

personal english



Character #28 Basilisk

In European Medieval **bestiaries**, a basilisk is a **legendary reptile** reputed to be **king of serpents** and is said to have the power to cause death with a single **stare**. According to **Naturalis Historia** by **Pliny the Elder** (77-79 CE), the basilisk of Cyrene is a small snake ('not more than twelve fingers in length') so venomous as to leave a wide trail of deadly venom in its wake, and whose stare is likewise lethal. Its only weakness purportedly is in the odor of the **weasel**, which, according to Pliny, was thrown into the basilisk's hole to weaken or kill it. The legend of the basilisk and its connection to the weasel in Europe may have been inspired by accounts of certain species of Asiatic snakes (such as the **king cobra**) and their natural predator, the **mongoose**. The basilisk is nicknamed 'king' because it is said to sport on its head a **crown-like crest**. Stories of the basilisk show that it is germane to the **cockatrice**, a snake-like winged creature with a rooster's head. The basilisk is allegedly hatched by a cockerel from the egg of a snake or toad; this is the reverse of the cockatrice, which is hatched from a cockerel's 'egg' incubated by a snake or toad.



Click on the Picture for two **VIDEOS** on the Basilisk