

The plural ending *-le* and influences between the inflectional and the derivational morphology

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Abstract

In this article we describe the situations in which the plural ending *-le* has a derivative value, creating feminine plural nouns. This ending is part of two suffixes used to derive plural nouns, *-ale* and *-ele* (both with complex suffixes). In some borrowed formations the suffixes were attached to the etymons in order to adapt them to the Romanian morphological system, while other formations were created in Romanian. Some neological formations with *-ale* were borrowed and they are analysable in Romanian. We present a list with the derivatives created with these suffixes (and the developed suffixes), based on several dictionaries: DA, DLR, DI, and MDA. In the article we make some remarks regarding the dating of these suffixes and formations, their productivity, the relation between the plural derivatives and the singular nouns (if there are any) and we describe some theoretical aspects.

1. Introduction

In this article we will show that the plural feminine ending *-le* sometimes has a lexical value, to derive formations with plural form and singular or plural meaning. The plural ending *-le* was inherited from Latin, in nouns such as *cățea – cățele* 'bitch', *măsea – măsele* 'molar', *stea – stele* 'star' (for this morphological type, see Graur, 1961). It was reinforced in the morphological system as a sign of the plural by borrowings, most of them from Turkish (*basma – basmale* 'head scarf', *cercevea – cercevele* 'window frame', *cișmea – cișmele* 'fountain', *dușumea – dușumele* 'floor', *manea – manele* 'oriental song', *merdenea – merdenele* '(cheese) pie', *rindea – rindele* 'scraper', *teșcherea – teșcherele* 'small scraper', *sarma – sarmale* 'sarma (type of meat dumpling)'), but also from Slavic languages (*manta – mantale* 'cape'), from Romance languages (*bretea – bretele* 'suspenders', *jaluzea – jaluzele* 'blinds', *pijama – pijamale* 'pyjamas'), from Modern Greek (*cucuvea – cucuvele* 'little owl', *frigănea – frigănele* 'French toast'), from Hungarian (reg. *cheșchenea – cheșchenele* 'headdress, handkerchief') or with multiple origin (*canapea – canapele* 'couch, sofa', from Modern Greek, French, and German). We notice that there are two types of borrowings, ending in *-ea* (more numerous) or in *-a*. Moreover, the position of this ending plural was reinforced by many Romanian derivations with the diminutive (main value) suffix *-ea* and with various complex suffixes (developed from or compound with *ea*): *cea, icea, ucea, ulea, -unea, -ușea, -ușea, -ișea, -oșea* (see Pană Dindelegan, 2007). With a lexical value, the ending (affix) *-le* is found in the suffixes *-ale, -ele* and some suffixes developed from these two, which derive plural nouns, most of them feminine.

2. The suffixes *-ale* and *-icale*

The suffix *-ale* has multiple origin (see FCLR, p. 122–123): (a) it was created in Romanian, for the adaptation of some borrowings from Modern Greek which had an unusual final for the Romanian morphological system, with the plural ending *-ικά* (for instance, *politicale* 'political matters' < Gr. *πολιτικά*, cf. DLR – see

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infra) and (b) borrowed from Latin (*-ales*¹), from French (*-ales*), and from German (*-alien*), in analysable nouns.

