



Santa Barbara

Celebrations from the Past to the Present



The European Mining Routes of Saint Barbara Federation MINES.B

The European Mining Routes of Santa Barbara Federation (MINES.B) is a network of multiple values in which the partners work with the intention of animating, enhancing and bringing to light the potential of those territories that have been protagonists of European mining history. The focus is on the mining heritage - both tangible and intangible - re-proposed through a tourist-cultural itinerary that virtually connects some of the most important mining sites in Europe. The characteristic of this itinerary is to include within it several local routes: in fact, the MINES.B partners are committed to making this significant mining heritage accessible by creating itineraries that can be travelled on foot and by bicycle, according to the modalities of slow and sustainable tourism.

The Federation's main objective is to keep alive the history of mining men and women, who shaped their lives according to the mining activity that marked the rhythm of their days and existences, adding precious and essential pieces to the evolution of humanity and contributing to the construction of a common European identity.

Saint Barbara

Celebrations from the Past to the Present

The European Federation of Mining Routes of Saint Barbara (MINES.B) is pleased to present this booklet, a choral work realised by its partners dedicated to the figure of **Saint Barbara**, the **patron saint of miners**. This work comes from the desire to preserve and enhance the rich intangible mining heritage linked to the cult of Saint Barbara.

The patron saint, celebrated on **4 December**, represents much more than a simple religious symbol. She is a figure of profound anthropological relevance, capable of uniting believers and non-believers alike under her protection. For miners, Saint Barbara was not only a patron saint invoked in times of danger, but a collective reference point that united entire communities, becoming an **emblem of hope and strength**.

In this booklet, some of the member of the Federation recounts the celebrations dedicated to Saint Barbara in their respective mining areas, documenting the religious and civil festivities of the past and present. It is a journey into the memory and traditions of the mining communities, paying homage to their history and identity.

The production of this work is a testimony to the MINES.B Federation's commitment to protecting the intangible mining heritage. This heritage, made up of stories, rituals and traditions, is the beating heart that gives life and meaning to our precious mining heritage.

The legend of Saint Barbara

St Barbara was born in 273 A.D. in Nicomedia, in present-day Turkey. At the time, Nicomedia was part of the Asian province of the Roman Empire.

According to tradition, Barbara was the daughter of Dioscurus, a pagan man who, wishing to protect her from her many suitors, locked her up in a tower. However, during her imprisonment, Barbara discovered the Christian faith and she converted. When her father learned of her conversion, filled with rage, he denounced her to the Roman authorities. This was how Barbara was captured, subjected to terrible torture and finally sentenced to death by beheading. The macabre murder was entrusted to Dioscurus himself, but according to legend, immediately after performing the act, the man was struck by lightning and reduced to ashes, divine punishment for his crime.

This dramatic event has made Saint Barbara a symbol of protection against violent and sudden deaths, as well as from lightning. She is also the patron saint of all professions related to explosives and fire: artillerymen, military engineers, the navy, miners and firefighters, who invoke her for her intercession and protection in times of danger.

The liturgical memory of Saint Barbara is celebrated every year on 4 December, a day dedicated to honour her courage, faith and martyrdom.

Our Partners:

- 1) Comarca Andorra Sierra de Arcos, Spain
- 2) Fondazione Cammino Minerario di Santa Barbara, Italy
- 3) Le Bois du Cazier, Belgium
- 4) Les Sentiers de Grande Randonnée - GR412, Belgium
- 5) Idrija Mercury Heritage Management Centre, Slovenia
- 6) Mission Bassin Minier, France
- 7) Municipality of Aljustrel, Portugal
- 8) Terra Montanae Civic Association, Slovakia



Svetnica sv. Barbara v Idriji in na Slovenskem

»V Idriji sem prisostvoval lepemu praznovanju... ki se tu odvija pozno ob sončnem zahodu. Vse hiše mesteca so bile svečano razsvetljene (kolikor je bilo to pač mogoče), kar je lepo opazovati s kakega griča. Vsi rudarji gredo v povorki ob glasbeni spremljavi, s puškami in bajoneti ob strani, oblečeni v rudarsko nošo. Slišati je tudi zvonjenje zvonov in grmenje topovskega strela, kar vse večkratno odmeva od hribov, ki obdajajo mesto«. Tako je v svoj popotniški dnevnik zapisal H. Costa, ki se je v dvajsetih letih devetnajstega stoletja že drugič mudil v mestu Idrija.¹

Procesijo, ki je bil deležen, je leta 1891 v reviji Dom in svet precej bolj slikovito opisal Ivan Idričan.² Slednji je v Črticah o Idriji še več pozornosti namenil slovesnosti, ki se je v Idriji odvijala vsako leto 22. junija. Na ta dan, ki je posvečen sv. Ahacu, so rudarji leta 1508 v Idriji odkrili bogato cinabaritno rudo in to pomembno odkritje se je še globlje zasidrilo v verovanje in praznovanje prebivalcev majhnega rudarskega mesta. Tega dne so bile vse poti »...olepšane z vejami in drevesci. Okna so okrašena s cveticami in razsvetljena s svečami. Postavljeni so prekrasni oltarji, kjer se poje...«. Vsi udeleženci so bili svečano oblečeni, dogodek pa je spremljala rudarska godba. Ko je bil uradni del procesije zaključen, se je povorka odpravila na »Zemljo«,³ kjer je v senci »...visokih in košatih dreves...« potekala veselica. In ko se je znočilo, »...poči topič...« in »...ves vrt na Zemlji razsvetle z barvnimi balončki, godba igra in obilno ljudstvo se zabava po svoje«. Kljub temu da se je dogodek odvijal na dan sv. Ahaca, je imela v procesiji zavetnica sv. Barbara osrednje mesto. Procesija se je uradno vedno začela pred mogočno župnijsko cerkvijo sv. Barbare, ki je stala v središču mesta. Cerkev je bila ob tej priliki bogato okrašena, kar lepo ponazarja ena izmed priloženih fotografij. Da je praznovanje odmevalo tudi zunaj kotline, je moč razbrati iz takratnega časopisja. Tako so v reviji Slovenec v rubriki Dnevne novice na dan 25. 6. 1894 objavili, da se je »...Praznik sv. Ahacija ...obhajal ...letos jako lepo ob najkrasnejšem vremenu. Mnoge hiše, mimo katerih je šel sprevod z Najsvetejšim, bile so okusno okinčane, toda nad vse se je odlikoval dom katoliške delavske družbe, katerega so krasile premnoge

¹ Kavčič Ivica: Vtisi Henrika Coste; Idrijski razgledi, 2/2013, Mestni muzej Idrija, Idrija 2013, str. 93.

² <https://www.dlib.si/stream/URN:NBN:SI:DOC-EUPX7XCN/8c85d869-7313-4e29-b28c-8d21087658d1/PDF>

³ Lokalni toponim za predel Idrije

⁴ <https://www.dlib.si/stream/URN:NBN:SI:DOC-EUPX7XCN/8c85d869-7313-4e29-b28c-8d21087658d1/PDF>



**Center za upravljanje
z dediščino živega srebra**
IDRIJA Mercury Heritage
Management Centre

nove zastave in sveže zelenje...«.⁵ Še večjo pomembnost procesije in praznovanja pa izkazuje dogodek, ki se je zgodil v letu 1902, in sicer: »Prevzvišeni gosp. knezoškof dr. Anton Bon. Jeglič je v Idriji minulo soboto zvečer blagoslovil novo zastavo oddotne Marijine družbe. V nedeljo 22 t. mes., svetega Ahacija dan, pa je zjutraj najprej delil zakrament Svete birmе; birmancev je bilo 840; potem pa je po slovesni sveti maši vodil procesijo sv. Ahacija. Procesija je bila veličastna. Štirje blagoslovi procesije so se kakor navadno izvršili pri jamah svete Barbare (poud. T. B.), svete Terezije, sv. Ahacija in sv. Janeza Nep. ...«.⁶

Kako je v Idriji potekalo praznovanje na dan zavetnice sv. Barbare, se zaradi pomanjkanja ustreznih virov žal ne da natančneje opisati. Iz tradicije je znano, do so se idrijski rudarji vsak dan sv. Barbari in ostalim zavetnikom poklanjali že pred spustom v rudnik v znameniti kapeli, ki se nahaja znotraj Antonijevega rova. Za večje praznovanje in izkazovanje vernosti na dan 4. decembra pa lahko seveda domnevamo, da so bili pri obhajanju svetnice uporabljeni sorodni elementi čaščenja⁷ kot pri čaščenju ostalih pomembnih svetnikov in zaščitnikov. Potrebno je izpostaviti, da je dan sv. Barbare v mesecu decembru, tj. v zimskem času, kar seveda prinaša določene omejitve (okraševanje s cveticami, veseljačenje na prostem...). Ker pa gre za zavetnico vseh rudarjev, se da sklepati, da je praznovanje sv. Barbare potekalo podobno kot npr. v velenjskem premogovniku, kjer so bili rudarji na ta dan prosti in je bila namesto dela organizirana posebna maša. Po uradnem cerkvenem obredu so se svečano oblečeni rudarji, noseč bakle, odpravili v povorki na procesijo med različnimi sakralnimi objekti, pri tem pa jih je spremljala godba na pihala.⁸ Poleg že omenjenih načinov praznovanj in obeležb dneva sv. Barbare je bilo med rudarji splošno razširjeno tudi verovanje, da je rudar, ki je želel umreti doma in ne pri kaki nesreči v temini rovu, zavetnici v rovu prižgal svečko. Sv. Barbare pa niso obhajali samo rudarji. Krojači so na dan sv. Barbare odložili svoje delo. Tudi gospodinjje 4. decembra niso šivale, ker je obstajala nevarnost, da bi »kuram rit zašile« in ne bi več mogle nositi jajc.⁹

V nekaterih primerih je čaščenje zavetnice celo prešlo običajen okvir in so jo obhajali, tudi ko z njeno svetniško podobo in izročilom niso imeli nikakršne zveze. Tako so mladi fantje na njen dan »lazili« od hiše do hiše in z molitvijo posvečali vsako hišo, ki so jo obiskali, v povračilo pa dobili dobrote, ki jih je

5 <https://www.dlib.si/stream/URN:NBN:SI:DOC-MGEHUXKJ/3ddbced3-1a29-4360-b56c-7a12c80a3c3e/PDF>

6 <https://www.dlib.si/stream/URN:NBN:SI:doc-FWVX53KO/22340fa4-6057-43b8-a485-659ee875cf3c/PDF>

7 Kot sorodni elementi so zamišljeni: okraševanje prostorov, slavnostne maše in procesije, prižiganje sveč, sodelovanje godbe na pihala...

