

BRUGGE

MUSEA
BRUGGE

Press File

TALES FROM THE UNDERGROUND
BRUGES IN THE YEAR 1000



VERHALEN UIT DE

ZWERZEN
OUDGEO

BRUGGE IN HET JAAR 1000 | EXPO
GRUUTHUSEMUSEUM | VANAF 09.12.2021

 Vlaanderen
verbeelding werkt

 RAAKVLAKE
Onroerend Erfgoed Brugge en Ommeland

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Musea Brugge and Raakvlak are proud to present: Tales from the underground - Bruges in the year 1000

Bruges – the Venice of the North, the New York of the North Sea – was known far and wide during the Late Middle Ages as a vibrant trading metropolis. But the city's great success was more than just coincidence. Archaeologists and historians now see the year 1000 as a key moment in Bruges' development. By that time, all the components necessary for later success were present: a unique location in the landscape, the support and protection of the count, the presence of traders and craftsmen.

This exhibition in the Gruuthusemuseum takes you back to that crucial but often neglected period in the city's history. As the absolute highlight, for the first time in more than a millennium an artefact of the very highest quality and importance is returning to Bruges: the seal of Boudewijn (or Baldwin) IV!

Come and discover the most important archaeological sites in and around the medieval city. From the count's castle to the shepherders in the coastal plain. From the fields on poor sandy soils to the first trading contacts with Scandinavia. The sources are scarce, but the stories they reveal are both fascinating and impressive

The mystery surrounding the seal

Boudewijn IV, known as the Bearded, was the count of Flanders from 988 to 1035 and ruled his domains from his base in Bruges. Like his predecessors, he was a powerful, self-assured and ambitious man. His seal reflected these characteristics: the count prominent on the front, seated in majesty with a sword and a spear (or lance) in his hands. The seal was used to authenticate important documents, which in this period was a royal prerogative. Since 1906, the seal has been part of the collection of the National Museum of Denmark.

How did this remarkable and remarkably important object find its way to the other side of Europe? Was it stolen and carried off as plunder to the frozen lands of the North? There is no disputing that it somehow ended up in the homeland of the Vikings! Or was it taken to Denmark by an ambassador or another important figure who had a close connections with the count? We will never know for certain, but it is highly likely the diplomatic contacts of this kind between the two regions did exist. Now, **for the first time in**

more than a millennium, this artefact of the very highest quality and importance is returning to Bruges for the temporary exhibition 'Tales from the underground: Bruges in the year 1000'.

The return of the seal of Boudewijn IV to Bruges has given a new impetus to the scientific and academic study of this exceptional object. Archaeologists Pieterjan Deckers and Else Roesdahl, the former from Belgium and the latter from Denmark, have taken this opportunity to delve further into the seal's past. The results of their research will be published in the near future. In addition, before the exhibition starts the seal will be subjected for the very first time to a 3D-scan. The resulting 3D-model will be used as a basis for the printing of a 3D-replica that visitors will be able to handle during the exhibition.

The exhibition

From 9 December 2021 to 27 October 2023, the temporary exhibition 'Tales from the underground: Bruges in the year 1000' will take place in the Gruuthusemuseum in Bruges. The exhibition, which is the result of collaboration between **Raakvlak** (Inter-municipal Agency for Immoveable Heritage for Bruges and the Ommeland) and **Musea Brugge**, take visitors back to the fascinating period around the year 1000. Alderman Minou Esquenet: "An outstanding artefact like the seal of Boudewijn IV opens our eyes to the importance of the unique position occupied by Bruges, Flanders and its counts on the international stage. The seal and the other fascinating objects and documents on display also demonstrate that even after the closing of the city's Archaeological Museum there is still very much a place for archaeology in Bruges."

Pascal Ennaert, the chairman of Raakvlak: "The many stories highlighted in the exhibition are expertly told by a team of specialists from the fields of archaeology and history. Finds such as whale bones, ice skates, jewels and a bear's skull help to bring these stories to life. It is no coincidence that campaign image for the exhibition is a whale. It stands a symbol for the importance of water – both river and sea – for medieval Bruges. With this exhibition, we invite visitors to also think about the many questions and puzzles that archaeologists are still trying to unravel!"

"It is by no means easy to find and correctly

identify artefacts from the period around the year 1000,' says Elviera Velghe, director of Public Affairs and Exhibitions for Musea Brugge. 'Even so, various excavations, such as the one carried out in the vicinity of the Church of Our Lady, have

discovered some interesting objects. The exhibition sheds light on some of the most important archaeological sites in and around the city and brings together top finds from throughout the region."

Images in high resolution

Images to promote this exhibition can be downloaded via the following link:
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/museabrugge/albums>
Please mention the correct credits to be found with each photo.



1. A seal of Count Boudewijn IV (988-1035), discovered in Denmark. Collection of the National Museum of Denmark, photo: <https://samlinger.natmus.dk>
2. The skull of a bear, discovered during excavations on the Burg in Bruges. Collection of the Crowne Plaza Hotel, photo: Dominique Provost
3. Whale vertebra, discovered during excavations on the Burg in Bruges. Collection of the Crowne Plaza Hotel, photo: Raakvlak
4. Pot with a spout, in red-painted earthenware (1050-1125), discovered on the Brugse Steenweg in Koolkerke, photo: Raakvlak

Practical info exhibition

Title	Tales from the underground – Bruges in the year 1000
Location	Gruuthusemuseum, Dijver 17c, 8000 Bruges
Dates	from 9 December 2021 up to and including 27 October 2023
Opening times	from Tuesday to Sunday from 9.30 to 17 hrs. Closed on Mondays, 25 December and 1 January.
Tickets	€ 14 € 12 (red.) [incl. permanent exhibition] – free up to 12 years and Bruges inhabitants – via www.museabrugge.be/tickets
Info	www.museabrugge.be/ondergrond

In collaboration with Raakvlak



More info

All arrangements can be made via the press officer of Musea Brugge, tom.deschacht@brugge.be or t +32 50 47 23 81.

Press visits to the exhibition are possible by appointment (see www.museabrugge.be/en/press). The press file can also be consulted online and texts can be copied via www.museabrugge.be/en/press.

Request

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THE MUSEA BRUGGE FRIENDS' ASSOCIATION THANKS THEIR SPECIAL BENEFACTORS

