

THE LOCAL FEAST OF DRAGOBETE

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Abstract

The paper aims to highlight the importance and the impact of the local feast of *Dragobete* (February 24th) on the mentality of urban and rural people, in relation to the *Valentine's Day* (February 14th) import feast. Starting from the past-present binaries, emphasizing on the local feasts, it is assumed that *Dragobete* represents a moment of conciliation between the masculine and feminine authority.

Certain levels are aimed: *Dragobete*-feast; *Dragobete*-character; the similarities and differences between the local feast and the feast coming in the Romanian cultural space, on the Western channel. On the one hand, *Dragobete*, this ancient feast, received as inheritance from the ancestors, preaches the pure, innocent love, and gives balance. The impressive number of the regional names attests the spread of the holiday in all the ethnographic areas of Romania. On the other hand, *Dragobete*-character, sometimes correlated with *Baba Dochia*, sometimes with the plant called *Năvalnic* (*Phyllitis scolopendrium*, fam. *Polypodiaceae*), should not be confused with the *Zburătorul*, with the creature called "evil hour"/ "splice", which torments the premarital status girls, the widows and produces disequilibrium.

The paper, highlighting various aspects: the comparative-analytical perspective, the interdisciplinary perspective, the critical angles of approach (ethnological, linguistic, mythological, religious), the sliding towards legends, the isotopes (superhuman, phytomorphic, dendromorphic, zoomorphic), the synchronic analysis, reveals the respect which the Romanians regardless of the region of our country (Banat, Bucovina, Crișana, Dobrogea, Maramureș, Moldova, Wallachia, Oltenia, Transylvania), allocates even today to this celebration transmitted over time from generation to generation, from our ancestors.

Keywords: *Dragobete, pure love, character, feast, steadfastness.*

1. Introduction

Every passing year, the native feast of *Dragobete* (February 24th) is likely to be annihilated by the imported feast *Valentine's Day* (14 February). Both celebrations take place in the month of February and are under the tutelage of love.

The month of February (Christian Calendar) inserts 28 days in the ordinary years and 29 days in the bisect years. In the past, during the month of Făurar / Faur / Februar (Popular Calendar), the agricultural tools, the seeds required for sowing, were prepared. The craftsmen had the moral obligation to complete the agricultural tools needed to work the field until the arriving of spring. At the end of the month there were socials, dances. So the month of Făurar was a reason of joy for the young people. According to the Popular Calendar, the month of Făurar is patronized by young divinities such as: *Trifon*, *Haralambie*, *Vlasie* and *Dragobete*.

The masculine authority was imposed during the winter holidays, in the Octoiului interval, through the role of the carolsingers group, including through the role of *Trifonul*, *Gurbanul* or *Arezanul Viilor* (1 Făurar), *Haralambie* (10 February); of *Vlasie* (11 Făurar).

We start from the premise that the autochthonous feast of *Dragobete* represents a moment of conciliation between the masculine and feminine authority. To emphasize the importance of this ancient manifestation, we take into consideration certain levels: *Dragobete*-feast; *Valentine's Day*-character; similarities and differences between *Dragobete's* native feast and the imported *Valentine's Day* feast¹.

2. *Dragobete*-feast

Dragobete holiday must be corelated to certain regional namings: *Bragobete*, *Bragovete*, *Cap de Primăvară*, *Cap de Vară*, *Cap de martie*, *Drăgobete*, *Drăgostițele*, *Gabrovete*, *Ioan Dragobete*, *Însoțitul Păsărilor*, *Logodna Păsărilor*, *Logodiciul Păsărilor*, *Sânt' Ioan de Primăvară*, *Ziua Dragostelor*. By *Dragobete* (24 Făurar –Popular Calendar)/by *Întâia și a doua aflare a Capului Sfântului Ioan Înaintemergătorul și Botezătorul Domnului* (24 February – Christian Calendar) a moment of conciliation between the masculine and feminine authority is instituted. We must not overlook the fact that *Dragobete* feast, celebrated by the traditional community on 24th Făurar, depending on the region, can be celebrated also on the 28th Făurar or the month of Mărțișor, on March 1. This aspect is also certified by specialists: " *Dragobete* is a young God of the native Pantheon with a fixed date of celebration in the same village, but variable from area to area (24 and 28 February, 1 and 25 March), patron of love and good humor