8 Poles Rok: Sveta Barbara zavetnica rudarjev, Premogovnik Velenje, 1998.

9 Poles Rok: Sveta Barbara zavetnica rudarjev, Premogovnik Velenje, 1998.

gospodinjstvo premoglo.¹⁰

Med najbolj razširjene običaje v slovenskem prostoru lahko prištejemo t. i. Barbarine vejice, ko se je na njen dan v vaze postavilo odrezane vejice sadnega drevja, da so se do božiča razcvetele.¹¹

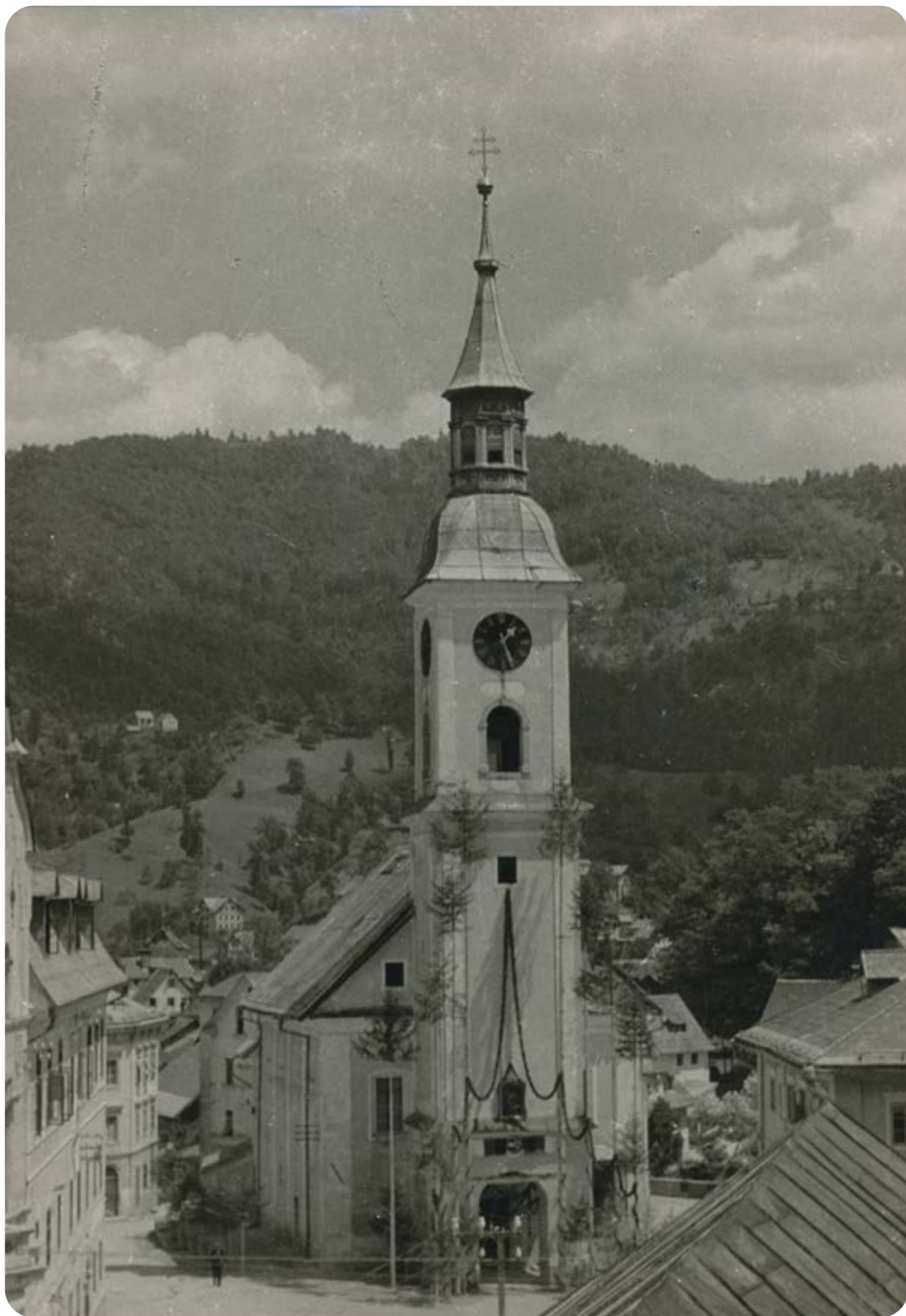
Po 500 letih je idrijski rudnik zaprl svoja vrata in prebivalci Idrije so svoj pogled usmerili v prihodnost ter se posvetili novim izzivom, ki jih prinaša sodobni čas. Vendar tradicija in spomin na dolga stoletja rudarjenja še vedno ostajata. Poleg številnih tehničnih spomenikov, ki ponazarjajo bogato dediščino in preteklost in živijo še naprej v okviru turistične in muzejske dejavnosti, se v Idriji organizirajo dogodki, ki obeležujejo svetnico in njen osebni praznik. V podzemni rudniški kapeli sv. Trojice v Antonijevem rovu je organizirana maša, osrednji trg tradicionalno zaživi v barvah semnja sv. Barbare¹² v temini rovu nekdanjega rudnika pa se na dan sv. Barbare odvije manjši glasbeni koncert.¹³

10 Kuret Niko: Praznično leto Slovencev, 2. knjiga, Družina, Ljubljana 1989, str. 217.

11 Poles Rok: Sveta Barbara zavetnica rudarjev, Premogovnik Velenje, 1998.

12 Da je semenj potekal tudi v preteklosti, se da slediti v določenih koledarjih raznih združb. Kot primer izpostavljam Koledarčke Družbe sv. Mohorja za različna leta: <https://www.dlib.si/stream/URN:NBN:SI:DOC-NXAU8UHJ/73daa79a-c8be-4471-a93b-1326f6c059df/PDF>, str. 202; <https://www.dlib.si/stream/URN:NBN:SI:DOC-ZDBMECDV/7bc750c5-a781-4abb-8c04-0e6eee03c4b5/PDF>, str. 146; <https://www.dlib.si/stream/URN:NBN:SI:DOC-M4HRE53S/1015a19d-cb78-4cff-91e7-8903b80aaa8e/PDF>; str. 125;

13 Tako kot v Idriji tudi v drugih rudarskih krajih Slovenije na dan 4. decembra še vedno potekajo slavnosti v počastitev dneve sv. Barbare. Med njimi gre posebej omeniti praznovanje, ki ga vsako leto zapored že od 1996 priredi Slovensko rudarsko društvo inženirjev in tehnikov.



Okrašena župnijska cerkev sv. Barbare na dan sv. Ahaca - Hrani Župnija Idrija
 Decorated parish church of St. Barbara on St. Achacus Day - Photo kept by the Parish of Idrija



Procesija na mestu nekdanjega jaška Sv. Barbare - Fototeka Mestnega muzeja Idrija MP 817
 Procession at the site of the former St Barbara's shaft - Photo Library of Idrija municipality museum MP 817



Okrašena notranjost župnijske cerkve sv. Barbare - Hrani Župnija Idrija
 Decorated interior of parish church of St. Barbara - Kept by the Parish of Idrija

Saint Barbara in Idrija and in Slovenia



Koncert v Antonijevem rovu na dan sv. Barbare
 Concert in the Anthony's mine on the st. Barbara's day

»In Idrija I attended a beautiful celebration... which takes place here late at sunset. All the houses in the town were festively lit up (as much as they could be), which is lovely to observe from a hilltop. All the miners march in procession, accompanied by music, with rifles and bayonets at their side, dressed in miner's costumes. The ringing of bells and thunder of cannon fire can be heard echoing again and again from the hills embracing the town«. This was written by H. Costa in his travel journal during his second visit to the town of Idrija in the 1820's.¹

The procession that he had attended was much more vividly described by Ivan Idričan in the Dom in svet (Home and World) magazine in 1891.² In his Črticah o Idriji (Sketches on Idrija), Idričan devoted even more attention to the celebration that took place in Idrija every year on June 22nd. On this day, which is dedicated to St. Achacius, miners discovered rich cinnabar ore in Idrija in 1508. This important discovery became even more deeply rooted in the beliefs and celebrations of the inhabitants of this small mining town. On that day all the paths were »...embellished with branches and small trees. The windows were adorned with flowers and illuminated with candles. Lovely altars were set up for singing...«. All the participants were festively dressed, and the event was accompanied by the miners' band. When the official part of the procession was finished, the participants headed towards »Zemlja«³ where, in the shade of »...tall and spreading trees...« festivities were under way. And when night fell, »...the cannon pops...« and »...illuminates the entire garden at Zemlja with coloured balloons, the band plays, and scores of people enjoy themselves no end«. ⁴ Although the event took place on St. Achacius' Day, the central place in the procession was taken by patron Saint Barbara. The procession officially always began in front of the magnificent Parish Church of St. Barbara, which stood in the center of the town. On this occasion the church was elaborately decorated, as is beautifully depicted in one of the enclosed photos. As revealed in the newspapers of the time, the celebrations also reverberated beyond the basin. For example, the Slovenec (Slovenian) magazine published in its

¹ Kavčič Ivica: Vtisi Henrika Coste (Impressions of Henrik Costa; Idrijski razgledi, 2/2013, Idrija Municipal Museum, Idrija 2013, p. 93.