Analysable nouns with plural meaning borrowed from Modern Greek had the ending *-ικά*, an unusual ending for Romanian nouns, which don't have the plural in *-a*. The attachment of the plural ending *-le* made these nouns compatible with the Romanian morphological system. In contemporary language, they are feminine *pluralia tantum* nouns², analysable with the suffixes *-ale* and *-icale* (developed from *-ale*, see **FCLR**, p. 124)³: *diamanticală* '(obsolete) diamond jewellery; precious stones' < Modern Gr. *διαμαντικά*; *giuvaericală* 'jewellery' < Modern Gr. *τζοβαερικά*; *istericală* 'hysterics' < Modern Gr. *ύστερικά (πάδη)*; *nevrică* 'nervous breakdown' < Modern Gr. *νευρικά*; *poeticală* '(obsolete) poems' < Modern Gr. *ποιητικά* (the plural of *ποιητική*); *politicală* 'political matters' < Modern Gr. *πολιτικά*; *revmatică* 'rheumatism' < Modern Gr. *ρευματικά*; *tipicală* 'songs for some religious services' < Modern Gr. *τυπικά* (according to **DLRM** it is a derivative from *tipic*); *triadicală* 'a type of religious songs' (**DTM**) < Modern Gr. *τριαδικά τροπάρια*; *vasilicală* 'a Greek compilation of Roman law, started by the emperor Basil I' < Modern Gr. [*τὰ*] *βασιλικά*; *zaharicală* < Modern Gr. *ζαχαρικά*⁴. The oldest attestations of these nouns are from the end of the 18th century, with the form unadapted to the Romanian morphological system (the one in *-a*): *giuvaerica* 'jewellery' is attested in 1792 (*apud* ŞIO, in **DA**, in a context where the interpretation is ambiguous, singular or plural: *Giuvaerică, mărgăritar i ceasornic* 'Jewellery, pearl and watch'), and *zaharica* 'sweets' is attested in 1794 (at Iorga, S.D. VIII, 29, in **DLR**, with plural meaning: *O bucătăriţă săsoaică... care să aibă ştiinţă şi praxis de uscături, de bucate şi de zaharica* 'A German cook... who knows and has experience with cold dishes, cooked food and sweets'). In the next century, we find the first attestations of the adapted formations, with *-le*: *zahricală* 'sweets' (attested in 1814, at Dionisie, C. 187, cf. **DLR**, s.v. *zaharica*); *vasilicală* 'Basilika' (attested in 1817, in Uricariul IV, 302/20, cf. **DLR**); *revmatică* 'rheumatism' (at Piscupecu, O. 297/2, in **DLR**); *diamanticală* 'diamond, jewellery' (attested in 1831, in CR 4²/34, cf. **DLR**); *istericală* 'hysterics' (at Gorjan, H. II, 123, in **DA**); *poeticală* 'poems' (at Alecsandri, S. 44, in **DLR**); *giuvaericală* 'jewellery' (at Filimon, *apud* TDRG, cf. **DA**); *politicală* 'political matters' (in Conv. Lit. III, 98, in **DLR**); *nevrică* 'nervous breakdown' (at Vlahuţă, O. A. 149, in **DLR**). In this period, we can notice the emergence of an opposition between the singular in *-a* and the plural in *-ale*, for instance *giuvaerica* vs. *giuvaericală*: [...] *pronunţînd cu îngîmfare numele fecărei mătăsării sau giuvaerica, [...] lăşînd să se vadă cît se putea mai bine o cutie de giuvaericală* 'saying smugly the name of every piece of silk or jewellery, ... letting a piece of jewellery show the best he could' (N. Filimon, *Ciocoii vechi şi noi*). Some borrowings have the first attestations in the 20th and the 21st century: *tipicală* (in TDRG, cf. **DLR**), *triadicală* (in **DTM**).

The second source of the suffix *-ale* in Romanian were analysable borrowings from Latin, French and German finished in various forms of this suffix. The first borrowings are from the middle of the 19th century: *anale* (in Uricariul V, 155/6, cf. **DA**) 'annals' < Lat. *annales*, Fr. *annales*; *saturnale* (in Calendar (1858) 48/18, cf. **DLR**) 'Saturnalia' < Fr. *saturnales*. Most of the borrowings are recent: *actinomicetale* 'Actinomycetales' < Fr. *actinomycétales* (**MDN**); *aspergilale* 'Aspergillales' < Fr. *aspergillales* (**MDN**); *chimicală* 'chemicals' < Germ. *Chemikalien* (**DEX**₂); *mirtale* 'Myrtales' < Fr. *myrtales* (**MDN**); *piperale* 'Piperales' < Fr. *pipérales* (**MDN**)⁵.

¹Lat. *-ales* represents the plural form of the adjectival suffix *-alis*.

²For some nouns, some singular forms in *-ală* developed later, but they were not very much used. Therefore, for *zaharicală* the singular form *saharicală* developed (the form with *z-* is not attested), attested in dictionaries only (Polizu, Pontbriant, D. 645, cf. **DLR**, s.v. *zaharica*).

³The sources of the inventoried formations are **DA** and **DLR** or the ones indicated in parentheses.

⁴Some nouns of this type, borrowed from Modern Greek or Turkish, are not analysable: *geamparale* 'castanets; nightingale trill; a type of dance' < Tur. *çal-para* (**DA**), *zumaricală* '(obsolete) sweets' < Modern Gr. *ζυμαρικά* (**DLR**).

⁵We could mention here the obsolete formation *colonială*, an adaptation of German *Kolonialwaren* 'colonial merchandise' (**DA**, **MDA**), possibly from French [denrées] *coloniales* as well (**DEX**₂). In (**FCLR**, p. 120), it is shown that the formation could be the result of the conversion of the plural adjective from the phrase *mărfuri colonială* 'colonial merchandise', therefore it wouldn't be a derivative.