¹ See Delia-Anamaria Răchișan, *Istoricul și estetica mărțișorului românesc din cele mai vechi timpuri până în prezent*, Cluj-Napoca, Mega & Argonaut Publishing House, 2017, pp. 13-66; See Delia-Anamaria Răchișan, *Nume de manifestări ritual-magico-simbolice între convențional și neconvențional*, in Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Onomastics "Name and Naming", Conventional / Unconventional in Onomastics, Edited by Oliviu Felecan, September 1-3, 2015, pp. 806-810, Mega & Argonaut Publishing House, http://onomasticafelecan.ro/iconn3/iconn3_proceedings.php; See Delia-Anamaria Răchișan, *Formulele magice și antropologia vârstelor. Magia cuvântului în Maramureș*, Bucharest, Romanian Academy Publishing House, 2013, pp. 165-171.

on the Romanian regions”²; ”Until the 19th century, the documents provides us information according to which, between *Dragobete* feast and the feast of March 1, there have been substitutions or extensions of some practices, *Dragobete* being sometimes associated with the first day of March”³. The young people, in some parts of the country, pick up the first flowers (plant sacrifice). We have to start from the premise that the first flowers, the first crops / fruits have a ritual function, that they definitely belong to the Good God. On the *Dragobete* holiday, the girls and boys pick the first flowers that come out of the snow: ”This action with a basic ritual function, desecralized, in time, is the first vegetal sacrifice with the role of «primiții»” (the first crops, the first fruits are of the Lord , as well as the first born animal), which also provided the guarantee of purity, an absolutely necessary quality at any moment of transition from the ample complexe rituals that govern the human existence. This is followed by the practice of *Mărțișor* on 1 March”⁴.

This ritualic gesture strengthens, at a symbolic level, the relationship between the spring equinox and the summer solstice. *Dragobete/Cap de Primăvară*, the variable feast from one area to another, anticipates the Spring equinox from March 9, according to the Julian Calendar. The youngsters (the lads and the young girls) from the Romanian villages celebrated *Dragobete*, picking up, joyfully, spring flowers – snowdrops, crocus, violets. This ritual gesture was continued on *Sânziene / Drăgaica* (June 24, summer solstice), but the young people were gathering this time summer flowers – fairys, wild roses, etc. The spring flowers, picked up on *Dragobete* holiday, and the summer flowers, picked up on *Sânziene/Drăgaica* feast, gathered in bundles, were left on the water: ”they were making bouquets and slogging them on the water. The tradition claims that the union of the sister flowers, disfavoured by the nature never to meet, tantamounted to a good deed, representing half of «sărindar» [A series of prayers made by the priest for forty days for the dead and sick ones]”⁵. The first spring flowers, the first summer flowers announce on the one hand the vegetal sacrifice, on the other hand, being under the tutelage of the sacred, incorporats various functions (agrarian, apotropaic, curative, of initiation, erotic function, etc.) and are used in ritualic practices with ancient connotations. Itself, the term „sărindar” in the Orthodox Christian religion means „the priest's prayer for the dead ones for forty days, for the

² Ion Ghinoiu, *Sărbători și obiceiuri românești*, Bucharest, Elion Publishing House, 2002, p. 229.

³ Sabina Ispas, *Mărțișorul și relațiile lui cu timpul sacru*, în *Sub semnul mărțișorului*, Moldova Republic Ministry of Culture, National Museum of Ethnography and Natural History, Ethnology Society of Moldova, Chișinău, 2015, p. 47.

⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁵ Ion Ghinoiu, *Sărbători și obiceiuri românești*, ed. cit, p. 228.

forgiveness of sins, for the sick ones”⁶. To gather, in a bouquet the flowers of the spring [(first)summer], to free them on the water, tantamounted with a good deed; with the forgiveness of the living and the sleeping one`s sins. Gathering together, for the bearers of love, for infatuated girls and lads, it meant harmony. The holidays, ”the passing rites” [the strong moments in the human life birth, marriage, death] must be imposed through harmony, quality, balance, purity, plenitude. On *Dragobete*, the girls and the lads, who were at the age of puberty and youth, appeal to the games of love: ”To a gorjanca [*Native female from Gorj county*] was enough to touch a man with her hand, and to a Mehedințence [*Native female from Mehedinți county*] to slowly trample his feet to become cherished and loved throughout the year”⁷. In the rural areas, these run, „se zburătoresc” [*these fly*] (a concept developed by the ethnologist Ion Ghinoiu – a ritualic flight that ends with the girl's catching and kissing), sing and the birds chirp. Including wild and domestic birds fly on *Dragobete* Day: ”before mating they are in a state of restlessness: they fly, are agitated, chase themselves, and hit with their wing”⁸. It heads to the forest to collect the first spring flowers – snowdrops, violets, călugărei etc. (phytomorphic sacrifice). The lads offered flowers to the girls, to the loved ones. It was given and receiving; were communicating by gestures. The pure and innocent love of youngsters wanted to be sustainable: ”the girls and the boys had to meet in order to be in love for the whole year”⁹. The girls with premarital status, to be sure that their beauty will persist throughout the year, desiring to be liked by the lads, used to appeal to some ritual-magic-symbolic practices: ”From the unmelted snow until *Dragobete*, the young girls and wives, made water reserves with which they washed themselves on certain days of the year for the preservation of beauty – Muntenia, Oltenia, Dobrogea, Transylvania”¹⁰.

Ioan Țoca points out the itinerary of the lovers, which led to the founding of a family: ”On this day, the girls and the boys get dressed with the most beautiful clothes and they start after snowballs or woods through the forest, the girls going ahead and the boys behind them. Now friendships are bind, and the boys offer the girls' they like bouquets of snowdrops, making love declarations. Generally, these friendships are preliminary to future marriages”¹¹. If the same girl had two suitors, she left herself

⁶ *** *Dicționarul explicativ al limbii române*, Second Edition, Univers Enciclopedic Publishing House, Romania Academy, „Iorgu Iordan” Institute of Linguistics, Bucharest, 1998, p. 952.

⁷ Ion Ghinoiu, *Comoara satelor. Calendar popular*, Bucharest, Romanian Academy Publishing House, 2005, p. 51.

⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁹ Ion Ghinoiu, *Sărbători și obiceiuri românești*, ed. cit., p. 229.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*.

¹¹ Ioan Țoca, *Sărbători religioase, datini și credințe populare*, Bucharest, Allfa Publishing House,, 2004, p. 138.