² <https://www.dlib.si/stream/URN:NBN:SI:DOC-EUPX7XCN/8c85d869-7313-4e29-b28c-8d21087658d1/PDF>

³ Local toponym for a locality in Idrija

⁴ <https://www.dlib.si/stream/URN:NBN:SI:DOC-EUPX7XCN/8c85d869-7313-4e29-b28c-8d21087658d1/PDF>

Daily News section on 25 June 1894 that »...the Feast of St. Achacius... was celebrated... very nicely this year in the most beautiful weather. Many houses past which the procession with the Blessed Sacrament went were tastefully decorated, but the one that excelled above all was the Home of the Catholic Workers' Society, which was adorned with countless new flags and fresh greenery...«.⁵ An even greater significance of the procession and celebration can be seen in an event that occurred in 1902: »This past Saturday evening in Idrija His Eminence the Prince-Bishop Dr. Anton Bon. Jeglič blessed the new flag of Mary's society - the Solidarity of Our Lady. On Sunday, the 22nd of this month, St. Achacius Day in the morning, the prince-Bishop first distributed the sacrament of Holy Confirmation to 840 recipients, and after a solemn holy mass he conducted a procession of St. Achacius. The procession was glorious. The four blessings of the procession took place, as usual, at the shafts of Saint Barbara, St. Theresa, St. Achacius and St. John of Nepomuk...«.⁶

It is unfortunately not possible to describe how the celebration on the day of patroness St. Barbara unfolded due to the scarcity of adequate resources. It is known from tradition that each day, before descending into the mine, Idrija miners paid homage to St. Barbara and other patrons in the renowned chapel located inside Anthony's Main Road. For bigger celebrations and expressions of faith on December 4th, we can assume, of course, that similar elements of veneration were used to celebrate the patroness⁷ as in the veneration of other prominent saints and protectors. It should be noted that the Saint Barbara's Day falls in the month of December, i.e., in winter, which naturally brings certain limitations (floral decorations, outdoor merrymaking...). However, since she was the patroness of all miners, we can conclude that Saint Barbara was celebrated in a similar way as, for example, in the Velenje Coal Mine, where miners had a work-free day and attended a special mass instead of work. After the official church ceremony, the festively dressed miners set off in procession among various sacral buildings, carrying torches and accompanied by a brass band.⁸ Besides the already mentioned ways of celebrating and commemorating St. Barbara's Day, there was a widespread belief among miners that if a miner wished to die at home and not in an accident in the dark underworld, he would light a candle to the patroness in the mine. But Saint Barbara was not only celebrated by miners. Tailors set their work aside on St. Barbara's Day. Even housewives did not sew on December 4th to avoid the danger of »sewing

⁵ <https://www.dlib.si/stream/URN:NBN:SI:DOC-MGEHUXKJ/3ddbced3-1a29-4360-b56c-7a12c80a3c3e/PDF>

⁶ <https://www.dlib.si/stream/URN:NBN:SI:doc-FVWX53KO/22340fa4-6057-43b8-a485-659ee875cf3c/PDF>

⁷ Such similar elements include: decoration of rooms, festive masses and processions, lighting of candles, participation of the brass band...

⁸ Poles Rok: Sveta Barbara zavetnica rudarjev, Premogovnik Velenje (St. Barbara, Patroness of Miners, Velenje Coal Mine), 1998.

up the butts of hens«, which wouldn't be able to lay eggs any more.⁹

In some cases, the veneration of the patroness went beyond the normal framework, and she was celebrated even by those who had nothing to do with her saintly image and tradition. On her day, young boys would »prowl« from house to house, consecrating each house that they visited with prayer, and in return received delicacies which the household could afford.¹⁰

Among the most widespread customs in the Slovenian Lands were the so-called Barbara's branches. On her day, the cut branches of fruit trees were placed in vases so that they blossomed by Christmas.¹¹

After 500 years, the Idrija Mine closed its doors and the inhabitants of Idrija began to look towards the future and devoted themselves to the new challenges brought by modern times. Yet tradition and the memory of many long years of mining have remained. Alongside the numerous technical monuments illustrating the rich heritage and past, which continue to live on within the scope of tourist and museum activities, events are still being organised in Idrija to commemorate the patroness and her feast day. A mass is held in the underground mine Chapel of the Holy Trinity in Anthony's Main Road, the central square traditionally comes alive in the colours St. Barbara's Fair,¹² and a small music concert is given in the dark shaft of the former mine on St. Barbara's Day.¹³

⁹ Poles Rok: Sveta Barbara zavetnica rudarjev, Premogovnik Velenje (St. Barbara, Patroness of Miners, Velenje Coal Mine), 1998.

¹⁰ Kuret Niko: Praznično leto Slovencev, 2. knjiga (A Festive Year for Slovenians, Book 2), Družina (Family magazine), Ljubljana 1989, p. 217.

¹¹ Poles Rok: Sveta Barbara zavetnica rudarjev, Premogovnik Velenje (St. Barbara, Patroness of Miners, Velenje Coal Mine), 1998.

¹² The existence of the fair in the past can be traced in the almanacs of different associations. An example of these are the Almanacs of the Hermagoras Society for various years: <https://www.dlib.si/stream/URN:NBN:SI:DOC-NXAU8UHJ/73daa79a-c8be-4471-a93b-1326f6c059df/PDF>, str. 202; <https://www.dlib.si/stream/URN:NBN:SI:DOC-ZDBMECDV/7bc750c5-a781-4abb-8c04-0e6eee03c4b5/PDF>, str. 146; <https://www.dlib.si/stream/URN:NBN:SI:DOC-M4HRE53S/1015a19d-cb78-4cff-91e7-8903b80aaa8e/PDF>; p. 125;

¹³ Celebrations commemorating St. Barbara's Day continue to be organized on December 4th both in Idrija and in other mining areas of Slovenia. Among these, special mention should be made of the celebration held annually since 1996 by the Slovenian Mining Association of Engineers and Technicians.

La celebración de Santa Bárbara en la comarca Andorra-Sierra de Arcos



Santa Bárbara es una advocación muy popular desde la Edad Media en toda la provincia de Teruel, y por lo tanto en la comarca de Andorra-Sierra de Arcos. Testigo de este fuerte arraigo popular son las numerosas ermitas y capillas dedicadas a la santa en nuestra comarca. En Crivillén, del siglo XVII, en buen estado de conservación, aún se utiliza para el culto en fechas señaladas. En Ariño, del siglo XVIII, restaurada por SAMCA, la empresa minera de la localidad, en los años 40 del pasado siglo. La había en Alloza, documentada ya en la Edad Media, hoy desaparecida. En Oliete hay una capilla abierta dedicada a la santa junto a la cual aún se celebra la festividad con el encendido de la hoguera. En Andorra hay una calle santa Bárbara, llamada así porque a ella se accedía por un arco con un modesto altar para la santa que se derribó en 1934. Santa Bárbara también está presente en una pintura en una de las pechinas del atrio de la ermita de san Macario, patrón de la localidad.

Este culto a la santa no sólo se manifiesta en las advocaciones de las ermitas, también en las tradiciones y cofradías de varios pueblos comarcanos. Las celebraciones más documentadas son las de Andorra gracias al libro *El dance de Santa Bárbara de Andorra*, coordinado por José Ángel Alloza. La primera referencia escrita de una cofradía dedicada a honrar a santa Bárbara en Andorra es de 1705. De esta cofradía formaban parte prácticamente todas las familias del pueblo y tenía una gran relevancia. Muestra de ello es que es la única que tenía Comparsa de Gigantes propia, un gigante y una giganta. De pasear a los gigantes se encargaban los cofrades, los bárbaros, y solo desfilaban en su festividad. Con el paso del tiempo se fueron deteriorando y desaparecieron, aunque fueron recuperados en la primera década del siglo XXI y hoy vuelven a estar presentes en las celebraciones. En Andorra había también un dance dedicado a la santa que se representó por última vez en 1922. De la organización del dance y de la festividad de la santa se encargaban los mayores, nombrados anualmente de entre los miembros de la cofradía.

En las primeras décadas del siglo XX se va produciendo el declive de los festejos de santa Bárbara hasta que la minería del carbón, a partir de

los años 40, se convierte en la principal base de la economía comarcal, especialmente de los pueblos de Ariño y Andorra. Este auge de la minería del carbón revitaliza el culto a santa Bárbara, que durante la segunda mitad del siglo XX será una de las festividades más importantes del año en la comarca.

Incluso la prensa de la época se hace eco de las celebraciones. Así, el periódico *Inquietud* en diciembre de 1952 publica el siguiente titular: "Ariño celebró con esplendor la festividad de Santa Bárbara. Los actos fueron organizados por la Empresa SAMCA". En 1962 el periódico *Lucha* publicaba un artículo sobre la celebración del XX aniversario de la empresa Calvo Sotelo, que actuaba en Andorra, casualmente coincidiendo con las celebraciones de santa Bárbara.

Durante estos años los actos festivos eran numerosos: concursos de entibadores, de tiro al plato, bailes y verbenas, misa y procesión de la santa, incluso fuegos artificiales.

En Andorra era un día tan importante que el 4 de diciembre era fiesta local declarada por el Consejo de Ministros (1969).

Estas celebraciones llegan incluso al arte. Alejandro Cañada, uno de los pintores más destacados de Aragón y el más destacado de nuestra comarca, entre su numerosa obra pintó también una Santa Bárbara, que comparte el lienzo con un minero.

