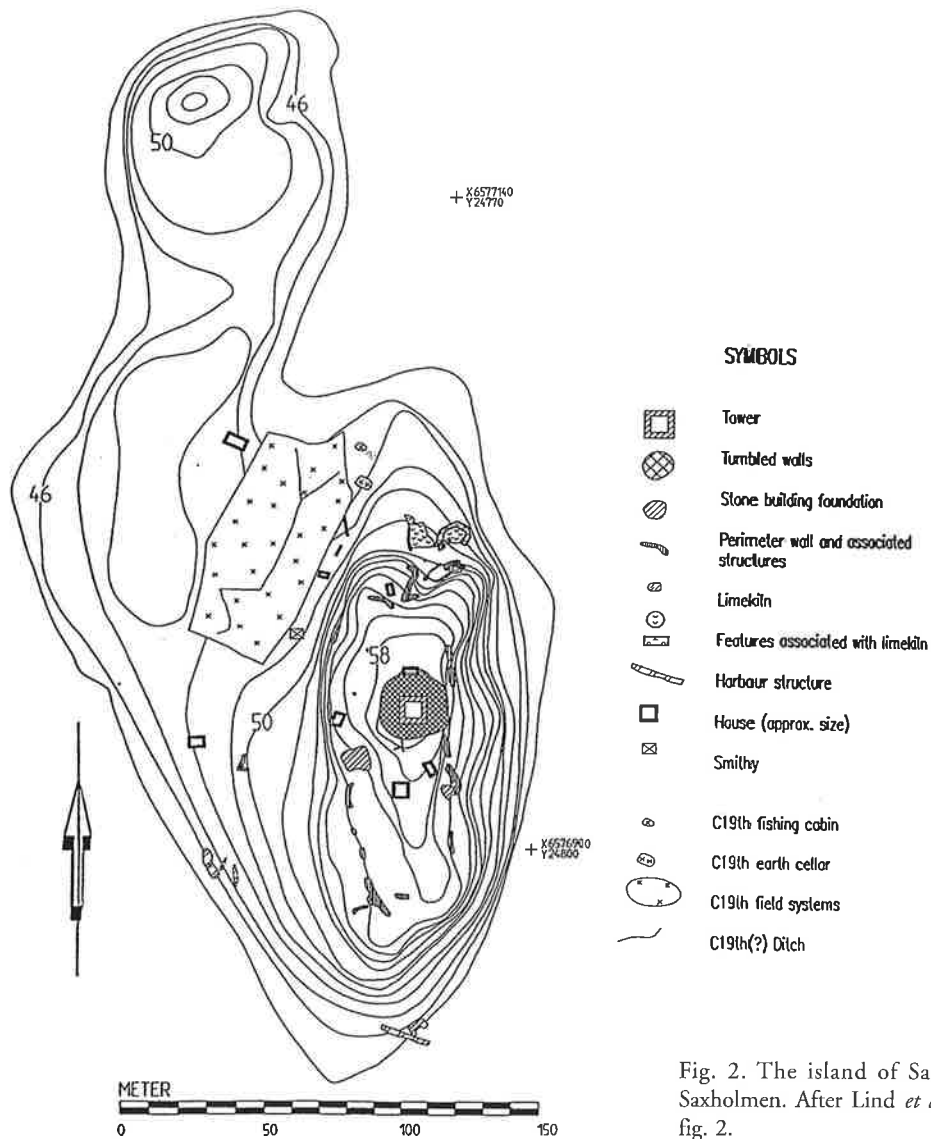


Fig. 2. The island of Saxen and Saxholmen. After Lind *et al.* 1997, fig. 2.

be considered as a unit of both production and consumption, but as probably not all members of the household were involved in the direct production both the demographic composition and structure and the internal ties of dependence are of interest.

The excavated structures and the finds indicate that the castle garrison consisted of the lord and his family, squires or other high-ranking men-at-arms, other men-at-arms, craftsmen of different trades and probably these persons'

families. This can be considered as an extended household of non-related families with internal ties of dependence both vertically and horizontally. The validity of the reconstruction of this kind of household structure is also illuminated by written source material. In a document from 1297 Lars Boberg makes a transaction with the monastery of Julita, and this transaction was witnessed by two squires explicitly said to belong to the *familia* of Lars Boberg (DS 1212; see also Svensson 1996, p. 217).

