



Hautes-Alpes  
Musée muséum départemental

*La collection Barle,*  
l'Espagne au coeur des Alpes

*The Barle Collection,  
Spain in the heart of the Alps*

November 2022 / January 2024

Musée Muséum départemental des Hautes-Alpes

Curators : Anna BERNARD, Valérie VERGER, Baptiste VAPPÉREAU

# The Barle Collection, Spain in the hearts of the Alps

In the history of compiling the Musée Départemental des Hautes-Alpes' collections, donations from Anne Laure and Adolphe Barle, in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, stand out for the quantity, quality and diversity of the works donated. But what makes the collection even more distinctive is its provenance: Spain.

While Italian and Flemish art are noticeably present in French public collections, Spanish art is not well represented. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Spanish works were nevertheless highly sought after by collectors. Indeed, in the second half of the century, industrialists, encouraged by the French government, invested massively in the Spanish economy. The expanding railway network made it easier for art lovers to travel to and from the Iberian Peninsula. It was in this context that fostered Franco-Spanish exchanges, and lasted until the First World War, that the Barle couple compiled their collection.

Although there are few records indicating the history of the works before they entered the museum's collections, it is likely that the collection was compiled in Madrid itself, Anne Laure's hometown and the couple's place of residence until the turn of the century.

The first donation to the museum in 1908 was made just a few years after the couple's return to Gap. A second donation followed in 1909, a year before the new museum opened in the Parc de la Pépinière. Following Adolphe Barle's death in 1935, Anne Laure continued to make donations: part of her library in 1941, then the most substantial donation of a hundred items in 1942.

In total, nearly 200 works entered the Museum's collections: some thirty paintings, more than eighty ceramics, four pieces of high-quality furniture, four sculptures, around thirty books, and roughly thirty devotional objects. The vast majority of these items were Spanish or were purchased as such by the Barles. The exhibition provides a glimpse into this emblematic collection that will take you on a journey through the art of the Iberian Peninsula.



*Spanish dance, LUCAS Y PADILLA Eugenio, 1846*



*Exhibition's view*

# Anne Laure and Adolphe BARLE

**While the specific reasons for the donations to the *Musée départemental des Hautes-Alpes*, and the interest in Spanish art are unknown, the life of Adolphe and Anne Laure Barle provides some food for thought.**

Adolphe Barle was born in Paris on 24 January 1862. His father's parents, Jean Charles Barle and Julie Taillet were from Gap. In 1885, young Adolphe graduated as engineer from the prestigious *École des Mines*. He joined the Madrid Gas Company in the late 1880s. The Company's director was Léon Litschfousse, father of the future Madame Barle.

Anne Laure was born Litschfousse on 11 November 1871 in Madrid. Her parents, Léon Litschfousse and Louise d'Anouilh de Salies, were French expatriates in Madrid. Anne Laure received a strict religious upbringing, chaperoned by a duenna, an older woman who was responsible for the education of young girls from good families in Spain.

It is likely that Adolphe and Anne Laure met through the professional relationship between her father, Léon Litschfousse, and Adolphe. They were married in Madrid on 24 October 1891 and stayed there until the end of the century, when they returned to France. They spent the winter in Nice and the summer in Gap for the rest of their lives. Adolphe died on 30 December 1935 in Nice, Anne Laure on 27 February 1948 in Gap.

In Spain as in France, the couple rubbed shoulders with the local elite. Adolphe Barle was directly linked to Charles Blanc, Chief of Police in Paris, and State Councillor. He was his brother-in-law, married to Eudoxie Barle. Until the death of Charles Blanc in 1915, they were the owners of the Château de Montmaur. The family photos above show Adolphe and Anne Laure Barle with Charles Blanc in Montmaur and at the Villa Julie