Pero con el declive de la minería a finales de la centuria pasada las fiestas en honor a la santa fueron decayendo también, hasta que a principios del XXI varias asociaciones, conformadas principalmente por mineros jubilados, y el museo minero de Andorra-Sierra de Arcos, MWINAS, abierto en 2005, las impulsaron desde un enfoque más ligado a su valor patrimonial y al mantenimiento de la memoria de la cultura minera que tanto ha marcado la vida en esta comarca.

En Ariño, el pueblo más minero de la comarca y el último en cerrar sus minas, la devoción se mantiene viva gracias a la labor de la asociación Corral Negro que con la colaboración del ayuntamiento y la aportación económica de SAMCA - todavía vinculada al municipio con otros proyectos - organiza cada año las celebraciones: ofrendas a la santa, procesión, misa, comida de hermandad, baile, hoguera la víspera, reparto de golosinas para los niños, etc.

En Andorra los actos son similares y están impulsados por un grupo de trabajo formado por la cofradía de santa Bárbara que todavía pervive, los voluntarios de la asociación cultural pozo de san Juan y la comarca de Andorra, que gestiona el museo minero.

A la misa, procesión y ofrendas, se suman las actividades organizadas

en el museo minero. El fin de semana anterior al 4 de diciembre hay una jornada de puertas abiertas y se convoca un concurso infantil de dibujo cuya temática es la minería. Los dibujos ganadores se exponen en el museo. Cada año se inaugura una exposición relacionada con el patrimonio minero: de fotografía, de herramientas recuperadas, de antiguos planos, etc., también hay conferencias y otras actividades de tipo cultural.

El día 4 de diciembre, tras las ceremonias religiosas, la actividad vuelve a trasladarse al museo donde, tras la entrega de premios del concurso de dibujo llega el acto más emotivo, el homenaje a los mineros de más edad, organizado por los voluntarios del pozo de san Juan. Tanto en la procesión como en las actividades del museo participan el grupo de Dulzaineros La Martingala, los gigantes de la cofradía, recuperados en 2006 con el impulso de ésta y la aportación económica de la comarca, y los danzantes de santa Bárbara (El dance fue recuperado en 2001).

Las celebraciones de santa Bárbara ya no gozan de la vitalidad de los años dorados de la minería pero siguen siendo una fecha señalada en el calendario festivo comarcal gracias sobre todo a las asociaciones y entidades que trabajan por la conservación del patrimonio minero, tanto material como inmaterial.



Ofrenda de flores a santa Bárbara el 4 de diciembre en el museo minero de Andorra, MWINAS
Offering of flowers to St. Barbara on December 4 at the mining museum of Andorra



Danzantes de Santa Bárbara en el patio del Museo Minero, MWINAS, el día de santa Bárbara
Dancers of St. Barbara in the courtyard of the Mining Museum, MWINAS, on St. Barbara's Day



Procesión de santa Bárbara saliendo de la ermita del mismo nombre en Ariño
Procession of Saint Barbara leaving the hermitage of the same name in Ariño



Estampa de un danzante de santa Bárbara fechada en 1922
Stamp of a dancer of Santa Barbara dated 1922

Saint Barbara celebrations in Andorra-Sierra de Arcos

Santa Barbara is a very popular devotion since the Middle Ages throughout the province of Teruel, and therefore in the region of Andorra-Sierra de Arcos. Witness of this strong popular roots are the numerous hermitages and chapels dedicated to the saint in our region. In Crivillén, it is from the 17th century, in a good state of preservation, still used for worship on important dates. In Ariño, there is one from the 18th century, restored by SAMCA (the local mining company) in the 40's of the last century. There was one in Alloza, documented in the Middle Ages, now disappeared. In Oliete there is an open chapel dedicated to the saint, next to which the festivity is still celebrated with the lighting of a bonfire. In Andorra there is a Santa Bárbara street, so called because it was accessed through an archway with a modest altar for the saint which was demolished in 1934. Saint Barbara is also present in a painting in the atrium of the chapel of Saint Macarius, patron saint of the town.

This cult to the saint is not only manifested in the dedications of the hermitages, but also in the traditions and brotherhoods of several villages in the region. The most documented celebrations are those of Andorra thanks to the book *El dance de Santa Bárbara de Andorra*, coordinated by José Ángel Alloza. The first written reference to a brotherhood dedicated to honouring Saint Barbara in Andorra dates from 1705. Practically all the families of the village belonged to this brotherhood and it had a great relevance in the history of Andorra. Proof of this is that it is the only one that had its own Giants Group, a giant and a giantess. The giants were carried by the brotherhood's members and only paraded on their festivity. With the passing of time they deteriorated and disappeared, although they were recovered in the first decade of the 21st century and today they are once again present in the celebrations. In Andorra there was also a dance dedicated to the saint that was performed for the last time in 1922. The organisation of the dance and the saint's festivities was the responsibility of the mayoral, appointed annually from among the members of the brotherhood.

In the first decades of the 20th century, the festivities of Saint Bárbara began to decline until coal mining, from the 1940s onwards, became the mainstay of the local economy, especially in the villages of Ariño and Andorra. This boom in coal mining revitalised the cult of Saint Barbara, which during the second half of the 20th century was one of the most important festivities of the year in the region. Even the press of the time echoed the celebrations. Thus, the newspaper *Inquietud* in December 1952 published the following headline: 'Ariño celebrated the festivity of Santa Bárbara with splendour. The events were organised by SAMCA Company'. In 1962, the newspaper *Lucha* published an article on the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Calvo Sotelo company, which performed in Andorra, coinciding with the celebrations of Saint Bárbara.

During these years, there were numerous festive events: competitions of shoring up, pigeon shooting, dances and open-air dances, mass and procession of the saint, and even fireworks.

In Andorra it was such an important day that 4th December was declared a local holiday by the Council of Ministers (1969). These celebrations even extend to art. Alejandro Cañada, one of the most outstanding painters of Aragon and the most outstanding of our region (he was from Oliete), among his numerous works, also painted a Saint Barbara, who shares the canvas with a miner. But with the decline of mining at the end of last century, the festivities in honour of the saint also began to decline, until the beginning of the 21st century when several cultural associations, formed mainly by retired miners, and the Andorra-Sierra de Arcos mining museum, MWINAS, opened in 2005, promoted them from an approach more closely linked to their heritage value and the maintenance of the memory of the mining culture that has so marked life in this region.

In Ariño, the most mining town in the region and the last to close its mines, the devotion is kept alive thanks to the work of the Corral Negro association which, with the collaboration of the town council and the economic contribution of SAMCA -still linked to the municipality with other projects- organises the celebrations every year: offerings to the saint, procession, mass, brotherhood meal, dance, bonfire on the eve, distribution of sweets for the children, etc.

In Andorra, the events are similar and are promoted by a working group formed by the brotherhood of Saint Barbara, which still survives, the volunteers of the cultural association of the San Juan's Well and the region of Andorra-Sierra de Arcos, which manages the mining museum.

In addition to the mass, procession and offerings, there are also activities organised at the mining museum. The weekend before 4 December there is an open day and a drawing competition for children on the theme of mining. The winning drawings are exhibited in the museum. Every year an exhibition related to mining heritage is inaugurated: photography, recovered tools, old plans, etc. There are also conferences and other cultural activities.

On 4th December, after the religious ceremonies, the activity moves back to the museum where, after the prize-giving ceremony of the drawing competition, the most emotional event takes place: the tribute to the oldest miners, organised by the volunteers of the San Juan Well. Both in the procession and in the museum activities, the Dulzaineros La Martingala group, the giants of saint Barbara brotherhood, recovered in 2006 with the impulse of the brotherhood and the economic contribution of the region, and the dancers of Saint Barbara (the dance was recovered in 2001) take part.

The celebrations of Saint Barbara no longer enjoy the vitality of the golden years of mining, but they are still an important date in the local festive calendar, thanks mainly to the cultural associations and entities that work for the preservation of mining heritage, both tangible and intangible.

Santa Barbara in Sardegna: celebrazioni e tradizioni tra passato e presente



La devozione per Santa Barbara in Sardegna è molto antica, risale al periodo bizantino, quando i monaci orientali arrivarono nell'isola. Questa devozione è pressoché presente in tutta la Sardegna e soprattutto nei villaggi minerari. Lo dimostra il fatto che non solo sono intitolate a suo nome moltissime Chiese, ma anche molte zone dell'isola, località, pianure, grotte e anche molti nuraghi (antichi edifici megalitici, tipici della Sardegna | 1800-1100 a.C.) vengono denominati "Santa Barbara".

I minatori, vista la precarietà della loro vita, si affidavano in modo particolare a questa Santa. La discesa in galleria non avveniva più in solitudine, ma si aveva in qualche modo la certezza di non essere abbandonati, di non essere soli, e se fosse successo l'inevitabile, sentire di morire tra le braccia della Santa sarebbe stato più dolce, quasi come addormentarsi tra le braccia di una madre.

Questo è ciò che custodiva il cuore del minatore, che con i suoi sacrifici, cercava di vivere quotidianamente un'esistenza degna di uomo, cosa che purtroppo il lavoro in miniera spesso non offriva, ma questa per moltissimo tempo è stata l'unica realtà che i sardi hanno conosciuto. Non si avevano molte prospettive per il futuro, era già tanto se si riusciva ad arrivare sani e salvi al giorno successivo, e la fede e la devozione in Santa Barbara rappresentava l'ancora di salvezza per il domani.

Quasi in tutti i siti minerari, accanto ai primi agglomerati abitativi per gli operai e per le loro famiglie, sorgevano non solo le strutture necessarie per una idonea e civile convivenza, come scuole, spacci aziendali, asili, luoghi di incontro, cineteatro, mense ed ospedali, ma tra queste spiccava anche la Chiesa nella maggior parte dei casi dedicata a Santa Barbara, luogo nel quale la comunità aveva modo di assolvere al proprio bisogno spirituale. La maggiore partecipazione degli abitanti dei vari villaggi minerari si aveva per la festa di Santa Barbara, che veniva festeggiata il 4 di Dicembre come data ufficiale stabilita dalla Chiesa, ma che spesso si ripeteva in primavera o durante l'estate.

