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Furness Abbey grave yields treasures of a prosperous medieval abbot

When stabilizing the wooden foundations of the abbey, archaeologists discovered the undisturbed tomb of a well-fed, little-exercised abbot in his 40s, who suffered from arthritis. Furness Abbey, on the outskirts of Barrow in Cumbria, was one of the most powerful and richest Cistercian abbeys in the country. The man was buried with a silver-gilt crosier and a jeweled ring in remarkable condition. The crosier features a central gilded silver plaque depicting the archangel Michael slaying a dragon. The large ring, likely to have been given to the abbot on his consecration, "...is an unusual ring. The bezel is a pyramid shape and is pointed – it would stick in to your finger. You would have felt it when you wore it and it might have been a reminder of the piety of the office," noted English Heritage curator Susan Harrison. It is also possible that the ring might have held a relic in place on the abbot's finger.



Re-written from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/culture/2012/apr/19/furness-abbey-grave-medieval->



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