



## Culture language

**Ramón Menéndez Pidal** (1869-1968) was an expert on Asturias and its language. One of his first pieces of research were devoted to the variety in L.lena and he even wrote some texts in that variety. There is the story told by his relatives where his last words before dying were in Asturian.

**Image 1.** Ramón Menéndez Pidal photographed in 1905, the year before publishing *The Leonese Dialect*, a founding work in the modern scientific studies of Asturian Philology (1906).

**Image 2.** Even though the term *Leonese* grows strong in the field of Hispanic and Romance Philology since Pidal, there are some antecedents in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, such as a reference by the German philologist Emil Gessner to the *Altleonensische* or *Ancient Leonese*.

**Image 3.** Philological research by the Swedish Erik Staaf on Leonese medieval documents (1907).

Even though Pidal's discourse placed the Asturian language inside a larger historic entity (the *Leonese*) later subordinated to Castilian, his perception on the Asturian language revealed a certain degree of ambiguity immediately transferred to the later Spanish philology. Pidal considered that Asturian (*the best preserved remnant of ancient Leonese*) coexisted with Castilian in a state of bilingualism similar to that of Galician.

**Image 4.** Pidal's vindication of Leonese *boosted* not only the philological research but also the literary use of the local variety in Leonese territory, such as in this book of stories by the soldier Cayetano Álvarez Bardón in 1907.