PROANTIC
LE PLUS BEAU CATALOGUE D'ANTIQUITES

Base Made Of Egyptian Imperial Red Porphyry



350 EUR

Period : 20th century

Condition : Très bon état

Description

Beautiful plaque/base made of solid Egyptian imperial red porphyry, carved from ancient ruins. Beautiful dimensions and a deep purple-red color. Perfect for displaying a work of art or for mounting on gilded bronze. Length: 12.2 cm. Width: 10 cm. Thickness: 1.5 cm. Egyptian Imperial Porphyry is particularly rare: only the Roman and later Byzantine emperors could obtain this purple stone, which was the exclusive property of the Emperor (fiscus caesaris).The stone's purple color was associated with "Tyrian purple," the most expensive dye of antiquity.This rock was all the more rare and precious because it was found in only one place on Earth: Mons Porphyrites, located in the eastern desert of Egypt (Jebel Dokhan). After the fall of the Roman Empire, the exact location of the quarry was

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"lost" for nearly 1,500 years, before being rediscovered by explorers in the 19th century, though it was never re-mined.Porphyry is one of the hardest rocks on the planet (a 7 on the Mohs scale, close to quartz).In ancient times, it was nearly impossible to carve with conventional iron tools. Extracting it required special hardened steel tools and months of polishing with emery to achieve a mirror-like shine. Crafting a single 5-meter column alone took several years of uninterrupted work by a full team of elite stonecutters. The cost of transporting it from the remote quarries of the Egyptian desert to Alexandria and then to Rome was so high that a cubic foot of imperial porphyry fetched an exorbitant price of 250 denarii--equivalent to a skilled worker's monthly wage! (for a piece barely thirty centimeters long). Because of this difficulty, the extraction of new blocks ceased after the 4th century. Virtually all of the porphyry seen today in churches or museums (columns, basins, sarcophagi) consists of reused pieces from the Roman era.