Inv. no. 5/2002

CASKET, CARVED IVORY WITH GILT-BRONZE FITTINGS

SPAIN, CORDOBA; C. 966-968

H: 9.9; W: 14.5; D: 9.3 CM

The ivory casket belongs to a little group of masterfully carved ivory objects that were made for the Spanish Umayyad court in the second half of the 10th century. The casket is the largest in the group, carved from a single tusk. It is also one of the most monumental. The motifs’ various hunting scenes are not found in a latticework of medallions, as on the other caskets. Instead, each side is filled out with entire, independent scenes.

There was once an Arabic inscription around the lid that probably contained the name of the person for whom the casket was made. It was undoubtedly removed when the casket – like so many others of its kind – found a new place in a Christian context in the Middle Ages.

Published in:
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Sotheby’s, London, 18/5-1967, lot 23;
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Ángel Galán y Galindo: “Sobre el origen de los marfiles califales cordobeses” in Arte, Arqueología e Historia, 2006, 13, no. 02027, p. 57;
Noelia Silva Santa-Cruz: La eboraria andalusí del califato omeya a la Granada nazaria, Oxford 2013, cat.no. 12, pp. 213-215, figs. 125a-h, and p. 144;