Introduction: Early Modern Urban Periphery in Europe, the New Lödöse Project

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Abstract The *Nya Lödöse Project* focused on one particular urban site, a Swedish town founded in 1473 and finally abandoned in 1624. The use of the town virtually abandoned on several occasions related to large - scale wars. A large scale rescue archaeology project initiated in 2013 focused on this urban site, situated in today's Gothenburg, Sweden. Combining a set of disciplines proved productive. Historical sources were revisited and scrutinized, and new archaeological evidence retrieved. Various specialists contributed with knowledge on digital field methodology, osteology, archaeobotany and ICP analysis, just to quote some examples. The Nya Lödöse Project has produced a wealth of information of one particular location from the sixteenth century, a town of relatively short duration, and thus with a good time/space relation. This introduction briefly discusses the articles of this IJHA volume, entirely dedicated to the Nya Lödöse project.

The Nordic area had a slow urban development in the medieval and early modern periods. While a town like Paris had between 40,000 and 60,000 inhabitants in 1500, an urban site with more than 1000 inhabitants could be considered large in the Nordic area at this time. Urban developments in the twelfth to fourteenth centuries has attracted much archaeological attention in the Nordic area, and the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries during the last decades has been studied in a series of projects, but the sixteenth century remains relatively little known in archaeological terms. Thus, it was a rare opportunity when extensive infrastructural transformations in Gothenburg offered the possibility for a large scale rescue archaeology project on an urban site which

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existed from 1473 to 1624, though there were decade - long periods of virtual abandonment related to large - scale wars. The site is located in the so-called Old Town district of Gothenburg. Despite the name, there are no visible remains above ground of the sixteenth century town today in this district. Below ground, however, there were substantial materials, remains of wooden floors, streets, and cemeteries. The project had a large budget for this region of Sweden, and showed several particular characteristics. It was an interdisciplinary project, in collaboration with historians and several specialists, such as osteology and archaeobotany. The project also worked intensively with the local community. In terms of organization, the project was financed by government authorities, mainly the municipality, in relation to a large infrastructural project. Several contract archaeology companies collaborated, and had simultaneously an articulation to the University of Gothenburg and the Early Modern Town Project, financed by the Science Council of Sweden. In this volume Rosén, Gainsford, Öbrink, Carlstein, Alfssdotter, and Thoreld discuss the project and its various components.

Certain written sources relate to the New Lödöse town, particularly its later periods, but data is not abundant. Archaeology thus plays an important role in getting closer to this socioeconomic and political setting. This volume of the IJHA touches on several aspects of the town, and has been produced by several scholars involved in the project. Cornell, Nilsson, Palm, and Rosén try to place the town in a wider context, and briefly discuss its hinterland and its economic characteristics. Large parts of the historical data come from recent historical research with primary sources, which are published for the first time in this journal. Rosén and Larsson combine archaeological and historical data to give a general idea of the place. They stress the deep economic inequality at the location, which is evident in written sources, and also visible in the archaeological material. The archaeological analysis takes the individual plots as the point of departure. There are general similarities in size and general distribution of functions within these plots, though there are marked differences in details. The wealthy and the poor seem to have been present in all parts of the town, but there are indications of certain differences between areas in this regard. Öbrink, Williams, and Nilsen address the layout of town and the plots in greater detail. The buildings were wooden, and the only archaeologically known exception thus far was the church. There is clear evidence of the city's foundation, visible in the clearance of the area and the creation of plots of similar size. There is evidence for two kinds of streets. One type was shared general streets, administered by the town council. But there were also smaller streets managed by the inhabitants. There is also evidence that individual plot owners and users worked their sections in different ways.

Schager, Lennblad, Andersson, and Paring address the question how refuse and garbage was handled in the town. There were many different ways to dispose of garbage. Parts of the refuse were used as fertilizers and compost and deposited in open plots inside and fields outside the town walls. Other garbage was thrown into a nearby river. Certain garbage heaps were excavated, but there was no system using bins or similar installations. In small stretches (called *vretar*) between plots there is often a remarkable accumulation of garbage, which indicates that they were used for temporary disposal of garbage and as human latrines. Carlsson, Gustavsson, and Forsblom Ljungdahl investigate the production of the ceramics recovered at the site. An interesting observation is that a considerable percentage of the ceramics seems to have been

produced in the region. A particular type of imported ceramics, the Jutish pots, a kind of blackware, was produced on the Danish countryside, and in domestic contexts. Ceramics from several European countries was retrieved, mostly from northern Europe but also some Mediterranean material. In general, the evidence shows that ceramics was produced in varied socioeconomic contexts and at different scales.

Maltin and Jonsson address the remains of fish from the town. Fish evidently played a major role in the local diet. The fish mainly comes from far out in the Atlantic, and must have been produced through large manufacturing operations, probably run by people from other countries. There is little use of local fish resources. The individual plots exhibit particular traits in terms of species and amounts of fish. In terms of method, the decision to make a systematic and intensive collection of bone materials was productive. Heimdahl and Vretemark address disease and health care, based on osteological remains from the cemetery and the archaeobotanical analysis of stomach contents. Among other things, they discover the use of herbal remedies to treat pain and illness in the last moments of life. Andreasson and Svensson address the cemetery material in terms of demography and identity. The osteological material from the cemetery, accumulated over several field seasons, consists of over 1000 individuals, which is a high percentage of the population considering the town's short duration. There is no evident spatial patterning in the distribution of the burials in terms of sex and age. However, there is a large variability in terms of the construction of the burial and in the ways the bodies have been handled. Only a few individuals were buried in coffins. The evidence demonstrates that a high percentage of the population suffered from severe diseases, and there is a high percentage of signs of violence, particularly on male skeletons.

Hjertman, Naumann, Johansson, and Kjellin discuss war and violence at New Lödöse. The town was strategically situated in a conflicted region, and violence was an ever-present feature. In periods of armed attacks, large parts of the population fled and relocated to other towns. Different classes and social groups experienced war in different ways.

Combining a set of disciplines proved productive in the Nya Lödöse Project. Historical sources were revisited and scrutinized, and new archaeological evidence retrieved. Various specialists contributed with knowledge on digital field methodology, osteology, archaeobotany, and ICP analysis. The project questioned traditional assumptions and has initiated the creation of a new approach, and contributed to new visions of the site and the corresponding time period in the region in question. This volume is the first systematic attempt at summarizing the results, and the work will be continued on various lines, including specialized analysis and theoretical work.

The Nya Lödöse Project has produced a wealth of information of one particular location from the sixteenth century, a town of relatively short duration, a good time/space relation. The micro-study of this location will be of great interest for future comparison within the region, in the wider Nordic landscape, and beyond to the wider world.