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ASTURLEONESE DIALECT CLASSIFICATIONS

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Abstract

This article reviews the different ideas that have been put forward for classifying dialects and sub-dialects in the Asturleonese linguistic domain, from early works by Arias de Miranda (1858) and Menéndez Pidal (1906) through to more recent proposals by García Arias (2003) and González i Planas (2004). All these proposals have adhered to traditional dialectological patterns. The division of Asturleonese into three macro-dialects (western, central and eastern) has enjoyed wide consensus among scholars for over a century. Notwithstanding certain discrepancies, quite a few points of consensus also exist in favour of sub-dialectal division, especially with regard to Western Asturian, but there is some disagreement whether certain zones on the eastern flank of the domain which have undergone a vigorous process of Castilianisation should still be considered Asturleonese-speaking areas. The paper includes maps, schematic tables and comparison charts.

Keywords: dialect classification, isoglotic classification, Asturian, Asturleonese, Mirandese, Leonese

Name: Asturianu/asturleonés [astur'janu /astur'kio'nes]

Language-code: ISO-639-2: ast

CLASSIFICACIONS DIALECTALS DE L'ASTURLLEONÈS

Resum

Aquest article repassa les diferents idees que s'han plantejat per classificar els dialectes i subdialectes en el domini lingüístic asturleonès, des dels primers treballs d'Arias de Miranda (1858) i Menéndez Pidal (1906) fins a propostes més recents de García Arias (2003) i González i Planas (2004). Totes aquestes propostes s'han adherit als patrons dialectològics tradicionals. La divisió de l'asturleonès en tres macrodialectes (occidental, central i oriental) ha gaudit d'un ampli consens entre els estudiosos durant més d'un segle. Malgrat certes discrepàncies, també hi ha força punts de consens a favor de la

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divisió subdialectal, sobretot pel que fa a l'asturià occidental, però hi ha cert desacord sobre si determinades zones de l'àrea oriental del domini que han experimentat un vigorós procés de castellanització encara s'han de considerar zones de parla asturlleonesa. L'article inclou mapes, taules esquemàtiques i gràfics de comparació.

Paraules clau: classificació dialectal, classificació isoglòtica, asturià, asturlleonès, mirandès, lleonès

CLASIFICACIONES DIALECTALES DEL ASTURLLEONÉS

Resume

Nesti artículu facemos un repasu a les diverses propuestes de clasificación dialectal y subdialectal del dominiu llingüísticu asturlleonés, dende les primeres d'Arias de Miranda (1858) y Menéndez Pidal (1906) a les más nueves de García Arias (2003) y González i Planas (2004). Toes s'axusten a patrones propios de la dialectología tradicional, a nun ser daqué casu d'usu de métodu cuantitativu nuna área de frontera interdialectal. La división en trés macrodialectos (occidental, central y oriental) atropa'l consensu xeneral de va más d'un sieglu. Magar qu'existen delles discrepancies, hai consensu d'abondo na división subdialectal, sobre manera no que fai al asturianu occidental. Tamién hai delles discrepancies sobre l'adscripción asturlleonesa de dellos territorios del llau oriental del dominiu, de castellanización más fonda. La esposición ilústrase con mapes, tables esquemàtiques y tables comparatives.

Palabres clave: clasificación dialectal, asturianu, asturlleonés, mirandés, lleonés

1. Introduction

1.1 Geographical area of the Asturleonese

Asturian-Leonese or Asturleonese is spoken in the following areas (Andrés Díaz 2013: 19-20) (Maps 1 and 2):

All of Asturias apart from its easternmost areas (municipalities of Ribadedeva / Ribadeva, Peñamellera Baja / *El Valle Bajú de Peñamellera* y Peñamellera Alta / *El Valle Altu de Peñamellera*, which correspond to the *Montañese* dialect of the Castilian linguistic domain that extends into the neighbouring Cantabria); and the zone called Eo-Navia, at the westernmost edge of the region, which corresponds to the dialect complex known as *Asturias Galician*, *Galician-Asturian* or *Eonaviego*, within the Galician-Portuguese linguistic domain.

A wide swathe of territory in the western part of the province of León, including

the northern districts of Forniella, Palacios del Sil, Laciana / *Llaciana*, Babia, Omaña / *Oumaña*, Luna / *Lluna*, Gordón and Los Argüellos / *Los Argüeyos*, the southern districts of eastern Bierzo / *El Bierzu*, La Cepeda, La Maragatería / *Maragatos* and La Cabrera / *Cabreira*, and the north-eastern district of Sajambre / *Sayambre*.¹

A large pocket in the west of the province of Zamora, including eastern Sanabria / *Senabria*, La Carballeda / *La Carbayeda* and Aliste.

In Portugal, Río de Onor / *Ruidenore* and Guadramil in the north-eastern corner of the province of Bragança and the Terra de Miranda district, including the municipality of Miranda do Douro / *Miranda de l Douro* and, partially, that of Vimioso, which constitutes the southern limit of the Asturleonese linguistic domain.



Map 1. Language areas in the Iberian Peninsula, according to Andrés Menéndez (2013) (adapted)

¹ The northern districts of León are commonly included in the Asturian domain: Palacios del Sil, Laciana and Babia in the Western Asturian zone; Gordón and Los Argüellos in the Central Asturian zone; and Sajambre in the Eastern Asturian zone.

1.2 Sociolinguistic situation

Asturleonese is a Romance language in the Iberian Peninsula, spoken in Spain (in the autonomous communities of Asturias and Castilla y León) and in Portugal (Miranda do Douro, Bragança region) (Map 1 and 2). Its wide geographical extension during the Middle Ages is now notably reduced due to the encroachment of Castilian, especially in the easternmost parts of the domain. Today, the vitality of Asturleonese as a living language varies in the different areas in which it is spoken. It can, however, be affirmed that, owing to the prevalence of bilingualism with Castilian (in Spain) and with Portuguese (in Portugal), there no longer remain any monolingual speakers of any of its varieties. Two of the areas where Asturleonese has been best conserved are Asturias and Miranda do Douro.



Map 2. The Asturleonese linguistic domain, according to Andrés Menéndez (2013)

Asturleonese is not a co-official language in any of the regions in which it is spoken, and therefore does not enjoy the same status as other languages spoken in Spain like Galician, Basque and Catalan. In all those regions, however, legislation is in place for its protection in education, media, local government, and social/artistic contexts. Spain has ratified the European Charter. Asturian (and Galician-Asturian) is

recognised under Part II. Portugal has only recently signed the charter (September 2023), but it is not ratified yet (nor entered into force). The greatest advances in the language's social usage and normalization have taken place in Asturias and in Miranda. The Statute of Autonomy of the Principality of Asturias (1981) established blanket protection which, implemented through the Law on the Use and Promotion of Bable/Asturian (1998), allowed progress to be made in education, in the recovery of Asturian toponyms, and in the social and institutional use of the language. The co-officialization of Asturian is a subject of debate among the region's citizens, and its defenders in the political parties with representation in the regional parliament currently constitute a majority. With regard to Miranda, a law passed by the Portuguese parliament in Lisbon (*Reconhecimento oficial de direitos linguísticos da comunidade mirandesa*, 1999) recognised Mirandese as a language alongside Portuguese. The 1983 Statute of Autonomy of Castilla y León, amended in 2005, very generically provides for the protection of Leonese (also Part II recognition of the European Charter), but this legislation has not been implemented as fully as in Asturias. Overall, Asturleonese is a *recessive* or *minoritized language* in a sociolinguistic situation of *diglossic bilingualism*.

1.3 Scientific recognition of the Asturleonese linguistic domain

Although no collective awareness of the Asturleonese “language” or its domain has ever existed among its speakers, the research carried out by Viejo Fernández (2004: 49-67) detected a certain social awareness of Asturian which dates back at least to the 14th-15th centuries, and which is still very much alive today. In purely linguistic terms, however, recognition of the existence of an Asturleonese linguistic domain is an entirely different matter. It was not until 1906 that Ramón Menéndez Pidal published *El dialecto leonés*, the first work of scientific linguistics to openly contemplate the existence of an Asturleonese linguistic domain (called a *Leonese* domain by Menéndez Pidal) encompassing all the speech varieties between the Cabo de Peñas in the north to Miranda do Douro in the south. Menéndez Pidal “discovered” the Asturleonese

Romance domain just a few years after Italian romanist Ascoli had applied exclusively linguistic or glottological criteria to “discover” the existence of Ladino (1873) and Franco-Provençal (1874) Romance domains, or “geotypes” (Goebel 2010).

Since then, Romance, and Hispanic linguists have come to fully accept Asturleonese as Romance language, regardless of the myriad social, cultural, and political influences that have shaped both the area as a whole and its component subregions.

1.4 The inclusion/non-inclusion of certain areas in the Asturleonese linguistic domain

The preceding geo-linguistic introduction to Asturleonese does not mention certain areas which some authors have considered part of its linguistic domain, but which have been and continue to be an object of debate. They are: the eastern extreme of Asturias, from the Purón river to the border with Cantabria; the province of Cantabria itself, or at least the western part of it; central and western areas in the province of León (the Órbigo, Bernesga, Curueño, and Porma districts); the Sayago region in the province of Zamora; north-western areas in the province of Salamanca (La Ribera and Los Arribes); the northern parts of the province of Cáceres (Extremadura), mainly Las Hurdes, Sierra de Gata, Trasierra - Tierra de Granadilla, the Alagón valley and Plasencia; and southern parts of the province of Salamanca (El Rebollar, Los Agadones or Sierra de Gata and Sierra de Francia). In all these areas, dialectal varieties of Castilian are now spoken which all share a series of features indicative of an *Asturleonese sublayer*. Asturleonese was, after all, their language throughout the Middle Ages and, in some cases, even into the modern era. The degree of Castilianisation attained in these regions, however, makes it very difficult to include them in a present-day map of the Asturleonese linguistic domain, although debate continues to rage in Asturleonese linguistics about the extent to which historical factors should still condition a classification that has been updated to reflect current reality (see, for example, Fernández Juncal 1998, 2009; García Gil 2010; Cueto Fernández 2011; Morala Rodríguez 2011).

1.5 The glottonyms of the linguistic domain

Given the inexistence of a collective language awareness, the Asturleonese linguistic domain has no popular, traditional glottonym. The mention of *Leonese* in different learned writings from the 17th century through to the beginning of the 20th century (Gómez Turiel 2012) reflects not a popular name for the whole domain but either a popular name circumscribed to León itself or a learned term referring to the language spoken in the old Kingdom of León. Gessner (1867) was the first philologist to use the term *Leonese*, albeit to refer to a language type in medieval documents (Morala Rodríguez 2007: 96), while Vasconcelos used terms like *leonez*² ‘Leonese’ (1882) and *asturico-lionés* ‘Astur-Leonese’ (1902) when exploring the relationship between Mirandese and adjacent speech varieties, as has been well documented by Gómez Turiel (2012).

