

Renaissance mystery solved

February 8 2008

Forensic scientists said the death of Italian Renaissance philosopher Giovanni Pico della Mirandola appears to have been foul play.

Silvano Vinceti, head of the committee that managed the exhumation of Pico's body, said it appears Pico and his friend, Antonio Ambrosini -- also known as Poliziano -- died in 1494 of arsenic poisoning, most likely at the hand of a member of the Medici family, The Telegraph newspaper said Thursday.

The bodies of the two men were exhumed last year and tested using current technology. The team found a toxic level of arsenic in their bones, as well as high levels of mercury and lead.

The forensic scientists said they believe Piero de Medici ordered Pico's death and that Pico's secretary probably administered the poison.

Pico's tract "The Oration on the Dignity of Man" has been called the "manifesto of the Renaissance," the newspaper said.

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