

Barrio de san Nicolás s/n
33873 Navelgas (Tineo) Asturias

Tel. y Fax: **985 80 60 18**

www.museodeloro.es
info@museodeloro.es

Guía del Museo del Oro



Gold is maybe the first element to be recognized as a metal by mankind. Together with silver and copper, they may appear in Nature in a raw state. The origin of its chemical symbol, Au, comes from the Latin word "aurum" meaning "radiant dawning". This was probably due to its soft yellow colour.

These are some of its most important features:

- It is considered a "heavy metal" because of its high density. It is 19.3 times denser than water at 20°C. This way 1 m³ of gold weights more than 19 tons.

- It is considered a "precious metal" because of its great stability to most solvents. It resists the action of water, air and many other aggressive chemical substances like acid solutions. That is why it is considered a metal which does not rust or corrode, being only soluble in solutions of cyanide, urea, and some compounds with chlorine, selenium, tellurium, and sulphur.

- Most of its uses and value are due to its beautiful appearance and because it is really easy to work with it. This fact derives from its high ductility – it can be stretched in wires with a weight of 0.5 mg/m – and from its malleability – it can be turned into transparent sheets with 0.00001 mm of thickness). These properties of gold are at the same time synonyms of its high capacity for plastic deformity coming from its crystal structure.

- It is a very soft metal used almost always in alloys because it is too soft and expensive for most of its possible industrial uses.

Two different scales are mainly used to express the quality of gold:

- When gold is alloyed with some other metal, it is used the carat scale. This scale expresses the proportion of gold a particular piece contains. This way "24-carat" contains 100% of gold; "18-carat" contains 75% of gold and so on.

The prize of gold in markets is generally set in US Dollars for commercial and financial purposes. The value in dollars of 31.1035 grams of 24-carat gold is the common way of measure, known as Troy Ounce.

Gold is a transition metal. It belongs to the 11th group of the periodic table. Its electronic configuration is 4f14 5d10 6s1. Its most common oxidation states are 0 (original state), +1 (univalent), and +3 (trivalent). Gold is the noblest of metals in original state. It has a strong metallic character which transforms it in an excellent conductor of heat and electricity.

Some of its main physical and chemical features are shown in the following table:

Atomic Number	79
Atomic Mass	197 uma
Density at 20°C	19,32 g/cm ³
Melting Point	1.064,4 °C
Boiling Point	2.808 °C
Electric Negativity	2,54 eV
Atomic Radio	1,439 Å
Atomic Volume at 20°C	10,21 cm ³ /mol
Specific Heat	0,138 J/g3·K
Thermal Conductivity at 20°C	3,14 W/cm·K
Electric Resistance at 20°C	2,06·10 ⁻⁶ Ω·cm
Enthalpy of Fusion	12,77 kJ/mol
Enthalpy of Vaporization	324,4 kJ/mol
Crystal Structure	Centred on faces
Hardness (Mohs' Scale)	2,5-3
Límite elástico	55 MPa
Coefficiente de dilatación lineal a 20°C	14·10 ⁻⁶ °C ⁻¹





Gold is present in most of everyday life objects

Though we usually associate gold with wealth, gold is present in our most common activities as a lot of everyday products surrounding us are made of gold. Really, gold alloyed in small quantities.

The physical and chemical properties of this metal make it irreplaceable in certain applications like technology and medicine.

Its already told properties: high conductivity, malleability, and rust resistance, make it essential for the manufacturing of components for electronic equipment – like computers, mobile phones, activation circuits for airbags in our cars, satellites and spacecrafts or music players.

Its industrial applications make use nowadays of the 15% of gold world production. Gold can be completely recycled.

Being biologically inactive, gold is used intensively in medical research and is used as a treatment for some illnesses, like arthritis or some kinds of cancer, being its better known uses those in dental medicine.

The medical equipment for heart surgery is made of gold as well as its use in the manufacturing of medical lasers.

However, its main use is in jewellery – including the manufacture of coins and the reserve for the emission of currency –, this use of gold makes approximately the 70% of its world production.

Undoubtedly, gold has an amazing history full of symbolism. It is par excellence the symbol of love, of plenty and of its owner's energy. It has served from prehistory to bring out the beauties of our bodies as no other metal can do. Also, the association of gold with power has been known all history long.

