



PROANTIC

LE PLUS BEAU CATALOGUE D'ANTIQUITES

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## Limestone Portable Altar. English, 12th Century.



1 450 EUR

Period : Before 16th century

Condition : Etat d'usage

Material : Stone

### Description

A limestone portable altar. English, 12th century. Measures 8 x 7cm. Provenance: English Private Collection. The condition is consistent with its age, showing general wear and minor chipping throughout. The small altar is constructed from three separate pieces: the upper two sections were at some point broken and later rejoined, while the base is a later replacement. Portable stone altars have their origins in the Roman world, where they were used for private devotion and easily transported for ritual use in domestic, military, or itinerant settings. Often modest in scale and form, they reflect a long tradition of personal piety and functional design. The present example, dating from the Norman period, is likely modelled on the 12th-century font of St Martin's Church in Canterbury--one of the oldest continuously used

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churches in England. Carved from Caen stone, a fine-grained limestone imported from Normandy, the font is cylindrical in form and composed of multiple stone segments, lined with lead and decorated with tiers of blind arcading, interlocking circles, and pellet moulding. Its restrained Romanesque ornamentation and robust construction reflect both the influence of classical forms and the distinctive aesthetic of Norman ecclesiastical design. As such, it offers a fitting and historically resonant model for the altar's form and material language.