





THE MERRY CEMETERY



SARMISEGETUZA REGIA

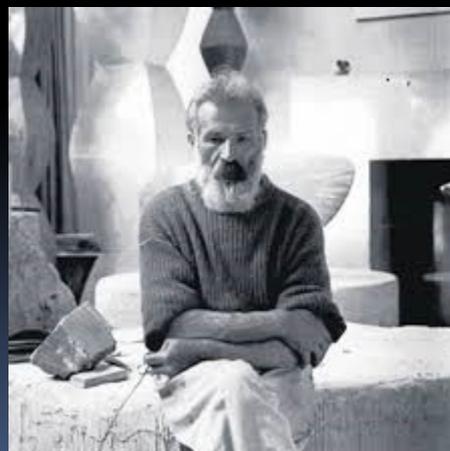


THE ROMANIAN BLOUSE

## ROMANIAN CULTURAL VALUES



VORONEȚ MONASTERY



CONSTANTIN BRÂNCUȘI



SIGHIȘOARA CITADEL

**CHILDREN'S PALACE**, CRAIOVA, ROMANIA  
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The **MERRY CEMETERY** (Romanian: *Cimitirul Vesel*) is a cemetery in the village of Săpânța, Maramureș county, Romania. It is famous for its brightly colored tombstones with naïve paintings describing, in an original and poetic manner, the people who are buried there in addition to scenes from their lives. The Merry Cemetery became an open-air museum and a national tourist attraction.

The unusual feature of this cemetery is that it diverges from the prevalent belief, culturally shared within European societies – a belief that views death as something indelibly solemn. Connections with the local Dacian culture have been made, a culture whose philosophical tenets presumably emphasized the immortality of the soul and the belief that death was a moment filled with joy and anticipation for a better life.

### Romanian

*Sub această cruce grea  
Zace biata soacră-mea  
Trei zile de mai trăia  
Zăceam eu și cetea ea.  
Voi care treceți pă aici  
Incercați să n-o treziți  
Că acasă dacă vine  
Iară-i cu gura pă mine  
Da așa eu m-oi purta  
Că-napoi n-a înturna  
Stai aicea dragă soacră-mea*

### English

*Under this heavy cross  
Lies my poor mother-in-law  
Three more days should she have lived  
I would lie, and she would read (this  
cross).  
You, who here are passing by  
Not to wake her up please try  
Cause' if she comes back home  
She'll scold me more.  
But I will surely behave  
So she'll not return from grave.  
Stay here, my dear mother in-law!*



**SARMIZEGETUSA REGIA** was the capital and the most important military, religious and political centre of the Dacians, prior to the wars with the Roman Empire (101 AD). Built on top of a 1200 m high mountain, the fortress, comprising six citadels, was the core of a strategic defensive system in the Orăştie Mountains (in present-day Romania).

Sarmizegetusa Regia contained a citadel and residential areas with dwellings and workshops as well as a sacred zone.

- The fortress, a quadrilateral formed by massive stone blocks (murus dacicus), was constructed on five terraces, on an area of almost 30,000 m<sup>2</sup>.

- The sacred zone — among the most important and largest circular and rectangular Dacian sanctuaries — includes a number of rectangular temples, the bases of their supporting columns still visible in regular arrays. Perhaps the most enigmatic construction at the site is the large circular sanctuary. The layout of the timber settings bears some resemblance to the stone monument at Stonehenge in England.

- An artifact referred to as the “Andesite Sun” seems to have been used as a sundial. Since it is known that Dacian culture was influenced by contact with Hellenistic Greece, the sundial may have resulted from the Dacians' exposure to Hellenistic learning in geometry and astronomy.

- Civilians lived below the citadel itself in settlements built on artificial terraces, such as the one at WHITE FACES. A system of ceramic pipes channeled running water into the residences of the nobility.

The archaeological inventory found at the site demonstrates that Dacian society had a relatively high standard of living.



**"IA"** is the main part of the **Romanian traditional costume**. The oldest variant of IA was a long blouse as a dress. At the beginning the blouses were made of linen or hemp, later were made of cotton and then of *borangic*, or the Romanian silk. It's not known exactly the period when this port appeared, but some sources believe that this type of clothing had been worn in the time of the "Cucuteni" culture (5500-2750 BC). The "ia" is actually a Romanian traditional shirt, used in days of celebration, made of white fabric decorated with beads and embroidery on the sleeves, chest and neck. The motifs sewn are stylized, geometric figures or inspired by nature. The colors and patterns are different, depending on age, but also by the event where it has to be worn.

"Ia" was and is admired abroad also. Thus, the French painter **Henri Matisse** painted in 1940 **"La Blouse Roumaine"**, inspired by a collection of Romanian blouses received from the Romanian painter **Theodor Palladi**. Matisse's paintings will be inspiration for the fashion house **Yves Saint Laurent**, who integrated the Romanian blouse into a collection of haut couture in 1981.

In 2006 another designer, **Jean Paul Gaultier**, has dedicated a whole collection for the Romanian traditional port. In 2008 year **Oscar de la Renta** has used prints and fabrics inspired by Romanian folk outfit. In 2011 year **Philippe Guillet** has dedicated for Romania a collection **"100% couture, 100% modern, 100% Romanian, with Romanian artisans and artists"**.

From 2013 a community established through facebook (named "La Blouse Roumaine"), manages to create a special event on June 24, as "The Universal Day of the Romanian Blouse". In this day the Romanian women are invited to wear the "Ia", no matter in what corner of the world they are. The day was not chosen at random, because it is the day when it is celebrated "the Day of Sânziene". It is a celebration associated with a cult of vegetation and fertility, but also of the sun.

