

# GALERIE GOLCONDA

ARCHÉOLOGIE MUSÉALE  
FOSSILES – BIJOUX RARES ET ANCIENS  
CABINET DE CURIOSITÉS DES GRANDES CIVILISATIONS

## CERTIFICATE

### **CYLINDRICAL STEMMED RITUAL CHALICE**

#### **BACTRIA (1st Millennium BC)**

**MATERIAL AND TECHNIQUE:** Elegant goblet carved out of a single block of calcite (alabaster). Traditionally called “chalice” by archeologists, it has the shape of a goblet with slightly rounded cylindrical sides on a high stem. The lip of the goblet is flat and slim. Traces of a wide, wooden drill bit, used with an abrasive such as sand for polishing the object, are visible. Signs of erosion and some bits missing due to its age. This is a classic shape from the middle Bronze Age in this region. The material is mostly brownish yellow.

Fine condition.

**ORIGIN:** The region of Bactria, straddling what is present-day Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Afghanistan, is rich in innumerable mineral and agricultural resources, which permitted it to be populated since the Neolithic era. Today, these goblets' use still remains unknown: ritual vases, containers for burning perfumed oils, gift between people of stature, all hypotheses are possible. Alabaster was a highly-prized stone in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> millennia. Tableware made of it has been found in Cyprus, Egypt and Mesopotamia.

It is said that the prophet Zarathustra found refuge in Bactria-Zariaspa and that during the Iron Age he spread his doctrine, beliefs later collected in a holy book, the *Avesta*, finally translated in the 18<sup>th</sup> century by the Frenchman Abraham Anquetil-Dupeyron, thus making known to Europeans this very ancient monotheistic religion.

**DIMENSIONS:** Height 13.6 cm

Police book registration N°: 1651