



LIVING TRADITIONS: THE SURVIVAL OF ARCHAIC RITUALS IN CONTEMPORARY RURAL ROMANIA

WHAT ARE “LIVING TRADITIONS”?

When we talk about living traditions, we are talking about traditions that are not just kept in museums, or mentioned in history books, but traditions that people still practice today.

They are part of everyday life — especially during holidays, celebrations, or important community events.

And the reason they survive is because people still find meaning in them.

These rituals bring families together, they mark key moments of the year, and they connect people to nature, spirituality, and to the cycle of life.

EXAMPLES OF ARCHAIC ROMANIAN RITUALS THAT STILL EXIST TODAY

The first one is the series of Winter Mask rituals: The Bear, The Goat, and The Old Man.

In many villages in Moldova and Maramureș, people perform these dances during Christmas and New Year.

The Bear Dance, for example, is an ancient ritual that symbolizes rebirth and new beginnings.

People dress in real bear skins, they dance, they drum, and they go from house to house to bring good luck for the new year.

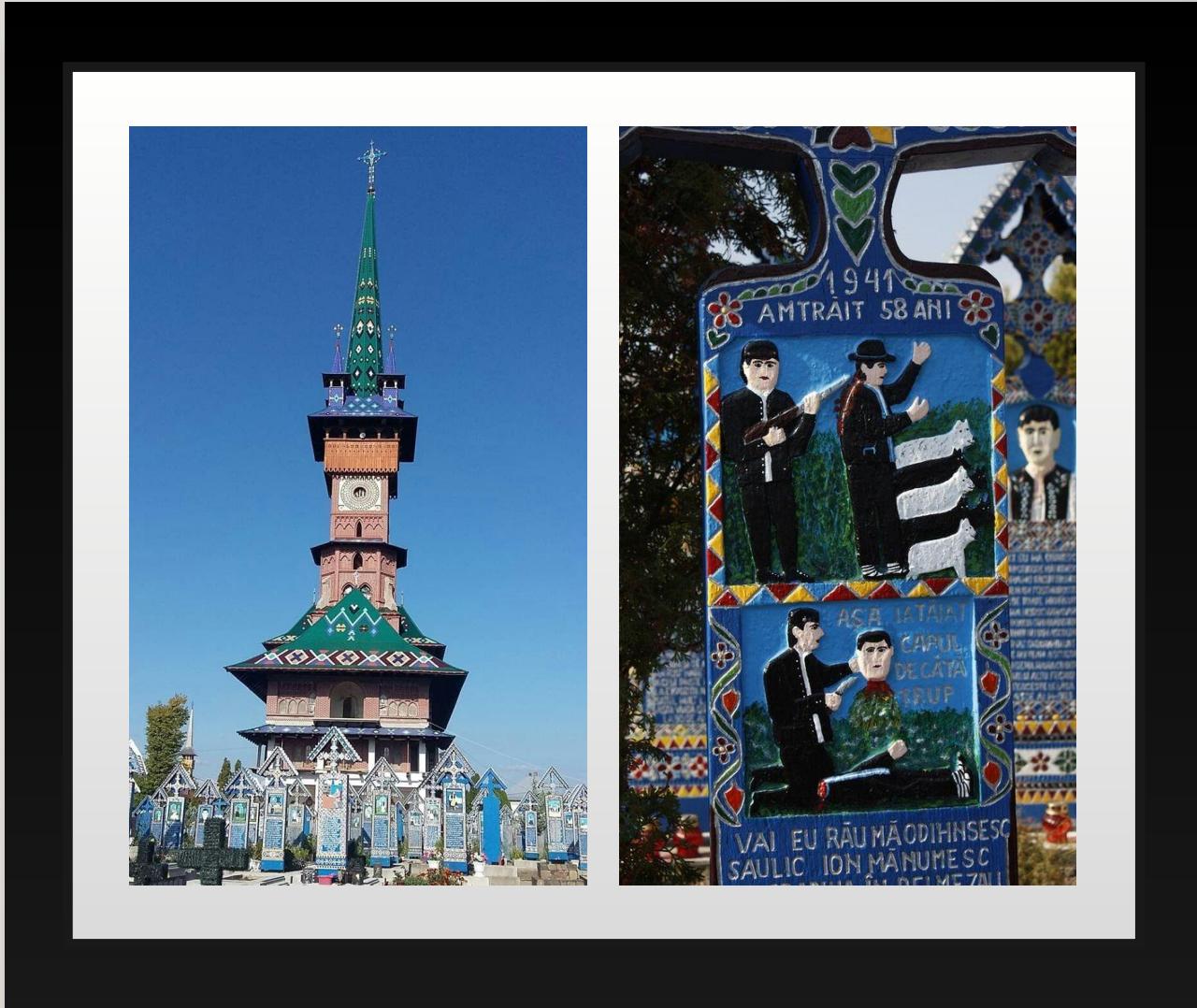
Even today, these rituals attract thousands of visitors and are performed with the same energy and pride as they were centuries ago.



SĂPÂNȚA

Săpânța is a small village in northern Romania, in Maramureș County, famous for its unique cultural traditions.

Here death is greeted with humor. Wooden crosses are painted in bright colors, telling stories of the person's life — sometimes funny, sometimes ironic. This place is called the Merry Cemetery, and it shows how tradition helps people accept even the hardest parts of life.