Menéndez Pidal called the whole linguistic domain *Leonese*, because that had been the language of the old Kingdom of León. Menéndez Pidal’s school of philology/linguistics also coined the terms *Asturian-Leonese* and *Asturleonese*, in allusion to the language having been that of the Kingdom of Asturias, the forerunner of the Kingdom of León. These glottonyms are still used in present-day linguistics. More recently, García Arias (2003) coined and encouraged the use of the term *Astur* to designate this linguistic domain—a clear reference to the ancient Astures of Roman times. In more specialised contexts, other glottonyms are often used. These include *Asturian*, in reference to the whole domain (as employed, for example, by Martínez García 1979, to refer to the speech of Ribera del Órbigo in the province of León), and occasionally even *Bable*, although this name is usually only used as a synonym of *Asturian* in its most specific sense (i.e., the Asturleonese of Asturias).

Other glottonyms associated with the domain are only partial in scope, being either popular names (*Asturian*, *Cabreirese*, *Sanabrese*, *Mirandese*, etc.) or technical terms (*Western*, *South-Central*, etc.).

² In current spelling *leonês*.

2. Dialect classifications of the Asturleonese

All the dialectal and sub-dialectal classifications of Asturleonese to date — beginning with the one proposed by Arias de Miranda / Laverde Ruiz— are based on traditional dialectology. That is to say, there are no perceptual classifications, and quantitative or statistical methods (dialectometry, horiometry) have only been used to analyse the dividing lines between the Galician-Portuguese and Asturleonese domains in Asturias (ETLEN 2017) and between western and central dialects of Asturian (Rodríguez Monteavaro 2022; Rodríguez Monteavaro & Andrés Díaz 2022).

These classifications of Asturleonese dialects share the following characteristics: (a) They are strictly linguistic or “glottological” insofar that they are based not on factors like identity, culture, society, or politics but on differential features, or isoglosses. Only on very rare occasions have timid attempts been made to draw ethno-historical conclusions from dialect distribution data; (b) Up until recently, the general practice was to select a limited set of isoglosses, sometimes attaching more weight to one or more of the same.

A total of eight classifications have been proposed, the first in 1858 and the last in 2004. The first was by Arias de Miranda (1858) / Laverde Ruiz (1862), the second by Menéndez Pidal (1906), the third by Catalán (1956-1957, 1957-1958), the fourth by Neira Martínez (1976, 1984) and Martínez Álvarez (1996), the fifth by García González (1981, 1982, 1983), the sixth by Borrego Nieto (1996), the seventh by García Arias (2003) and the eighth by González i Planas (2004).

2.1 *Arias de Miranda (1858) / Laverde Ruiz (1862)*

Jurist, journalist, and politician José Arias de Miranda (Grau, Asturias, 1795 - 1890) was the mayor and chief magistrate of his hometown and a member of the provincial parliament. A habitual collaborator with the press in Asturias and Madrid, he had a keen interest in the language, culture, and history of Asturias, about which he wrote several works. Gumersindo Laverde Ruiz (Estrada, Cantabria, 1835 - Santiago de

Compostela, 1890) was a writer, journalist, philosopher, and philologist. Residing in Asturias from his early childhood, he taught in Lugo, Valladolid, and Santiago, was a frequent contributor of articles in the contemporary press and published works on a wide variety of subjects.

2.1.1 Framework: Isoglottic dialectology

The first classification of dialects within what would later be recognised as the Asturleonese linguistic domain was presented by Arias de Miranda (1858-1859) and subsequently adopted, implemented, and disseminated by Laverde Ruiz (1862), with abundant quotations from the original article. It referred exclusively to Asturian, because at that time no overview yet existed of Asturleonese as a whole.

2.1.2 Classification of dialects and sub-dialects

This classification divided Asturian into three major macro-dialects (*Western, Central and Eastern Asturian*): “The Asturian dialect offers three great varieties for the observer’s consideration — Eastern, Central and Western Asturian — all of which are marked by distinctive features that set them apart from all other subordinate divisions”³ (Laverde Ruiz 1862: 192).

Although on occasions they did make some reference to internal diversity, neither Arias de Miranda nor Laverde Ruiz contemplated any kind of dialectal subdivision (Table 1).⁴

³ «Tres son —la Oriental, la Central y la Occidental— las grandes variedades que, determinadas por relevantes caracteres sobre todas las demás fracciones subalternas, ofrece á la consideración del observador el dialecto asturiano».

⁴ In this figure and henceforth in the article, linguistic phenomena will be referenced using present-day formulations.

NAME OF DIALECT ZONE	GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION	FEATURES OR ISOGLOSSES
Western Bable	Eastwards from the river Eo and northwards from Pajares to the lower Nalón, including Morcín	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Retention of the initial F (<i>folgar</i> 'to rest', <i>faba</i> 'bean', <i>fumo</i> 'smoke'). - Masculine ending in -o. - Diphthongs <i>ei</i>, <i>ou</i> (<i>gaiteiro</i> 'bagpiper', <i>toupo</i> 'mole'). - In territories in the more interior zones and further to the west, ʌ, ç'ʌ, ç'ʌ > <i>ch</i> instead of <i>y</i> (<i>viecho</i> 'old', <i>trabachar</i> 'to work'). - Idem, PL- CL- FL- > <i>ch</i> (<i>chave</i> 'key', <i>chover</i> 'to rain').
Central Bable	From the above demarcation to the banks of the Sella	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Many shared features with 12th, 13th and 14th century Castilian. - Masculine ending in -u (<i>amigu</i> 'friend', <i>quíerolu</i> 'I want/love him'), plural -os. - ʌ, ç'ʌ, ç'ʌ > <i>y</i> (<i>navaya</i> 'knife', <i>arbeyu</i> 'pea', <i>trabayar</i> 'to work'). - Fem. plurals ending in -es (<i>les vaques</i> 'the cows', <i>les peres</i> 'the pears').
Eastern Bable	From the Sella to the Santander Mountain range; the old Asturias de Santillana zone, more or less	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fewer archaisms; more similar to present-day Castilian. An "easy, ringing" tone, "brisk, fluent modulation." - F- > /h-/ j- (<i>juente</i> 'fountain/spring', <i>jumu</i> 'smoke', <i>jornu</i> 'oven').

Table 1. Table showing the three dialect zones proposed by Arias de Miranda (1858) (Own elaboration)

Apart from these differential features, Arias de Miranda and Laverde Ruiz also listed a series of features they claimed (erroneously, in some cases) to be common to all varieties of Asturian.

2.2 Menéndez Pidal (1906)

Ramón Menéndez Pidal (A Coruña, 1869 – Madrid, 1968) was one of the most influential figures in 20th century Spanish philology and the founder of what became known as the "Spanish" or "Madrid" school of philology. He was also the author of seminal works on the Spanish Middle Ages and the linguistic history of Castilian and Asturleonese, a linguistic domain which he himself first identified.

2.2.1 Framework: Isoglottic dialectology

In 1906, Menéndez Pidal published *El dialecto leonés*, a work which not only

affirmed the existence of a new Romance linguistic domain but also offered a full dialect classification for that domain. For that purpose, he uses mainly phonological and morphological features, based in medieval documentation. In a first step he studied “vertically structured” classification. On a secondary, “transverse” level, he also proposed a classification based on the different political-administrative entities.

2.2.2 Classification of dialects and sub-dialects

Menéndez Pidal analysed this area differentiating *Western Leonese*, *Central Leonese* and *Eastern Leonese* and thus making the three dialect zones of Asturian just one component of a general three-way division. Like Munthe before him, Menéndez Pidal excluded the varieties of the Eo-Navia zone, allocating them to the Galician-Portuguese linguistic domain. This position was assimilated by subsequent scholars. Despite his many notes regarding internal differences in each zone, Menéndez Pidal did not formally propose a sub-dialectal classification. His classification was immediately accepted and has been considered valid in Asturleonese studies ever since.

The dialect zones proposed by Menéndez Pidal are (Map 3):

– *Western Leonese*, characterised by the simultaneous diphthongisation of the short vowels ě, ō (*tierra* ‘land’, *cuervo* ‘body’) and retention of the falling diphthongs *ei*, *ou* (*caldeiro* ‘cauldron’, *outro* ‘(an)other’). This variety is spoken throughout the western regions of Asturias, León and Zamora and in Terra de Miranda (Portugal).

– *Central Leonese*, now mainly known in Asturias.

– *Eastern Leonese*, spoken in the eastern parts of Asturias, León, and Zamora. This dialect zone also extends into Cantabria, Salamanca, and Extremadura. Its most characteristic feature is the substitution of the Latin F- with the aspirated /h-/: *jorno* ‘oven’.

However, Menéndez Pidal went beyond this initial, “vertically structured” classification. On a secondary, “transverse” level, he also proposed a classification based on the different political-administrative entities, focussing particularly on

Asturian as the least Castilians, and therefore most vigorous, variety of *Asturleonese*: “As a whole, *Asturian* can be considered the best conserved vestige of old Leonese and of those three dialect regions which in the Middle Ages extended further south than they do today”⁵ (Menéndez Pidal 1906: 39). *Asturian* would therefore have all the features of Leonese listed above, plus the following: diphthongisation before yod (*nueche* ‘night’); diphthongisation in some forms of the verb *ser* ‘to be’ (*yera* ‘I/he was’); retention of the diphthong in *-iello* (*castiello* ‘castle’); the suffix *-oria* or *-oira* (*salmorea*, *salmoira* ‘brine’); the loss of the final syllable in the Latin *-inum* (*molín* ‘mill’); retention of the front palatal as an unvoiced sibilant (*xelar* ‘to freeze’); retention of the middle palatal as an unvoiced sibilant (*fluxir* ‘to flee’); $\text{ɥ, c'ɫ, g'ɫ} > y$ (*muyer* ‘woman’); contractions of prepositions with articles (*cona* ‘with the (f.)’, *pola* ‘for/by the (f.)’); the form of the dative atonic pronoun (*dioioslo* ‘he/she gave it to them’). Menéndez Pidal divided *Asturian* into three zones which, taken together, constitute one component of the three-way division of Leonese:

–*Western Asturian*, characterised by the coexistence of the following features: the falling diphthongs *ei, ou* (*él cantóu* ‘he sang’, *you cantéi* ‘I sang’); gender-differentiated possessives (*mieu / mía* ‘my’); simple past verb desinences (*rompéu* ‘he/she broke’, *partíu* ‘he/she broke/divided’); $\text{ct, ult} > \text{-it-}$ (*muito* ‘much’); the existence of the consonant *ʎ*, or “che vaqueira” (*ʎamar* ‘to call’); and $\text{ɥ, c'ɫ, g'ɫ} > \text{ch}$ (*mucher* ‘woman’). This dialect zone extends from the river Navia to the lower Nalón, and from Grau to Teberga.