From the analysable borrowings ending in *-ale*, feminine plural nouns, the suffix *-ale* was detached and it began to form *pluralia tantum* (feminine) nouns in Romanian, especially in the regional or vernacular language: *burtucale* ‘animal bowels’ (attested in Rev. Crit. III 91, cf. DA, s.v. *burduf*), cf. *burtuc* ‘cow bowels’; *trancanale* ‘meaningless words; small domestic objects, lumped together’ (first attestation at Pann, P. V. III, 95/8, cf. DLR, s.v. *trancana*), cf. (*a*) *trăncăni* ‘to babble’ and *tranc* ‘plump’ (in relation to the last one, the derivative is analysed with a complex suffix *-anale*); *turtale* ‘(reg.) some kind of cake prepared for great holidays’ (in Chest. V 8/5, cf. DLR), cf. *turtă* ‘pie’; *vristale* ‘(reg.) stripes (in a fabric)’ (Vîrcol, M. 88, Gr. Băn., in DLR), cf. *vîrstă* ‘stripe, band of a different colour’; *zăngănele* ‘fashionable accessories which make noise’ (Internet), cf. (*a*) *zăngăni* ‘to rattle’; *zdrancanale* ‘(regional) small domestic objects (making noise)’ (at Udrescu, Gl., cf. DLR, s.v. *zdrancana*), cf. (*a*) *zdrăncăni* ‘(to) jingle’; *zdrăngănele* ‘large accessories (for the neck), which rattle’ (Internet), cf. (*a*) *zdrăngăni* ‘to rattle’; *zorzonale* ‘(reg.) pretentious ornaments, without value’ (in Mat. Folk. 353, in DLR, s.v. *zorzoană*), cf. *zorzon*, *zorzoană* ‘ornament’. In standard language, this suffix was used to derive the plural noun *cosmeticale* ‘cosmetics’ (DEX₂).

We can add to this inventory some semi-analysable nouns, such as *hartapale* ‘pulled, torn pieces’ (Muscel, 111, in DA, s.v. *hartan*), cf. *hartă-partă* ‘broken’ and *hartan* ‘a big piece of meat; a fragment broken from something’; *zangarale* ‘(Olt.) ornaments; nickel and brass decorations applied on harness’ (attested at Ciaușanu, Gl., Coman, Gl., cf. DLR, s.v. *zangara*).

We can notice that there are two stylistic types of formations with *-ale*: some of them are from standard language or from specialized registers, others are vernacular or regional. This separation has its causes in the multiple origins of the suffix: internal, through conversion of the plural ending *-le* in a lexical derivative affix (detached with the final segment *-a* or *-ica*), and external, detached from analysable neological nouns, from literary language. The formations with *-icale* are regional or vernacular. Neither of the suffixes was very productive in Romanian and no new formations appeared in contemporary language.

3. The suffix *-ele*

The nominal suffix *-ele* is not discussed in the Romanian scholarly literature⁶, probably because it was considered simply a plural form of the suffix with the feminine form *-ea*⁷. In dictionaries, some formations with *-ele* have etymologies with *-ea*, although all the examples are with the plural form, in *-ele* (for instance: *adormițele* ‘anemone; Easter flower’ – in DLRM; *alunele* ‘a type of plant with white flowers (*Carum bulbocastanum*)’ – in DA; *așitele* ‘shavings’ – in MDA; *găluștele* ‘small dumplings’ – in MDA, etc.), other formations have etymologies with *-ele* in the dictionaries (*adormițele* ‘anemone; Easter flower’ – in MDA; *fărîmele* ‘small crumbs’ – in DEX₂; *măgurele* ‘small hummock’, *piersecele* ‘a type of orchid (*Cypripedium*)’, *scâlcele* ‘dandelion’, *sclipurele* ‘small arcades’, *spetele* ‘inset’, *stenurele* ‘small rocks’, *strîmturele* ‘piece of garment for women’ – all in DLR, m etc.). Sometimes, the dictionaries indicate the etymology with the masculine suffix *-el*, although all the examples are with the plural form in *-ele* (*sfaturele* in an idiom meaning ‘to stammer’, *șesurele* ‘small plains’, *ștucurele* ‘small fragments’ – in DLR). Most likely, the suffix *-ele* comes from the plural form of the inherited diminutive suffix *-ea*, being detached from the analysable formations with the plural form of this suffix. It has become quite productive, leading to the formation of *pluralia tantum* nouns with an attenuated or lost diminutive meaning. The fact that the suffix attaches to verbal themes as well is a sign that it has lost its initial diminutive meaning.

