

"The May's Tree"

This is a popular tradition celebrated in some Castilian villages although is disappearing.

In my father's village, Casarrubuelos, a town in the south of Madrid, it's still celebrating.

The young's men chop the tallest tree in the forest; this tree will be called "El Mayo".

Many people carries it with the help of an ox cart and put it in a hole in the square with hard effort. This is named "pingar el Mayo"

In my mother's village, Serranillos del Valle, after that, the young boys takes Mayo's branches and put it in the window of the girls.

In other villages the young men climb up the tree to take a flag, a prize or a girl's garment.

Actually, this tree is a pagan phallic symbol witch fertilizes the land; it's the symbol of the spring.



Painting of Francisco de Goya y Lucientes with people climbing up May's Tree.



Origins

These celebrations are, in fact, a very ancient tradition associated with pre-Christians European pagan cultures: with Celts festivities, with the festival of Flora, the roman goddess of flowers, or the Walpurgis Night Celebration of the Germanic countries.

This Festivity is an agricultural feast with which village people celebrated spring time fertility.

In spite of many pagan celebrations were abandoned or Christianized, this rites persist in the popular traditions and festivities.

http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Festividad_de_los_Mayos

VOCABULARY:

Underskirt: enagua
Shawl: mantón
Sleeve: manga
Necklaces: collares

garment: prenda de vestir
branches: ramas
ox cart: carreta tirada por bueyes
carnations: claveles