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**A COMPARISON OF HEALTH AND LABOR INDICATIONS OF A CLUNIAC
AND CISTERCIAN MONASTIC CEMETERIES FROM MEDIEVAL LONDON**

Ruth Lynn Dorton

Abstract

Many of the monastic cemeteries from Medieval London are used in bioarcheological research on health with little stated on the role the religious order plays in health. Each religious order has its own traditions that define their daily lives. It is well documented that the diets of the religious communities were more similar to the nobility, however some religious orders, like the Cistercians, are also participating in more strenuous labor similar to lay people. This project used information from the Wellcome Osteological Database to assess how the differences in the labors performed by religious orders affect indications of health and stress on the skeletons of 558 individuals associated with two prominent medieval religious orders, a Cluniac cemetery restricted to only monks who did not participate in strenuous work activities and a Cistercian cemetery that included lay individuals. The results show a difference in indications of health and stress associated to work activities at different age ranges at death for each cemetery. The individuals from the Cistercian cemetery show an overall lower age at death for health indications than the individuals from the Cluniac cemetery. The individuals from the Cluniac cemetery show overall more indications of disease than the individuals from the Cistercian cemetery. The implication is that the Cluniac individuals were living longer even with diseases compared to the individuals from the Cistercian cemetery. This suggests that the strenuous labor required for the Cistercian increased the health risk despite having better quality diets.