caught by the one she liked: "The girl who was caught and kissed was considered somehow engaged to her escape partner, for one year, to be able to see how constant their mutual feelings were. The parents found out from the young ones what had happened and were satisfied or unsatisfied"¹². The righteous love of the youth must be correlated with the behavior of the disbelievers: "on *Dragobete*, all the animals mate, and also people put the hatching hen, thinking that the chickens will be strong and vigorous"¹³. On *Dragobete* various prohibitions were respected. For example, birds or animals were not sacrificed, nor were they hunted: "the housewives gave an erogenous food to the domestic birds, and for the birds of the sky they dashed on the roofs of houses seeds of millet, wheat, barley, rye"¹⁴; the work was forbidden: "not to twitter like birds"¹⁵. The birds built their nests and were mating: "It is believed that the non-migratory birds gather in the flocks, twitter, mate and begin to build their nests. The unpaired birds, on this day, were left alone and without chicken until the *Dragobete* from the next year"¹⁶; the youngsters were building swings hanging them on tree branches for their chosed sweethearts: "the young men were looking to drip themselves, namely to pinch, to kiss, to make love vows"¹⁷. In some ethnographic areas, *mărțișoarele* [*the trinkets worn on March 1*] were worn by *Dragobete*, which was celebrated on 1 March: "The custom of *Dragobete*, which was held on March 1, illustrates the same preoccupation for integration into the natural order of the village [...] the girls weared on their neck trinkets made from twisted wool"¹⁸. So, the flowers offered on March 1 (re) remind of the native *Dragobete* feast. We note the unity in diversity. The *Dragobete* feast, as it has been mentioned before, is found in all the regions of our country. For example, Maramureșenii [*Native people from Maramureș county*] of a certain age, especially the elderly, correlates *Dragobete* holiday with the *Day of Love*. They say that on this day the birds of heaven are singing and dancing, except the cuckoo and the halo; that those who have felt in love need to meet; that the weather is suited to the sowing of wheat, corn, if the bird of the plow (the ornit) is heard singing, or if the snow is completely melted, so that the „clocoteii” [snowflakes] have replaced the snow with their white coat. Therefore, the emphasis is placed on the consciousness of man-nature-divinity.

¹² Ioan Țoca, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

¹³ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴ Romulus Vulcănescu, *Mitologie română*, Bucharest, Academiei Publishing House, 1987, p. 338.

¹⁵ Ion Ghinoiu, *Sărbători și obiceiuri românești*, ed. cit., p. 230.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 229.

¹⁷ Ion Ghinoiu, *Comoara satelor. Calendar popular*, Bucharest, Romanian Academy Publishing House, 2005, p. 51.

¹⁸ Ștefan Enache; Teodor Pleșa, *Zona etnografică Dolj*, Bucharest, Sport-Turism Publishing House, 1982, p. 117.

Dragobete holiday, rooted in the mentality of rural area people, by every year passing, tends to become a popular holiday in the urban environment as well.

3. *Dragobete*– character and the polisemantism of the term „*dragobete*”

Dragobete-character (re) reminds on the one hand of *Eros* / of *Cupidon* from mythology; the son of *Baba Dochia* from the Romanian legends, also called *Dragomir* / *Iova* / *Iovan*; on the other hand, we find out that some specialists associate *Dragobete* with *Năvalnicul*, inclisively with *Zburătorul*. From an etymological point of view, *Dragobete* comes from the old slavonic language *dragu, biti* < ”to be dear” bulg. dial. *dragovesc* < ”bringer (bearer of love)”; srb. *drăgovetan* < ”bound (covered) by love”, aspect attested even by Doru Mihăescu in the study *Etymological and lexical contributions*¹⁹. In some legends, we find the anthroponym *Dragomir* (Slavonic language *dorogo* ”pretious”, *mir* < ”peace”). The polysemanism of the term „*dragobete*” determines this concept and a wide range of symbols – anthropomorphic, dendromorphic, phytomorphic, zoomorph, suprahuman. *Dragobete* can be analyzed from several critical angles; can refer to the human being, to the plants and animals, to a superhuman mitic force. We analyze, one by one, certain levels which we correlate with the above mentioned symbols:

Dragobete, in the position of a human being, is not only beautiful physically, but it is also the adept of morality: ”Often portrayed as a young, handsome and good man, inspired trust and pure love to girls and women”²⁰. It is not accidental, that everywhere, on that day, some auspicious words must resound, words that become a leitmotif: ”*Dragobete* kisses the girls!”²¹ „*Dragobeți*” designates the lads in love, ”the lads gripped by love`s thrills”²² – reference to the human being (anthropomorphic symbol).

