



Hispano-Moresque Albarello

Manises, Spain, c. 1450

Lustre-glazed earthenware

28.5cm high, 13cm diameter

Stock no.: A5866

Provenance: French private collection

This pharmacy jar, or albarello, is decorated with an intricate ivy leaf pattern; the motif was commonly used to decorate 15th-century Valencian lustreware, with dated pieces suggesting a manufacturing period of c. 1427-1478.¹ This albarello was likely made towards the beginning of that period. The large leaves are decorated with sgraffito veins, painted alternately in copper lustre and cobalt blue. As the century progressed, the leaves decreased in size and the use of sgraffito diminished. The negative space is filled by fern fronds and floral motifs in copper lustre, which was most common in the middle of the century.²

Similar albarelli are held in the Hispanic Society of America, New York (accession no. [E597](#), dated 1435-1475), the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (accession no. [56.171.95](#), dated 1435-65), the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (accession no. [WA1967.44](#), dated 1440-1480), and the British Museum, London (accession no. [1968.0204.1](#), dated c. 1450). Albarelli with ivy-leaf decoration appear in altarpieces of the late 15th century, the best known of which is the Portinari Triptych in the Uffizi, Florence (accession no. [1890 nm. 3191, 3192, 3193](#)) painted by Hugo van der Goes in 1482.

[1] Ray, Anthony. *Spanish Pottery 1248-1898, with a Catalogue of the Collection in the Victoria and Albert Museum*. London: V&A Publications, 2000. p. 83.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 84.