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CYLINDRICAL IVORY BOX, CARVED AND OPENWORK DECORATION,
INLAID WITH A BLACK, PITCH-LIKE SUBSTANCE

EGYPT?; MID-14TH CENTURY

H: 9.2; DIAM: 9.2 CM

The box belongs to a group of 11 closely related containers whose origins in either Mamluk Egypt or Nasrid Spain have been debated. The inscription bands at the top and bottom of the box consist solely of good wishes for its owner, and there is no information on who this owner might have been or where the box was made. The inscription was originally surrounded by a dark layer of pigment of the same type as the fine black inlays, which still remain in several places.

Boxes of this type might have been made for aromatics that were released through the fine openings.

Published in:
Boisgirard, Paris, 26/4-1979, lot 69;

Kjeld von Folsach: *Art from the World of Islam in The David Collection*, Copenhagen 2001, cat.no. 408;
Ángel Galán y Galindo: *Marfiles medievales del islam*, Córdoba 2005, no. 08010, pp. 165-166;
Stefano Carboni: “Cylindrical ivory boxes with openwork decoration: Mamluk, Nasrid, or something else?” in *Journal of the David Collection*, 2005, 2:2, fig. 116, p. 214;
Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom (eds.): *Cosmophilia. Islamic Art from the David Collection, Copenhagen*, McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College, Boston 2006, cat.no. 107;
Linda Komaroff: *Gifts of the Sultan: the arts of giving at the Islamic courts*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles 2011, cat.no. 53 and fig. 103;
Noelia Silva Santa-Cruz: *La eboraria andalusí del califato omeya a la Granada nazarii*, Oxford 2013, fig. 271, p. 422;