



12th-century Stone Capital Depicting A Cocatrix



650 EUR

Period : Before 16th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Stone

Height : 25 c.m.

Description

This is a rare fragment of a French Romanesque sculpture depicting a cocatrix, a mythical hybrid creature from the symbolic imagination of the Middle Ages and featured in medieval bestiaries. Cocatrixes are bipedal dragons or serpents with rooster heads, first mentioned in the Bible as a venomous, fiery serpent. Similar to the Greek basilisk, some believe it is the same cryptid, save for the name. The basilisk, like the cocatrix, could kill with a single glance, a touch, or even a breath. The weasel was the only animal apparently immune to it, and the only way to kill it was to force it to gaze at its own reflection. Placing the cocatrix on religious or civil buildings gives it an apotropaic function: it does not glorify evil, but represents it in order to ward it off. Its sculpted presence serves as a

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warning, a symbolic boundary between the secular world and the sacred space, reminding the faithful of the dark forces that lurk outside the divine order. The stone used is a local sedimentary rock, likely coarse limestone or sandstone, a material commonly used in rural Romanesque statuary in the Massif Central. The surface shows signs of ancient and uniform erosion, indicating prolonged exposure to the elements. The base is truncated, indicating prior removal, which suggests that this sculpture was originally an architectural element: a corbel, a fragment of a capital, or a secondary element of a cornice or portal. Condition: "as is"--original breaks and missing pieces, historical erosion consistent with the piece's age and exposure to the elements, no visible modern restoration. Height: 25 cm