Nowadays, the gold reserve of Spain amounts 16.8 million ounces, that is, 522,500 kilos (522.5 tons). The market value of this asset rise more or less 6,000 million Euros. From the point of view of the mining industry, it has been proved the presence in Spain of 80 tons of gold which can be extracted in profitable conditions. However, it is known the existence of higher quantities. All this mining reserves are placed in the North West of Spain.

The colours of gold

We always imagine gold as yellow, but it may appear in different colours from white to red. This depends on its alloy with other metals. The most common commercial names are these:

14-carat Yellow Gold is:	58.3% gold, 20.8% silver, and 20.8% copper.
18-carat Red Gold is:	75% gold and 25% copper.
18-carat White Gold is:	75% gold and 25% palladium (or also nickel or platinum).
18-carat Yellow Gold is:	75% gold, 12.5% silver, and 12.5% copper.
18-carat Pink Gold is:	75% gold, 20% copper, and 5% silver.
18-carat Green Gold is:	75% gold and 25% silver.
18-carat Blue Gold is:	75% gold and 25% iron.

The most common alloys of gold are with silver and copper.

The colouring of gold depends on the proportions of each metal. The gold-silver-copper alloys may have red colourings (when copper prevails), yellow (when gold prevails) or pale (when silver prevails).

Other striking colours appear sometimes in less common alloys with gold. The alloy of gold and aluminium shows a purple colour. The one of gold with indium shows a metallic blue and those with cobalt, rhodium or ruthenium present black shades.



Finding gold is not an easy task

A great deal on the historic value of gold comes from its scarcity and the difficulties of its extraction. If gold would be as plenty as other metals, it would undoubtedly lose most of its economic and symbolic value.

It is considered that there are about $5.90 \cdot 10^{13}$ kilos of gold on the Earth's crust. $5.29 \cdot 10^9$ of that quantity is under the oceans, making the cost of its extraction higher than its value. Gold is in the 75th place among the more abundant elements of the Earth's crust. It appears in different geological environments depending on the mechanisms of its formation. The most common are:

- Fine grain gold disseminated in usually altered carbonated sedimentary rocks – cases of **Navelgas** or **Salamón** in Palencia – Spain.

- Auriferous Placers: The meteorization of rocks with a certain amount of gold produces the concentration of this metal in the contact area between the altered and the sane rocks. The erosion of this material produces the gold deposits in water flows and rivers – like the ones in Navelgas River or some others in the **North of León**.

- Gold deposits associated with intrusive igneous rocks like granite. The mineralized area in these cases could be inside or near the igneous rock. At the deposit of **Salave** (Tapia de Casariego), gold appears inside of a granodiorite of this kind.

- Deposits formed in sedimentary and metamorphic rocks. These deposits are formed in seams of the rocks filling open spaces and replacing the original materials with metal minerals, calcite or quartz. In these cases, gold used to be associated with other minerals, generally sulphurs. Under this category we could include the seam webs we can find in **Ibias** and **Los Oscos**.

- Contact areas between and intrusive igneous rock and a carbonated sedimentary rock (limestone or dolomite). These are favourable environments for the presence of gold mineralization (named "skarn" type). The deposits on the Narcea River – **Valle-Boinás**, in Belmonte de Miranda, and **Carlés**, in Salas – belong to this group.

Though gold can be found in a pure state, there are certain minerals in which gold is combined with other chemical elements. It is common to find it in natural alloys with copper, platinum – and other elements of its group –, selenium, tellurium and bismuth. Also the well-known alloy gold-silver named "electrum" from the mineralogical point of view.

Gold extraction

As it has happened with other metals, the mining operations to produce gold has derived inevitably to the exploitation of deposits of less importance due to the intensive prospecting and exploitation of gold for centuries.

Until the 19th century, the exploited deposits contained gold in its raw and/or free form. This made the production process much easier: simple gravimetric methods to raw gold – taking advantage that it is denser than the minerals which appear with it –, and the amalgamating with quicksilver for free gold.

The process of amalgamating – not common anymore – consists of the addition of quicksilver in a liquid state to the triturated ore forming an amalgam quicksilver-gold.

After the extraction of the amalgam from the ore, the quicksilver is separated by distillation and the remaining is gold with an acceptable purity. The use of quicksilver for gold extraction is still a common practice in small mining companies. It is mainly used in developing countries, as it requires less investment and is an easy operation.

In Scotland, at the end of the 19th century, appeared a process known as **cyaniding**. This process consists on the triturating of the auriferous minerals to really fine size, less than 0.1 mm. Water is added to form a pulp which is pre-concentrated through flotation methods.

