

MATERIAL EXCHANGES IN MEDIEVAL  
AND EARLY MODERN EUROPE

STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF DAILY LIFE  
(800–1600)

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# Material Exchanges in Medieval and Early Modern Europe

*Archaeological Perspectives*

*Edited by*

MAGDALENA E. NAUM,

JETTE LINAA, AND

SERGIO ESCRIBANO-RUIZ

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Porcelain dish from the VOC-ship *Witte Leeuw*, stranded in 1613.  
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British or French lead Pilgrim's Badge with Saint Leonard, fifteenth  
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Fossilized Echinoids from the collection of Kilian Stobæus,  
originally at the Museum Stobæanum. Photo: Gunnar Menander,  
courtesy of Magdalena Naum.  
Glass situla, early sixteenth century, Venice (Murano). The  
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# A Mandatory Stop

*The Trade of Imported Pottery in Asturias (the NW Iberian Peninsula) during the Early Modern Period*

## Introduction

This research presents the analysis of 3066 sherds, which were found in thirty-four archaeological excavations carried out across six regions of Asturias (NW of the Iberian Peninsula, Spain). The fragments come from twenty-one different pottery production sites and date between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. The archaeological study of this ceramic material has offered new insights into the pottery trade in Asturias during the early modern period. The results of this study help us to reconstruct the historical processes that shaped the society of Asturias in that period.

The region of Asturias is located in the north-western part of the Iberian Peninsula and faces the Cantabrian Sea, the southern extent of the Bay of Biscay (Figure 5.1.1). In the early modern period, Asturias belonged to the Kingdom of Castile and was part of an international network of commercial exchange. Research carried out in this region has revealed the rich and diverse material culture which arrived here from Europe, Asia, and America. Studies of the region's ceramic material, such as the one presented below, confirm the breadth of these global exchanges. The present study focuses on ceramic material from archaeological contexts because it is one of the main surviving sources for studying past socioeconomic conditions. Given that the study of pottery technology can reveal how mankind acts in relation to nature, the pottery itself can offer information on this interaction (Carandini 1984, 66–67). In addition to their decorative and technological aspects, pottery provides evidence about circulation and exchange, social differentiation, consumption patterns, and functionality (Molinari 1990, 16; Orton and Hughes 2013, 121–271). Through the analysis and study of pottery, research can approach the individual who produced that piece, as well as the one who used and discarded it (Escribano-Ruiz 2014, 6).

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