–*Central Asturian*, characterised by feminine plurals in *-es* (*les cases* ‘the houses’) and the lack of the features typical of Western *Asturian* mentioned above.

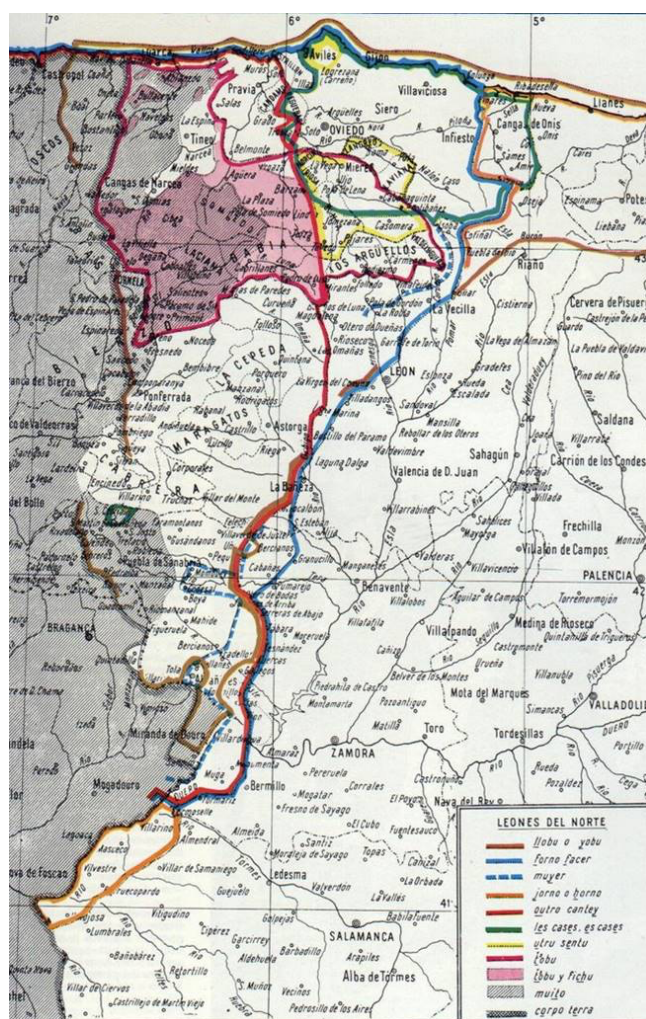
–*Eastern Asturian*, characterised by the aspirated *F-* $> [h-]$ (*jorno* ‘oven’) and the evolution of *-m'N-* $> [-mbr-]$ (*hombre* ‘man’).

The *Asturleonese* spoken in *Cantabria* shares with Eastern *Asturian* the aspirated initial *F-* (*jorno* ‘oven’) and some other general Leonese, non-*Asturian* features.

The three-way division of *Asturleonese* is also evident in León, where the

⁵ «El Asturiano puede pasar, en su conjunto, por el resto mejor conservado del antiguo leonés y de esas tres regiones dialectales que en la Edad Media se dilatarían por Sur más de lo que hoy».

western dialect is spoken in the areas around Murias de Paredes (Laciana, Curueña), Ponferrada and Astorga; the *central dialect* in those of La Vecilla, León, La Bañeza and Valencia de Don Juan; and the *eastern dialect* in those of Riaño and Sahagún. Menéndez Pidal also noted the presence of Asturleonese in Zamora (the *western dialect* in Sanabria), Salamanca and Extremadura.



Map 3. Map of the Asturleonese domain showing the three-way dialectal division and the main isoglosses made by Menéndez Pidal (From the edition published by the Instituto de Estudios Asturianos, 1962)

Finally, Menéndez Pidal listed all the features present in the different parts of the linguistic domain and in medieval documentation which differentiate Asturleonese from Galician-Portuguese and Castilian.

Frías Conde (2001: 3-4) slightly reformulated Menéndez Pidal's classification of

Asturleonese to accommodate *Asturian*, *Leonese*, and *Mirandese*:

a) The western block:

- Western Asturian (including Babia and Llaciana).
- Western Leonese (Altu Bierzu, Maragatería), Sanabrese.
- Mirandese.

b) The central block:

- Central Asturian.
- Central Leonese: from the Asturias-León border to the towns and villages on the banks of the Duero in the province of Zamora, in the Aliste and Villarino area behind the mountains.

c) The eastern block:

- Eastern Asturian (extending into Cantabria).

Later, in 1923, Menéndez Pidal proposed a new division of the Asturleonese domain which, although focussed more on geographical or political-administrative entities, nevertheless remained compatible with the western / central / eastern pattern. The new components were: *Montañese*, (*Eastern, Central and Western*) *Asturian*, *northern Leonese dialects* (*Argüellos, Babia and Laciana, Astorga, Maragatería, Sanabria, Aliste, Mirandese*), *Sayaguese*, and *Charro* (Salamancan sub-dialect).

Menéndez Pidal's three-way dialectal classification shaped the evolution of Asturleonese dialectology throughout the 20th century and right up to the present day

2.3 *Catalán* (1956-1957, 1957-1958)

Diego Catalán Menéndez-Pidal (Madrid, 1928 - 2008), the grandson of Ramón Menéndez Pidal, was an eminent philologist, dialectologist, and scholar of Hispanic Romance languages. He published numerous works on the geography of languages in the Iberian Peninsula, particularly Castilian and Asturleonese.

2.3.1 Framework: Isoglottic dialectology

In 1954, Rodríguez-Castellano published *Aspectos del bable occidental*, the most comprehensive study of the western variety of Asturian to have been undertaken up until then. It described in detail the language's features and the geographic distribution of its isoglosses, with notes on, among other things, the dividing line between the Galician-Asturian and Central Asturian language zones and on the speech of the *brañeros* or *vaqueiros* (transhumant livestock breeders in those same dialect zones). This issue was eventually addressed in the two works Diego Catalán published in *Romance Philology* (Catalán 1956-1957 and 1957-1958; later brought together in 1989: 30-99).

2.3.2 Classification of dialects and subdialects

After reviewing Asturleonese language features in general, the typical features of Western Asturian and the border lines between the Western Asturian language zone and the Galician and Central Asturian zones, those two works identified the main divisive phenomena within Western Asturian and then went on to detail Catalán's famous classification of Western Asturian into four zones (see Table 2, Map 4 and Table 3):

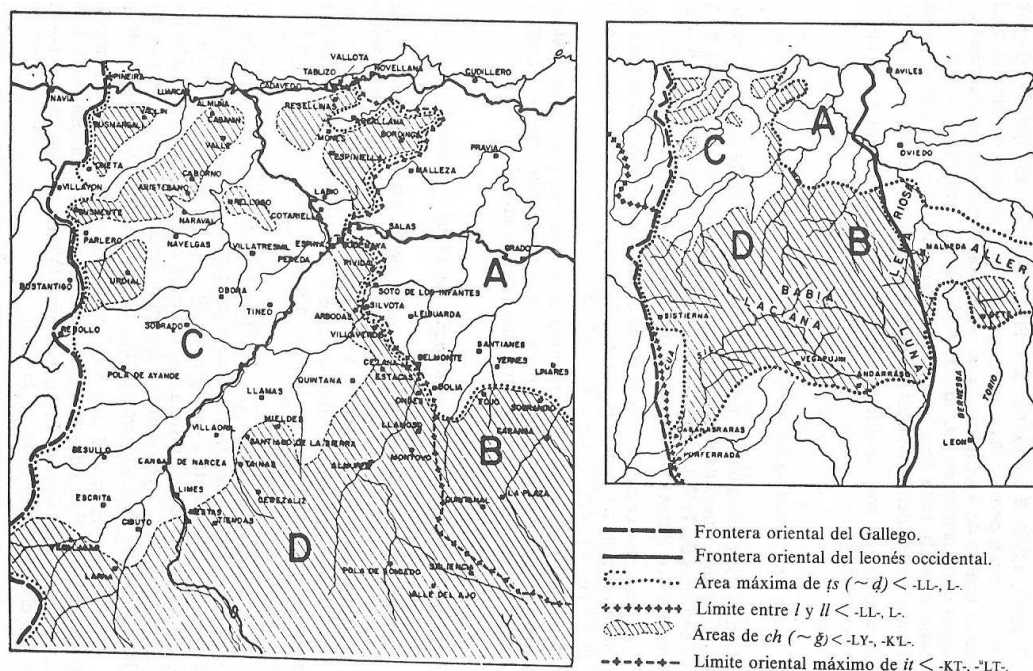
NAME OF DIALECT ZONE	GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION	FEATURES OR ISOGLOSSES
Zone A: Western Bable of the eastern lowlands	Municipalities of Castrillón, Illas (except for Cabañas), Candamo, Soto, Muros, Pravia, Cudillero (except for the <i>brañas</i> ⁶ and Vallota to the west), Salas (except for the <i>brañas</i> to the NW and NE and the parish of Labio), the north of Belmonte (downstream of the town of Belmonte itself), Grado, the northern half of Tameza, the western end of Oviedo, the western half of Santo Adriano, and the last villages to the north of Proaza and Pedroveya (Quirós).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Unstable diphthongs <i>ie, ue</i> ● Falling diphthongs <i>ei, ou</i> ● No vowel metaphony ● N-, -NN- > ñ ● L-, -LL- > // ● PL-, CL-, FL- > // ● LJ, C'L, G'L, T'L > y (> Ø) ● CT, ULT > ch
Zone B: Western Bable of the eastern highlands	Municipalities of Teberga, Quirós (except for Pedroveya to the north), Alta Lena (SW of Lena), Proaza (except its northern extreme) and the south of Tameza.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Unstable diphthongs <i>ie, ue</i> ● Falling diphthongs <i>ei, ou</i> ● No vowel metaphony (but there is vowel metaphony in the SE corner, in the higher up villages of Quirós and Alta Lena) ● N-, -NN- > n ● L-, -LL- > // ● PL-, CL-, FL- > // ● LJ, C'L, G'L, T'L > ch ● CT, ULT > ts
Zone C: Western Bable of the western lowlands	Lowland valleys in the municipality of Cangas del Narcea, the non-Galician half of Ayande, the eastern extreme of Belmonte, Tineo, Villayón, the non-Galician half of Navia, Luarca, Vallota (Cudillero) and Labio (Salas).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Suffix <i>-oiro</i> ● N-, -NN- > n ● L-, -LL- > // ● PL-, CL-, FL- > ch ● LJ, C'L, G'L, T'L > y (> Ø) ● CT, ULT > it
Zone D: Western Bable of the western highlands	Municipalities of Degaña, the non-Galician end of Ibias (parish of Sistora), the upper part of Cangas del Narcea, Somiedo, the southern half of Belmonte (upstream of the town of Belmonte); plus the <i>brañas</i> in the western lowlands (in the municipalities of Belmonte, Tineo, Salas, Cudillero, Luarca, Villayón and Navia).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Same vowel system as Zone C ● N-, -NN- > n ● L-, -LL- > // ● PL-, CL-, FL- > ch ● LJ, C'L, G'L, T'L > ch ● CT, ULT > it