## ***Items in the display case:***

Family photo album – Views of the interiors of the Villa Julie

Photos by Adolphe Barle, early 20<sup>th</sup> century

Collection of photos of Anne Laure and Adolphe Barle

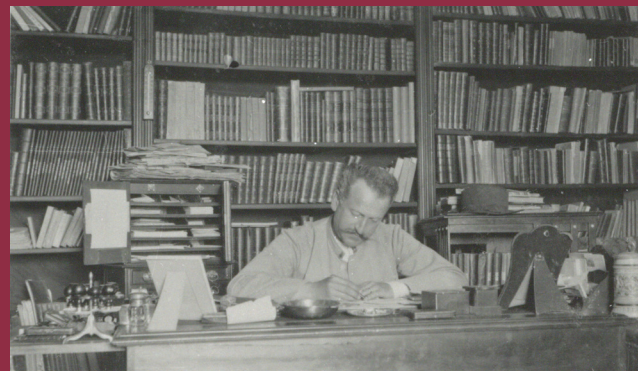
Adolphe Barle's business card

Name tag with Adolphe Barle's monogram

*All these family objects were kindly lent by Sophie Garoute*



**Anne Laure Barle**



**Adolphe Barle**



**Living room at the Villa Julie in  
Charance (Gap)**

# The Madrid Gas Company

The 19<sup>th</sup> century was a time of industrialisation and strong economic growth in Europe. Napoleon III, emperor of the Second Empire (1852–1870), saw the Iberian Peninsula as a potential for investment. *Crédit Mobilier Français* was founded in 1852 by the Pereire brothers. It was a French bank which invested in Madrid before becoming *Crédit Mobilier Français* in the 1860s. It was in this context of a race for investment that the Madrid Gas Lighting and Heating Company was founded in 1865. French investors made a fortune and reaped the benefits of the developing European railways.

The work presented below, is extremely refined and of great quality. It was given to Adolphe Barle by the employees of the Madrid Gas Company when he retired in 1899. He had taken over from his father-in-law as General Manager of the company.

## Adolphe Barle, photographer, and man of his time

Adolphe was a man of his time. He loved the latest inventions and was constantly on the cutting edge of technological innovation.

A keen photographer, he left several hundred glass plates, illustrating the Hautes-Alpes, but also Provence, Paris, Spain, Switzerland and even Morocco, from the very beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The first known photos were taken starting in 1898. They immortalise moments of the couple's daily life. In the photo of the Villa Julie, we can see the crenelated tower in which Adolphe Barle set up his photo laboratory.

The couple modernised several villas that they owned in Gap and Nice. Villa Julie had a telephone line as early as 1906, four years after the telephone was installed in Gap. Adolphe was also a great car enthusiast, as the photos above illustrate. With Anne Laure and their friends, they would go on excursions across French Alpine passes (Lautaret, La Grave, Galibier), but also to Switzerland (Fribourg) and other European cities.

### ***Objects in the display case:***

Thank you book offered to Adolphe Barle by the Madrid Gas Company  
1899, Illumination on parchment; leather and gilded metal for the cover

Roger GAROUTE (1920–1997), *View of the Villa Julie*, 20<sup>th</sup> century, Oil on canvas  
Roger Garoute is Adolphe and Anne Laure Barle's great-nephew by marriage. A prolific artist, he produced several works (paintings, drawings) on the theme of the Villa Julie as well as works donated to the museum.

*All these family items were kindly lent by Sophie Garoute.*



**The Barle and their friends on the road  
of the Galibier**



**Villa Julie in Charance (Gap)**

# The Barle faience collection

Faience represents a significant part of the Anne Laure and Adolphe Barle collection. In 1909, Adolphe donated seven 'Spanish faience' then Anne Laure completed the donation in 1942 with another 64 pieces, 50 of which came from various 15th to 17th-century Spanish workshops.