The production tasks and status of dependence were according to social status and gender. For example, the craftsmen were probably regarded as specialists in their trade, but had little influence over the general decision-making of the household. The decision-making was most likely in the hands of the head of the household and his family. On the other hand, the head of the household, whether it was Lars Boberg or not, was most likely excluded from the direct production at the castle. It is also unlikely that his men-at-arms contributed to any great extent. It is a qualified guess that the armed escort of the lord was closer to the head of the household, and therefore had greater possibilities to influence the general decision-making of the household. I therefore suggest that a greater task specialization among men made the position of the individuals in the hierarchical structure clearer.

The position of the women appears to be different from that of the men. As the household of the castle most likely consisted of several families, the women were related to the men by blood or marriage, but their inter-female relationships were probably different from the male hierarchy. The occurrence of specialized buildings for handicrafts supposed to have been practised by men makes a contrast to the remains of handicrafts performed by women, mainly textile production (cf. Rui 1996), which can be found in all dwelling houses and particularly in the hall. The production of textiles can therefore be regarded as a part of everyday life, and not restricted to special areas. It was probably carried on by the noblewomen too, as indicated by the spindle whorl mentioned above, which may be related to the lady of the castle. Other tasks that probably involved all women at the castle, whether they were direct performers or supervisors, were the various stages of food preparation also visible in all the dwelling houses. If the male population of the castle were divided according to whether or not they took part in direct production, then work with production united the females, and meetings between women –

whatever their position in the household – were more regular. The “official” position of an individual woman in the hierarchy of the household was probably decided by the position of the man to whom she was related, but through the regular meetings of everyday life more informal channels were created, probably to the benefit of the families of the individual women as well.

Skramle

When knights, fair ladies and pigs were living at Saxholmen, forest farmers tilled the fields at Skramle in the western part of Värmland. Archaeological excavations have been carried out at Skramle since 1990 and the excavations will be concluded in the summer of 1998 (Andersson & Svensson 1995; Andersson & Svensson 1997). So far (1997) fourteen (or fifteen) houses, belonging to three chronologically separate phases, have been located. The oldest house have been dated to the 6th and 7th centuries, nine (or ten) houses to the second half of the 13th and early 14th centuries and four houses to the 15th century. Here only the middle phase, i.e. houses H V–VIII and H X–XIV, will be discussed. It should also be noted that Skramle is unknown in contemporary written sources.

Five of the nine (or ten) houses in question were dwelling houses (H VI–VIII and H X–XI), in one case (H VI) with an adjacent smithy (H VIb), one house (or two houses) constituted a cow-house and probably a barn (H XIVb and H XIVa), one house a handicraft house (H XII) for e.g. brass casting, and two houses were outhouses (H V and H XIII) without clearly known functions. The larger of the outhouses (H V) was divided into three parts, and a rune-stone with an inscription “Øtha inscribed [the runes] alone. I know of danger” (Odenstedt 1997, p. 175) in the older runic futhark had been placed in the house as a groundstone. This house appear to have been the most impressive building on the site. Of these houses three dwelling houses (H VI–VII and H X), the smithy and the handicraft house were used during the late 13th century, the dwelling house H VIII and possibly

