



Baluster jug

Not on display

Title/Description: Baluster jug

Born: 1250 c. - 1300 c.

Object Type: Jug

Materials: Earthenware, Lead glaze

Measurements: h. 430 x w. 130 x d. 130 mm

Accession Number: 396

Historic Period: Late 13th century - early 14th century

Production Place: Britain, England, Europe, London (probably)

Credit Line: Donated by Robert and Lisa Sainsbury, 1973

This pottery jug is an example of medieval London-type ware. The common name of baluster jugs originates from the very tall and elongated shape of the jug, with its curves running from the oval body towards gently expanding base and the tulip-shaped neck. These demanding physical attributes made the jug a particularly difficult shape to throw on a potter's wheel and would have possibly contributed to its status as an elegant and prized possession. These jugs would have probably been used to hold drinks such as wine or ale, and would have been a practical and wieldy item to use at a dining table.

The Sainsbury Centre jug is a particularly elegant example of the type, with its almost exaggerated attenuation of form and subtle curves running between the body, the narrow base, and the widening neck. The flat base has a subtle rim and three elegant carinations decorate the base, the base of the neck, and the mouth of the jug. The darkened red earthenware still displays traces of yellow glaze, especially on the side opposite the rod handle. The jug is an excellent and well-preserved example of a prized domestic object from medieval London. It represents a proud local manufacturing response to imported goods such as the fashionable parrot-beak pottery from Saintonge.

Agata Gomolka, April 2022

Further Reading

R. L. Hobson, Catalogue of the collection of English Pottery in the Department of British and Medieval Antiquities and Ethnography of the British Museum (London: British Museum Press, 1903).

W. B. Honey, English Pottery and Porcelain (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1947)

B. Rackham, Medieval English Pottery (London: Faber & Faber, 1972)

Provenance

Acquired by the Sainsbury Family in 1943. Donated to the Sainsbury Centre, University of East Anglia in 1973 as part of the original gift.