The **VORONEȚ MONASTERY** is a [medieval monastery](#) in the [Romanian](#) village of Voroneț, now a part of the town [Gura Humorului](#). It is one of the famous [painted monasteries](#) from southern [Bukovina](#), in [Suceava County](#). The monastery was constructed by [Stephen the Great](#) in 1488 over a period of 3 months and 3 weeks to commemorate the victory at [Battle of Vaslui](#). Often known as the "[Sistine Chapel](#) of the East", the [frescoes](#) at Voroneț feature an intense shade of blue known in Romania as "Voroneț blue."

Included today on [the UNESCO World Heritage List](#) together with six more churches from the region, this religious monument is a unique symbol of how local medieval princes emphasized their great support for the Orthodox faith in a time when its existence was threatened by the expansion of the Ottoman Empire.

Voroneț was known for its school of calligraphy, where priests, monks and friars learned to read, write and translate religious texts. The school produced two notable copies of Romanian translations of the [Bible](#): *The Codex of Voroneț*, discovered in 1871, and *The Psalter of Voroneț*, found in 1882. These books are now held at the [Romanian Academy](#).



The monastery was deserted soon after 1775, when the [Habsburg Monarchy annexed](#) the northern part of [Moldavia](#). The monastic community returned to Voroneț in 1991. Since their return, those living in the monastery have constructed housing for the resident [nuns](#), a chapel, fountains, stables, barns, and a house for pilgrims.

Of small, but well-balanced proportions, the church of Voroneț Monastery is representative for the Moldavian style, having also Gothic and Byzantine-inspired elements.

Exquisite testimonies of their painters' talent, the frescoes of Voroneț conserve a centuries-old secret. The distinct 'Voroneț blue' color is unique in the world, and its composition is almost impossible to replicate today.

**CONSTANTIN BRÂNCUȘI** (February 19, 1876 – March 16, 1957) was a Romanian **sculptor**, painter and photographer who made his career in France. Considered a pioneer of **modernism**, one of the most influential sculptors of the 20th-century, Brâncuși is called the patriarch of modern sculpture.

In 1903, Brâncuși traveled to **Munich**, and from there to **Paris**. In Paris, he was welcomed by the community of artists and intellectuals brimming with new ideas. He worked for two years in the workshop of **Antonin** Mercié of the **École** des Beaux-Arts, and was invited to enter the workshop of **Auguste** Rodin. Even though he admired the eminent Rodin he left the Rodin studio after only two months, saying, "Nothing can grow under big trees."

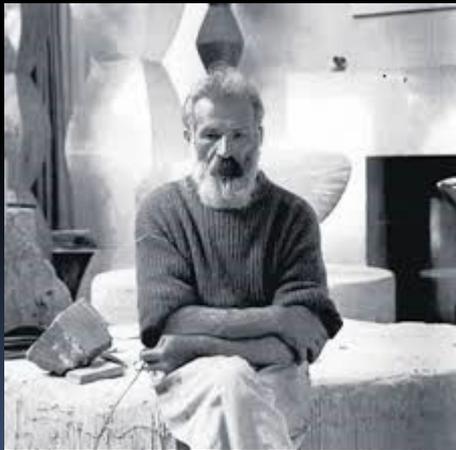
After leaving Rodin's workshop, Brâncuși began developing the revolutionary style for which he is known. His first commissioned work, *The Prayer*, was part of a gravestone memorial.

In the following few years he made many versions of *Sleeping Muse* and *The Kiss*, further simplifying forms to geometrical and sparse objects.

His works became popular in France, Romania and the United States. Collectors, notably **John Quinn**, bought his pieces, and reviewers praised his works. In 1913 Brâncuși's work was displayed at both the **Salon des Indépendants** and the first exhibition in the U.S. of modern art, the **Armory Show**.

In 1938, he finished the **World War I** monument in **Târgu-Jiu** where he had spent much of his childhood. *Table of Silence*, *The Gate of the Kiss*, and *Endless Column* commemorate the courage and sacrifice of Romanians who in 1916 defended Târgu Jiu from the forces of the **Central Powers**. The restoration of this ensemble was spearheaded by the **World Monuments Fund** and was completed in 2004.

The **Târgu Jiu ensemble** marks the apex of his artistic career. In his remaining 19 years he created less than 15 pieces, mostly reworking earlier themes, and while his fame grew he withdrew. In 1955 *Life* magazine reported, "Wearing white pajamas and a yellow gnome-like cap, Brâncuși today hobbles about his studio tenderly caring for and communing with the silent host of fish, birds, heads, and endless columns which he created."





## Europe's last remaining inhabited medieval citadel

**SIGHISOARA CITADEL** (latin, *Castrum Sax*) is the historical centre of Sighisoara city (German, Schäßburg - Schassburg or Schäsbrich), located 90 km away from Sibiu city. It was built in the 12th century by Saxon colonists and has maintained its original structure almost unchanged until today. It is part of UNESCO heritage since 1999, encompassing a rich history which illustrates the dominance of Saxon and Szekel colonies in the area.

An important part of Sighisoara's history is tightly bound to the connection with the Draculesti family and the birthplace of Vlad the Impaler. Born around 1431, Vlad, the future famous Vlad Tepes, the Romanian prince which inspired Bram Stoker for his famous novel *Dracula*, spends his childhood and begins his education in the cosmopolite Sighisoara - the house where he was born can still be seen today and a very well maintained fresco on the building stands as clear proof that the building once belonged to the Draculesti family.

Sighisoara was not the biggest or richest of the seven Saxon walled citadels\* in Transylvania, but it has become one of the most popular. A walk through the town's hilly streets with their original medieval architecture, magical mix of winding cobbled alleys, steep stairways, secluded squares, towers, turrets and enchantingly preserved citadel, is like stepping back in time.