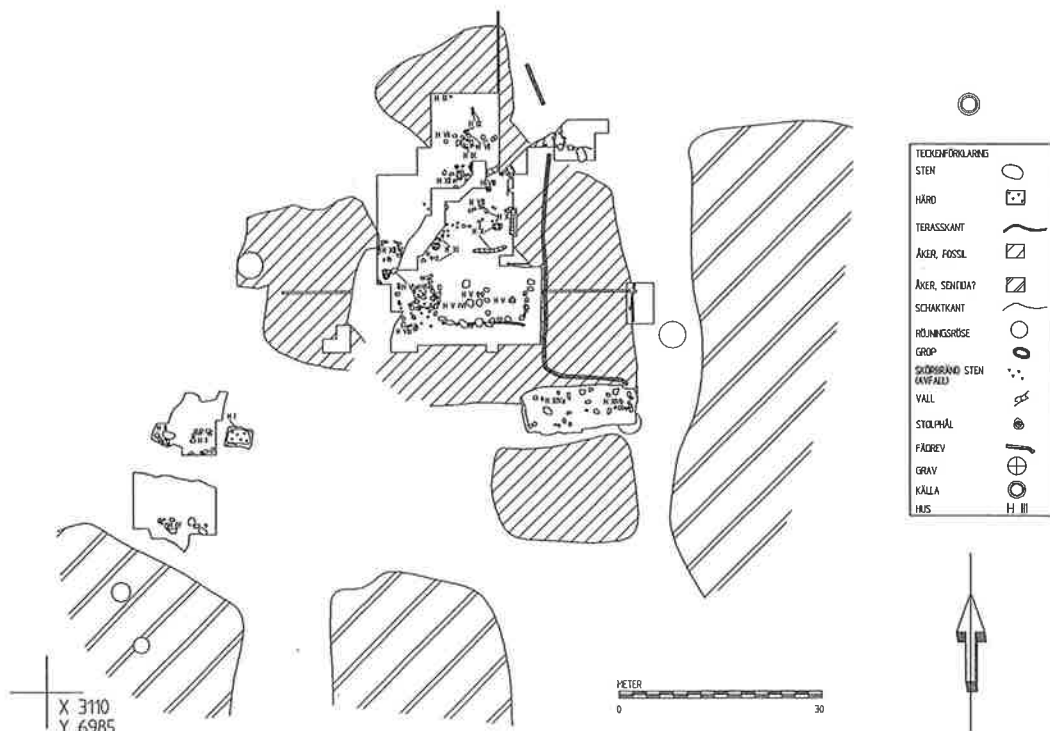


Fig. 3. Skramle. (Mainly) after Svensson 1998 in print, fig. 60a. Symbols: sten = stone; härd = hearth; terrasskant = terrace; house foundation; åker, fossil = deserted field; åker, sentida? = arable land; schaktkant = intervention; röjningsröse = clearance cairn; grop = pit; skörbränd sten (avfall) = fire-cracked stones (refuse); vall = wall; house foundation, bench; stolphål = post-hole; fädrev = cattle path (wall); grav = grave (not in this figure); källa = well; hus = house.

also H XI during the early 14th century and the other houses were probably used throughout the whole period. In the case of H V one of the three parts (the eastern part) appears to have been abandoned in the early 14th century.

According to the finds (approx. 600 objects), the osteological material and the macrofossil materials, the forest farmers at Skramle in the 13th and early 14th centuries occupied themselves with farming, including cattle breeding, handicraft for domestic use and for sale, hunting and fishing. Apart from self-supporting activities the forest farmers made soapstone products, probably for a local market, and they also seem to have practised hunting for and preparation of furs for sale at an external market. The production of goods for sale, both

on the local and the external markets, was part of a regular outland use practised by the forest farmers. Outland use at Skramle could have included other activities apart from hunting and soapstone quarrying, most likely e.g. outland haymaking and forest grazing was practised, but this is not visible in the archaeological material.

The exploitation of outland resources and visits to markets required members of the household to stay away from the farm for varying lengths of time. This fact, and also some of the tasks of the daily livelihood, often called for an organization larger than the individual family—especially during periods when there were small children in the family. As discussed above, the two obvious strategies for solving this problem were the use of extended families or cooperative labour.

According to written sources from early modern times, the households in the area consisted of nuclear families, sometimes with the addition of a maid and/or a farm-hand (Andersson & Svensson 1995, p. 20). The smallness of the dwelling houses, the largest being about 6 x 6 m or 36 square metres, supports the testimony of the written source material. As there were three contemporary dwelling houses during the second half of the 13th century, this would indicate that Skramle was a small village during this period, but according to written sources the medieval countryside in Värmland was made up of scattered single farms (cf. Österberg 1977, pp. 61 ff.).

Presumably the existence of one smithy, one handicraft house and one cow-house and/or barn would indicate that there was only one unit of production at Skramle during the 13th century, i.e. a household of an extended character. Of special interest in this discussion is the largest dwelling house, H X, which displays somewhat more luxury finds than the other dwelling houses. In this house a mount with an alleged heraldic picture (but without reference to any noble family) and a few other costume accessories in bronze and brass were found. If the household structure at Skramle in the late 13th century was of an extended character, this could have been the dwelling house of the head of the household. The presence of the mount could also point to the presence of a local magnate and not an ordinary forest farmer. If there really was a household of an extended character at Skramle, there was a transition from extended households in medieval times to nuclear family-based households in early modern times.