After this, if the ore is rich in free gold, an amalgam with quicksilver can be produced, and gold will be freed through distillation as it was described previously.

The minerals of a lower quality, being most nowadays, and the residues of amalgamating go on another process. It consists on the treating of the concentrated mineral pulp with cyanide, usually sodium cyanide. This way a chemical compound called "sodium aurocyanide" is formed. Gold is extracted later using zinc oxide or activated coal.

The whole process is known as "**lixiviation**".

Silver is almost always present in non-pure gold. This is why gold have to undergo, finally, an electrolytic process to get a higher purity.



Mankind have conferred to gold, all history long, more magical and symbolic qualities than to any other metal. Its beauty and scarcity have transformed it in the most precious good for Man.

Neolithic ornaments

The first findings of objects made on gold by Man date from the Neolithic. They are previous to those made on silver, copper, or bronze.

Gold was used in that period in the making of purely ornamental objects: tiaras, bracelets, earrings, rings, and torques (a kind of neckrings) made of one piece or formed with strings of small drilled balls.

Those pieces were elaborated with simplicity: small straight lines in zigzag and various geometrical forms made with a hammer.



The flesh of Pharaohs

Gold started to be used as a symbol, the expression of the qualities of Kings, in the times of the Egyptian monarchy.

The most ancient royal title was that of "Horus' Name", which remarked the divine nature of the king associating him with Horus, the falcon.

This God, landed on the hieroglyphic symbol of gold is understood as the incarnation of the King, identify with all Gods.

Egyptians believed Gods had gold flesh as symbol of incorruptibility.

According to tradition, the Gods had gold flesh, lapis lazuli hair, and silver bones, a really scarce material in Egypt.

Golden jewels, the bright object of desire

Jewels tell us, more than any other use of gold, about beauty, power and mysterious symbolism.

Jewels are signs of status, wealth, power, the owner's prestige or as military or civilian medals.

These uses of gold popularized fast. Women as well as men, from the humblest to the Pharaohs wore some kind of jewel. They always had some concrete meaning: amulet, decorative object, honorific prize.

- 1.- Shebyu necklace, honorific prize for military courage.
- 2.- Menta necklace, used by high-class ladies or priestesses as symbols of their devotion for the Goddess Hathor or her incarnations.
- 3.- Cylindrical golden seal ring with the name of the King. It was given to those officials acting in the name of the King in official events during the Old and Medium Empires.





China, the most ancient perfection

In Chinese the character *kin* serves at the same time to designate gold and metal. Chinese culture considers gold as the perfect metal.

In southwest continental China, golden coins dating from the 6th century B.C. have been found.

However, the most impressive discovery, both for its artistic value as for its archaeological value, has been the unearthing of the relics of the Shu Kingdom (2800-900 B.C.).

In these explorations, there have been found golden objects, masks, vessels, a 143 cms ceremonial staff and even a tiger made in spiral; all of them made as a way of artistic expression for those who were known as the "Kingdom of Deities in the Human World".



Greek gold, from chaos to cosmos

In the Greek tradition, gold evokes the Sun and all its symbolism: fertility, wealth, power, centre of heat, love, talent, home of light, knowledge and radiation.

It means the transition from the beginning of the world, when there was only Chaos, to Cosmos. An ideal of beautiful fair order formed by three generations of gods: Uranus and Gaia, who gave her son Kronos a golden sickle to used it against his father, Kronos and his wife Rhea and finally the Olympic Gods.



Alchemy, mother of chemistry, the art of produce gold

The wish of man for acquiring gold has always gone beyond the mere searching of the metal. The alchemists searched in science the way of produce gold from other metals. This generally brought them to ruin or persecution.

Alchemy appeared in Egypt and became important in Alexandria in the Hellenistic period.

Aristotle defended that Nature formed gold in the insides of the Earth from other inferior metals. Consequently, a craftsman with experience and skill could reproduce that process in his laboratory,

In parallel, Chinese and Hindu alchemists established a connection between gold and long life, even physical immortality. In the 6th century B.C. they said this could be achieved through magic drugs called "the elixir of life", a solution with gold. After the Greeks, medieval alchemists went on studying the substances. Science reappeared in the 7th century with the Arabs, heirs of the Greek philosophy through the School of Alexandria.

The alchemists of the Middle Ages believed that adding and mixing quicksilver and sulphur in proper quantities with a base metal like lead would transmute this base metal into gold or silver. But that transmutation could only be possible with the help of a catalytic called the Philosopher's Stone. The history of Alchemy is basically the search of the Philosopher's stone.

