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Villanovan Bronze Pyxis



An ancient Villanovan bronze circular lidded pyxis, the sides decorated with rows of embossed circles; on the lid, embossed circles radiate from the center; with remnants of chain latches at the sides.

Northern Italy.
Ca. 8th - 7th century BC.
Diameter: 6 1/2 in. (16.5 cm).

The so-called Villanovans (named after a modern town near Bologna) were the early Iron Age predecessors of the Etruscans. They are thought to have settled the area of Etruria, roughly modern Tuscany, in the 11th century BC. By the fourth century BC the Villanovans were assimilated by the Etruscans and overcome by the neighboring Gauls.The pyxis was a lidded cylindrical vessel mostly used by women to hold cosmetics, trinkets or jewelry. Surviving pyxides from the Classical Period are mostly ceramic, but sometimes they are made of wood, metal, or ivory. The name derived from Corinthian boxes made of wood from the boxwood tree (puxos).

Formerly in the Jerome Eisenberg collection, New York; previously in a Swiss private collection.

inventory number: 9264

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