A seguito della chiusura dei siti di estrazione e al conseguente abbandono dei villaggi da parte degli abitanti, in molti villaggi minerari queste manifestazioni religiose sono andate perdute. Tuttavia, in molti altri ancora sopravvive e perdura l'antico legame con Santa Barbara, tanto che riveste ancora un ruolo ambito poter portare "a spalla" il simulacro della Santa soprattutto per quei minatori ormai anziani che hanno vissuto una realtà così dura e faticosa come il lavoro nelle miniere. Il Cammino Minerario di Santa Barbara attraversa molti dei villaggi minerari in cui Santa Barbara veniva celebrata e, in alcuni casi, ancora oggi viene celebrata. Ecco alcuni esempi.

Le celebrazioni a Masua (frazione di Iglesias)

Come nella maggior parte dei villaggi minerari anche Masua disponeva di una chiesa. Dapprima situata nella parte superiore dell'abitato accanto all'infermeria venne poi trasferita all'ingresso del villaggio in un edificio che in precedenza ospitava il forno del pane. Non vi era un sacerdote fisso ma uno pendolare, in quanto questi si divideva tra i vicini centri minerari di Acquaresi, Nebida e Masua.

Anche qui il culto per Santa Barbara era molto sentito. Il 4 dicembre si celebrava la santa messa in onore di Santa Barbara. La funzione veniva celebrata all'aperto nella vicina piazza, si svolgeva inoltre la processione, la statua della Santa veniva portata "a spalla" dai minatori per tutto il villaggio.

Era considerata una grande festa, durava due giorni, il 4 e il 5 dicembre, e si svolgeva con grande partecipazione degli abitanti che si preoccupavano, insieme al comitato composto dai minatori, di curare con particolare attenzione i festeggiamenti in onore di Santa Barbara. Infatti, si addobbavano con cura le strade e in occasione della festa si sceglieva l'abito migliore da indossare. Per quanto riguarda le manifestazioni civili, in questa occasione, si facevano diverse attività sportive come gare ciclistiche, tornei di calcio tra scapoli e sposati, ad esempio. Inoltre, si svolgevano giochi come l'albero della cuccagna, la corsa con i sacchi. Si proiettavano film al cinema all'aperto, si facevano spettacoli teatrali e i tipici fuochi d'artificio concludevano i festeggiamenti. Tuttavia, questa festa conobbe lo stesso destino del villaggio, già nel 1950 non si festeggiava più e, nel 1970 circa, la chiesetta di Masua venne chiusa definitivamente.

Da pochi anni, in occasione della festività dedicata a Santa Barbara si svolge una processione dove la statua di Santa Barbara di Masua viene trasportata dalla chiesa di Nebida, dove è custodita, fino ad arrivare alla spiaggia del Molo di Masua per poi essere portata, attraverso un'imbarcazione, nei pressi dello scoglio del Pan di Zucchero, per omaggiare la statua in bronzo della Madonna che giace nel fondale.

Testimonianze di: Sig.ra Fadda Emilia, ex abitante del villaggio minerario di Masua e Don Francesco Lai, parroco di Nebida

Le Celebrazioni a Domusnovas

A Domusnovas, una delle feste maggiormente sentite è sempre stata quella in onore di Santa Barbara. La Chiesa di Santa Barbara di Domusnovas è molto antica, risale alla fine del 1200, ciò ci fa comprendere quanto fosse radicato nel territorio il culto nei confronti di questa Santa.

In tempi lontani, la cui usanza oramai è scomparsa, alla vigilia della festa si faceva "su fogaroni, un grande falò, in onore a Santa Barbara.

Ancora oggi Santa Barbara è una festa molto sentita e si svolge il 4 dicembre di ogni anno. In preparazione alla festa, viene dedicata alla Santa una caratteristica novena che si svolge appunto per nove giorni, si racconta la vita della Santa e della sua fede in Cristo, e viene esclusivamente cantata in lingua sarda.

Si dà inizio alla festa con le celebrazioni religiose e alla sera, sempre dopo la messa, si svolge la processione che per circa un'ora percorre le vie del paese. La Santa viene trasportata con un trattore accuratamente addobbato per l'occasione, mentre una composizione di luci illuminano il simulacro, rendendo così la manifestazione religiosa particolarmente suggestiva.

Alla processione partecipano gli ex minatori e coloro che lavorano all'interno della polveriera che si trova vicino al paese, visto che Santa Barbara è protettrice di tutti quei mestieri che hanno a che fare con l'esplosivo. Inoltre, partecipano la banda musicale di Domusnovas, il gruppo folkloristico e numerosi fedeli che con la loro presenza testimoniano la loro devozione per Santa Barbara. Al rientro in chiesa viene distribuito il caratteristico "pane benedetto".

Testimonianza diretta tramite intervista a Don Cristian Lilliu, parroco della Chiesa di Santa Barbara di Domusnovas, Sig. Mura Giuseppe e Sig. Cadoni Mario, Presidente e Vicepresidente della Confraternita della Madonna Addolorata.

Il culto di Santa Barbara in Sardegna è un fenomeno di grande rilevanza culturale e religiosa. Attraverso i secoli, la devozione verso la santa si è radicata profondamente nelle comunità minerarie, assumendo un significato di protezione, conforto e speranza in un contesto di grande precarietà. Anche oggi, Santa Barbara rappresenta un simbolo di fede e identità per molti sardi, ricordando loro la forza e la resilienza delle generazioni passate.



Festa di Santa Barbara a Bacu Abis
Saint Barbara celebrations in Bacu Abis



Processione in onore di Santa Barbara, Iglesias
Procession in honor of Saint Barbara, Iglesias



Chiesa di Santa Barbara, Bacu Abis
Church of Saint Barbara, Bacu Abis



Statua di Santa Barbara, Chiesa di Montevecchio - Foto di Gianni Alvito
Statue of Saint Barbara, Montevecchio Church - Ph. Gianni Alvito

Santa Barbara in Sardinia: celebrating traditions from the past to the present

The devotion to Santa Barbara in Sardinia is ancient, dating back to the Byzantine period, when Eastern monks arrived on the island. This devotion is widespread across Sardinia, especially in mining villages. Numerous churches are dedicated to her, as well as local places, plains, caves, and even ancient *nuraghi* (ancient megalithic buildings, typical of Sardinia | 1800-1100 BC) named in her honor.

Miners, facing the dangers of their work, held a special devotion to this saint. Entering the mines was no longer an isolated experience, as Santa Barbara provided them with comfort and a sense of presence. If the inevitable were to occur, the miners felt that dying with the protection of Santa Barbara would be more peaceful, as if falling asleep in a mother's embrace. This faith was a source of strength for miners, who endured daily hardships in an environment that offered little chance of improvement. Faith in Santa Barbara became a lifeline, providing them with a sense of hope for the future.

In almost every mining site, alongside the initial residential clusters for miners and their families, various structures were established to support daily needs and a sense of community. These included schools, company stores, nurseries, meeting places, dining facilities, hospitals, and most importantly, a church, often dedicated to Santa Barbara. The community gathered here to fulfill their spiritual needs, and the main event of the year was the Feast of Santa Barbara, celebrated officially on December 4th, but often repeated in spring or summer.

Following the closure of the mines and the departure of many villagers, these religious celebrations faded in some mining towns. However, in many places, the link to Santa Barbara endures. Elderly former miners especially cherish the tradition of carrying the saint's statue on their shoulders, honoring the hard realities of their former lives.

Celebrations in Masua's Mining Villages

One prominent example of Santa Barbara celebrations took place in Masua, a mining area within Iglesias. Masua's original church was located near the infirmary in the upper village, later moving to a building that had previously served as the bread oven. Here, the cult of Santa Barbara was strongly felt. On December 4th, an outdoor mass was celebrated, followed by a procession through the village, with miners proudly carrying the saint's statue on their shoulders. The two-day celebration on December 4th and 5th was a community event, with streets adorned and the finest attire worn. The festivities included sporting events like cycling races and football tournaments, along with traditional games such as the *albero della cuccagna* (a pole-climbing game) and sack races. Films were shown outdoors, there were theatrical performances, and fireworks concluded the event. Unfortunately, as the village declined, so did the celebration, with the last official festivities held around 1950, and the Masua church closing around 1970.

Recently, a procession has been revived in Masua for Santa Barbara's feast day. The statue is transported from the church in nearby Nebida to the Masua pier, where it is then taken by boat to the Pan di Zucchero rock formation in honor of the bronze statue of the Madonna located underwater.

Santa Barbara Celebrations in Domusnovas

In Domusnovas, the annual Feast of Santa Barbara is one of the most cherished events. The local church of Santa Barbara dates back to the late 1200s, demonstrating the longstanding devotion to the saint. In the past, this celebration involved *su fogaroni*, a bonfire lit in the saint's honor on the eve of the feast. Today, Santa Barbara's Day on December 4th remains a deeply felt occasion. A traditional nine-day novena precedes the celebration, during which the life of Santa Barbara is recounted in Sardinian. Religious ceremonies and a nighttime procession follow the mass, with the saint's statue transported on a decorated tractor, accompanied by a display of lights. Former miners, current explosive specialists, the Domusnovas band, and the local folk group all join, demonstrating their devotion to Santa Barbara. The event concludes with the distribution of blessed bread.

The cult of Santa Barbara in Sardinia holds immense cultural and religious importance. For centuries, devotion to the saint has been deeply rooted in mining communities, symbolizing protection, comfort, and hope in a challenging environment. Even today, Santa Barbara remains a symbol of faith and identity for many Sardinians, reminding them of the strength and resilience of past generations.