For centuries, alchemists went on the search of an appropriate technique to transform gold into a "base metal" and this search based all medieval Alchemy. In this process, alchemists found substances much more important than gold, like mineral acids and phosphorus.

In the Renaissance, alchemists had turned into chemists and Alchemy had transformed into the science we all know as Chemistry.

However, marginally, Alchemy went on its independent path and became more and more associated with cabbala, magic and theosophy.



The number of gold and the golden proportion

In the 6th century B.C., the Pythagorean brotherhood tried to explain life through numbers. They communicated through a secret symbol: the five-tip star, obtained drawing the diagonals of a regular pentagon.

Studying this form, they discovered that dividing the value of the diagonal with the value of the side in any regular pentagon, the number you will get is always the same, Phi, the number of gold. This number symbolised the beauty, the magic, the perfection, the divine: 1.61803.

Two numbers are in a golden proportion when dividing them we get Phi, the number of gold. Though it may result unbelievable, it seems as if Nature will develop from this amazing number; "The Divine Proportion".

The Vitruvian Man, by Leonardo Da Vinci. The human body of a man inscribed in a circumference details the proportions that should be considered "golden proportions". According to the figures, in the man there are 16 golden proportions!



The value of a medal

The gold medal symbolises the highest recognition to prize any activity. In a certain way, its owner or the winner of the medal acquires a halo of grandiosity, power and glory. The first medals come from the Romans. It was in the period of Augustus when they acquired official status. The minting was carried out in Imperial offices in a similar process than that for coins. In these Roman medals were only engraved the faces of the Emperor or members of the Imperial Family.

The medals made for the proclamation or coronation of Kings occupy the main position among those of profane and historical themes. These usually form complete series in different nations and even, sometimes, they appear issued more than once in each reign by different houses or issuing centres.

Aztec's gold, human flesh for nature

Among the Aztecs, gold was associated with the new flesh of the Earth at the beginning of the raining season. It was a symbol of periodical renewal of Nature.

With the beginning of the rains, Aztecs worshiped fertility, the Mother Earth, and the deity Xipe Totec. This was the Aztec god of Spring and the new vegetation, but he was also the patron god of the goldsmiths.

The worship of Xipe Totec was carried out by skinning a victim and covering with his flesh the god's image like the rains cover the Earth with a new mantle of vegetation..

On the second ritual month of Aztec's calendar, Tlacaxipehualiztli (Men Skinner), the priests sacrificed human victims by removing their hearts, skinning their bodies and wearing their flesh painted in yellow and called teocuitlaquemitl ("golden vestments").



**9000 B.C. Neolithic**

The last period of prehistory began in 9000 B.C. and lasted until 4.000 B.C. It was a period of transcendental changes for Mankind.

In the Neolithic period there came the first revolution that changed human economy: Man's control over his own food supply.

At the same time humans began to sow and domesticate some animals, at the end of the Neolithic, they also developed a more complex technology and learnt how to make new instruments with stronger materials: metals like gold and copper were used to make ornaments.

1337 B.C. Egypt and Nubia (the year of the death of Pharaoh Tutankhamen)

The most ancient kingdoms in Africa flourished on the banks of the Nile.

The control of Nubia, whose name means "Land of Gold", was crucial for the rulers of the area from distant times.

Most of the Egyptian interest in Nubia was for the control of the access routes of the east and west deserts with their important mining areas, an essential position for Egyptian economy.

Nubia was explored frequently by temporal expeditions sent by the Pharaoh to get precious minerals required for the making of many ornamental objects both for his personal treasure and for the ornaments of temples in Egypt.

For Egyptians, gold was a vital resource. The respect the people would have for the Pharaoh depended greatly in the amount of gold he would wear himself.

26 B.C. Rome (Roman invasion of the Astur tribes)

In the mid-3rd century B.C. the use of technological, topographical and hydraulic innovations and the specialization and rationalization of mining exploitation made it possible to start huge mining enterprises unknown before.

The path the mining exploitation took in that moment would mark the beginning of an important and particular technological period which can be considered the birth of mining engineering.

The Roman conquest campaigns put in the hands of the Roman Empire the control over areas with a long mining tradition. Some of those deposits were of such an extraordinary wealth that they began to be considered as endless.

476 A.D. Middle Ages (Falling of the Roman Empire)

With the beginning of the Middle Ages there came an adjustment of the spending power to adjust offer and demand, suppress the deflationary effect of gold and try to prevent the returning of barter.

