

# Galerie Hioco

## Capital (P639A)



### What do we like in this sculpture?

- Its rarity: in fifteen years of activity, this is only the second small capital that we have presented!
- The naturalness of the acanthus leaf motif, completely Greek, smoothly associated with an image of the Buddha making the gesture of argumentation.
- The extremely refined vegetal decoration on this piece which was supposed to surmount a pilaster framing a niche and in which was a Buddha or a bodhisattva.

## I. Detailed description

### **Capital (P639A)**

*Schist*

*Ancient province of Gandhāra*

*2nd-3rd century*

*H. 15 cm or 5 7/8 in*

This fragment of a capital is a charming and quite characteristic piece of that Gandhāra art which is often called Greco-Buddhist art. It is indeed a superb illustration of the close relationship that this original Buddhist art has with ancient Western art. It combines with great finesse and naturalness the Greek acanthus leaf motif with an image of the appeasing Buddha.

The Blessed One is unmistakably recognizable by the *uṣṇīṣa*, the cranial protuberance that is the essential sign of his Enlightenment, and a large halo behind his head confirms his transcendental character. He is also identified by his broad monastic garment, elegantly draped around his body in the manner of a Roman toga, covering both shoulders and falling in soft folds. Buddha is depicted as spontaneously rising out of acanthus leaves that constitute the rest of the decoration.

All around the Buddha, the capital is decorated with an extremely refined vegetal decoration. The acanthus leaf motifs first appear in low relief, multiplying the incisions that accentuate their graphic aspect. The vegetal ornament finally unfolds into a leaf sculpted in high relief and ending in a graceful scroll.

This beautiful Hellenistic-influenced architectural piece would have topped a pilaster used to frame a niche in which a Buddha or a bodhisattva would have stood. Such architectural elements are found in miniature on the numerous Gandhārian reliefs, separating the different scenes and structuring the sculpted surface.

***A true Corinthian capital  
in the service of Buddhist architecture***

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II. Image of the piece – front view



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III. Image of the piece – three-quarter view



#### IV. Provenance: in all transparency!

. This piece belonged to an American collector. His collection included several Gandhāra works, acquired in New York until the late 1990s.

. We are always very cautious and diligent about the provenance of the artworks we offer. Ensuring the seriousness and reliability of the information given by the former owners is one of our priorities and we then guarantee this origin by engaging our responsibility.

. In order to reinforce this guarantee, we systematically verify that these artworks have not been registered as missing or stolen. As Interpol has granted us the right to directly consult their database of stolen or reported items, we verify by ourselves and issue a certificate attesting to this.

#### V. Condition report: our scientific approach

This Gandhāran sculpture is made of schist, dated from circa 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century and measures 15 cm high or 5 7/8 in. The top section is flat and polished and the sculpture has been reduced at the back. It has a clean edge on the right side and an irregular edge on the other side. A few missing details are evident: the upper left corner is missing and the acanthus leaves on the upper corners are spalled. The same is true for the two hands of the Buddha. The tips of some acanthus leaves are missing or reduced. All these breaks are old as evidenced by their weathered surfaces. In the lower part of the relief, one of the acanthus leaf ends has been broken off and reattached. The head of the Buddha appears well cleaned. Most of the sculpted surface has lime deposits or sand concretions of brown color. These deposits are particularly abundant on the sides of the relief. This phenomenon is probably explained by a period of burial of the sculpture in the ground. This condition appears consistent with schist carvings of the Gandhāran period. No other restoration was evidenced.

*Please note that since we are not conservators or restorers, it must be understood that any condition report we made is a subjective qualified opinion, even if we do our best efforts. Prospective buyers should inspect the piece to satisfy themselves as to condition.*

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## VI. Comparable museum artwork – The British Museum

A capital belonging to the collections of the British Museum in London (1880.174):

The British  
Museum

### Description

Part of a Corinthian capital. A rectangular projection from a plain and slightly wider backing block has an acanthus leaf with a central lobe drooping over a Buddha and on each side three lobes with points partly broken. The Buddha, with an oval head and a large plain projecting halo, is in dhyāna. His robe covers both shoulders and the hands, and spreads to lie in a straight edge below.

View less ↕

### School/style

[Gandhara School](#)

### Cultures/periods

[Kushan](#)

### Production date

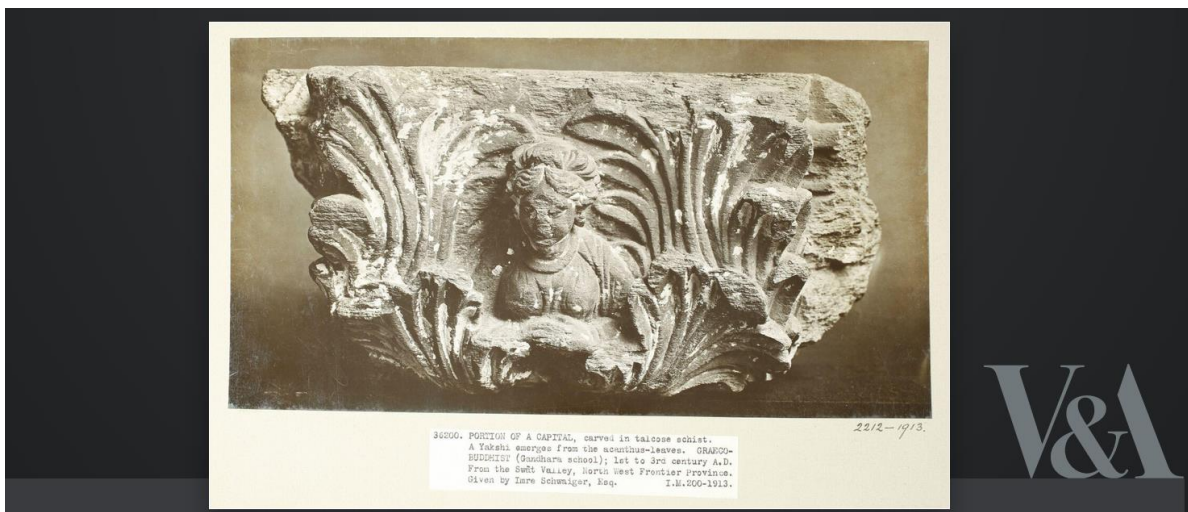
2ndC-3rdC



# Galerie Hioco

## VII. Comparable museum artwork – The Victoria & Albert Museum

A capital belonging to the collections of the Victoria & Albert Museum in London (IM.200-1913):



### BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Photograph depicting a portion of a capital in talcose schist, with a Yakshi emerging from the acanthus leaves. Greco-Buddhist (Gandhara School), ca. 1st to 3rd century from the Swat Valley, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (North West Frontier Province), Pakistan.

### VIII. Our guarantees: for a serene acquisition!

- More photos will be sent to you on request.
- In case of purchase, we will establish an invoice that you can pay by bank transfer.
- You will receive our certificate of authenticity with the photo of the artwork, its detailed description and the mention of the provenance.
- We will define together the shipping modalities and we will take care of all customs formalities if you live outside of France.
- If you do not like the piece, we give you the possibility to return it to us and we will assist you with the resulting terms and conditions.