



*Did You know that
a mediaeval sepulchre may be
visited in Tartu?*

Tiesitkö, että keskellä Tarttoa voi vierailla keskiaikaisessa hautakammiossa?

Знает ли вы, что в центре Тарту можно посетить средневековую гробницу?

Kas teadsid, et keset Tartut võib külastada keskaegset hauakambrit?



It all began in 2008, when archaeologist Martin Malve was investigating the cultural layer amongst the ruins of the Dome Cathedral and found a mediaeval tombstone.



The tombstone bears the portrait of a person, and a few text fragments say that it is a very intelligent or learned man, the Vicar at the Cathedral Chapter.



In 2013, renovations began in the lobby in Tartu's historical Dome Cathedral, now the University of Tartu History Museum. There came up with the idea to display underneath a glass floor the mediaeval tombstone found some years previously. The work, however, stumbled across an unexpected find.



Under the floor, an exceptionally well preserved mediaeval sarcophagus laid from brick was discovered.
The archaeologists set about emptying out the found sarcophagus, and surprises continued...



At a depth of 1.8 metres, the archaeologists discovered coffin remains that, once cleaned, yielded the skeleton of a male aged 40 to 45. The precise age of the tomb is not known; however, two coins from the 1530s found just above the coffin help to date it. An examination of the teeth confirmed that their owner was a person who once enjoyed better food than peasants.



The Museum decided to display the previously recovered tombstone, sarcophagus and skeleton in the floor pit. As a result of a complex operation, the tombstone reached its new location without incident.



The pit dug in the Museum floor is overlaid by durable glass panes.



The only mediaeval sepulchre on display for the general public in Estonia is a true magnet for visitors.



The University of Tartu History Museum is housed in the former Dome Cathedral whose two towers support viewing platforms from which wonderful views of the city centre of Tartu may be enjoyed from May to November.



Exhibition rooms across five storeys at the Museum provide both young and old with information about the foremost achievements of the University of Tartu and Estonian science.



The main building of the University of Tartu History Museum stands in the city centre of Tartu, on Toome Hill, which is a wonderful spot for walking or relaxation. Tartu Observatory and the University of Tartu Art Museum, which is housed in the main building of the University, are also located nearby.