The notary deed by Chauvet specifies where in Spain the ceramics came from by naming the workshops. The remainder of the faience donated came from Rouen, Moustier and other workshops still to be determined. Four groups of Hispanic faience can be distinguished in the donation:

## **Talavera de la Reina [cat. 1]**

Talavera de la Reina is a village in Castillo, in the Toledo Province. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Philippe II, King of Spain appreciated Azulejos productions and Talavera tableware. The latter created faience workshops to meet the requirements of the Palace and Escorial Monastery (San Lorenzo de El Escorial) which was a royal residence at the time. In the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, the themes represented on Talavera faience were mainly religious. More secular themes appeared in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. When Mexico was colonised in the 16th century, monks founded new monasteries and imported the Spanish skills for producing enamelled designs. A large number of lay potters, from Seville and Talavera de la Reina came to Mexico at the very start of the colonial period. This technique would go on to have a long history in Central America. The manufacturing processes/skills of the artisanal Talavera of Puebla and Tlaxcala (Mexico) and those of the ceramics of Talavera de la Reina and El Puente del Arzobispo (Spain) are included in the UNESCO list of intangible cultural heritage.

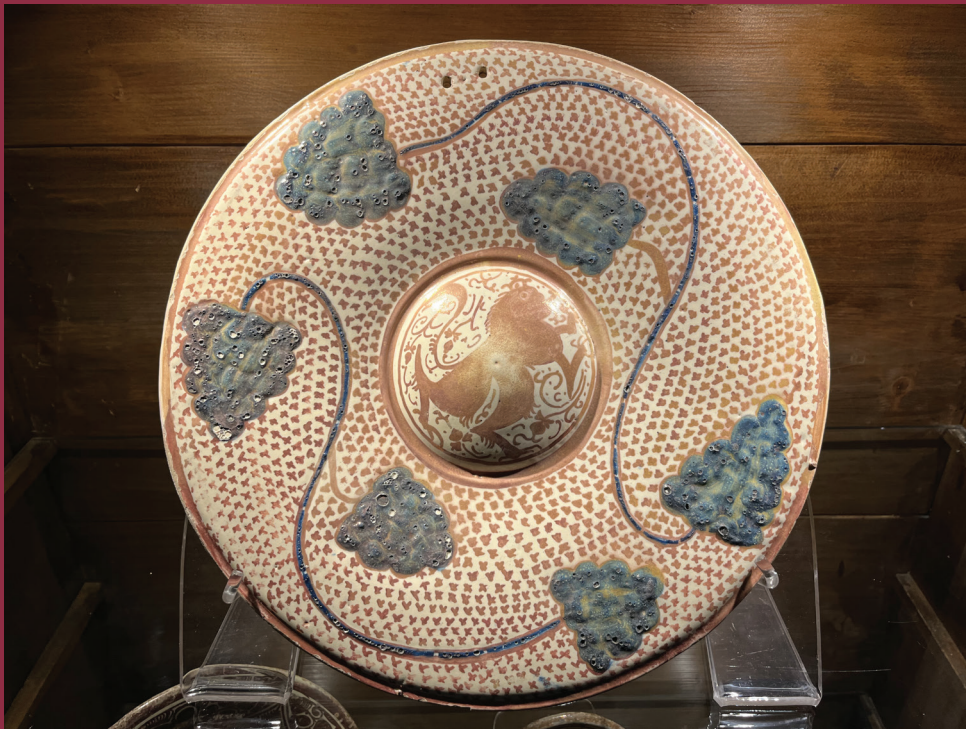
## **Manises [cat.2]**

Among Hispano-Moresque pottery, there is the pottery from Manises—a suburb near Valencia. At the end of the 12th century, the Islamic ceramics techniques and designs of Islamic ceramics were introduced into Spain by the Moors. The shape of these objects is known as Hispano-Moresque. In the 14th and 15th centuries, Hispano-Moresque ceramics gained popularity in this region that had become Christian. However, the pottery workshops were mainly run by Mudéjar craftsmen (Muslims established in the Christian kingdoms). Manises became the most important production centre. The blue and white designs were the first to combine floral and animal motifs of Islamic origin with figures and castles of Western origin. Manises is known for its glazed ceramics. Courts all over Europe commissioned these metal-glazed ceramics. As a result, the decorations on them are often heraldic, depicting western lords or castles.





cat.1 - *Saltcellar*, 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century



cat. 2 - *Great dish*, 17<sup>th</sup> century

### **Alcora [cat. 3]**

The Alcora faience workshop, located to the north-east of Valencia, was founded by the Count of Aranda in 1727. When the workshop was created, the Count brought in workers from Moustier, including Joseph Olerys, a famous ceramics painter. He is known for updating Moustier's designs by introducing grotesques. This workshop produced ceramics, tin-glazed ceramics, fine ceramics and even porcelain. The artwork is varied with religious, military, mythological or allegorical historical designs.

