



### Attempts at standardization

The evolution of Latin since the first centuries of this era meant the formation of a great heterogeneity of purely local Romance varieties all over the whole ancient empire. The current Asturian varieties, same as the entire group of Romance varieties in southern Europe, are an invaluable witness to this historical process.

**Image 1.** Since the Middle Ages, written documents show a unifying trend weaving together the different Asturian varieties as already studied by Rafael Lapesa in the research reproduced in the illustration.

**Image 2.** By mid-nineteenth century Juan Junquera Huergo was the author of an Asturian grammar and dictionary. The 1861 grammar was not published until 1987.

Nevertheless, **right from the first evidence of a Romance language in Asturias the existence of unifying trends** which adopt as a model the speech in the most prestigious political, economic or cultural centres could be perceived. In the medieval language, cities like Lleón and Uviéu performed that role in their areas of influence. Hence in Asturias, typically central traits can be found even in documents from its western wing. The distribution of linguistic traits along the Asturian geography mirrors those historical trends.

But the very first attempt at a normative codification can be attributed to Xovellanos' **Academy of Good Literature**, which could have been the first peninsular linguistic academy after the RAE, founded in 1713. The activities of this academy were based on the written literature, the collection of oral linguistic materials and etymological criteria. This project was continued in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with Juan Junquera's grammar and dictionary (1861) none of them published until more than a century later.

**Image 3.** Enriqueta González Rubín (Ribeseya, 1832-L'Infiestu, 1877) is considered the first writer of a tale in Asturian language with the structure of a novel. Her questioning take on society is remarkable there.

**Image 4.** The Asturian Institute of Xixón, an important hub of Asturianist activity in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in this 1870 photograph. Below, the institution nowadays.