Table 2. Table showing the proposal for four sub-dialect zones for Western Asturian (Catalán 1956-1957 and 1957-1958) (Own elaboration)

As can be seen in the table above, the *brañas* in the western lowlands (the municipalities of Belmonte, Tineo, Salas, Cudillero, Luarca, Villayón and Navia) are included in Zone D (and in enclaves in Zone C). Later authors expressly differentiated

⁶ *Braña*: Asturian word for mountain pastures.

the speech of the *brañeros* or *vaqueros* (the transhumant population) from that of Zone D, to which Catalán assigned it. García Arias (2003) even created a “Zone E” for it (see Section 2.7.2).



Map 4. Maps showing the sub-classification of Western Asturian into four sub-dialect zones (Catalán 1989: 73)

	PL-, KL-, FL-	L-, -LL-	N-, -NN-	-LJ-, -K'L-	-KT-, -'LT-	-ōRIU
Zone A	ll-	ll	ñ	-y-	-ch-	-oriu
Zone B	ʃs-	ʃs	n	-ch-	-ts-	-oriu
Zone C	ch-	ʃs	n	-y-	-it-	-oiru
Zone D	ch-	ʃs	n	-ch-	-it-	-oiru

Table 3. Table summarising phonetic features in the four sub-dialects of Western Asturian (Catalán 1989: 75)

The dividing line between the Western and Central Asturian language zones has been studied in a series of works of great dialectological interest: Rodríguez-Castellano (1954), who accurately demarcated the feminine plurals *-as* (Western) and *-es* (Central); Catalán, in the works mentioned earlier; Menéndez García (1963), on speech in Tineo; Suárez García (2016), on the parish of Trubia in the municipality of Oviedo; and Rodríguez Monteavaro (2021) and Rodríguez Monteavaro & Andrés (2022), who used dialectometric methodology to examine a stretch of the borderline between

Western and Central Asturian in the municipalities of Candamu, Les Regueres, Llanera, Grau, Uviéu (Oviedo), Tameza, La Ribera and Santu Adrianu.

2.4. *Jesús Neira Martínez (1976, 1984) and Josefina Martínez Álvarez (1996)*

Jesús Neira Martínez (La Pola de L Lena, Asturias, 1916 - Oviedo, 2011) was Senior Professor of Dialectology at the University of Oviedo. His doctoral thesis analysed speech in the municipality of L Lena (Lena). Much of Neira's subsequent work was dedicated to Asturian dialectology, with studies into geolectal demarcation / zoning and the language situation in Asturias. Josefina Martínez Álvarez (San Cloyo, Oviedo, 1937) is a retired Senior Professor of Spanish Language at the University of Oviedo. She is the author of a monographic study into the dialect of her hometown —the first study in Asturias to adopt a “language contact” approach— and of numerous works on Asturian dialectology.

2.4.1 Framework: Isoglottic dialectology

Both Neira Martínez and Martínez Alvarez analysed the Central Asturian dialect using phonological features, based on the evolution of specific Latin sounds in Asturian. The partitioning of the studied area is remarkably similar in both studies, which is why they are presented here together.

2.4.2 Classification of dialects and subdialects

Two works by Neira Martínez (1976, 1984) and one by Martínez Álvarez (1996) present proposals for dialectically subdividing Central Asturian. As can be seen in the synoptic table below (Table 4), these proposals are all very similar:

	NEIRA MARTÍNEZ (1976)	NEIRA MARTÍNEZ (1984)	MARTÍNEZ ÁLVAREZ (1996)
1)	Zones with no vowel metaphony: Oviedo, Gijón, Avilés.	Central Asturian, centred on the large cities of Oviedo, Gijón and Avilés.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The most widespread variety (Avilés, Corvera, Llanera, Las Regueras, Oviedo, Ribera de Arriba, Siero, Noreña, Gijón, Villaciosa, Sariego and Nava). - Features: initial F-; <i>ei</i> > <i>e</i>, <i>ou</i> > <i>o</i>; fem. pl. verb desinences -<i>es</i>, -<i>en</i>; contrasting -<i>u</i> / -<i>o</i>; non-metaphony; L-, -LL- > //; -NN-, -MN- > ñ; nominal neuter gender.
2)	Zones with vowel metaphony: the Carreño-Gozón zone; the Riosa-Mieres-Lena-Aller zone; and the Nalón zone.	Cabo de Peñas (Gozón and Carreño).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - North (Carreño, Gozón). - Features: as above, but with metaphony
3)		Nalón (Sobrescobio, Laviana, San Martín del Rey Aurelio, Langreo, Bimenes and part of Siero).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nalón (Sobrescobio, Laviana, San Martín, Bimenes, Langreo). - Features: /a/ > /o/ metaphony; NN-, -MN- > <i>n</i>.
4)	Zone with plurals in - <i>as</i> : upper reaches of Lena and Aller.	Upper Aller and upper Lena basin.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Middle and southern reaches of the Lena and Aller. - Features: as above, but with fem. pl. and verb desinences -<i>as</i>, -<i>an</i>
5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lena, Aller, Riosa and part of Mieres and Morcín. - Features: L-, -LL- > //; -NN-, -MN- > <i>n</i>; final -<i>e</i> instead of -<i>i</i> (<i>fixe</i>); desinence in 3rd pers. sing. Past <i>comú</i> 'he/she ate'; contrast between <i>enciende</i> (present) 'he/she lights' / <i>encinde</i> (imperative) 'light!'. 	Lower basin of the river Caudal (Morcín, Riosa, part of Mieres and lower reaches of the Lena and Aller).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Morcín, Riosa, Mieres and lower reaches of the Lena y Aller. - Features: L-, -LL- > //; -NN-, -MN- > <i>n</i>; metaphony.
6)		The easternmost part of the Central Asturian linguistic domain (Cabranes, Piloña).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eastern strip (Colunga, Caravia, Piloña, Cabranes, Parres, Ponga, Caso). - Features: neuter in -<i>u</i>.

Table 4. Synoptic table showing proposals for dialectically subdividing Central Asturian (Neira Martínez, 1976, 1984; Martínez Álvarez, 1996) (Own elaboration)

2.5 García González (1981, 1982, 1983)

Francisco García González, born in Novales (Cantabria), was Senior Professor of Dialectology at the University of Oviedo until his death in 1999. After his doctoral thesis on the speech of Cabuérniga (Cantabria), he published major works of research

into Eastern Asturian and the Montañese dialect.

2.5.1 Framework: Isoglottic dialectology

Following the framework of his predecessors, García González only took into account phonological and morphological characteristics in his classification.

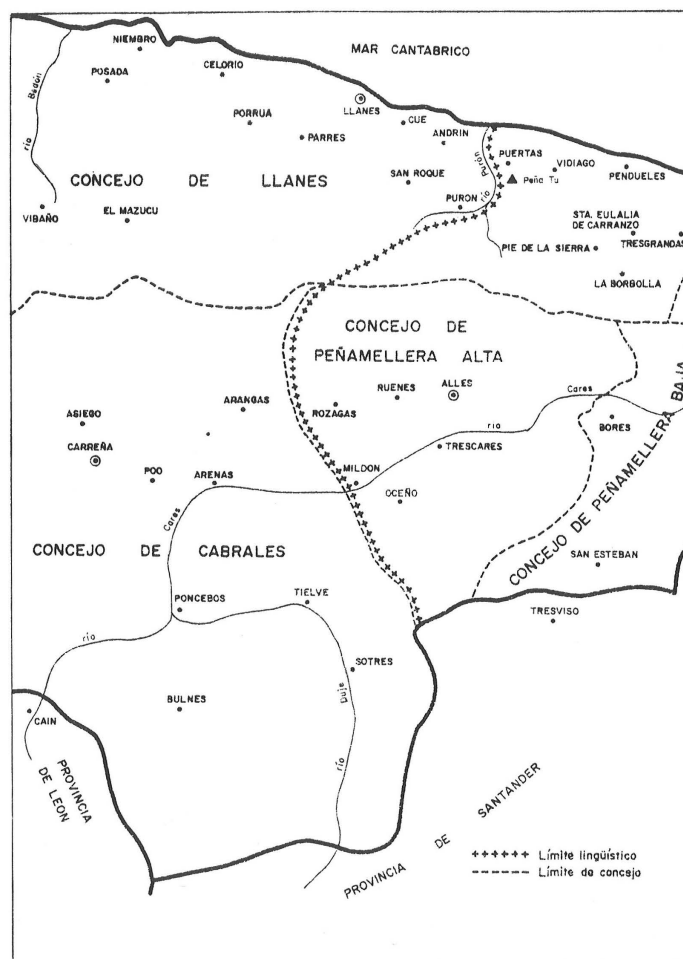
2.5.2 Classification of dialects and sub-dialects

Menéndez Pidal's classification of 1906 had placed the Eastern Asturian linguistic domain in an area stretching eastwards from the Sella basin and then continuing across a hazily demarcated dividing line into the Cantabrian speech zone. García González (1981, 1982 and 1983) reported an isogloss bundle on the river Purón (the municipality of Llanes and the area lying between those of Cabrales and Peñamellera Alta). This allowed him to differentiate two dialect zones: the *Eastern Asturian* zone per se, between the Sella and the Purón, and the *Montañese* zone, merging into the Cantabrian speech area to the east of the Purón (see Table 6 and Map 5). The biggest novelty in García González's proposal was the idea that the aforementioned isogloss bundle did not separate two varieties of Asturian but marked the dividing line between Asturian and the *Montañese* or *Cantabrian-Asturian* variety of Castilian (García González 1982). The eastern extreme of the municipality of Llanes, and the municipalities of Peñamellera Alta, Peñamellera Baja and Ribadedeva would thus be "segregated from the Bable domain and within the orbit of the Cantabrian speech zone"⁷ (García González 1981-1982: 339).