„*Dragobeți*” represent ”the buds picked by the girls from the tree branches and put on the ears”²³ – reference to the plant kingdom (dendromorf symbol).

At the same time, we can see that the beetle, called „*repedea*” („*repede*” [fast] lat. *Cicindela campestris*), in Banat, is called „*dragobete*”: ”In other places, however, *Dragobete* would be a runner beetle used by the

¹⁹ Doru Mihăescu, *Contribuții etimologice și lexicale*, Bucharest, Romanian Academy Publishing House, 2005, p. 54.

²⁰ Romulus Vulcănescu, *op. cit.*, p. 337.

²¹ Ion Ghinoiu, *Comoara satelor. Calendar popular*, ed. cit., p. 51.

²² *Ibidem.*

²³ *Ibidem.*

descendants at love exorcism²⁴ (Zoomorph simbol). Interestingly is the fact that, this beetle, called „Dragobete”, is correlated with magical texts that targets the eros. The term „dragobete” can be associated with the world of the disobedients.

Dragobete character also appears in the hypostasis of a supernatural being, of a mytho-erotic creature, named by Romulus Vulcănescu „zânul Dragobete” [Dragobete Deity]²⁵ (suprahuman symbol).

We have to start from the premise that love is an ontological physical experience specific to man, to the disobedients. *Dragobete* character stays under the tutelage of innocent love. We start from the premise that *Dragobete* should not be confused with *Zburătorul*. We bring some essential arguments in this respect: *Zburătorul* is called „ceas rău” [evil hours], „lipitură” [leech] „zmeu” [dragon]; metamorphoses in fire, in serpent, in star; has a tendency to afflict premarital girls or widows; is the symmetrical pair of the Forest's Girl; generates negative or positive affections taken to the extreme, causing disequilibrium: „*Zburătorul* is born from an <<dragoste fără seamăn>> [matchless love] [...] appears there where this love is not imparted, so as a symptom of contradictory sensitivity. Especially as a <<lipitură>> [leech], the representation can also be related to other powerful affections: fright, fear, anger, ugly, evil, bad will. *Zburătorul* is not only associated with the negative feelings, of the aspect of an inner life disequilibrium, but also with the positive affections, such as great joy, which, through the intensity of living, presume the same disequilibrium of life²⁶. *Dragobete*, in turn, confers harmony, a state of equilibrium. It is not by accident that the name of *Aflarea capului Sfântului Ioan Botezătorul* from the Christian Calendar, the regional name of *Sânt` Ion de Primăvară* from the Popular Calendar (re) reminds that Ioan Botezătorul [John the Baptist] was sacrificed to taught steadfastness; that on *Dragobete* feast the pure love is emphasized. The homonym character gives harmony, peace of mind, instead, *Zburătorul* causes anxiety, tension, and soul distress.

Dragobete-character may also be correlated with „Năvalnicul” (*Phyllitis scolopendrium*, family *Polypodiaceae*), a species of fern. The plant is ambivalent: beneficial – is harvested early in the morning; and evil – harvested at midnight (reference to the plant kingdom, phytomorphic symbol). Extrapolating, *Dragobete* has his plant – „Năvalnicul”.

According to a legend, the Mother of God transforms *Dragobete* into the magical herb, mentioned above, called „Năvalnic” (*Phyllitis scolopendrium* fam. *Polypodiaceae*). Referring to the legends, we notice

²⁴ *** *Dicționarul limbii române*, tom IV, M, Bucharest, Romanian Academy Publishing House, 2010, p. 1412.

²⁵ Romulus Vulcănescu, *op. cit.*, p. 337.