There are, however, several other indications pointing in a different direction. First, the inhabitants of H X were probably not magnates but forest farmers who had gained wealth from trade on an external market, possibly the fur trade. There is nothing in the finds from the early 14th century to indicate the presence of a magnate in the following generation. As a comparison one could mention the medieval farm-

stead of Kyrklägdan in Jämtland in northern Sweden, where the finds indicated a high degree of wealth and the use of outland resources (Olausson 1985). Second, the finds indicate that the same kind of daily life was carried out in the different dwelling houses during the 13th century, especially the occupations associated with women, e.g. textile production and food preparation. At least the women appear to have considered themselves as belonging to different households. Third, the division of the arable land into three main fields, apart from the field south of H XIV, located in connection with the dwelling houses,² indicates the existence of three different units (households) of production. Fourth, the most imposing building, the outhouse H V, was divided into three parts during the 13th century. Later, most probably during the early 14th century, only two parts were used. During this period there appear to have been at most two dwelling houses.

The most plausible interpretation is that Skramle was inhabited by three separate households with different possessions of arable land during the late 13th century. These households cooperated in some tasks, e.g. cattle breeding, as there was only a single cow-house and a single barn (H XIV), and the imposing outhouse H V was probably a symbol of this cooperation. The households of Skramle also seem to have practised some kind of inter-household labour division concerning handicraft probably executed by men, e.g. smithing. During the early 14th century the number of households was reduced to one or possibly two. One part of H V and the buildings associated with handicraft were probably abandoned during this period. If there were still two households during this period there ought to have been some cooperation, e. g. in connection with cattle breeding, but there is no indication of inter-household labour division. In fact, there are no indications of metal-related handicrafts at all, and possibly these kinds of products were bought from outside the farm.

The model from Skramle, that is, the main interpretation of Skramle as a site where forest