⁷ «Quedan segregados del dominio bable y entran en la órbita de las hablas cántabras».

EASTERN ASTURIAN (ASTURLEONESE)	MONTAÑESE (CASTILIAN)
<i>arbeyu</i> 'pea'	<i>arbeju</i>
<i>coxu</i> 'lame'	<i>coju</i>
<i>cerrada</i> 'closed' (fem.)	<i>cerrá</i>
<i>hüeya</i> 'leaf'	<i>hoja</i>
<i>camín</i> 'road'	<i>caminu</i>
<i>no-y canta</i> 'he/she does not sing to him/her' <i>no-yos canta</i> 'he/she does not sing to them'	<i>no li canta, no lis canta</i>
<i>la mio casa</i> 'my house'	<i>la mi casa</i>

Table 6. Table with examples illustrating the isoglosses separating Eastern Asturian and Montañese. Own elaboration based on the data collected by García González (1981, 1982, 1983)



Map 5. The border line between Eastern Asturian and Montañese, according to García González (1982: 189)

Partially inspired by García González's thesis, Martínez Álvarez (1996) proposed subdividing the Eastern Asturian zone as follows:

a) The area between the Sella and the Aguamía. Features: F- > [h-], feminine plurals in *-es*.

b) The area between the Aguamía and the Purón. Features: F- > [h-], feminine plurals in *-as*.

c) The area east of the Purón, extending into Cantabria: the isogloss bundle described by García González (1981, 1982, 1983).

Martínez Álvarez's exact demarcation of the Eastern Asturian language zone remains unclear, however, insofar that he proposed calling this the "Western Cantabrian Romance" zone.

2.6 Borrego Nieto (1996)

Julio Borrego Nieto (Moralina, Zamora, 1951) is Senior Professor of Spanish Language at the University of Salamanca. The author of a variationist sociolinguistic study into speech of Sayago (Zamora), he has also published numerous works on Spanish grammar, the dialectology of northern Castilian and the Asturleonese language as spoken in the provinces of Zamora and León.

2.6.1 Framework: Isoglottic dialectology

Although Nieto was a sociolinguist, he used the framework of isoglottic dialectology, following in the footsteps of his predecessors.

2.6.2 Classification of dialects and subdialects

Fully accepting Menéndez Pidal's three-way division, Borrego Nieto (1996) proposed sub-classifying the domain's sub-dialects in the provinces of León, Zamora and Salamanca (see map 1), but not Asturias. This classification was based on two intertwining criteria: one focussing exclusively on differential autochthonous features, and the other focussing on the degree of Castilianisation and, by extension, dialectal

vitality. It is summarised below:

Zone 1

Geographical extension: the westernmost part of León and Zamora, excluding areas with predominantly Galician features, i.e., districts of Babia and Laciana, part of Luna, part of Los Argüellos, eastern Bierzo and La Cabrera; non-Galician Sanabria. It is here that Leonese shows the greatest vitality.

Features:

- diphthongisation of *ě ō* before yod;
- unstable diphthongs *ie, ue* (*ia, ía, ua, uo*);
- maintenance of diphthong *ie* (*riestra* ‘string’);
- falling diphthongs *ei, ou*;
- closed final *-u, -i*;
- unstable atonic vowel system;
- paragoge of *-e*;
- epenthetic yod;
- retention of F-, L- > *//* (*//* in Babia and Laciana);
- PL-, CL-, FL- > *ch*;
- semi-learned PL-, CL-, BL- > *pr-, cr-, br-*;
- N- > *ñ*;
- phoneme */ʃ/* «x»;
- -NN-, -MN- > *n*;
- conservation of -MB-;
- LJ, C'L, G'L, T'L > *y* (*ch* in Babia and Laciana, *//* in Bierzo and Sanabria);
- CT, ULT > *it*;
- lambdacism of implosive consonants in secondary groups;
- velar [-ŋ];
- loss of final *-d*;
- masc. or fem. gender in some nouns;

- suffix *-al, -ar* in names of fruit trees;
- diminutive in *-ín, -ina*;
- contractions of preposition + article;
- possessives *tou sou / túa súa* ‘your’ (masc. and fem.);
- gender distinction in *dos / dúas* ‘two’ (masc. and fem.);
- dative pronoun *ye ~ ye ~ lle* ‘to him, to her’;
- pronoun *you* ‘I’;
- pronoun *vos* ‘you’ (pl.);
- loss of *-e* in verb forms *tien* ‘he/she/it has’, *vien* ‘he/she/it comes’, *suel* ‘he/she/it is accustomed to’, *diz* ‘he/she says’, etc.;
- desinences *-des, -de* (*facedes* ‘you do/make’ (pl.), *cantade* ‘sing!’ (pl.), in addition to *facéis, cantáis*);
- simple past, absence of present perfect; simple past forms *cantanon, cantoren, canton* ‘they sang’;
- simple past form *coméu* ‘he/she ate’;
- copulative conjunction *ya* ‘and’.

Zone 2

Geographical extension: districts in León lying between Zone 1 and Ribera del Órbigo (Maragatería, Cepeda, Omaña); in Zamora, the district of La Carballeda (with the sub-district of La Requejada) and Aliste, with at least some of the adjacent territory (Alba and Tábara).

Features:

- blurring of the features in Zone 1 towards the east;
- no diphthongs *uo, ua, ia*;
- no diphthongisation before yod;
- no diphthongs with forms of the verb *ser* ‘to be’;
- no conjunction *ya* ‘and’;
- diphthongs *ei, ou* more difficult to be found;
- no *!!*;

- scarcity of PL- > *ch*;
- scarcity of ʎ C' L G' L T' L > *y*;
- scarcity of -NN-, -MN- > *n*;
- scarcity of the phoneme /ʃ/ «x»;
- scarcity of CT, ULT > *it*;
- articles with Castilian forms;
- contractions *nel* 'in the', *pol* 'for/by the', *col* 'with the', *nu* 'in the' (masc.), *na* 'in the' (fem.);
- Castilianised possessives;
- no feminine numeric form *dúas* 'two';
- no tonic pronouns *nós* 'we', *vós* 'you' (pl.);
- no pronoun *you* 'I';
- scarcity of verb desinences -*de* -*des*;
- regression of forms like *cantóu* 'he/she sang', *canteimos* 'we sang/we have sung';
- presence of forms *cantorun*, *cantonen*, *cantoren*, *canton* 'they sang';
- abundance of verbs in -*iar*;
- imperfect forms *cumiá* 'I/he/she ate', *tinié* 'I/he/she had', *cumirié* 'I/he/she would eat';
- antihhiatic -*y*- (*cayida* 'fall, fallen', *criya* 'young animal', *criyado* 'servant', *ideya* 'idea');
- diminutive suffix -*ico*, -*ín*;
- despective masculine (*chaqueto* 'small jacket', *peloto* 'small ball', *bicicleta* 'small bicycle').

Zone 3

Geographical extension: in León, Ribera del Órbigo and perhaps also the land flanking the Órbigo, and the Bernesga, Curueño and Porma basins further to the north; in Zamora, the north-western corner of Sayago.

Features:

- closed final *-u*;
- suppression of *-r* in infinitives (*comprálo* ‘to buy it’, *cumélo* ‘to eat it’);
- velar [-ŋ];
- paragoge of *-e* after final *-r*;
- lexicalised initial F-;
- $\sqcup \text{C}'\text{L G}'\text{L T}'\text{L} > y$;
- epenthetic yod;
- retention of *-MB-*;
- scarcity of *L- > ll*;
- diminutive in *-ín -ina*;
- suffix *-al, -ar* in names of fruit trees;
- despective masculine;
- tonic possessives;
- tonic pronoun *vós* ‘you’ (pl.);
- verbs in *-iar*;
- verb desinences *cantái* ‘sing!’ (pl.) *coméi* ‘eat!’ (pl.), *metié* ‘he/she put in’, *compreste* ‘you bought’ (sing.), *metiú* ‘he/she put in’, *dijon* ‘they said’, *vinon* ‘they came’.
- The zone’s eastern border with the Castilian linguistic domain is marked by two features: retention of initial F-; and retention of falling diphthongs *ei, ou*. Zone 3 is delimited by these two isoglosses and constitutes what Menéndez Pidal classified as the “Central Leonese” zone, which is basically Castilian.

Zone 4

Geographical extension: north-eastern corner of León = Picos de Europa (Valdeón, Sajambre); districts of La Ribera del Duero and El Rebollar in the province of Salamanca, extending along the Gata and Francia mountain ranges.

Features:

- aspirated F- > [h-], thus corresponding to Menéndez Pidal’s “East Leonese”;

- verb desinences *comiú* ‘he/she ate’, *salíu* ‘he she went out’, *cantoren* ‘they sang’, *comioren* ‘they ate’;
- verbs in *-iar*;
- neuter for uncountable nouns (*lleche frío* ‘cold milk’). In La Ribera and El Rebollar, closed final syllables;
- *pr-*, *br-* in semi-learned words;
- metathesis (*palrar* instead of *parlar* ‘to natter’, *galrito* instead of *garlito* ‘fish trap’, etc.);
- diminutive in *-ino* ~ *-ín*. Loss of *-es* in El Payo (Rebollar) and San Ciprián de Sanabria, which led Menéndez Pidal to assume Asturian repopulation. The districts in Salamanca retain sibilant sounds as in Cáceres;
- /d/ deriving from the affricate (*idil* ‘to say’, *jadel* ‘to make/do’, *-ado*, *dagal* ‘zagal, shepherd boy’, *adera* ‘pavement’) and /z/ from the fricative (*caza* ‘house’, *tezu* ‘hill, crest’).