²⁶ Silviu Angelescu, *Mitul și literatura*, Bucharest, Univers Publishing House, 1999, p. 58.

that „Năvalnicul” is an anthropomorphic plant. It is believed that „Năvalnicul”, before being transformed into a homonymous plant, a herb picked for love, was a handsome young man who was disturbing the silence of young girls and wives: ”Like a beautiful and loving lad, he walks through the forest and kisses the girls”²⁷. It is believed that he would have scared the Mother of God who was holding the Child in her arms ”when she went to moliftă [*prayer read by the priest to a women after 40 days she gave birth*] 40 days after the birth with the child ”²⁸. Even his own name attests the fact that the young man could not be calmed down. The cuteliness has generated his metamorphosis into a plant of love: ”You are impetuous, impetuous you will be! / Between the weeds of love you are, / Weed of love to remain!”²⁹ From another legend, we find out that *Năvalnic* was a beautiful lad who tangled all the paths of the beautiful girls and wives. It is believed that for three days and three nights the Mother of God lost herself into a forest because of the extraordinary lad. As a punishment, an old initiated lady who wore a white chemise and soughted cure plants would have metamorphosed him into a ”weed” [plant] of love. By *Sfântă Mărie Mare* feast, usually an old initiated lady together with the unmarried young girls go into the forest to pick up the plant called *Năvalnic*, saying words of magical effect: ”How the world rages to sugar, so love rage into my house!”³⁰ Picking up the *Năvalnic* of love involves some ritual sequences: ”discovering the place where it grows; kow-towing and making the cross sign; falling offerings (salt, bread, sugar) at its root”³¹. The steps mentioned above (non-verbal language) are augmented by the prayer pronounced in whisper or in thought (verbal language): ”How does the world argue for bread, so do the young girls argue for me”³² or ”Oh, you, Impetuous, glorified emperor, how you grew up and multiplied more than any grass, how you multiplied more than all the flowers, so the whole world to run to Mary who bought you!”³³. The plant, pulled out with its root, was placed in a place of honor: in the breast, in the newborn baby's vat, at the waist, under the roof of the house etc. The Impetuous *Năvalnic* hanged under the roof of the house attracts plenty and suitors. The girls with premerital status preferred to put it in the breast, because it has magical effects: ”has the magical power to make the suitors to

²⁷ Ion Ghinoiu, *Dicționar. Mitologie românească*, Bucharest, Gold Encyclopedic Universe Publishing House, 2013, p. 108.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 204.

²⁹ *Ibidem*.

³⁰ Tudor Pamfile, *Dragostea în datina tineretului român*, Bucharest, Saeculum I. O. Publishing House, 1998, p. 24.

³¹ Ion Ghinoiu, *Comoara satelor. Calendar popular*, op. cit., pp. 49-50.

³² Ion Ghinoiu, *Dicționar. Mitologie românească*, ed. cit., p. 204.

³³ Ion Ghinoiu, *Comoara satelor. Calendar popular*, ed. cit., pp. 49-50.

overwhelm from all parts”³⁴. In some ethnographic areas, the stages of picking up the *Năvalnic* coincide with the stages of *Belladonna*’s picking: ”pour wine in their place [...]. At home I put the delved weeds behind the icon, from where I take them only when they go to the dance, when I put them on the girdle, believing that they will be danced by the lads, just as they played with those weeds coming from the forest”³⁵ (sympathetic magic, Bucovina). It relies on the magical force of the word, the plant is anthropomorphized. Constantin Pârvu agrees with I. Pachia Tatomirescu, when he states that the plant *Năvalnic* was called by Dacians ”*adolla*, *adollone*, *adoleană*, from where derived the name *odolă*, *odolane*, *odoleană odolean*, name that is used today in some areas of the country”³⁶.

There are also other plants under the tutelage of love. For example, Floarea Dragostei [The Flower of Love] (*Sedum fabaria*) or *Masa Raiului* [Mass of Heaven] or *Dragoste* [Love] is the protector of love and should not be missing from the people’s garden: ”It was the belief that if two threads were put for two young lovers and growing got closer to one another, it was a sign they would get marry, and if the threads were getting away to one another, it was said that they will part”³⁷.