This policy failed and the use of money in interior commerce had to coexist with barter. Anyway, monetary commerce remained though the coins were minted with silver and the use of gold didn't turn more generalised until the reign of Theodore I, King of Ostrogoths.

**1492. The searching of “El Dorado”. (The Discovery of America)**

15th and 16th centuries were the era of discoveries in Europe. Thanks to the great explorations carried out by Spanish and Portuguese explorers, the knowledge of the world expanded. Most of the times, the lack of interest from governments was overcome by the courage and curiosity of the explorers.

The New World gave lots of peasants, villains (inhabitants of villages), craftsmen and, less importantly, low noblemen (hidalgos) the illusion of overcoming their condition and have access to the privileges reserved in Europe for aristocracy.

This way we can understand the searching of mythic “El Dorado”, in the context of a life based on wealth and appearance.

“El Dorado” was a mythic city in South America. It was supposed that it had great gold reserves and the Spanish Conquistadores searched it incessantly. They felt attracted by the idea of a city with its streets made of gold, a place where the precious metal was so common that it was despised.

The origin of this myth could be in a ceremony of the Muisca priests (Chibcha), who covered themselves in gold dust to submerge in the Guatavita Lake.

1660: Brazilian Gold. (The discovery of gold and diamonds in Minas Gerais)

In the middle of the mountain, the small village of Ouro Preto, known as Vila Rica, was the mining centre of the region when two explorers discovered a weird black rock.

They sent it to Lisbon where they discovered it was gold covered by iron oxide. This discovery began a gold rush attracting people from all over the world.

In the 17th century these deposits had become the most important worldwide and their production supposed the 50% of the world production of gold.

Uncontrolled exploitation produced a fast exhaustion of the wealth.

1814: Russian exploitation in the Urals

In 1745, the peasant Eroféi Márkov discovered gold in seams at the river Beriózovka, near the city of Yekaterinburg, in the Urals. Also in that area, the first golden placers were discovered in 1814 by the foreman Brusnitsin, who organised its exploitation.

In the second half of the 19th century, the discovery of new deposits in the river Lena, Siberia, caused a gold rush.

Adventurers of all kinds went there on the searching of the amazing wealth. Some of them established landmarks and sold parcels. Others, in the harsh conditions of the taiga, panning the gold and returned as wealthy men. Some others extracted gold and drank there the earnings. Finally most of them died of scurvy and the harsh weather conditions.

1848: California, John Sutter and James Marshall

The finding of gold in Coloma by James W. Marshall in 1848 brought a massive affluence of gold-seekers.

The gold rush of 1849, with an international magnitude, prepared California for its consideration as state. The outbreak of the Civil War delayed this process which finally ended the 9th September, 1850, when California became state.



1860: Yukon River, Alaska

Though miners found gold in Yukon in the 1860s, this Canadian region remained uninhabited until the sudden finding of gold in Klondike River in 1896.

Between 1896 and 1904 the gold seekers extracted the precious metal with a value of more than 100 million dollars. This figure decreased soon due to the exhaustion of the richest deposits.

1869: Placers in South Africa, Transvaal

In 1869, the discovery of diamonds and gold in Transvaal attracted huge numbers of fortune seekers, most of them British. The President of Transvaal, fearing the British control, set restrictive means for the concession of permits of exploitation to British entrepreneurs.

This turned to be one of the reasons for the beginning of the Boers Wars which ended up with the triumph of the British armies and the creation of the South African Union in 1910.

British victory supposed the peak for mining in the area. When exploitation of diamonds and gold mines began, European capitalists had to hire white skilled workers, most of them were old Boer farmers who had lost everything with the wars; but others came from Europe attracted by the gold illusion.

The gold extraction today

Scientific innovation has brought higher efficiency in the extraction of gold with the use of modern techniques for mining exploitation. Together with this, gold is still a safe commodity in stock markets especially in periods of economic instability.

Despite of this situation, gold production is in a period of decrease due to the low prize of the ounce and the low profitability of the exploitations.

This situation has caused cuts in the investments for the research of new deposits. In recent years, the gross of the production-extraction of gold has been moved to countries where the big extractive enterprises may get some benefits in taxes, labour and environmental regulations as a consequence of the economic globalization.

The gold mining is only profitable when the quantity of gold extracted per ton of rock rises the 0.01 ounces, which is 3 grams. The most profitable exploitations can obtain up to 14 grams of gold per ton of rock.

