

COLNAGHI



An Antefix with a Lion's Head

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Roman

Imperial Period, ca. 1st century A.D.

Antefix with a Lion's Head

Terracotta

h. 24.8 cm

9 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.

Provenance

Charles Gillot (1853-1903), Paris;

thence by continuous descent;

Ancienne Collection Charles Gillot (1853-1903), Christie's, Paris, 4-5 March 2008, lot 147.



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Antefixes are decorative covers for the ends of tiles situated at the edge of a roof and were meant to cover the wooden under-structure of the roof, both to protect the beams from the elements and to give greater majesty to the building of which they were parts. Popular in Greek Italy and Etruria from the 6th century B.C. onwards, the present example is Roman, from the 1st century A.D.

The decorative program of this antefix, with a lion's head at bottom-center, as well as swirling abstracted acanthus leaf, is a testament to the heights of ancient ornamentation and luxury, as this piece of terracotta would have been attached to a roof and likely not entirely discernible to the naked eye of a viewer on the ground. However, this antefix like all Greek and Roman sculptures would have originally been painted; examples such as the one from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York below still show traces of the original pigment that would have also decorated this antefix.

Comparanda



New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 11.140.1.

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