### **Paular**

Within the donation, one of the faience collections is identified as Paular. Unlike the other workshops, for which there is an abundance of scientific literature, it is difficult to find information on a faience workshop under this name. It is probably faience with religious imagery, linked to the Santa Maria d'El Paular monastery, located north of Madrid and founded in 1390 by the Carthusian Order



cat.3 - *Susanna and the Elders*, 18<sup>th</sup> century

# The *bargueño*

[cat.5]

*Wood (walnut, softwood), bone, gold foil and tempera paint*

*Mid 17<sup>th</sup> century (upper part restored)*

*19<sup>th</sup> century (base partially restored)*

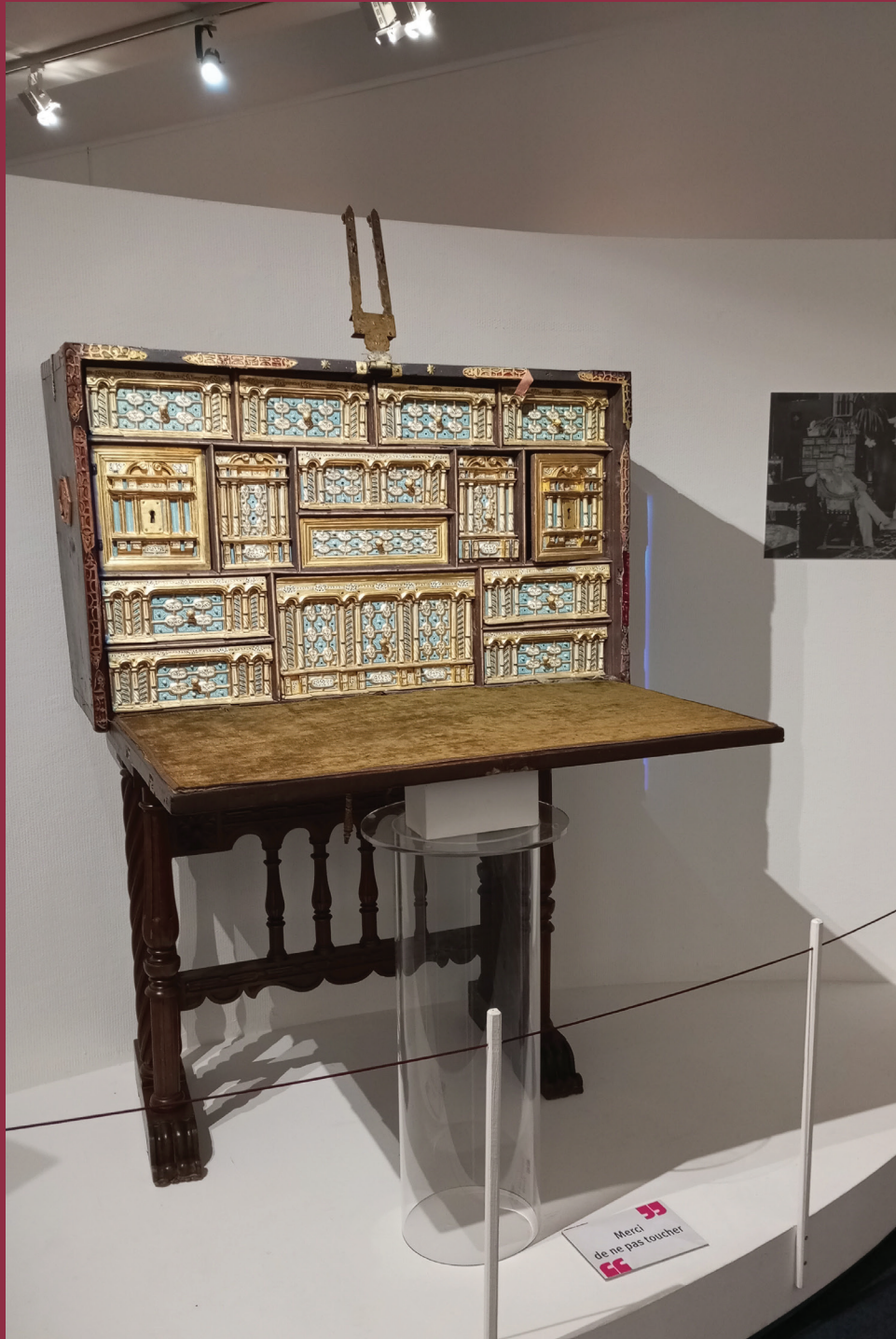
*Donation Anne Laure Barle, 1942*

The *bargueño* is a Spanish secretary: it is essentially a document cabinet that serves as a writing desk. Until the 15th century, the Al-Andalus civilisation present in Spain, contributed to the development of this style of furniture influenced by the Mudéjar style.

The chest, with its dovetailed frame, is made up of numerous drawers of different sizes, organised in horizontal registers that resemble the altarpieces of the 16th- and 17th-century churches of Toledo and Salamanca. This *bargueño* is made of carved and turned wood and bone and covered with gold foil and polychrome. It dates back to the first part of the 17th century. Once opened, the hinged panel serves as a writing surface. Three secret drawers are cleverly concealed in the base of the structural elements: they were used to conceal the most precious belongings. The chest is mounted on a solid walnut base called *pie de puente*, or bridge table.

During the Renaissance, this type of furniture became widespread because it was easier to move around at a time when exchanges between the West and the East (crusades, wars, trade, etc.) were frequent. From the 15th century onwards, Spain underwent significant economic development leading to an increase in the standard of living among the Spanish elite. It is therefore not surprising that new types of furniture appeared to meet this new demand.

