*“They are in charge of cultivating the land and do it with determination and vigour”:* the rural women livelihoods in the 18th century in Asturias[[1]](#footnote-1).

Morán Corte, Alberto. Universidad de León / Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.

Suárez Álvarez, Patricia. Universidad de León.

The “Principado of Asturias", is located in the North-Western maritime strip of the Iberian Peninsula and their countryside is characterized by mountains that, in the 18th century, hampered the comunications, also. At that time, the asturian economy was predominantly rural and agricultural work accounted for almost all of livelihood for most families. The cultivation of maize and faba (bean) alternated with spelled, and breeding sheep, beef cattle and pork were predominant. However, the precarity of the Asturian agriculture, that was characterized by land poor quality, not allowed this diversity translates into wealth, forcing farmers to seek additional sources of income. Equally, poverty forced to women to work outside in many cases contradicting the idea that many treatises about the women’s good education. Even though the absence of men was sometimes their reason for choosing her activity, the Asturian women were retail sales, mule drivers, tobacconist, bartenders, fruit sellers or sardine workers. In some cases those works complemented their husbands occupations. This fact is noted in “complementary profession” like miller-woman baker or sailor-women who worked in the sales of pickle. And, many times, this professions were a complement of work agricultural. In this aspect, rural women was reputable in Asturias, and travellers and ilustrated men, said things as “they are in charge of cultivating the land and do it with determination and vigour” (Conde de Laborde).

On this importance, we would analyze the role of asturian rural women in the society, their livelihoods, their labour life cycle and their resources and mechanisms against adversity and contextualize them into Spain and Europe of 18th century.

1. This work is inside into project I+D "Salarios, actividad de las mujeres y niveles de vida 1750-1950" (HAR2013-472777-C2-I-P) from Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)