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Etruscan Charun Antefix

An ancient Etruscan painted terracotta architectural antefix in the form of the head of Charun with exaggerated hook nose, pointed ears, furrowed brow, and fangs.

Etruria.
Ca. 5th century BC.
Height: 5 1/2 in. (10.2 cm).



Charun was an Etruscan underworld deity. He guarded the entry to the Underworld, as opposed to the similar Greek deity that ferried souls across the River Styx to Hades. Etruscan Charun was depicted with grotesque features including exaggerated nose, pointed ears, and fangs. He wields a hammer to protect the deceased, but also to dispatch the mortally wounded as was his later role in the Roman amphitheater.

cf.: Museo Etrusco "Claudio Faina", Orvieto, inv. no. 380, LIMC #33293.

Formerly in the collection of Artemis A. W. Joukowsky (1930-2020) and Dr. Martha Sharp Joukowsky, president of the Archaeological Institute of America, 1989-1993, (1936-2022), Providence, Rhode Island.

inventory number: 9228

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