In the photo above, Adolphe Barle is sitting in front of the *bargueño* in the Villa Julie billiard room.



cat.5 - Bargeño

# The paintings

## **Madonna and Child :**

### **1. *Madonna and Child***

Spanish school

16<sup>th</sup> century

Oil on marouflaged canvas mounted on wood

This painting does not appear in the 1942 donation deed, although it belongs to the collections under the same entry number as the rest of the donation. Its presence in the photograph of the Villa Julie billiard room proves that it belonged to the Barle couple. Six other paintings are in the same situation, including the St Peter, which is also on display.

### **2. *Madonna and Child***

Spanish school

17<sup>th</sup> century (?)

Oil on wood

### **3. *Madonna and Child [cat. 6]***

Spanish school

XV<sup>e</sup> siècle, Tempera sur bois

## **Prados' copies:**

### **4. *The Surrender of Breda, also known as Las Lanzas [cat. 7]***

Ubaldo FUENTES Y REDONDO (Madrid, 1870–after 1915)

1897, oil on canvas

Donation Anne Laure Barle, 1942

This painting is a reduced-size copy of the canvas by Diego Velazquez (1599–1660), painted in 1635 and kept in the Prado Museum in Madrid since 1819. The scene depicts Justin de Nassau handing over the keys to the city of Breda (Netherlands) to the Spanish general Ambrosio Spinola.

This work was probably commissioned directly by Adolphe and Anne Laure Barle from Ubaldo Fuentes y Redondo, who was also the artist behind the copy of Diego Velazquez's painting *Las Meninas*, donated to the museum in 1942. Trained at the San Fernando School of Fine Arts in Madrid, he worked from 1890.



*cat. 6 - Madonna and Child*



*cat. 7 - The Surrender of Breda*

## **The Saints:**

### **5. *The Beheading of a Saint***

Italian school

16<sup>th</sup> century, oil on wood panel

Donation Anne Laure Barle, 1942

When it entered the collections, this painting was considered as belonging to the Spanish School and was probably bought as such by the Barle couple.

