**RURAL INDUSTRY IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY NEW CASTILE: THE WOMEN'S ROLE IN THE ORGANIZATION OF PRODUCTION.**

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Historians of early-modern industry have paid little attention to New Castile, despite the evidence of a relevant and diversified industrial activity taking place in this region throughout the early-modern period. Among the reasons for this oviblion, one is tempted to single out two related ones: the predominantly small-scale profuction systems which made up the fabric of New Castile's industry, and the dominant role women played in them. In order to compensate for this disregard, this proposal focuses on the labour organization attached to three sets of New Castile manufactures: woollen cloths, hosery and ribbons, and esparto, during the eighteenth century.

While in previous centuries urban capital had made the *putting-out system* prevailing in woollen-cloth manufacture, the downward industrial influence of the main regional towns (Toledo and Cuenca) streathened that of the surrounding villages -such as Novés, Ajofrín and Sonseca. Here, both the independent units of the *small clothier system,* and the more developed *kaufsystem,* which required the assistance of wage workers, organized labour along gender lines, being the female arms -by thounsands- mainly devoted to spinning. Some villages endowed cloth-making crafts -mainly weaving- with a flexible corporative organization which nevertheless did not impede women's participation.

Hosery and ribbon-making were generalized in multiple villages, where women produced and commercialized on a domestic basis for local and regional markets. Only a small number of these production units seem to have been controlled by dealers who stored the hoses and ribbons produced by the women and then sold them in different fairs. The skills required for these manufactures were passed on from mothers to dauthters, as there is no evidence of formal apprenticeship.

The case of the sparto introduces some variations. In order to suply the demand of ropes, halters and other items necessary to transportation, the peasant producers needed to employ every member of their domestic units, being the women a key factor in the organization of labour. The small commodity production is paramount here. Not even the substantial demand of panniers posed by the charcoal industry of Madrid was able to introduce significant variations in this form of organization.

In sum, this paper looks deeper into the involvement of women in early-modern New Castile manufactures, in order to better understand the production systems which enabled them to become well reputed and highly demanded, though not ending up in full industrialization.