Sainte-Barbe dans Le Bassin Minier Du Nord-Pas-De-Calais



L'exploitation du charbon dans le Nord-Pas de Calais s'est arrêtée en 1990. Pourtant certaines traditions directement liées au monde de la mine se sont maintenues. Ainsi la fête de Sainte-Barbe, le 4 décembre, a toujours constitué un des temps forts de l'année dans le bassin minier.

L'origine de sa légende est ancienne et la vie de Barbara riche en événements dramatiques. À l'initiative de l'Église, son culte se développe rapidement et se transmet au Moyen Âge grâce à une iconographie très abondante.

Sainte Barbe, Sainte Patronne

Le châtiment infligé au père de la sainte, foudroyé, la fait considérer comme toute puissante contre le feu du ciel et contre le feu lui-même, qu'il s'agisse de l'allumer ou de l'éteindre. Elle fut d'ailleurs surnommée la sainte «du feu» et, par extension, de «tout ce qui tonne et détonne». Largement répandue dans tous les pays miniers, la dévotion à sainte Barbe a naturellement pris sa place dans la région Nord-Pas-de-Calais dès le XVIIIe siècle. Les mineurs l'ont très vite adoptée pour assurer leur protection contre les explosifs et le grisou menaçant. Pour éloigner les accidents, des statues de la sainte sont placées à l'entrée des fosses ou au fond des galeries, aux endroits les plus exposés aux dangers. Ainsi les mineurs se sentent rassurés par sa simple présence. Certains lui adressent leurs prières quotidiennes, d'autres se signent avant de descendre. Parfois aussi, à la maison, leurs épouses l'invoquent pour protéger leurs familles.

Sainte Barbe est leur sainte patronne, C'est par son martyre et la mort de son père, qu'elle devient patronne «de tout ce qui tonne et détonne»; pompiers, arquebusiers, artilleurs, fondeurs et mineurs se placent sous sa protection.

De la religion a la tradition

Beaucoup de nationalités sont venues travailler dans la région Nord-Pas de Calais. Sainte Barbe est fêtée par tous, athées, catholiques, musulmans ou protestants. Les mineurs descendent tous les matins avec une pensée pour elle: «moi, je ne suis pas un grand catholique, (...) je ne vais pas à la messe, mais sainte Barbe, j'y crois, quand on a vu tout ce qu'on a vu au fond, comment ne pas penser qu'elle nous a protégés». Face aux dangers quotidiens, les uns croient en sa protection «divine», les autres sont peut-être plus superstitieux que croyants et, malgré tout, chacun assiste à l'intégralité des festivités. Les mineurs accordent un grand attachement à leurs traditions. Après la fin de l'exploitation, la sainte est toujours célébrée par les anciens mineurs et leurs familles en mémoire de la mine et de ses ouvriers, pour qu'ils ne tombent pas dans l'oubli, ou bien encore pour se rappeler la dangerosité du travail et ses conséquences, que certains subissent encore aujourd'hui. En plus de sa présence à l'entrée des fosses ou au fond, les mineurs et leurs familles côtoient sainte Barbe dans leur vie quotidienne. Son nom est partout. On la retrouve non seulement associée à des fosses, plus exactement à quatre fosses du XVIIIe et du XIXe siècle des concessions d'Aniche, Vieux-Condé, Douchy et Fiennes, mais aussi à des églises, des écoles, des dispensaires, des hôpitaux, des brasseries, des rues, des cités. Des associations s'approprient son nom que ce soient les chorales, les harmonies, les clubs de sport ou encore les regroupements religieux. Son identité est ainsi inscrite à la fois dans l'espace et dans la mémoire. Sainte Barbe fait partie intégrante du patrimoine de la région ou plutôt du bassin minier.

Le 4 Decembre

Le jour de Sainte-Barbe est une véritable institution dans le monde de la mine. Le 4 décembre était une journée particulière, chômée payée dès 1946.

Ce jour de fête commence par une cérémonie religieuse et officielle organisée par les Houillères. La procession mène le personnel de la mine, patrons en tête, au vin d'honneur ou au banquet. En cette occasion, les Houillères récompensent les mineurs de leurs bons états de service avec une remise de médaille, un discours et une photo pour immortaliser l'instant. Les représentants des Houillères se déplacent aussi chez les mineurs malades et retraités pour leur offrir des colis. La journée se poursuit dans un esprit plus festif et populaire où les mineurs se retrouvent en famille et entre amis pour manger, boire, chanter et danser. Les femmes et les enfants profitent parfois de ce moment pour offrir au père un petit présent tel qu'un cigare ou une bouteille de vin que l'on ouvre autour d'une tarte au libouli ; de nombreuses cartes postales sont adressées aux mineurs. La fête se prolonge tard dans la soirée. Les mineurs rentrent à la cité pour une courte nuit, avant de reprendre, le lendemain matin à l'aube, leur travail. Cette journée clôt la quinzaine Sainte- Barbe qui s'est déroulée du 16 au 30 novembre. Pendant cette période, les patrons permettent aux ouvriers

de réaliser des journées de travail de 12, 14 et même 16 heures (descente à 3 heures le matin, remontée pouvant aller jusqu'à 19 heures), ce sont les longues coupes, qui leur rapportent un salaire équivalent à plus du double de la quinzaine ordinaire.

Sainte-Barbe aujourd'hui

Sainte-Barbe est fêtée partout dans le Bassin minier. Elle a même son festival!

Depuis 2018, chaque année, dans la région du Bassin Minier de Lens-Liévin, la **Sainte-Barbe** se transforme en un vibrant festival des **arts et du feu**, un événement culturel unique qui célèbre le patrimoine industriel et minier du territoire. Né en 2018, ce festival accueille plus de **50.000 visiteurs** et propose des spectacles extraordinaires, capables d'animer et d'"enflammer" d'anciens sites miniers grâce à la participation de compagnies artistiques de renom national et international.

Se déroulant au début du mois de décembre, le festival est rythmé par au moins un spectacle pyrotechnique chaque soir, organisé dans des lieux emblématiques de la région. Parmi les attractions principales, on retrouve l'installation dans l'église Saint-Amé, où le collectif régional **Les Yeux d'Argos** expose une gigantesque "cité minière", composée de **2.000 petits corons** (modèles de maisons minières) réalisés par les habitants. L'œuvre est surmontée d'un terril de cinq mètres de haut, symbole des mines.

Le dernier jour, le 8 décembre, est marqué par le suggestif **cortège des Gueules noires**, accompagné d'une marionnette de six mètres et d'un cheval géant, évocations poétiques du travail dans les profondeurs des mines.

Le festival est précédé par "**Les Étincelles**", une série d'événements communautaires organisés par des associations locales, des communes et des résidents, qui animent la région. Ces projets reflètent l'esprit collectif et le lien fort avec le territoire, transformant le festival en une célébration partagée de la mémoire et de la créativité.

La Sainte-Barbe n'est pas seulement un événement: c'est une immersion dans le passé industriel, revitalisée par l'art et la culture contemporaine.

Ph. 1-2-3:

Festival de Sainte-Barbe, qui se tient chaque année dans la partie centrale du bassin minier à Lens-Liévin
 Sainte-Barbe Festival, held every year in the central part of the mining basin in Lens-Liévin



LENS-LIÉVIN AGGLOMÉRATION
9-9BIS OIGNIES

FESTIVAL DE LA
SAINTE BARBE
ARTS ET FEU

7^{ème} ÉDITION

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TITANOS
LES COMMANDOS PERCU
DEUS EX MACHINA
INOOK
LUX FACTORY
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Sainte-Barbe in the Mining Basin of Nord-Pas-de-Calais

Coal mining in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region ended in 1990, but some traditions connected to the mining world have survived. One of these is the celebration of **Sainte-Barbe**, held every year on December 4th. This event has always been a significant moment for the local mining communities.

The legend of Sainte-Barbe is ancient, and her life was marked by dramatic events. Her worship spread quickly during the Middle Ages, encouraged by the Church and supported by abundant iconography.

Sainte Barbe, Patron Saint

The punishment of Sainte-Barbe's father, who was struck by lightning, made her a symbol of protection against fire and lightning, whether it was about controlling fire or extinguishing it. She became known as the "saint of fire" and, by extension, the protector of all that "booms and blasts." Her devotion spread widely across mining regions, including Nord-Pas-de-Calais, from the 18th century onwards.

Miners quickly adopted Sainte-Barbe as their protector against the risks of explosives and gas in the mines. To prevent accidents, statues of Sainte-Barbe were placed at mine entrances or deep underground in the most dangerous areas. Miners found comfort in her presence, with some praying to her daily or making the sign of the cross before descending. Even at home, their families—especially their wives—would invoke her to protect their loved ones.

Sainte-Barbe is the patron saint of miners and others who deal with "booming and blasting," including firefighters, gunners, and artillerymen. Her legacy stems from her martyrdom and her father's dramatic death, which made her a symbol of safety and protection.

From religion to tradition

The Nord-Pas-de-Calais region attracted workers from many nationalities, and Sainte-Barbe's celebration was shared by all—atheists, Catholics, Muslims, and Protestants alike. Each morning, miners would think of her before descending into the mines. As one miner put it: "I'm not very religious... I don't go to church, but I believe in Sainte-Barbe. After everything we've seen down there, how can you not think she protected us?". Faced with daily dangers, some saw her protection as divine, while others viewed it more as superstition. Still, everyone participated in the celebrations. After mining ended, Sainte-Barbe continued to be honored by retired miners and their families, as a way to remember the mines, their workers, and the risks they faced. Her presence remains visible in daily life: her name is associated with mines, churches, schools, hospitals, streets, and even breweries. Associations, choirs, sports clubs, and religious groups also use her name, anchoring her identity in the region's space and memory. Sainte-Barbe is deeply embedded in the heritage of the mining basin.