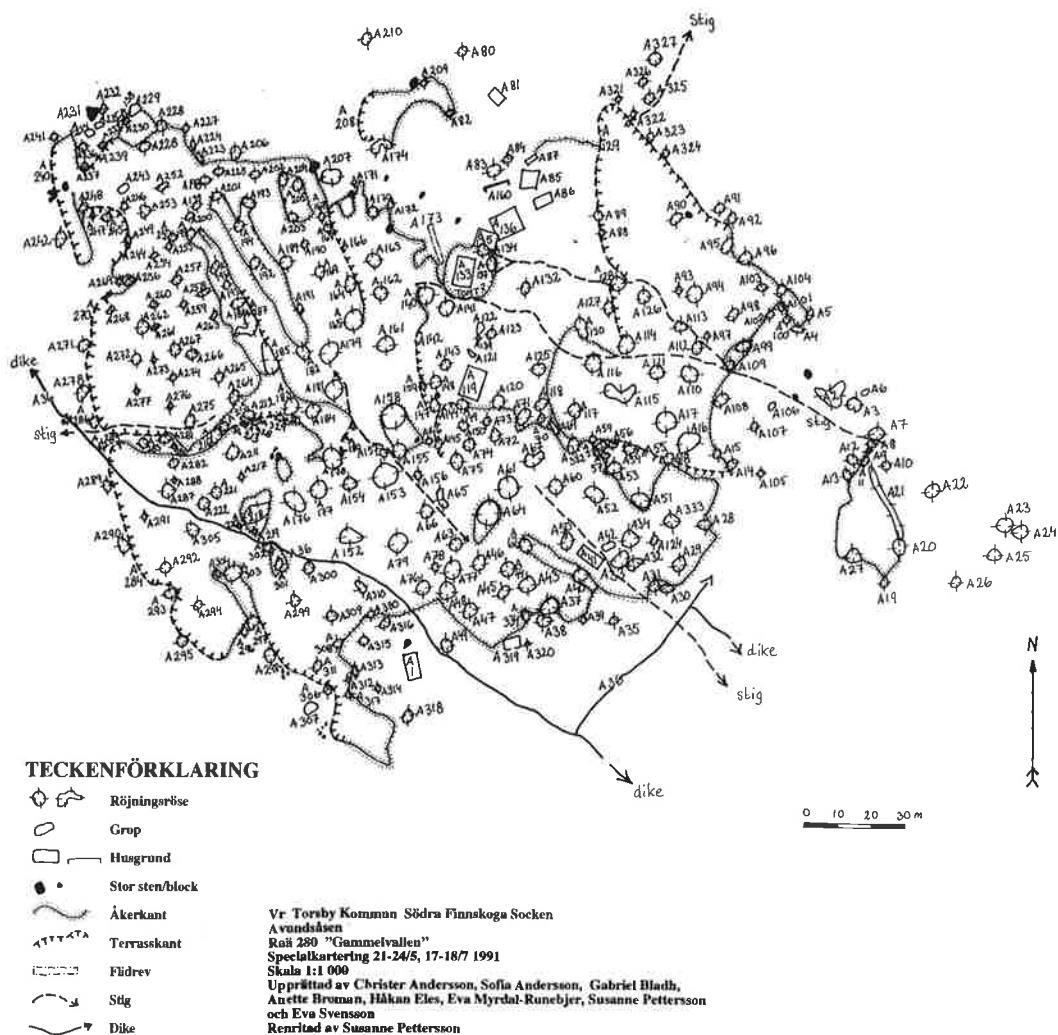


Fig. 4. Gammelvallen. After Bladh *et al.* 1992, app. 1. Note that further detailed mapping and archaeological excavations have altered the results somewhat. A2 has been interpreted as a smithy, A 85 and A 86 as one house, A 119 as a clearance cairn, A 325 and A 327 as drying kilns for grain. Symbols: röjningsröse = clearance cairn; grop = pit; husgrund = house foundation; stor sten/block = boulder; åkerkant = (negative) lynchet; terrasskant = terrace, positive lynchet; fäddrev; cattle path; stig = path; dike = ditch.

farmers lived in nuclear-family-based households and practised inter-household cooperation, will be elaborated further below.

Gammelvallen

In the 17th century Finns immigrated to the forests of northern Värmland and established farmsteads where they practised swidden (Bladh

1995). The farmstead Avundsåsen appears in written sources in the middle of the 17th century (probably founded c. 1650), and in 1663 the farm was recorded as a fiscal unit. In the early 18th century the farmstead moved to a new site, because of climate problems (frost). The abandoned site, presently known as Gammelvallen, was later used by the Finns as a shieling and for

other purposes. At Gammelvallen detailed mapping, excavations and palaeobotanical investigations have been carried out. Only an initial study has been published and technical excavation reports have been submitted (Bladh *et al.* 1992; VM Arkiv; see also Myrdal-Runebjer & Bladh 1995). The investigated material is under preparation for publication.

The detailed mapping showed an intensively cleared area with an abundance of clearance cairns (approx. 300), and about ten house foundations (see Fig. 4 with caption). Most of the settlement remains were located in the northern part of the area, and are believed to belong to the brief phase of settlement by forest swidden Finns. The house, A 1, in the southern part of the area is of a distinctively younger character, and is – together with A 319 – supposed to belong to a later period when the area was used as a shieling. All the other house remains, apart from the re-evaluated A 119, appear to have been dwelling houses, or at least they have hearths (interpreted as remains of Finnish smoke-ovens). Also a smithy and two drying kilns for grain (*ria*), A 325 and A 327, have been located.

In spite of the short period of settlement at the site, there are probably some chronological differences between some of the buildings in the northern area, because of the tight cluster of some buildings. The only excavated house, A 85 & 86, showed signs of having been dismantled after use, and the area had later been affected by fire. The finds gave no closer dating than the period of existence mentioned above for the farmstead of Avundsåsen according to written sources.

Although not all buildings were in use at the same time, there still ought to have been several contemporary dwelling houses. As there is only one excavated dwelling house, the archaeological material is insufficient to answer the question whether Gammelvallen was a village or if the site was inhabited by an extended family. The spatial organization of the main settlement area was somewhat different from the spatial distribution of houses at Skramle. At Skramle

the dwelling houses of the late 13th century encircled an open space, but at Gammelvallen there was one house, A 133, situated on the area believed to have been the central toft-site and another house, A 135, located next to this area. The other houses are situated clearly behind these houses, and on a downward slope. Perhaps this indicates a hierarchy among the houses, especially bearing in mind the short period of settlement. Such a hierarchy could indicate an unequal social structure among the inhabitants.

In this case the written source material contributes important information on the matter. Between the years 1658 and 1673 the written source material indicates that the size of the household at Avundsåsen varied significantly. Some years the household consisted only of the family of the landowner Mats Matsson, and some years the household included a different number of living-in persons – from one to thirteen (Bladh 1992, p. 13)! The large number of dwelling houses and their spatial distribution illustrate the desired household strategy among the settled forest swidden Finns in the early phase of colonization in northern Värmland: the extended household with a hierarchical structure. The written source material, and perhaps also the deliberate dismantling of the house A 85 & 86, shows that the reality sometimes differed from the ideals.

