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CYLINDRICAL BOX, CARVED IVORY

SPAIN, CUENCA; 1ST HALF OF 11TH CENTURY

H INCL. LID: 7.1; DIAM: 5.8 CM

Among the group of finely carved ivory boxes from the 10th-12th century are numerous cylindrical boxes, or pyxes, that in many cases have been preserved with their hemispherical lids. This little pyxis was carved with a repetitive pattern of vine scrolls on tendrils entwined in layers. On the lid, the pattern is combined with two symmetrically placed gazelle pairs that nibble on the vines.

The decoration is a slightly freer variant of the one found on another pyxis and on a box whose inscriptions say that it was made in Cuenca in around the middle of the 11th century.

After the fall of the Cordoba Caliphate, Cuenca briefly assumed its role as the most important Spanish production center for ivory objects.

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