In 1982, it was the subject of an in-depth study by the Laboratoire de Recherche des Musées de France (French Museums Research Laboratory). The composition of the gesso, a preparatory layer applied to the canvas before the painting itself, reveals that the canvas was more likely to belong to the Italian School. The city with its towers in the background seems to support this theory.

### **7. *Saint Peter***

Spanish school

17<sup>th</sup> century, oil on canvas

Donation Anne Laure Barle, 1942

This painting represents Saint Peter praying. Considered the first pope, he is easy to recognise thanks to the attributes in the foreground: keys and a bible. The background depicts the episode of the miraculous catch of fish.

Although the painting can be seen in the Villa Julie billiard room (see photo), it does not appear in the 1942 deed of donation. It was probably donated when the works were recovered in 1944.

### **8. *Saint Marguerite [cat.8]***

Spanish school

15<sup>th</sup> century, oil on wood

Donation Anne Laure Barle, 1942

Saint Marguerite is represented here with her traditional attributes: wearing a halo, she defeats the dragon, holding the palm of martyrs in her hand. Her face, filled with deep serenity, stands out against the golden background, a vestige of 14<sup>th</sup> century primitives. The Italian influence is noticeable in the landscape that occupies the upper two-thirds of the painting. While the figure of the saint is imposing under her heavy garments, it seems to be coming to life and her veil floating in the wind lends a dynamic quality: the work foreshadows the Renaissance.

### **6. *Saint Francis of Assisi***

CLOUWET Pieter (1629-1670, Antwerp)

17<sup>th</sup> century

Engraving–sculpted gilded wood

Donation Anne Laure Barle, 1942





cat. 8 - *Saint Marguerite*

## Iconography of the Ecce homo:

### 7. *Ecce homo*

Spanish school

17<sup>th</sup> century (?)

Oil on canvas

Donation Anne Laure Barle, 1942

### 8. *Ecce homo* [cat.9]

Luis Tristán ESCAMILLA (attributed to?)(ca. 1580/85–1624, Toledo)

17<sup>th</sup> century, oil on canvas

Donation Adolphe Barle, 1908

An inscription on the back of the canvas reads ‘D.P. Escamilla’. It is possible that this is in fact the painter Luis Tristán de Escamilla (ca. 1580/85–1624), a student of El Greco (1541–1614). Influenced by his master, he also applied the lessons of Caravaggio (1571–1610) with his work on light and the way he treated his figures with a certain naturalism. These two aspects are found here in The Mocking of Christ. He worked mainly in Toledo, where he settled from 1613 onwards.

### 9. *Ecce homo* [cat. 10]

MORALÈS Luis (de) (1509, Badajoz – 1586, Alcantara)

16<sup>th</sup> century, oil on wood

Donation Anne Laure Barle, 1942

This very small painting is attributed to Spanish painter Luis de Moralès in the 1942 deed of donation. Known as El Divino (The Divine), this painter was one of the greatest artists of the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. With a prolific body of work, he excelled in religious arts. Here we find the iconography of the Ecce Homo, which seems to have been greatly appreciated by the Barle couple.



*cat. 9 - Ecce homo*



*cat. 10 - Ecce homo*

# The sculptures

## ***Ecce homo [cat. 11]***

Spanish school

17<sup>th</sup> century

Carved and painted wood

Donation Anne Laure Barle, 1942

The 17<sup>th</sup> century saw a considerable development of religious art, in reaction to Martin Luther's Reformation and following the Council of Trent (1545-1563). Spanish art, especially sculpture from the south of Spain, will tend towards a more marked and austere realism, with the aim of bringing the image of Christ and the saints closer to the faithful.