Expanding the households among the forest farmers

The forest farmers practised outland use, i.e. they exploited large areas and several different ecological settings apart from the infields of their farms (Svensson 1998). Several of the goods produced in the outlands were also intended for sale on external markets. Sometimes this kind of livelihood demanded that members of the household stayed away from home for periods of varying length. During different periods in the individual household history there were also problems for a single household to cope with the daily tasks, especially when there

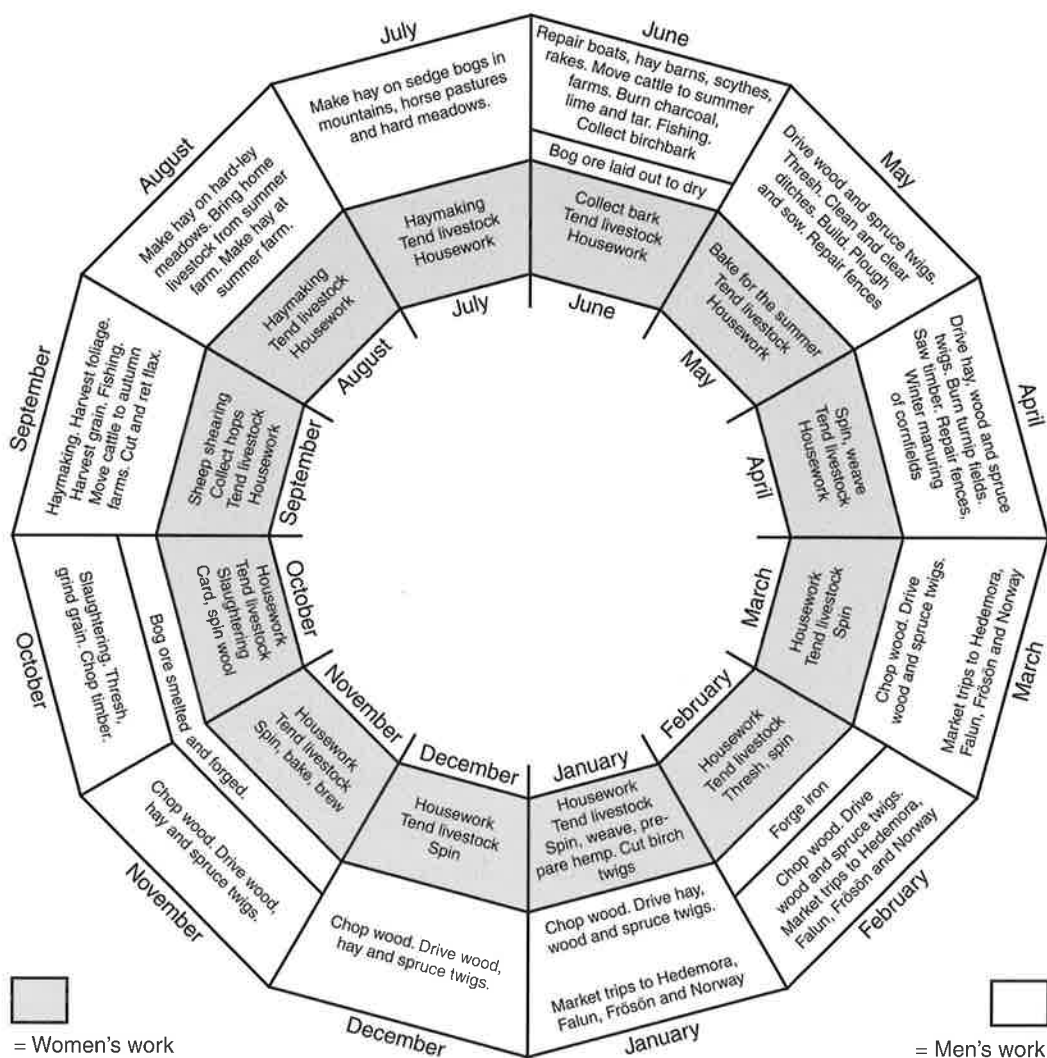


Fig. 5. The forest farmer's year in Offerdal parish during the mid-18th century. After Magnusson 1986, p. 283. Translation by Alan Crozier.

were small children. As discussed above, there were two major strategies for solving problems like this: extended households or cooperative labour.

