

MACROFOSSIL FINDS FROM PORVOO / BORGÅ — A MEDIEVAL TOWN IN SOUTHERN FINLAND

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This paper presents some results of macrofossil finds in archaeologically dated soil samples from the medieval town of Porvoo, dating to the 14th – 16th centuries AD. Porvoo (in Swedish, Borga / Borgå; borg=castle, å=river) is the second oldest city in Finland, which obtained town rights after Turku (Åbo) in the mid-14th century. In written sources, the name Borga is mentioned for the first time in 1327.

Porvoo has been an important centre of trade since the 13th century. It was established at the junction of the sea and the river, at a place where people used to come to trade their merchandise. Goods from the rest of Europe travelled via Porvoo, and people brought furs and other commodities to Porvoo to be transported via Tallinn to central Europe. The wealthiest and most influential townsmen were merchants of German origin, burghers who were responsible for town planning. They also built a centre for local administration and trade activities, with a town hall and a market place. The key landmark was the church which was founded on the hill to dominate the town.

Archaeological excavations have been carried out at several sites in Porvoo. These have revealed medieval log buildings, stone structures and streets. At a churchyard, over 50 graves have been excavated. Altogether over 20000 macrofossil finds have been identified and they represent 130 different taxa. The most interesting macrofossil finds from the sites are weed seeds of *Agrostemma githago*, *Anthemis cotula* and *Anthemis ruthenica*, *Centaurea cyanus*, *Chrysanthemum segetum*, *Hyoscyamus niger* and *Urtica urens*, which do not grow any more or are extremely rare in Finland today. Finds of cultivated or collected plants were grains of *Hordeum vulgare* and *Secale cereale*, as well as seeds of *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*, *Fragaria vesca*, *Vaccinium myrtillus*, *Rubus chamaemorus* and *R. idaeus*. Leaves of mosses, Bryophyta, were found in the grave of a newborn baby. The leaves were attached to the skull of the baby and came from a pillow made of mosses.

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