This bust of Ecce homo is a perfect example. It is a sculpture, carved from five pieces of wood, then covered with a polychrome of a particularly striking naturalism: thorns that pierce the skin, drops of blood that sparkle, the look rendered by the technique of inlaid glass paste and then painted. Drops of soot and wax, as well as discoloration on the top of her skull, confirm that she was placed in a church, used as an object of devotion.

## ***Portrait of young Adolphe Barle [cat. 12]***

MARCELLIN Jean Esprit (1821, Gap - 1884, Paris)

1876, Terra Cotta

Donation Anne Laure Barle, 1942

Created by Jean Esprit Marcellin, the identity of the young man depicted is not absolutely certain, but it is likely that it is Adolphe Barle at the age of 14. In Paris, his parents had an excellent relationship with the sculptor from the Hautes-Alpes, which would support this theory. Furthermore, when compared with photographs of Adolphe Barle the shape of the face and mouth and even the eyes are similar.

Two other sculptures by Marcellin, currently on display on the third floor, were donated at the same time as this small bust: the Return of Spring and a terracotta sketch.



cat. 11 - *Ecce homo*



cat. 12 - *Portrait of young Adolphe Barle*

# The Barle couple's library

On 7 November 1941, Anne Laure Barle gave the first part of the couple's library to the Musée Départemental. It consisted of twenty-nine works published by the *Bibliothèque de l'Enseignement des Beaux-arts de Paris*. Created in the 1880s and '90s by the Maison Quantin and directed by Jules Comte (1846–1912), one of the promoters of Fine Arts education at the beginning of the french Third Republic, this collection includes some sixty popular volumes. Each volume is written by a specialist and is decorated with beautiful cartonnage and numerous illustrations.

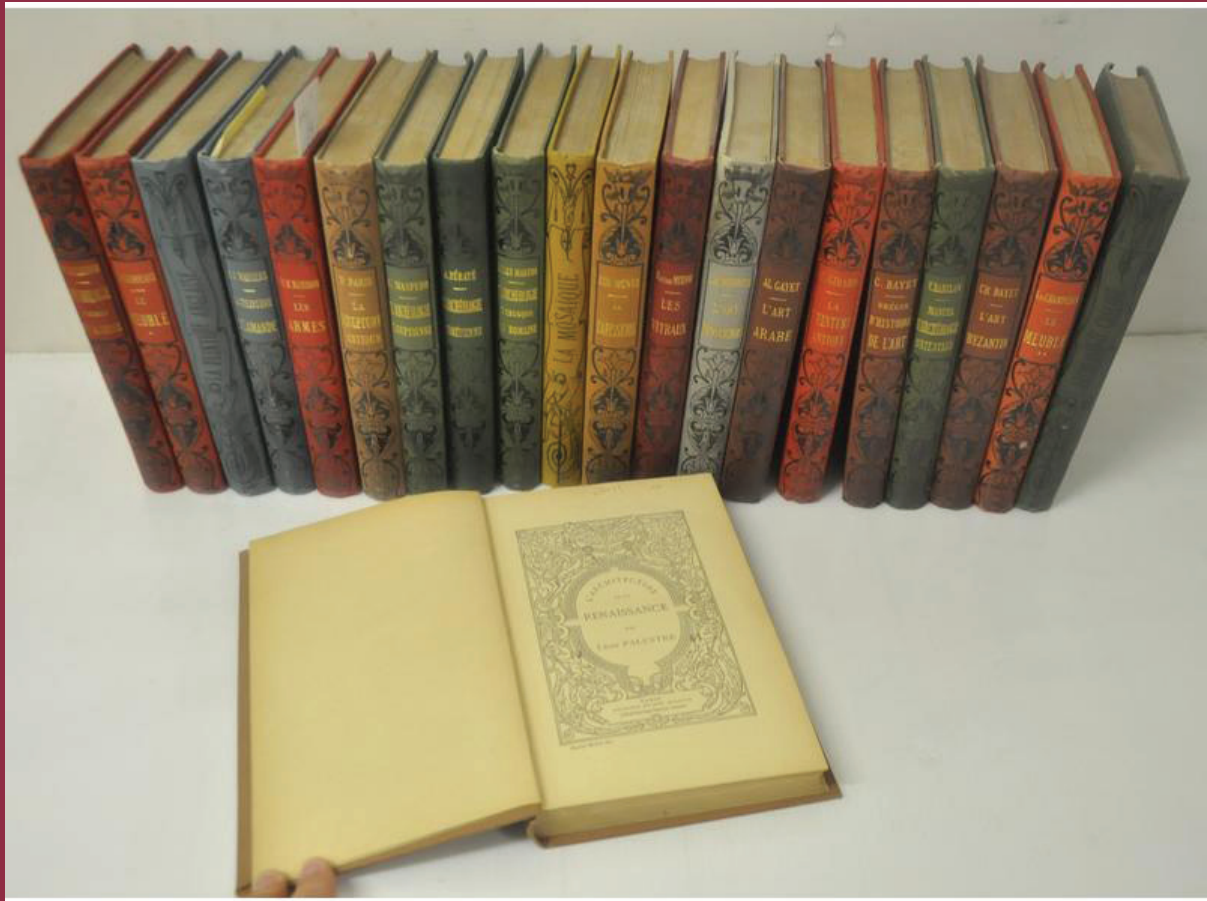
Several of the books bear the stamp of the Madrid bookshop Romo y Fusel. Its presence suggests that it was through the latter that the couple acquired this collection. In 1904 it became the International Bookshop of Madrid.