Outland production was in many cases a strategy for people in marginal areas to be able to carry on socially desired consumption and to be able to take part in the social life of the rest of the society (Martens 1992, p. 5). The social reproduction of the forest farmers and their ambition to be like other farmers must also have included

the household structure, and the Scandinavian ideal of the stem-family and reality of the nuclear family (see the discussion above). The obvious choice for the forest farmers was therefore to exploit the outlands together in a cooperative way. Other strategies for making outland use possible, and still keeping the desired household structure, were careful seasonal planning of the tasks and a strategic division of labour within the households. Of particular importance was the participation of women in activities taking

place in the far outlands.

From early modern times there are descriptions of how the forest farmers carefully planned their tasks for the year. Descriptions from different areas of Sweden show that the general pattern of planning was quite similar for the forest farmers of Sweden, and the periods assigned for various activities also became a tradition within the local communities (e. g. Mörner 1952, pp. 67 ff.; Jonsson 1957, pp. 169 ff.; Magnusson 1986, p. 283). As farming was of major importance, not least for the reproduction of social and cultural identity, the year was planned according to this livelihood. Several outland activities can also be considered as an extension of agriculture: infield practices were moved to the outland when possible.

In 1762 the county governor Adolph Mörner described the women in northern Värmland, with admiration, as diligent and equally used to hard physical labour as the men. Women who were not taking care of small children or staying at the shielings worked together with the men in all kinds of tasks in the outland – including the erection of charcoal stacks (Mörner 1952, p.75).

The shielings, i.e. sites where cattle grazed, and people processed milk, made hay and sometimes also practised agriculture, were the domains of women in the outlands in the summertime. The practice of female herders at the shielings needs some comment, as male herders were common in most parts of Europe (Szabó 1970, pp. 177 ff., 230 ff.). In the Scottish highlands both men and women moved to the shielings where men herded the cattle and women were in charge of dairy work (Grant 1961, pp. 73 f.). Milking and milk processing were traditional female occupations and among the tasks most stigmatized for men. Women were therefore needed at the shielings anyway, and probably the “take-over” of the herding by women was part of a more effective division of labour within the households. In general it appears to have been easier for women to enter the male spheres of work than the opposite (Löfgren 1982, pp. 9 f.). There are indications in the

archaeological material from western Norway that female responsibility for cattle herding in faraway outlands dates back to the late Bronze Age (Prescott 1995, pp. 174, 179, 183).

Yearly planning and smart internal household division of labour made several outland use activities possible. Still there were tasks that needed more labour, and inter-household work organizations also appear to have been socially desirable. The ideology of the local communities of the forest farmers was based on a sense of community, equality and appreciation of work capacity instead of land possession (Ekman 1991, p. 30; Johansson 1994, pp. 20 ff.). Organizing work together was therefore a means of reproducing the social structure of the local societies of the forest farmers. The way the outlands were exploited was the result of a delicate interplay between yearly planning, internal household division of labour and the organization of large-scale cooperation.

Local communities – local strategies

The organizations for large-scale cooperation were the result of local decisions and an adjustment to the surrounding realities. Therefore these organizations varied locally and chronologically. An examination of the local communities of Dalby and Gunnarskog, in northern and north-western Värmland respectively, and the outland use activities conducted in these areas showed the existence of two different strategies during the late Iron Age and the Middle Ages (see also Svensson 1997). The main outland activities were hunting such as using pitfalls (mainly for elk), bloomery iron production, (soap)stone quarrying, tar production and outland haymaking, agriculture and forest grazing in connection with shielings and other localities.

In Gunnarskog the forested outland used by the individual villages was relatively small, and the outland facilities could easily be used on a daily basis. In Dalby the outlands of the villages

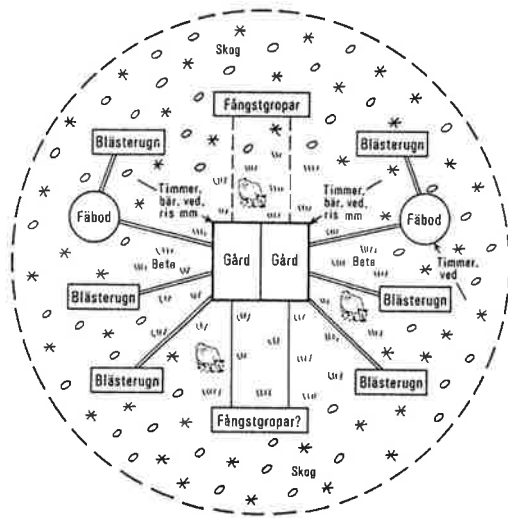


Fig. 6. Model of a forest farm in Härjedalen and its outland use in medieval times. After Magnusson 1989, p. 169. Bete = grazing; blåsterugn = bloomery furnace; bär = berries; fångstgropar = pitfalls; fåbod = shieling; gård = farm; ris = twigs; skog = woodland; timmer = timber; ved = firewood. This model is also relevant for the parish of Dalby.