We list below an inventory of analysable formations with the suffix *-ele*, which can have nominal, adjectival or verbal themes (from a semantic, not etymological point of view), compiled based on several dictionaries: DI, DA, DLR, MDA, and DLRLC. Most of them are feminine nouns, the exceptions (of neuter gender) are indicated below:

⁶It will be discussed in the second part of the volume *Formarea cuvintelor în limba română. IV. Derivarea nominală și adverbială* [Word formation in Romanian. IV. Nominal and adverbial derivation], made by the “Iorgu Iordan – Al. Rosetti” Institute of Linguistics from Bucharest (see FCLR – the first part).

⁷The suffix *-el* (fem. *-ea*) comes from Lat. *-ellus* (fem. *-ella*) and was inherited in words like *cățel*, *cățea* < *catellus*, *catella* or *vițel*, *vițea* < *vitellus*, *vitella*; the derivatives with this suffix are attested before the 16th century (Popescu-Marin, 2007, p. 86).

- (a) with **nominal** themes: *alunele* ‘1. (bot., reg.) the name of several plants; 2. freckles’ (cf. *alun* ‘hazel’); *bănușele* ‘(bot.) the plant *Bellis perennis*’ (*bănuș*, the same meaning); *cîmpurele* n. ‘small fields’ (cf. *cîmpuri* ‘fields’); *colțurile* n. ‘(vernacular) small corners’ (cf. *colțuri* ‘corners’); *cornurele* n. ‘small corners’ (cf. *cornuri* ‘corners’); *fărimiele* ‘small crumbs’ (cf. *fărimă* ‘crumb’); *găluștele* ‘small dumplings’ (cf. *gălușcă* ‘dumpling’); *găurele* ‘a thinned out sail’ (**DLRLC**) (cf. *gaură* ‘hole’); *gogoșele* ‘small donuts’ (cf. *gogoășă* ‘donut’); *măgurele* ‘(reg.) small hummock; diminutive of *măgură*’; *nemurele* n. ‘(Mold.) relatives; diminutive of *neam*’ (cf. *neamuri*, same meaning); *nodurele* n. ‘(reg.) small knots; diminutive of *noduri*’; *pacișele* / *păcișele* ‘flax or hemp fibres of inferior quality, which remain in the cam’ (cf. *pacișă*, similar meaning); *păcurele* ‘small flocks of sheep, animals, cattle’ (cf. *păcure* ‘flocks of sheep, animals, cattle’); *păltinele* ‘(bot.) currant fruit’ (cf. *păltinel* ‘currant tree’); *pășuiele* ‘(bot., Banat, Trans.) locust tree’ (cf. *pășui* ‘beans’); *păștele* ‘(bot., reg.) a plant with yellow flowers (*Draba nemorosa*)’ (cf. *paști* ‘Easter bread’); *păturile* f. ‘small beds’ (cf. *pături* ‘beds’); *pîjele* n. ‘nails’ (cf. *pîj* ‘wooden nail’); *penele* ‘(Mold.) linden strips used to make ropes’ (cf. *pană* ‘sliver’); *pieșcele* ‘(Olt.) a type of orchid (*Cypripedium*)’ (cf. *piersică* ‘peach’); *ploiele* ‘(reg.) pellet bullets bigger than the raindrops’ (cf. *ploaie* ‘rain’); *pomișele* ‘(reg.) strawberry plant’ (cf. *pomișă* ‘small fruit’); *prînzurile* n. ‘small lunches’ (cf. *prînz* ‘lunch’); *prezenturile* n. ‘small presents’ (cf. *prezent* ‘(obsolete) present’); *prundurele* f. ‘(pop.) small gravel’ (cf. *prunduri* ‘gravel’); *pudărele* ‘(reg., Hațeg) ornaments’ (cf. *pudră* ‘powder’, in **DLR**); *răchițele* ‘marshworth’ (cf. *răchită* ‘willow’); *răcorele* / *răcărele* ‘bindweed’ (cf. *răcoare* ‘coolness’); *sămurele* f. ‘small hems’ (cf. *sam* ‘hem’); *săpunele* ‘pimpernel’ (cf. *săpun* ‘soap’); *scălcele* ‘(reg.) dandelion’ (cf. *scalce* ‘the plant *Caltha palustris*’); *schimburele* f. ‘diminutive of change, exchange, shift’ (cf. *schimburi* ‘changes’); *sclipurele* n. ‘small arcades’ (cf. *sclipuri*, plural of *sclip* ‘arcade’); *șfaturele* n., in the idiom *a face șfaturele* ‘to stammer’ (cf. *șfaturi* ‘advice’); *spetele* ‘(reg.) inset (in a male shirt)’ (cf. *spete*, plural of *spată* ‘back’); *stenurele* f. ‘(vernacular) small rocks’ (cf. *stean*, variant of *stană* ‘rock’); *strîmturile* ‘(Bucov.) piece of garment for women’ (cf. *strîmturi*, plural of *strîmtură* ‘gorge, narrow place’); *șesurele* n. ‘(pop.) small fields’ (cf. *șesuri* ‘plains’); *șoimele* ‘female falcon’ (cf. *șoim* ‘falcon’); *ștucurele* n. ‘small fragments’ (cf. *ștucuri*, plural of *ștuc* ‘fragment, piece’); *șușele* / *susele* ‘(Mold., Bucov.) slats on the wall or the ceiling’ (cf. *șușă* ‘slat’); *tătărcele* ‘(bot., reg.) celandine’ (cf. *tătarcă*, the name of several plants); *tulpănele* n. ‘(Bucov.) the name of some small flowers’ (cf. *tulpan* ‘muslin’); *țundrele* (**DI**) (cf. *țundră* ‘(Trans., Banat) a large and long peasant coat, made from thick fabric of wool colour’); *vinețele*₁ ‘(obsolete) small veins’ (cf. *vînă* ‘vein’ (**DLR**), with the complex suffix *-ețele*, and *vinețiu* ‘purple’); *vîrstele* ‘(reg.) strips of a different colour than the background (in a fabric)’ (cf. *vîrstă* ‘strip, band’); *zorele* ‘the name of several plants’ (cf. *zori* ‘dawn’).