December 4th: a day of celebration

Sainte-Barbe's day was a major event in mining communities. Starting in 1946, December 4th became a paid holiday for miners. The day began with a religious ceremony and an official gathering organized by the mining companies. This procession often included company executives leading the miners to a reception or banquet. Miners who had shown outstanding service were recognized with medals, speeches, and photographs. The mining companies also visited sick or retired miners to deliver gift packages. The festivities continued with family and friends, featuring food, drinks, songs, and dancing. Families would sometimes exchange small gifts, such as cigars or wine, often shared alongside traditional desserts like *tarte au libouli*. Festivities stretched late into the night, and miners would return to work early the next morning. This day marked the end of the Sainte-Barbe fortnight, which ran from November 16th to 30th. During this period, miners worked long shifts—sometimes up to 16 hours—earning wages over twice their usual pay.

Sainte Barbe today

Since 2018, Sainte-Barbe has evolved into an annual cultural festival in the Lens-Liévin mining basin. The festival celebrates mining heritage through art and fire-themed performances. Attracting over 50,000 visitors, it features pyrotechnic shows, artistic installations, and community events. One highlight is the installation at Saint-Amé Church, where local residents contribute to a miniature mining village with over 2,000 handcrafted houses, topped by a five-meter terril. The festival closes on December 8th with a grand parade, showcasing giant puppets and symbolic depictions of mining life. Sainte-Barbe remains a vivid reminder of the region's mining past, blending tradition with modern celebrations to honor the memory and creativity of its people.

Svätá Barbora v naratívoch baníckeho dedičstva na Slovensku



Podľa legend, ktoré existujú v slovenskom prostredí, sv. Barbora bola šľachtičná z Malej Ázie. Narodila sa v 3. storočí n. l. do bohatej pohanskej rodiny šľachtica Dioskora a oplývala nevídanou krásou. Keďže o jej živote niet historických záznamov, údaje o sv. Barbore sú založené predovšetkým na legendách. Jej otec bol vážený kupec a odporca kresťanstva. Aby svoju dcéru ochránil pred kresťanskými vplyvmi a nevhodnými nápadníkmi, dal pre ňu postaviť vežu, do ktorej ju uväznil v obklopení všemožného prepychu. Veža mala iba dva okná. Jeden z jej sluhov bol stúpencom kresťanstva a Barboru čoskoro obrátil na svoju vieru. Tak sa aj napriek väzeniu stala kresťankou, keď ju v otcovej neprítomnosti tajne pokrstil kňaz prestrojený za lekára. Aby dokázala svoju vieru v Krista, dala vo veži murárom vysekať k dvom existujúcim oknám ešte jedno tak, aby jej navždy symbolizovali najsvätejšiu Trojicu.

Otec sa veľmi rozhneval a chcel dcéru zabiť. Barbore sa podarilo ujsť do úkrytu, ale kvôli zrade pastiera ju otec vydal úradom. Dcéra sa dostala pred sudcu Marciana, ktorý po márnom prehováraní, aby sa svojej viery zriekla, dal Barboru mučiť. Podstúpila početné muky. Barborino martýrium ukončila až poprava sťatím. Podľa legendy bol jej katom vlastný otec, ktorý zahynul okamžite po vykonaní rozsudku. Údajne ho zabil blesk, preto sa sv. Barbora stala patrónkou (aj) delostrelcov a ochrankyňou pred búrkou.

Svätá Barbora býva zobrazená ako mladá dievča s alabastrovou pleťou, v dlhom šate s plášťom. Jej atribútmi sú pávie pero, ktoré symbolizuje múdrosť, vzdelanosť a tiež nesmrteľnosť, ako aj meč, slonovinová veža, palmová ratolesť alebo kalich s hostiou.

Podľa jednej z legend Barbora vo veži, kde bola väznená, pestovala halúzku z čerešne. Práve v deň jej popravy halúzka vykvitla. Od tejto legendy sa odvodzuje zvyk rezania „barboriek“ – čerešňových halúzok na Slovensku. Pôvodne pripomínali zimný snovrat a následný príchod nového roka a víziu teplej jari.

Svätá Barbora v tradičnej kultúre

V tradičnej kultúre Slovenska bol deň sv. Barbory - 4. december - v poradí tretím stridším dňom v adventom období (po Kataríne a Ondrejovi). Verilo sa, že v týchto dňoch sa darilo zlým silám. Platil prísny zákaz ranných návštev žien, zákaz šitia, pradenia, vyšívania a párania peria. Kedysi sa aj tento deň na našom území slávil vo veľkom, neskôr viaceré rituály počas dňa svätej Barbory zanikli. Jedným z mála zvykov, ktoré sa uchovali, je rituál ľúbostnej mágie - rezanie vetvičky z čerešne alebo višne, tzv. barborky.

Deň sv. Barbory mal zvláštny význam pre slobodné dievčence, ktoré sa chceli vydať, ale aj pre vdovy. Mohli tak vykonávať zvyky spojené s ľúbostnou mágiou. Preto sa ráno vybrali do záhrady a odrezali si barborky – halúzky z čerešne. Doma haluz vložili do nádoby s vodou a potom netrpezlivo čakali, či im do Štedrého dňa rozkvitne. Ak áno, tak sa mala dievčina alebo vdova do roka vydať. V niektorých obciach si však halúzku doniesli aj vydaté ženy, ktoré chceli mať v budúcom roku bohatú úrodu. Na polnočnej omši si dievčatá rozkvitnutú halúzku zastrčili za pás a mládenec, ktorý im ju zobral, im takto vyznal lásku.

V niektorých regiónoch Slovenska chodili na deň sv. Barbory chlapci po domoch “ocelovať”, teda vinšovať s reťazou alebo kúskom železa, ktorý mal symbolizovať pevné zdravie. Zaželali zdravie všetkým v domácnosti, za čo dostali potraviny alebo drobné peniaze. Vo viacerých obciach Slovenska zasa chodili z domu do domu dievčatá zahalené do bieleho. V každom dome mlčky povymetali husacím krídlom alebo metlou všetky kúty od pavučín, aby vyhnali zlo z domu. Keď prišli do domu, spolu sa pomodlili a predniesli krátku básničku. Gazdiné ich za to odmenili jabĺčkami, orechmi, sušeným ovocím aj peniazmi.

Z pôvodných zvykov na deň svätej Barbory sa dodnes zachovala takmer na celom území len tradícia rezania čerešňových vetvičiek. Zvyk obdarúvania detí sladkosťami sa preniesol na deň svätého Mikuláša a preobliekanie sa dievčat do bieleho odevu a vymetanie kútov sa traduje na deň svätej Lucie. Deň tejto svätice bol rovnako dôležitý pre predpovedanie počasia, pretože sa verilo, že aké je počasie na Barboru, také bude do Vianoc. Platilo však, že už bude zima, ľudia budú viac kúriť aj voziť sa na saniach. Preto sa hovorilo:

*Po svätej Baruši, daj čiapku na uši.
Po svätej Baruši, daj pozor na uši.
Svätá Barbora vyhádza drevo zo dvora.
Svätá Barbora fahá sane do dvora.*

Sv. Barbora - patrónka a ochrankyňa baníkov

Deň sv. Barbory, 4. december, bol dôležitý najmä pre baníkov, keďže svätá Barbora je ich patrónkou. Baníci často do upravených otvorov a výklenkov v podzemí banských chodieb dávali sošky alebo obrázky sv. Barbory, aby ich ochraňovala. V deň sv. Barbory sa v banských mestách tradične konali slávnostné omše venované ochrankyni baníkov aj následné oslavy, ktorých sa zúčastňovali tak bohatí majitelia baní a banskí úradníci, ako aj baníci v slávnostných uniformách a ich rodiny.

Saint Barbara in the Narratives of Slovak Mining Heritage

According to legends found in Slovak tradition, Saint Barbara was a noblewoman from Asia Minor. Born in the 3rd century AD to a wealthy pagan family, Barbara was known for her extraordinary beauty. Since there are no historical records about her life, information about Saint Barbara is primarily based on legends. Her father, a nobleman named Dioscorus - a prominent merchant and staunch opponent of Christianity, sought to protect her from Christian influences and unsuitable suitors by imprisoning her in a tower, surrounded by luxury. The tower had only two windows.

One of her servants, who was secretly a Christian, soon converted Barbara to the faith. Despite her imprisonment, she became a Christian when, in her father's absence, a priest disguised as a doctor baptized her in secret. To demonstrate her faith in Christ, Barbara had the masons carve a third window in the tower, symbolizing the Holy Trinity.

Her father, furious, wanted to kill her. Although Barbara managed to flee, a shepherd betrayed her, and her father handed her over to the authorities. She was brought before the judge Marcian, who, after failing to persuade her to renounce her faith, ordered her to be tortured. Barbara endured numerous tortures. Her martyrdom ended when she was beheaded. According to legend, her own father who acted as her executioner was struck by lightning immediately after carrying out the sentence. This event made Saint Barbara the patroness of artillerymen and protector against storms.

Saint Barbara is often depicted as a young woman with alabaster skin, wearing a long robe and a cloak. Her attributes include a peacock feather, symbolizing wisdom, knowledge, and immortality, as well as a sword, an ivory tower, a palm branch, or a chalice with a host, which an angel is said to have brought her before her execution.

One legend states that while in the tower, Barbara nurtured a cherry branch. On the day of her execution, the branch miraculously bloomed. This gave rise to the Slovak tradition of cutting "barborky" — St. Barbara's cherry branches — on Saint Barbara's Day (December 4th). The blooming of these branches was originally associated with the winter solstice, the arrival of the new year, and the hope for a warm spring.