It is likely that Anne Laure and Adolphe Barle drew inspiration from these works when putting together their collection whether acquiring original works or commissioning copies. In the volume *Le Meuble* (A. de Champeaux, 1885), one of the books bequeathed to the Musée Départemental, for example, there is a reproduction of a bargueno, very similar to the one in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London (formerly the South Kensington Museum) and the one presented in the exhibition. This is also the case for Spanish Painting (P. Lefort, 1893) with the reproduction of Diego Velazquez's painting *The Surrender of Breda*, exhibited in the Prado Museum in Madrid since 1819.

In February 1945, Anne Laure Barle donated four other works to complete the collection:

- *Le dictionnaire de l'art, de la curiosité et du bibelot* (Dictionary of Art, Curiosities and Trinkets), Ernest Bosc, 1883.
- *La grammaire des Arts décoratifs* (The Grammar of Decorative Arts), Charles Blanc, 1882.
- *Le dictionnaire des marques et monographies* (Dictionary of Marks and Monograms), Oscar Ris-Paquot, two volumes, 1893.

Adolphe Barle's business cards were used as bookmarks, indicating that they were indeed used by the couple.



cat.13 - Bibliothèque beaux-arts

## The collection of devotionnal objects

In 1942, Anne Laure Barle donated a collection of reliquary medallions made of iron, enamel, silver, mother-of-pearl and other semi-precious stones from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

These medallions can be simple medals, decorated with one or more pious images, contain small fragments of relics with the name of the Saint or Ex-voto (thanksgiving, prayer to a god).

These pieces of silverware are often small and finely decorated, a ring allows them to be hung on the rosaries.

## Jacques Laudun's enamelled plates

In 1942, Anne Laure Barle donated four enamelled copper plates bearing the signature IL of Jacques Laudun, a famous enameller from Limoges.

The production of enamels by the Laudun atelier was notable throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> century, especially under the direction of Jacques II Laudun (1663-1729). This production is part of the tradition of painted enamel from Limoges, which has been outstanding since medieval times.

The subjects depicted are Christ (Salvator Mundi) [cat. 14], the Virgin (Mater Dei), Saint Luke (S. Lucas) and Saint Ignatius of Loyola (S. Ignatius de Loiola) [cat. 15].

Although not Spanish, they were framed and hung in the pool room of Villa Julie with Spanish paintings.





*Madonna praying the Child Jesus Christ*



cat. 14 - *Salvator Mundi*, J. Laudun



cat. 15 - *S. Ignatius de Loyola*, J. Laudun

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Saturday-Sunday - 2 PM to 5:45 PM

Closed on Mondays

