

Scientists retrieve Caravaggio's presumed remains

December 21 2009

Italian scientists Monday collected from a small chapel bones that are presumed to be the remains of celebrated Renaissance artist Caravaggio who died 400 years ago.

The scientists, watched by media, retrieved the bones from an ossuary in the central port town of Porto Ercole to find out more about Caravaggio's death and give him a more notable burial site.

The remains were placed in aluminium boxes and taken to the University of Bologna's Ravenna campus where they are to be compared with those of descendants of the artist's family.

The project is led by [anthropology](#) professor Giorgio Grupponi, who also worked on the reconstruction of the face of Middle Ages poet Dante Alighieri that was unveiled in 2007.

The revolutionary Caravaggio, whose real name was Michelangelo Merisi, was born around 1571 and died in 1610, apparently from malaria, after leading a tumultuous life.

His body is said to have been buried in the Porto Ercole cemetery and later exhumed in 1956 when the remains were put into the crypt of the church.

The 16th-century painter was celebrated for his dramatic chiaroscuro (light and shadow) paintings including "Bacchus", "The Supper at

Emmaus" and "Sacrifice of Isaac".

Criticised at the time for an expressionist style, his works stirred religious debate.

They are on exhibition until January 24 in Rome's Borghese Gallery alongside the works of British [artist](#) Francis Bacon.

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