Dievčatá Barbory s husacími krídlami v rukách, so zakrytými tvármi a starý otec kráčajúci na Deň svätej Barbory, 4. decembra. Dolná Súča, 1963. Archív Ústavu etnológie SAV v Bratislave. Foto: J. Podolák

Barbora girls with goose wings in hands, face covered and grandfather walking on the St. Barbara Day, 4th of December. Dolná Súča, 1963. Archives of the Ústav etnológie SAV v Bratislave. Photo: J. Podolák

St. Barbara in traditional Slovak culture

In traditional Slovak culture, St. Barbara's Day was the third in a series of "witches' days" during Advent (following St. Catherine's and St. Andrew's days). It was believed that evil forces thrived on these days. There were strict prohibitions against women visiting in the morning, as well as bans on sewing, spinning, embroidery, and feather plucking. In earlier times, this day was widely celebrated in the region, though many of the rituals associated with St. Barbara's Day later disappeared. One of the few customs that has been preserved is the love magic ritual of cutting a cherry or sour cherry branch, known as a "barborka."

St. Barbara's Day had special significance for unmarried girls who wished to marry, as well as for widows. In the morning, they would go to the garden and cut a "barborka"—a branch from a cherry tree. They would then place the branch in a container of water at home and anxiously wait to see if it would bloom by Christmas Eve. If it did, the girl or widow was believed to marry within the next year. In some villages, even married women would bring home a branch, hoping for a good harvest in the coming year. At midnight mass, girls would tuck the blooming branch into their belts, and the young man who took it from them would be professing his love.

In some regions of Slovakia, boys would visit houses on St. Barbara's Day to "steel," which meant to offer good wishes with a chain or piece of iron symbolizing strong health. They would wish health to everyone in the household in exchange for food or small amounts of money. In many Slovak villages, girls dressed in white would go from house to house. Silently, they would sweep all the corners with a goose feather or broom to chase away evil from the house. Upon entering, they would pray together and recite a short poem. The housewives would reward them with apples, nuts, dried fruit, or money.

Of the original customs associated with St. Barbara's Day, the tradition of cutting cherry branches has been preserved almost everywhere. The custom of giving sweets to children has been transferred to St. Nicholas Day, while the tradition of girls dressing in white and sweeping corners takes place on St. Lucy's Day.

Patron of Miners

Saint Barbara's Day was particularly important for miners, as she is their patron saint. Miners would often place statues or images of Saint Barbara in small niches or alcoves in the underground tunnels to protect them. On her feast day, festive masses and celebrations were traditionally held in mining towns, with wealthy mine owners, miners in their formal uniforms, and their families attending church services to honor their protector.

Saint Barbara's Day also played a role in weather forecasting, as people believed that "the weather on Saint Barbara's Day would last until Christmas." It was generally expected that winter would begin in earnest, with people preparing for colder temperatures, heating their homes more, and using sleds for transportation. As a result, several sayings developed: "After Saint Barbara, put a hat on your ears," "After Saint Barbara, watch your ears," "Saint Barbara drives the wood from the yard," and "Saint Barbara brings the sled into the yard."

Saint Barbara of Aljustrel



No dia 4 de dezembro, o dia de Santa Bárbara, a santa padroeira dos mineiros, é celebrado com reverência e devoção. Em Aljustrel, este dia ressoa profundamente, não apenas como uma observância religiosa, mas como um testemunho do espírito duradouro de uma comunidade cuja essência está ligada à mineração há milênios.

Durante mais de cinco mil anos, o povo de Aljustrel tem descido às profundezas da terra, extraindo os seus tesouros ocultos enquanto enfrenta o seu imenso poder. Neste trabalho, a fé não é apenas um sentimento religioso; é uma companheira vital. Os desafios diários nas minas—escuridão, isolamento, a ameaça iminente do perigo—requerem mais do que força física. Exigem uma crença em algo maior, uma força que une e sustenta.

Esta fé partilhada transcende o individualismo e recorre à confiança coletiva. Espelha a dependência de um colega de trabalho, de um vizinho, de um amigo, que inevitavelmente oferecerá apoio quando mais for necessário. Neste contexto, a fé em Santa Bárbara torna-se um reflexo da fé na camaradagem e na solidariedade humana.

O espírito desta ligação é talvez mais vividamente expresso no cântico do Hino dos Mineiros, uma tradição que faz com que muitos se emocionem. Os seus versos são mais do que palavras; são uma afirmação do vínculo entre fé e amizade. Estes elementos, profundamente entrelaçados, fornecem força e confiança numa profissão onde a incerteza está sempre presente.

A crença em Santa Bárbara tem um significado único em Aljustrel. Para aqueles que não são religiosos, simboliza confiança e unidade, despojada de ornamentação ou pretensão. É uma celebração da companhia, de uma compreensão partilhada que transcende o material e o mortal.

E assim, a oração persiste:

"Santa Bárbara abençoada, padroeira dos mineiros, olha lá, olha lá, amigo, olha lá, olha lá, como estou a fazer..."

Hino dos Mineiros

Nas Minas de Aljustrel
 Trai larai larai lai lai la
 Muitos mineiros morreram, olha lá
 Olha lá, camarada, olha lá
 Olha lá, como eu venho

Muitos mineiros morreram,
 olha lá Olha lá, camarada, olha lá
 Olha lá, como eu venho
 Lai larai larai lai lai la
 Minha cabeça está perfurada
 Trai larai larai lai lai la
 Perfurada por uma broca, olha lá
 Olha lá, camarada, olha lá
 Olha lá, como eu venho
 Perfurada por uma broca, olha lá
 Olha lá, camarada, olha lá
 Olha lá, como eu venho
 Lai larai larai lai lai la

Minha camisa está rasgada
 Trai larai larai lai lai lai la
 E o sangue de um camarada, olha lá
 Olha lá, camarada, olha lá
 Olha lá, como eu venho
 E o sangue de um camarada, olha lá
 Veja lá, meu amigo, veja lá
 Veja lá como eu venho
 Lai larai larai lai lai la

Santa Bárbara abençoada
 Trai larai larai lai lai la
 Padroeira dos mineiros, veja lá
 Veja lá, meu amigo, veja lá
 Veja lá como eu venho
 Padroeira dos mineiros, veja lá
 Veja lá, meu amigo, veja lá
 Veja lá como eu venho
 Trai larai larai lai lai la
 Lai larai larai lai lai la
 Lai larai larai lai lai la
 Lai larai larai lai lai la
 Lai larai larai lai lai la
 Lai larai larai lai lai la

Saint Barbara of Aljustrel

On December 4th, the day of Saint Barbara, the patron saint of miners, is celebrated with reverence and devotion. In Aljustrel, this day resonates deeply, not merely as a religious observance but as a testament to the enduring spirit of a community whose lifeblood has been tied to mining for millennia.

For over five thousand years, the people of Aljustrel have ventured into the depths of the earth, extracting its hidden treasures while contending with its immense power. In this work, faith is not just a religious sentiment; it is a vital companion. The challenges faced daily in the mines—darkness, isolation, the looming threat of danger—demand more than physical strength. They call for a belief in something greater, a force that unites and sustains.

This shared faith transcends individualism and taps into a collective trust. It mirrors the reliance on a fellow worker, a neighbor, a friend, who will inevitably lend support when needed most. In this context, faith in Saint Barbara becomes a reflection of faith in camaraderie and human solidarity.

The spirit of this connection is perhaps most vividly expressed in the singing of the Miners' Anthem, a tradition that brings tears to many eyes. Its verses are more than words; they are an affirmation of the bond between faith and friendship. These elements, deeply intertwined, provide strength and reassurance in a profession where uncertainty is ever-present.

Belief in Saint Barbara holds a unique significance in Aljustrel. For those who are not religious, it symbolizes trust and unity, stripped of ornamentation or pretense. It is a celebration of companionship, of a shared understanding that transcends the material and the mortal.

And so, the prayer endures:

"Blessed Saint Barbara, patron saint of miners, look there, look there, friend, look there, look there, how am I doing..."

Miners' Anthem

In the Aljustrel Mines
 Trai larai larai lai lai la
 Many miners died, look there
 Look there, comrade, look there
 Look there, how I come

Many miners died,
 look there Look there, comrade, look there
 Look there, how I come
 Lai larai larai lai lai la
 My head is pierced
 Trai larai larai lai lai la
 Pierced by a drill, look there
 Look there, comrade, look there
 Look there, how I come
 Pierced by a drill, look there
 Look there, comrade, look there
 Look there, how I come
 Lai larai larai lai lai la

My shirt is torn
 Trai larai larai lai lai lai la
 And the blood of a comrade, look there
 Look there, comrade, look there
 Look there, how I come
 And the blood of a comrade, look there there
 See there, my friend, see there
 See there how I come
 Lai larai larai lai lai la

Blessed Saint Barbara
 Trai larai larai lai lai la
 Patroness of miners, see there
 See there, my friend, see there
 See there how I come
 Patroness of miners, see there
 See there, my friend, see there
 See there how I come
 Trai larai larai lai lai la
 Lai larai larai lai lai la
 Lai larai larai lai lai la
 Lai larai larai lai lai la
 Lai larai larai lai lai la
 Lai larai larai lai lai la

Conclusion

This volume represents a synthesis of the joint work of the MINES.B Federation partners, united by the common objective of documenting and enhancing the traditions associated with the figure of **Saint Barbara**. Through a collection of contributions from different mining realities, the book has highlighted the cultural and historical depth of the cult of the Saint, highlighting her role as a **unifying element** and **intangible heritage** of great value.

The celebrations and rituals described in the preceding pages testify not only to the centrality of Saint Barbara in **mining communities**, but also to the importance of preserving these moments as an integral part of our **collective memory**. The figure of the Saint thus proves to be a bridge between past and present, representing a cultural heritage that deserves to be protected and passed on.

We would like to thank the partners of the MINES.B Federation for their commitment and for sharing their knowledge and experience that made the realisation of this book possible. Their contribution has made it possible to paint a rich picture of the mining traditions associated with Santa Barbara, reinforcing our common commitment to the valorisation of intangible heritage.



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