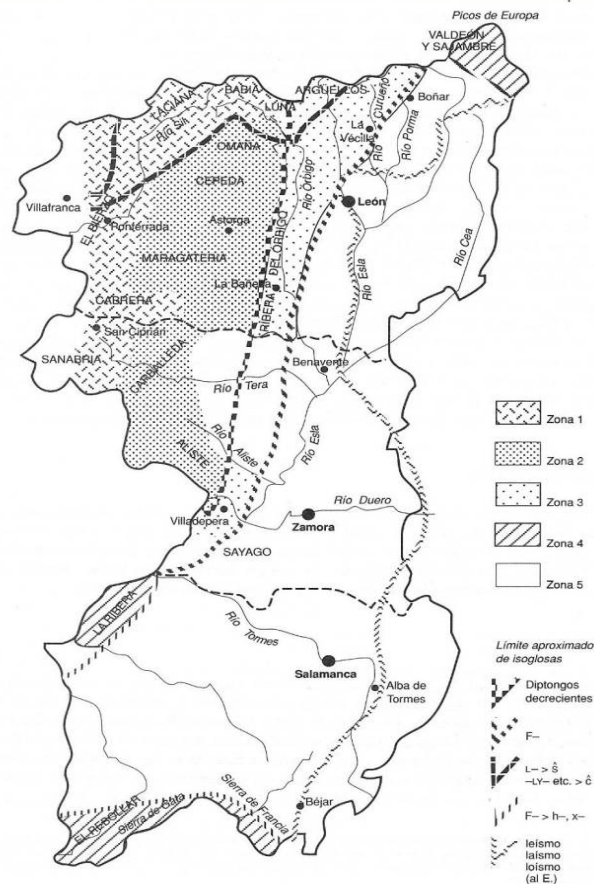
Zone 5

Geographical extension: in León, the lands to the east of the initial F- isogloss, except for the corner where F- is aspirated as /h-/. In Zamora, the entire province except for Sanabria, Carballeda, Aliste and the north-western corner of Sayago. In Salamanca, the only districts not included are La Ribera and El Rebollar (with their mountain ranges).

Features:

- autochthonous features are very blurred;
- epenthetic yod;
- *pr-*, *br-* in semi-learned words;
- retention of *-MB-*;
- loss of *-r* in infinitives before clitics;
- suffixes *-al*, *-ar* for fruit trees;
- diminutive in *-ín*, *-ina*;
- verbs in *-iar*;

- verb forms *cantemos* ‘we sang/we have sung’, *cantaistis* ‘you sang’ (pl.), *dijon* ‘they said’, *trajon* ‘they brought’, *entrái* ‘enter!’ (pl.), *coméi* ‘eat!’ (pl.);
- pronoun *vos* ‘you’ (pl.);
- tonic possessives;
- *leísmo*, *laísmo* and *loísmo* in atonic pronouns;
- neuter gender and distinction between *le* and *la / lo* ‘him, her / it’ (accusative) (Map 6).



Map 6. Asturleonese dialect zones in León, Zamora and Salamanca (Borrego Nieto 1996: 142)

2.7 García Arias (2003)

Xosé Lluís García Arias (Teberga, Asturias, 1945), Senior Professor (retired) of Dialectology at the University of Oviedo, is an eminent philologist and linguist dedicated to the study of Asturian and Asturleonese. After writing his doctoral thesis on speech of his own native territory, his research activity has centred on etymology,

dialectology, toponymy, history of language and sociolinguistics. He is the author of several works of great relevance to Asturian linguistics, such as an etymological dictionary of Asturian toponyms, a *Gramática histórica de la lengua asturiana* (*Historical Grammar of the Asturian Language*), a dialectological dictionary of Asturian, and above all his monumental, seven-volume *Diccionariu etimolóxicu de la llingua asturiana* (*Etymological Dictionary of the Asturian Language*).

2.7.1 Framework: Isoglottic dialectology

As in previous classifications, García Arias used diachronic phonological and morphological criteria in his classification.

2.7.2 Classification of dialects and sub-dialects

García Arias (2003: 39-47) proposed the most far-reaching re-classification of Asturleonese dialects since 1906, although he preferred to use the glottonym *Astur* to refer to this linguistic domain (Map 7). He retained Menéndez Pidal's three-way division, but critically re-assessed all the existing proposals and went on to add some of his own:

ASTURIAN DIALECT CLASSIFICATION

1) BASED ON PHONIC AND MORPHOLOGICAL CRITERIA:

a) *Western Asturian*. Features: five-vowel system with three atonic final vowels; diphthongs *ei*, *ou*; adjectives with two endings (*malu*, *mala* 'bad [m./f.]'); two pronominal references *lu* / *la* 'him/her'; feminines ending in *-as*;

Subdivision: zones A, B, C, D, E.

b) *Central Asturian*. Features: 5 vowels with 5 atonic final vowels; monophthongisation *ei* > *e*, *ou* > *o*; retention of F-; adjectives with two or three endings *-u*, *-a*, *-o*; three pronominal references *lu* / *la* / *lo* 'him/her/it'; feminines ending in *-es* (minority *-as*).

Subdivision:

–*Zone F, or Core Zone*. Features: adjectives with three endings and feminines in -*es*.

Subdivision:

–*North-central* (Avilés, east of Illas, Les Regueres, Uviéu, La Ribera, Siero, Sariegu and Nava, northern part of Mieres and Morcín, the Nalón basin, with Bimenes, Siero, Sariegu, Nava and the west of Villaviciosa).

–*South-central* (most of Ayer, Llena, and Riosa, part of Morcín and the southern part of Mieres).

–*Zone G, or Lateral Zone* (east-centre of Villaviciosa, Cabranes, Piloña, Casu, part of Ponga, part of Parres, Berbes [west of Ribeseya], Caravia, Colunga).

Features: adjectives with two endings (*malu, mala* ‘bad [m./ f.]’) and feminines in -*es*.

c) *Eastern Asturian*. Features: 5 vowels with 5 atonic final vowels; monophthongisation *ei > e, ou > o*; *F-* > aspirated *h-*; adjectives with two endings (*malu, mala* ‘bad [m./ f.]’); three pronominal references (*lu la lo* ‘him/her/it’); feminines in -*as* or -*es*.

Subdivision:

–*Zone H, or the ‘rioseyano⁸ zone’* (territories along the banks of the Seya where *h-* is aspirated: almost all of Ribeseya, the eastern third of Parres, Cangues d’Onís and Amieva). Features: adjectives with two endings, feminines in -*es*.

–*Zone I, or the ‘llanisco-cabraliego⁹ zone’* (territory of Llanes, east of Cangues d’Onís, territory of Onís, Cabrales). Features: adjectives with two endings, feminines in -*as*.

–*Zone J, or the ‘astur-santiyanés¹⁰ zone’*: east of the river Purón and Puertas de Vidiago. Features: *ɔ, ɔ’L, ɔ’L, ɔ’L > /x/; /x/* where Ast. has */j/*; the ending -*á*; Lat. *ö > /o/*; suffix -*inu*; dative pronoun *li, lis* ‘to him/her, to them’;

⁸ *Rioseyano*: the sub-dialect of Ribadesella / Ribeseya.

⁹ *Llanisco-cabraliego*: the sub-dialect of Llanes and Cabrales.

¹⁰ *Santiyanés*: sub-dialect of Santillana / Santiyana.

possessives *el mi, el tu, el su* 'my, your, his/her'.

2) BASED ON DIACHRONIC PHONIC CRITERIA:

a) Northern-Eastern Asturian (north-central + lateral + eastern + A). Features: L-, -LL- > //; N-, -NN- > ñ.

b) Southern-Western Asturian (south-central + B + C + D + E): L- -LL- > //; N-, -NN- > n.

CLASSIFICATION OF DIALECTS IN THE *ASTUR* LINGUISTIC DOMAIN¹¹

1) WESTERN GROUP. Features: five-vowel system; falling diphthongs *ei, ou*; retention of initial F-.

Subdivision:

a) Asturian.

Subdivision:

–A. Features: L-, -LL- > //; Lj, C'L, G'L, T'L > y; CT, ULT > *ch*; PL-, CL-, FL- > //; N-, -NN- > ñ.

–B. Features: L-, -LL- > //; Lj, C'L, G'L, T'L > *ch*; CT, ULT > *ts*; PL-, CL-, FL- > //; N-, -NN- > n.

–C. Features: L-, -LL- > //; Lj, C'L, G'L, T'L > y; CT, ULT > *it*; PL-, CL-, FL- > // ~ *ch*; N-, -NN- > n.

–D. Features: L-, -LL- > //; Lj, C'L, G'L, T'L > *ch*; CT, ULT > *it*; PL-, CL-, FL- > // ~ *ch*; N-, -NN- > n.

–E (western *brañas*). Features: L-, -LL- > //; Lj, C'L, G'L, T'L > *ky*; CT, ULT > *it*; PL-, CL-, FL- > // ~ *ky* ~ *ts*; N-, -NN- > n.

b) Augustan Leonese¹²

Subdivision:

–*Bercian-Sanabrese* (Forniella, part of El Fabeiru, eastern Bierzo, Cabreirese and Sanabrese; corresponds to Borrego Nieto's Zone 1). Features: L-, -LL- > //; Lj, C'L, G'L, T'L > y ~ //; CT, ULT > *it*; PL-, CL-, FL- > *ch*.

–*Cepedano alistiano* (sub-dialect La Cepeda and Aliste) (south of Omaña and La Cepeda, Maragatos, Astorga, west of La Bañeza, La Carbayeda, Aliste. Corresponds to Borrego Nieto's Zone 2). Features: L-, -LL- > //; Lj, C'L, G'L, T'L

¹¹ Remember that this author calls *Ástur* the *Asturleonese* linguistic domain (see 1.5).

¹² From the Roman name of current Astorga, *Asturica Augusta*.

> *y* ~ *ll*; CT, ULT > *ch*; PL-, CL-, FL- > *ch*.

c) Mirandese. Features: L-, -LL- > *ll*; Lj, C'L, G'L, T'L > *ll*; CT, ULT > *it*; PL-, CL-, FL- > *ch*;
N-, -NN- > *n*; unvoiced / voiced sibilants.

2) CENTRAL GROUP. Features: five-vowel system; monophthongisation *ei* > *e*, *ou* > *o*;
retention of initial F-.

Subdivision:

a) Asturian.

Subdivision:

-*North-lateral-central*. Features: L-, -LL- > *ll*; Lj, C'L, G'L, T'L > *y*; CT, ULT > *ch*; PL-,
CL-, FL- > *ll*; N-, -NN- > *n*.

Subdivision:

-*North-central* (Avilés, east of Illas, Les Regueres, Uviéu, La Ribera, Siero,
Sariegu, Nava, northern part of Mieres and Morcín, the Nalón basin,
Bimenes, west of Villaviciosa).

-*Lateral-central* (eastwards from the above locations as far as the Seya with
F-, Cabranes, Piloña, part of Parres, Ponga and Casu). Features: L-, -LL- >
ll; Lj, C'L, G'L, T'L > *y*; CT, ULT > *ch*; PL-, CL-, FL- > *ll*; N-, -NN- > *ñ*.