Zburătorul also has a plant of his – „*zburătoare mică*”/„*zburătoare*” (lat. *Veronica longifolia*). The plant is harvested as a remedy against the evil hour. To cease the power of the plant, it is believed that *Zburătorul* would have pulled out the middle part of the plant, but the expected effect did not arrived, because the plant now has a taumaturgical role, a curative, therapeutic function. The legend found at Simion Florea Marian in the study *Botanică Românească*³⁸ rigorously reproduces the relationship between *Zburătorul* and a beautiful girl. The girl’s mother, appealing to an initiated woman, will get through the medium of the girl, from *Zburătorul*, the weed called „*zburătoare*” to cure the cow from the household. The performer will actually appeal to a cheater, the victim-animal being just a pretext. The mother will wet her face with the cure prepared by the initiated woman (the woman appeals to white magic, and the most suitable term would be that of enchantress, not the term „witch” met in the legend) by saving her, using the *Zburătorului’s* grass. The remedy obtained by boiling the plant, the water from the small ulcer, the decoction has soteriological value, apotropaic function. There are other plants that bear its name – *Zburătoare de mlaștină*

³⁴ Tudor Pamfile, *Dragostea în datina tineretului român*, Bucharest, Saeculum I. O. Publishing House, 1998, p. 23.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 24.

³⁶ I. Pachia Tatomirescu, *apud* Constantin Pârvu, *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 511.

³⁷ Valer Butură, *Enciclopedie de etnobotanică românească*, Scientific and Encyclopaedic Publishing House, Bucharest, 1979, p. 90.

³⁸ Vezi Simion Florea Marian, *Botanică românească*, Bucharest, Paideia Publishing House, 2000, pp. 125-129.

(*Epilobium palustre* L., fam. *Onagraceae*), Pana-Zburătorului (*Lunaria annua* L., fam. *Brassicaceae/Cruciferae*).

We must not forget that *Dragobete* character is the son of *Baba Dochia*. *Dragobete*, named *Iovan Dragobete / Dragobete / Dragomir*, according to the legends, is believed to have frozen; that he became petrified alongside the sheep and his mother – *Baba Dochia*: "But *Iovan Dragobete*, because he had been dressed worse than his mother, had frozen"³⁹; "She saw *Dragomir* frozen"⁴⁰. "Her body and her son's body can still be seen today petrified in Almaș,"⁴¹. It is believed that the other *Baba Dochia's* children left her because of her wickedness, except for *Dragomir*: "Only one boy, the most patient, perhaps because he was a little low-mind, remained of all her children"⁴². Children should normally listen to their parents. In this case, the relationship of consanguinity is altered, *Baba Dochia*, in the posture of the mother, is sanctioned by the children – they leave her. *Baba Dochia* also fails as a mother-in-law. The remaining son – *Iovan Dragobete / Dragobete / Dragomir* – including the herd of sheep / goats, will be sanctioned by a superhuman force (God / Trinket / Spring): "Only one boy, the most patient, maybe because he was a little low-minded, remained with her, from all the children"⁴³.

We realize that *Dragobete*–character treads the access path specific to multiple interpretations.

4. *Dragobete* and *Valentine's Day* between autochthonous and și non-autochthonous

The binarity autochthonous – non-autochthonous highlights a Romanian feast and an import feast – *Dragobete* and *Valentine's Day*. *Dragobete* feast, from the present, is now subject to desacralization, tends to become an overflowing feast. The same young people celebrate both feasts. Because *Dragobete* is a native celebration, inherited for centuries, from ancestors, as it is natural, we will minimize *Valentine's Day* feast, insisting on the Romanian celebration – *Dragobete*. The TV shows, the press, radio, the social networks revitalizes both *Valentine's Day* and *Dragobete* year after year, but the first celebration mentioned above has much more media support than the native *Dragobete* feast. The questionnaire, applied by Georgeta Orian on a sample of one hundred subjects aged between 19 and 61, highlights on the one hand the lax border between autochthonous – non-

³⁹ Simion Florea Marian, *Sărbătorile la români*, Bucharest, Saeculum I. O. Publishing House, 2011, p. 109.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 131.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, p. 126.

