Finch & Co



ENGLISH MEDIEVAL LIMESTONE GROTESQUE

AN ENGLISH MEDIEVAL LIMESTONE GROTESQUE OF A PRIAPIC GRIMACING HUNCH BACKED DWARF
1ST HALF 15TH CENTURY
SIZE: 27CM HIGH, 20CM WIDE, 30.5CM DEEP - 10½ INS HIGH, 8 INS WIDE, 12 INS DEEP
38.5CM HIGH - 15¼ INS HIGH (WITH STAND)

LITERATURE

THIS FIGURE SQUATTING ON HIS HAUNCHES, EXPOSING HIS GENITALS, WITH A SHORT THICKSET BODY IS REFERRED TO IN THE WEST COUNTRY OF ENGLAND AS A 'HUNKY PUNK'. MEDIEVAL ELABORATE CARVED STONE GROTESQUE FIGURES WERE USED TO VISUALLY BREAK UP STRAIGHT SECTIONS OF MASONRY ON CHURCH BUILDINGS, BUT THE MEDIEVAL MASON WAS ALSO DISPLAYING HIS ARTISTRY AND WIT. FIGURES SUCH AS THIS REPRESENT AN ASSOCIATION WITH MAGICAL ANCIENT POWERS AND WERE HOPED TO WARD OFF AND DISSIPATE EVIL SPIRITS. THE EXPOSED SEXUAL ORGANS WERE BELIEVED TO GENERATE A PROTECTIVE FORCE, AND AS THE ANCIENT ROMANS HAD BELIEVED, THE PHALLUS WAS A VOTIVE AMULET CAPABLE OF DRIVING OUT DEMONS. THE ROMANS ALSO VALUED DWARVES FOR THEIR APOTROPAIC AND TUTELARY QUALITIES, AND THE MEDIEVAL MASON HAS EXAGGERATED ALL THE FEATURES OF HIS BODY FOR MAXIMUM VISUAL IMPACT HIGHLIGHTING HIS GRIMACING COUNTENANCE. FOR THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH THE PURPOSE OF THESE CARVINGS WAS TO LEND ICONOGRAPHIC SUPPORT TO THEIR MORAL TEACHINGS.