-*South-central* (most of Ayer and Llena, Riosa, Morcín, south of Mieres).
Features: L-, -LL- > *ll*; Lj, C'L, G'L, T'L > *y*; CT, ULT > *ch*; PL-, CL-, FL- > *y*; N-, -NN- >
n.

b) *Leones ribereño* (Leonese of La Ribera del Órbigo) (La Ribera del Órbigo;
corresponds to Borrego Nieto's Zone 3). Features: L-, -LL- > *ll*; Lj, C'L, G'L,
T'L > *y*; CT, ULT > *ch*; PL-, CL-, FL- > *ll*.

3) EASTERN GROUP. Features: five-vowel system; monophthongisation *ei* > *e*, *ou* > *o*;
F- > [h-].

Subdivision:

a) Asturian

-*Eastern*. Features: L-, -LL- > *ll*; Lj, C'L, G'L, T'L > *y*; CT, ULT > *ch*; PL-, CL-, FL- > *ll*; N-, -
NN- > *ñ*.

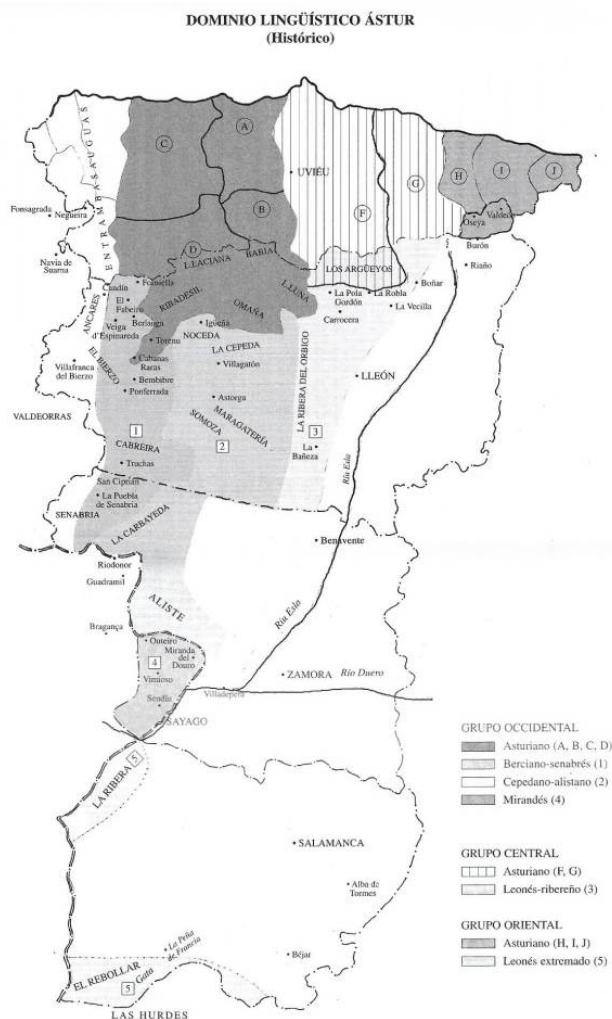
Subdivision:

-*Rioseyno* (subdialect of Ribadesella / Ribeseya).

-Llanisco-cabraliego (sub-dialect of Llanes and Cabrales).

-Astur-santiyanés (sub-dialect of Santillana del Mar).

b) *Leonés extremado* (Southernmost Leonese) (zones separated from the rest of the domain: La Ribera de Salamanca, El Rebollal, Sierra de Gata. Corresponds to the zones referenced by Borrego Nieto). Features: monophthongisation $ei > e$, $ou > o$; F- > [h-].



Map 7. Map of the Asturleonese or Astur linguistic domain (García Arias 2003: Fig. 35)

2.8 González i Planas (2004)

Francesc González i Planas (Girona 1978) is a lecturer in Catalan Language and Spanish Dialectology at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya and at the Universitat de

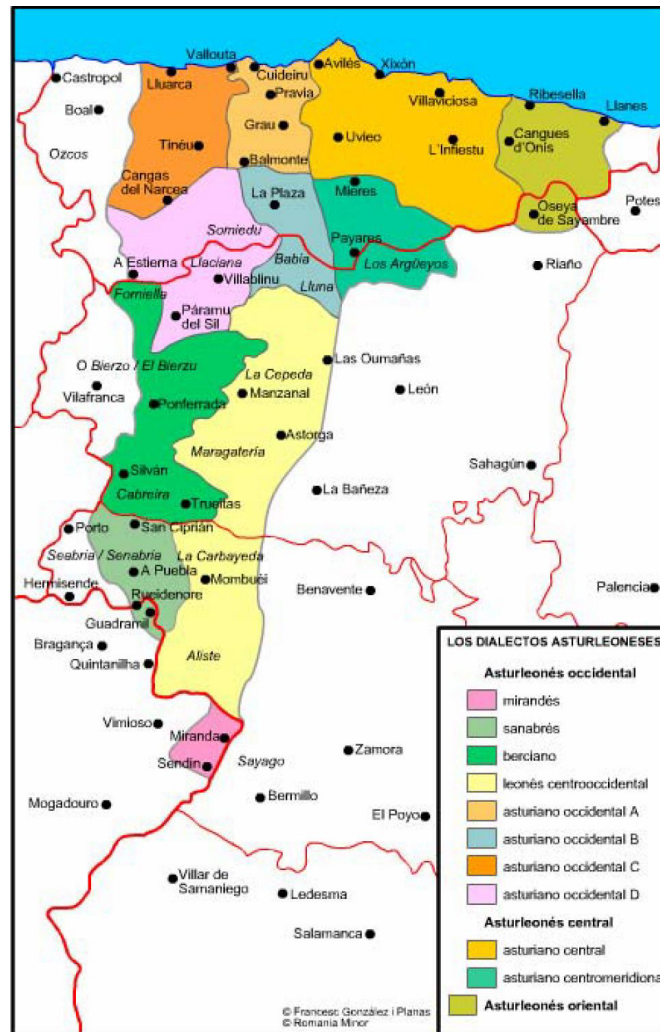
Girona. His publications include works on Asturleonese grammar.

2.8.1 Framework: Isoglottic dialectology

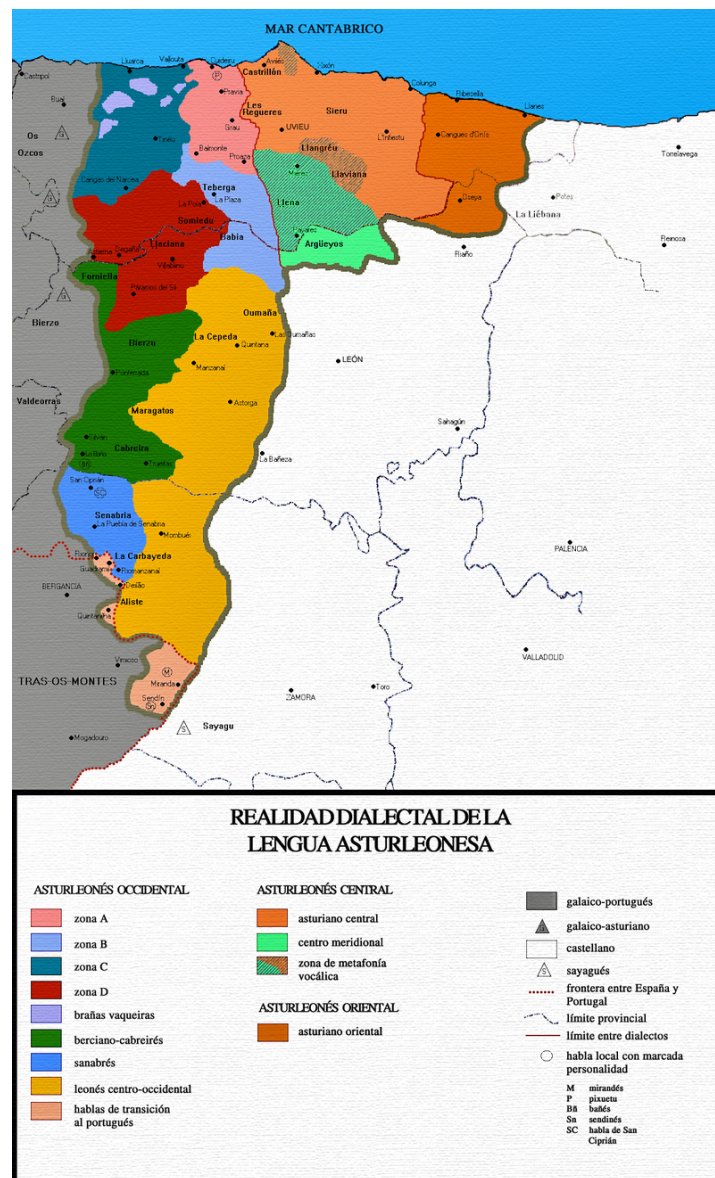
No documentation is provided on the origin of the data and characteristics used for the mapping of the Asturleonese varieties. This author's contribution is only cartographic: he offers two new versions of the dialect map of Asturleonese. There is an abundant bibliography on the subject on the same website.

2.8.2. Classification of dialects and subdialects

In 2004, on the *Romania Minor* project website (www.romaniaminor.org), González i Planas presented a new proposal for a linguistic map of Asturleonese. There are a small number of differences between the dialectal zoning used to create the new map from the one adopted by Borrego Nieto (1996) and García Arias (2003). There are two versions of González i Planas' map (Maps 8 and 9): the first is designated "Asturleonese dialects"; the second, which includes more detail and better graphics, "Dialectal reality of the Asturleonese language". Both maps have been adopted by Wikipedia and constitute a revision of the geographical area in which Asturleonese is spoken and of its dialectal and sub-dialectal classification.