were large, and several outland activities required the users to stay away from home for certain periods of time. Another important difference was that the villages in Gunnarskog appeared to specialize in one kind of outland production, apart from agrarian outland use, e.g. outland haymaking. There is seldom more than one kind of structure on the individual village's outlands, but on the other hand only a few villages display the same kinds of outland structures. At the Skramle site presented above, the farmers specialized in the production of soapstone goods. For other villages it was bloomery iron production, pitfalls for elk, or shielings. The forest farmers in Dalby practised a more complex outland use, with several different kinds of structures on the outlands of the villages. All villages also seem to have carried on the same kinds of outland use, as pitfalls for elk, bloomery furnace sites and shielings appear on almost every village's outland. A third important difference concerned the relation between the

local communities and the external world. In Dalby the forest farmers were involved in large-scale bloomery iron production for sale on an external market in the period of transition from the Viking Age to early medieval times.

These differences point to different strategies towards outland use within the local communities. In Gunnarskog the strategy appears to have been specialization and division of labour between the different villages within the framework of local society. It was mainly the production of everyday goods that was organized through labour division within the local society. The individual households probably produced goods for an external market in addition to the production aimed at the local society. At Skramle the forest farmers seem to have practised fur hunting and preparation for sale outside Gunnarskog.

The complex and "complete" outland use structures of the individual villages in Dalby point to the village as the framework of work organization. Perhaps the possibilities to generate wealth by producing bloomery iron also triggered off competition between the villages. When the external market for bloomery iron gave way during the latter part of the 12th century, a higher degree of cooperation between the villages seems to have been developed. The village still remained important, and most of the outland use was organized through the village in the 19th century too.

However, strategies and realities did not always coincide. At Skramle there appear to have been both cooperation and labour division between the households in the village in the late 13th century, i.e. a structure similar to the Dalby strategy. The production of soapstone goods may also have been a common task for the households at Skramle, as there appears to be one production place. Judging by the finds of arrows, on the other hand, fur hunting was practised by the individual households. In reality there seem to have been different levels of cooperation in the local community of Gunnarskog, and probably this was also the case

in Dalby, especially after the collapse of the bloomery iron production for sale on an external market.

The relationship between households and larger organizations for cooperation and division of labour was a question of constant negotiation, for which realities and ideals could differ a lot. Of special interest is the fact that in Dalby and Gunnarskog both Swedish forest farmers and forest swidden Finns exploited the same outlands, but in different ways and using different organizations and displaying different household ideals.

Notes

1. The interpretations of the functions of the different buildings on these sites are mainly based on the architectural features and structures of the houses and the finds. These interpretations have also been compared with the results from phosphate mapping and analyses of macrofossil material and osteological material where available. These results have been compared with relevant literature concerning the kinds of buildings that should be present at medieval castles (e.g. Lundberg 1935), medieval farmsteads (e.g. Augustsson 1995; Myrdal 1985, pp. 43 ff.) and early modern farmsteads of the forest swidden Finns (e.g. Hämmäläinen 1945). The functional analyses of the different buildings at the different sites will be presented in forthcoming publications.

It should be pointed out that very few medieval farmsteads have been excavated to the same extent as Skramle in Sweden (cf. Ersgård & Hällans 1996), and comparative archaeological material is therefore very scarce. Comparative archaeological material from early modern farmsteads of the forest swidden Finns is completely lacking (personal communication from Professor Jussi-Pekka Taavitsainen, University of Turku, Finland).

2. According to stratigraphical observations, the largest, eastern, field appears to have been restricted to the area east of the cattle path during the Middle Ages. The larger extension of this field was due to land use of the abandoned site in the early modern times. Also the field south of H XIV was used after this house was abandoned, but it is possible that the field was used also while H XIV was in use.

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