In Navelgas case, the extraction is in the world average between 3 and 7 grams per ton.

The extraction of gold is made nowadays through the process of cyaniding. This process obtains 30% more profits than the process of amalgamating using quicksilver. Anyway it is a highly polluted process.



The gold in Navelgas

The canals and gold-panning sites in Lavadoira and Santiago Ferredo, the great exploitations on the "Sierra del oro" between Navelgas and Naraval, or the canals and deposits at the "Presa del Moro" testify the efforts made to obtain the precious metal.

The mines in Navelgas are special because they form part of a gold complex exploited by underground trenches which are still visible. It is common to find in these counties uneven paths with more than a 2%. These paths are popularly called "antiguas". A good example of these paths is the one between "Chano la Muela" and Folgueras del Río. Through this "Antigua" the river was diverted to dam up the water at "el Chano la Muela", the place where we can find one of the most important movements of earth and rocks on the West.

Today, we can observe the landslides produced in the hillsides by the water courses which could even completely destroy the mountain.



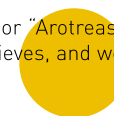
Utillaje del oro

From the period when Rome exploited the deposits in Navelgas we know in detail how they got the metal. However, there is not a single document on who made it. Some scholars defend that the harsh work was carried out by slaves, but the majority of scholarship defend the opposite. They say there were free workers, peregrine, who earned their salaries or paid tribute to Rome with their temporal work. They were free and submitted workers, but not slaves.

Whoever they were, these people probably came from the region. They turned from craftsmen gold-seekers to skilled miners in an industrial exploitation. They were Astures from Celtic or other ethnic origins, and lived in real mining camps ordered according to the kinds of work they develop in the exploitation.

While some of them made the complex tools required for the different systems, others took care of the food supplies, dig the underground tunnels and canals, sieved the alluviums and seek the golden splinters.

According to Strabo, the "Artabros" or "Arotreas" extracted the tin and gold from water streams and rivers using basketry sieves, and wooden containers with a conic form, like inverted Chinese hats.





Navelgas was already popular in the mid-19th century in Asturias and Galicia because of the rests of its gold mines and for the existence of "oueiros" seeking the waters of the Esva to get, from the bed of the river, small golden nuggets.

German geologist, Wilhelm Schulz (1800-1877) and other scientists like Professor Máximo Fuertes Acevedo (1832-1890) showed their interest in the rests of the Roman mining exploitations. They reflected with mineralogist curiosity the tradition of "oueiros", the gold seekers who went all over the rivers Esva and Narcea.

They used ancient techniques, separating the clay from the golden sands, and extracted from them the small gold nuggets.

In the middle of the 19th century, the tradition of "oueiros" of the river Esva had almost disappeared. It was then when started the activities of the Sociedad Aurífera Asturiana. This company renewed the traditions of panning, used in those first moments as a way of prospecting the gold possibilities in the banks of river Navelgas.

Between 1949 and 1956, the Compañía Aurífera Asturiana exploited an underground mine in the old Roman mines. In this exploitation worked the two main figures who recovered the tradition of batting the banks of the Esva: Eustaquio Fernández and Enrique Sanfiz.

Enrique Sanfiz Fernández (1911-1992), convinced that the rivers Paredes, Bárzana y Navelgas were the most auriferous in western Asturias, did not lose an opportunity for panning their banks, though the nuggets he found did not bring him wealth.

For those interested in his job and his aim in removing the beds of rivers, he had just one piece of advice: "To be a good gold-seeker you must be patient, have sight and know the land".

His particular hobby was noticed for the media. Enrique Sanfiz became the first person from Tineo who can be watched by Spanish on television. It was introduced as the last gold-seeker in Spanish rivers.

Soon after that, the image of Enrique Sanfiz panning the Navelgas river appeared on newspapers and magazines in the late 80s as the image of the survivor of a job with a long tradition.

However, Enrique Sanfiz did not happen to be the last, but the first of a saga with his surname. This saga has reached its third generation and Navelgas is being known for the gold in its river.

The Asociación de Bateadores de Oro "Barciaecus" (a gold-panners association) was created ten years ago. It took its name from a Roman stele appeared near mount Balbón, close to Naraval. It has joined the worldwide movement of gold panning as a hobby and tourist attraction.

They have travelled the five continents searching for the areas where there have been the world's largest goldfields and organizing in Navelgas the National & Regional Gold Batting Contest since 1999.