Map 8. Map entitled “Asturleonese dialects” (González i Planas 2004), in *Romania Minor* (www.romaniaminor.org)



Map 9. Map entitled “Dialectal reality of the Asturleonese language” (González i Planas 2004), in *Romania Minor* (www.romaniaminor.org)

3. Discussion

The dialect classifications detailed above are evaluated below.

a) Arias de Miranda believed that the three-way division of Asturian into western, central and eastern varieties was attributable to the Roman *conventus*: *Lucensis*, with its capital in Lugo (*Lucus Augusti*), would thus have extended as far as the lower Nalón; *Asturicensis*, with its capital in Astorga (*Asturica Augusta*), would

have reached the central part of Asturias; and *Cluniensis* would have reached Cantabria. Laverde Ruiz preferred to focus on the tribes who had inhabited Asturias prior to Roman domination: the *Astures* in the central zone, the *Cantabri* to the east and the *Gallaeci* to the west. The Romans diminished the differences between those zones. Arias de Miranda / Laverde Ruiz included the Eo-Navia zone within the Western Bable domain. This error was soon corrected by Munthe in 1887, and was subsequently almost forgotten, apart from in the dictionary Acevedo & Fernández published in 1932 under the title *Vocabulario del bable de Occidente*, a work which basically listed Galician lexical terms used in Asturias. The classification proposed by Arias de Miranda / Laverde Ruiz was adopted by a series of late 19th century authors whose work on linguistics was too early to be considered scientific. They included, above all, Vigón Casquero (1862) and Canella Secades (1886), who fully accepted the explanations put forth by Arias and Laverde, including their thesis regarding the ancient Roman or pre-Roman origins of Asturian. Munthe (1887: 14, 15) adopted a scientific approach, although his references to eastern, central and western dialects (or “dialects of the west of Asturias”) again echoed Arias de Miranda’s classification. One innovation, however, was his classification of Eo-Navian speech as Galician rather than as a variant of Western Asturian. Munthe’s terminology was also used by Vasconcellos (1900-1901), who affirmed, for example, that “In Eastern Asturian there are some truly notable phenomena”¹³ (1900-II: 63).

b) Menéndez Pidal’s division of Asturleonese into three dialect zones has been generally accepted to date. As García Gil (2009) so acutely observed, the consequences were quick to appear following the publication of *El dialecto leonés*: Blánquez Fraile (1907) examined the boundaries of the Western Leonese zone in Alcañices, Sanabria and La Bañeza; Alonso Garrote (1909) studied the speech of Maragatería and Tierra de Astorga; Krüger (1923) explored that of San Criprián de Sanabria; Sánchez Sevilla (1928) looked at Cespadosa de Tormes; and García Rey (1934) analysed lexical items used in El Bierzo. Menéndez Pidal’s classification can also be found in numerous works on Asturian dialectology. It is either cited or explicitly reproduced in the following studies,

¹³ “No asturiano oriental ha phenomenos verdadeiramente notáveis”.

some of which used it to justify the inclusion of specific speech patterns: Canellada (1944, Central Asturian in Cabranes); Álvarez Pérez (1949, Western Asturian in Babia and Laciana); Rodríguez-Castellano (1952, Central Asturian in the upper Aller region); Rodríguez-Castellano (1954, Western Bable); Neira Martínez (1955, Central Asturian in Lena); Menéndez García (1963, Western Asturian in Tineo); García Arias (1974, Western Asturian in Teberga); Conde Saiz (1978, Central Asturian in Sobrescobio); García Valdés (1979, Western Asturian in Santianes de Pravia); Cano González (1980 [1973]); Neira Martínez (1976); Cano González (1981, Western Asturian in Somiedo); Neira Martínez (1984); Vallina Alonso (1985); Díaz González (1986, Western Asturian in Candamo); Cano González (1992); Cano González (1994); Borrego Nieto (1996); Martínez Álvarez (1996); García Arias & Cano González (1996); González-Quevedo (2001, Western Asturian in Palacios del Sil); García Arias (2003); García Gil (2008); Suárez García (2016, Western Asturian in Trubia); Cano González (2018); Rodríguez Monteavaro & Andrés (2022). It was also used as the basis for studies into “Leonese” in the provinces of León and Zamora: Casado Lobato (1948, Western Leonese in Cabrera Alta), Borrego Nieto (1983, Leonese in Sayago), Le Men Loyer (2007), Morala Rodríguez (2007); García Gil (2007, Central Asturleonese in the northern districts of León), and García Gil (2018). And also, for studies into Mirandese: Verdelho (1993), Ferreira (1995), García Arias (2002).

c) Catalán’s classification of Western Asturian into four subdialects is not mentioned in Menéndez García’s monograph on speech of El Cuarto de los Valles in Tineo (Menéndez García 1963), a study which had formed the basis of its author’s doctoral thesis in 1957, but in subsequent studies it was immediately assimilated by all dialectologists and it continues to be generally accepted today. It can be found in almost all general works on Asturian and in all works focussing specifically on Western Asturian: Cano González (1980 [1973]), Neira (1976), Alarcos (1976), Neira (1984), Cano González (1992), Cano González (1994), Martínez Álvarez (1996), García Arias & Cano González (1996), García Arias (2003), Cano González (2018), García Gil (2018). Monographs on dialects in specific municipalities or parishes in the Western Asturian domain also refer to Catalán’s classification, locating their study zones in one of Catalán’s four dialect zones: in Zone A, García Valdés (1979, on Santianes de Pravia),

Díaz González (1986, on Candamo), Suárez García (2016, on Trubia); in Zone B, García Arias (1974, on Teberga); in Zone D, Cano González (1981, on Somiedo); González-Quevedo (2001, on Palacios del Sil). Logically, all these studies revealed a large amount of information about the dialects in each Western Asturian sub-zone.

d) Unlike other authors (for example, García Arias, 2003, and González i Planas, 2004: see Sections 2.7 and 2.8), Borrego Nieto did not classify any of the speech patterns from northern León as belonging to the Asturian domain. Babia and Luna (which for García Arias and González i Planas are an extension of the Western Asturian Zone B) and Laciana and Ribera del Sil (which those same authors consider an extension of Zone D) thus come to constitute Borrego Nieto's Zone 1, while Los Argüellos is his Zone 3 and Valdeón and Sajambre his Zone 4. Borrego Nieto's concept of "Leonese" encompasses everything from the best conserved forms of Asturleonese Romance to Castilian with Leonese sublayers. More specifically, his Zone 5 clearly refers to an area which once belonged to the Leonese domain, but which is today easily classifiable as Castilian. Neither García Arias (2003) nor González i Planas (2004) include this area within the Leonese zone. The same can be said of La Ribera de Salamanca, El Rebollar and Sierra de Francia in Borrego Nieto's Zone 4; García Arias takes them into account in his classification as *leonés extremado* (Southernmost Leonese) but González i Planas has them down as Castilian-speaking areas.

e) García Arias combined several classification possibilities, considering synchronic and diachronic phenomena. He offered two spheres of classification, one Asturian and one Asturleonese (*Astur*), classifying *Montañese*, the speech identified by García González (1981, 1982, 1983), as an *astur-santiyanés* variant of Eastern Asturian. He also proposed new glottonyms for several dialect zones and sub-zones: "Zone E" for the speech of the western *brañas* which Catalán (1956-1957, 1957-1958) included in Zone D; "Core Central Asturian"; "Lateral Central Asturian"; "North Central Asturian" and "South Central Asturian", which he included in the "Core Central Asturian" zone rather than establishing them as separate categories of the same level; "*rioseyano*" (sub-dialect of Ribadesella / Ribeseya), "*llanisco-cabraliego*" (sub-dialect of Llanes and Cabrales); "*Astur-Santiyanés*" (sub-dialect of Santillana del Mar); "Augustan Leonese";

“Bercian-Sanabrese”; “*cepedano alistiano*” (sub-dialect of La Cepeda and Aliste) (sub-dialect of La Cepeda and Aliste); “*leonés ribereño*” (Leonese of La Ribera del Órbigo); and “*leonés extremado*” (Southernmost Leonese). The dialect map proposed by García Arias respects the historic presence of Asturleonese in several areas where, thanks to intense castilianisation, some doubt may exist regarding their adscription to the Asturleonese language domain. It does not, however, contemplate either Cantabria or Extremadura (see map in Figure 12). To the north of León, Babia, Luna and Omaña appear as an extension of the Western Asturian spoken in Zone B; Laciana and Ribera del Sil as an extension of the Western Asturian spoken in Zone D; Los Argüellos as an extension of South-Central Asturian; and Valdeón and Sajambre as an extension of Eastern Asturian (*rioseyano* and *llanisco-cabraliego*). García Arias’ classification was echoed in later studies and presentations, such as that of García Gil (2018).

f) The maps compiled by González Planas are innovative insofar that they are the first to explicitly accept that, as postulated by some scholars in the second half of the 20th century, certain areas should not be ascribed to the Asturleonese linguistic domain (see the review by Cueto Fernández, 2011). More specifically, the following areas actually lie within the Castilian linguistic domain: the eastern extreme of Asturias, stretching eastwards from the river Purón (labelled by García González, 1981-1982-1983 as a *Montañese* or *Cantabrian-Asturian* zone); all of Cantabria; the whole province of Salamanca; and a strip in the centre of León that Borrego Nieto included in his Zone 2 and García Arias classified as speaking the *leonés ribereño* variant of Leonese associated with La Ribera del Órbigo. Like García Arias, González i Planas included areas of northern León as extensions of the Central, Eastern and Western Asturian zones (except for Omaña, which he placed in the “West-Central Leonese” zone).

g) In short, ever since the earliest classifications by Arias de Miranda (1858) and Menéndez Pidal (1906), there has been a very firmly established consensus that the Asturleonese linguistic domain comprises three macro-dialects: Western, Central and Eastern. The sub-classification of dialects within this scheme also enjoys wide consensus—especially with regard to Western Asturian, although some discrepancies and differences in approach continue to exist which affect not only units of

classification but also their grouping together into superordinate units. Another subject of disagreement between scholars is the issue of whether the more castilianised lands on the eastern flank of the Asturleonese linguistic domain should be considered part of the domain or ascribed to the Castilian domain. This affects the eastern edge of Asturias, Cantabria, large swathes of central and eastern León and Zamora, and Salamanca.

h) Some studies, like those of Rodríguez-Castellano (1952) on the upper Aller region and Neira Martínez (1955) on speech in the southern/central parts of the municipality of Lena, are questionable in their assignment of certain borderline speech patterns to an intermediate zone between the Western and Central Asturian linguistic domains.

One theoretical framework has been used in dialect classifications carried out in Asturleonese: Isoglottic dialectology. Placing each classification in the history of Asturleonese dialectology can throw light on understanding it better (see Table 7)

Year	Isoglottic Dialectology
1858 / 1862	Arias de Miranda and Laverde Ruiz
1906	Menéndez Pidal
1956-1957 and 1957-1958	Diego Catalán
1976, 1984 and 1996	Neira Martínez and Martínez Álvarez
1981, 1982 and 1983	García González
1996	Borrego Nieto
2003	García Arias
2004	González i Planas

Table 7. Analysis of different dialect classifications in Asturleonese dialectology

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