⁴² Marcel Olinescu, *Mitologie românească*, Bucharest, Saeculum Vizual Publishing House, 2004, p. 260.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, p. 260.

autochthonous, on the other hand, the lightness with which Romanians accept an imported feast. The answers of the questioned subjects regarding *Dragobete* feast, highlights the confusion, ignorance, overthrow of values, deacralization of ancient traditions, and represents an alarm signal both for ethnologists and also for those persons who cherish the ancestral traditions: "I appreciate *St. Valentine's Day* celebration because is more popular [...] I think *Dragobete* is a recently reinvented celebration for commercial purposes, as a reaction to *St. Valentine's Day*; As long as *Valentine's Day* will exist, there will be *Dragobete* too [...]"⁴⁴. Between *Dragobete* and *Valentine's Day* there are some similarities: both celebrations take place in February; joy prevails; young people uttering love words to each other. We intercept multiple differences. We must start from the premise that each holiday has an individual status and there should be no confusions. *Dragobete* holiday does not depend on *Valentine's Day*, and *Dragobete*-character does not identify with Saint Valentin. Each has its own individuality. Here are some arguments in this regard. Valentin, based on *valens, valentis* principle, from the verb *valere*, has the meaning of "being strong", of "being healthy". It is believed that the hippocratic *Valea* would have been formed from this surname. The anthroponym also spread due to the celebration. St. Valentines, mentioned in the Greeko Catholic Calendar, becomes the protector of the lovers. According to the legend, Valentin was a Christian priest who believed that people's right to marry was given by God. According to the legend, Emperor Claudius II prohibited the Romanian soldiers to get marry. The Emperor wanted the soldiers to fight, not to stay at home with their families. Father Valentin opposed the decision taken by Emperor Claudius II and married couples in secret. Finally, the priest was arrested and sentenced to death.

It is believed that he has been executed on February 14, 269 or 270. By the day of his execution, he sent goodbye letters to his friends to whom he wrote: „Remember your Valentine!"

(https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ziua_%C3%AEndr%C4%83gosti%C8%9Bilor#Legenda_Sf.C3.A2ntului_Valentin, Accesare site: 27. 11. 2017).

Nowadays, on *Valentine's Day*, young people have fun, party, offer gifts, but the magico-ritual practices are missing. This day brings benefits to the merchants.

Valentine's Day is a holiday celebrated by people from various corners of the world: Brazil, Korea, Colombia, Denmark, France, Japan, Norway, Sweden, Turkey etc.

(https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ziua_%C3%AEndr%C4%83gosti%C8%9Bilor, Accesare site: 27. 11. 2017).

⁴⁴ Georgeta Orian, *De la Dragobete la Sf. Valentin sau despre cum o sărbătoare „importată” resuscitează una „tradițională”*, in *Annales Universitas Apulensis, Series Philologica*, tom 1, 15/2014, Alba Iulia, 2014, pp. 120-121.

Dragobete and *Valentine's Day* are holidays celebrating love. *Dragobete* is the native feast inherited from the ancestors, *Valentine's Day* is the imported feast that has arrived in Romania on the western channel.

5. Conclusions

Dragobete, the Romanian traditional feast, loved by Romanians from all the regions of our country, analyzed synchronously, announces the slide from ethnology to linguistics. The interdisciplinary perspective, the polisemantism of the term „dragobete”, the vast palette of symbols (anthropomorphic, phytomorphic, dendromorphic, superhuman) highlights the complexity of the autochthonous celebration. The native holiday of *Dragobete*, announcing innocent love, gives stability, harmony. The similarities and differences between *Dragobete* and *Valentine's Day* emphasize the unity in diversity.

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