SÂNZIENELE

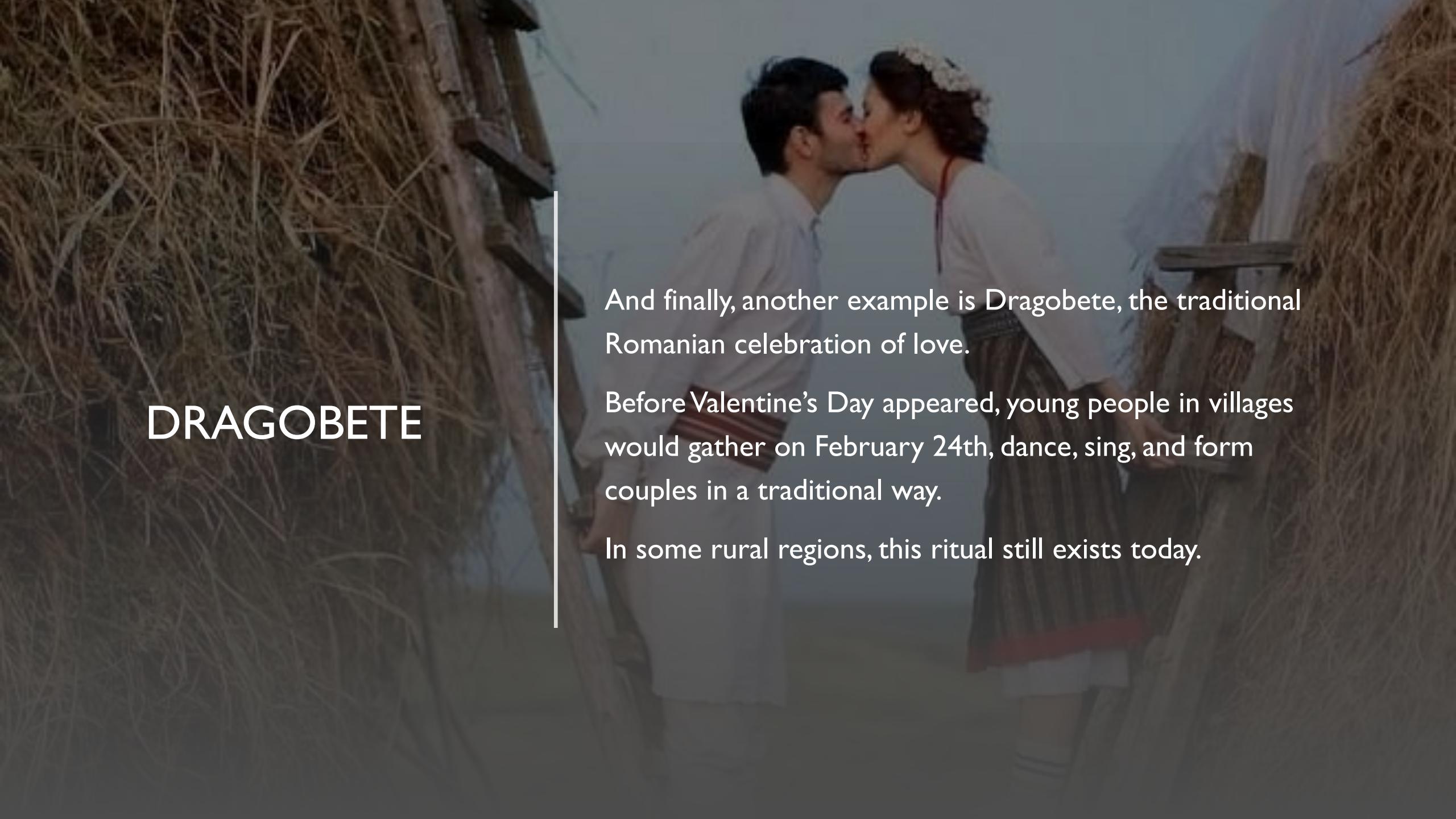
Another beautiful ritual is Sânzienele, celebrated on the night of June 24th.

Young girls make flower crowns, gather herbs, and perform rituals that celebrate nature, love, and femininity.

This tradition has pre-Christian roots and is strongly connected to the forests and fields of the Carpathians.



DRAGOBETE

A photograph of a man and a woman in traditional Romanian clothing, including a white shirt and a patterned vest for the man, and a light-colored blouse for the woman. They are standing close together and are in the middle of a kiss. The background is a rustic, possibly a barn or a traditional building with straw on the roof. The scene is set during the day with natural light.

And finally, another example is Dragobete, the traditional Romanian celebration of love.

Before Valentine's Day appeared, young people in villages would gather on February 24th, dance, sing, and form couples in a traditional way.

In some rural regions, this ritual still exists today.

WHY DO THESE TRADITIONS SURVIVE?

First, because villages have a very strong sense of community.

People know each other, they celebrate together, and they take part in these rituals as a group.

Second, there is a deep respect for ancestors.

Many villagers see traditions as something inherited from their grandparents and keeping them alive is a way of showing respect and maintaining continuity.

Third, rural life is still closely connected to nature.

And fourth, these traditions give people a strong sense of identity and pride.

They help preserve local culture and make each region unique.

WHY ARE THESE TRADITIONS IMPORTANT TODAY?

These living traditions are extremely important today because they preserve our cultural heritage, they connect young people to their roots, and they help keep communities united.

They also show Europe and the world the richness of the Carpathian region and contribute to cultural tourism.

CONCLUSION

So, in conclusion, archaic Romanian rituals have not disappeared.

They continue to live in rural communities, and thanks to digitalization, they are being shared with the entire world.

These rituals are a bridge between the past and the future, and they remain an essential part of who we are.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR
ATTENTION!**