



Family languages

Castilian enters into Asturias

Since the 14th century, the monarchy starts an **acute process of centralization which is going to have deep linguistic consequences**. Fernando IV issues as early as 1304 the royal prerogative to appoint notaries in the old Leonese kingdom, a first step on the road to castilianizing civil servants.

Image 1. Sepulchre of Rodrigo Álvarez d'Asturies, Count of Noreña, aristocrat with a central prominence in the Asturian and Castilian politics in the 14th century (Archaeological Museum of Asturias).

Image 2. Enrique III, son and heir to Juan I, and therefore, first prince of Asturias.

Image 3. Chapter Hall in the Cathedral of Uviéu, original stage for the meetings of the Xunta Xeneral del Principáu, the Asturian parliament.

Image 4. Old photograph of Casa de la Rúa in Uviéu, a 14th century building.

On the other hand, **the Asturian aristocrats show a growing involvement in Castilian politics**, in the disputes among noblemen and in the court relationships, which defines a beginning of castilianization of this social group. An obvious example is Rodrigo Álvarez de les Asturias, Count of Noreña and Xixón and legal guardian of the future Alfonso XI, a king who felt very proud that *his words were very Castilian*. The other leading estate, **the Church**, in a few decades is going to fall in the hands of the active bishop Gutierre de Toledo, who starts a significant castilianization of the Asturian documents and clergy. The political riots devastating Asturias at the time soon produce **the creation of the Principality of Asturias**, established in 1388 by king Juan I, which means both a boost to Asturian self-government (by means of the local parliament, the **Xunta Xeneral**) and a direct dependency of this new power on the royal house embodied in the heir to the throne.

The consequence of these new situations is obvious in the texts at that time, with a **growing castilianization of notary documents all**

along the 14th century, especially those coming from the great scriptural centres (Church of Uviéu, monasteries or cities) the Asturian elements being more visible in other minor and more rural centres.

Image 5. Sepulchre of king Juan I (Cathedral of Toledo), the Castilian king who established the Principality of Asturias in 1388.