In general, all derivatives from neuter nominal themes with the plural ending *-uri* are neuter (*cîmpurele*, *colțurile*, *cornurele*, *nemurele*, *nodurele*, *prînzurile*, *prezenturile*, *prundurele*, *sclipurele*, *șfaturele*, *șesurele*, *ștucurele*). It is possible that the authors of the dictionaries considered these words to be neuter by analogy with the neuter themes. Some derivatives with neuter themes are considered feminine in **DLR**: *păturile*, *sămurele*, *schimburele*, *stenurele*.

- (b) with **verbal** themes: *acățele* ‘(bot.) tendrils of the vine’ (cf. (*a*) *acățea*, variant of (*a*) *agățea* ‘(to) hang’); *adormișele* ‘(bot.) anemone’ (cf. *adormit* ‘asleep; slept’); *ațîțele* ‘(Trans.) slivers’ (**MDA**) (cf. (*a*) *ațîța* ‘(to) make fire’); *bodrogănele* ‘(obsolete) discussions; hassle’ (**MDA**) (cf. (*a*) *bodrogăni*, variant of (*a*) *bodogăni* ‘(to) grumble’); *ghionghionele* ‘(Turkish word) affectation’ (**DA**) (cf. (*a*) *ghionghioni* ‘(to) caress’); *măgulele* ‘flattery’ (cf. (*a*) *măguli* ‘(to) flatter’); *păcănele*₁ ‘(Wallachia) the wings of a weaving machine’ (cf. (*a*) *păcăni* ‘(to) click, crack’); *păcănele*₂ ‘(slang) electronic poker; mechanical games’ (Volceanov)⁸; *picățele* ‘1. dots, small spots; 2. (reg.) doughnut’ (cf. *picat* ‘dropped’); *pupățele* ‘(Bucov.) kisses’ (cf. *pupat* ‘kissed’); *spărgcele* ‘(reg.) annual gypsophila’ (cf. (*a*) *sparge* ‘(to) break’); *toconele* ‘(Olt.) the name of a traditional song’ (cf. (*a*) *toconi*, an unattested variant of (*a*) *tocăni* ‘(to) hammer’; **DLR**

⁸It is very unlikely that *păcănele*₂ be etymologically related to *păcănele*₁; they are probably different words, and *păcănele*₂ is a recent colloquial derivative (for a discussion about this derivative, see Zafiu, 2013).

refers to *tocăliță* ‘a carol’; *țișnele* ‘(reg.) a variety of plums’ (cf. (*a*) *țișni* ‘(to) spring’).

- (c) with **adjectival** themes (more rarely): *flocoșele* ‘(bot.) various types of hairy plants’ (cf. *flocos* ‘hairy’); *gălbenele* ‘several types of plants’ (cf. *galben* ‘yellow’); *iuțele* ‘(reg.) spicy vegetables, chili peppers, cucumbers’ (cf. *iute* ‘spicy’); *rumenele* / *romănele* ‘red make-up, blusher’ (cf. *rumen* ‘red, sanguine’); *sărbezele* ‘bearberry’ (cf. *sarbăd* ‘fad’); *vinețele*₂ ‘the name of several plants’ (cf. *vinăt* ‘purple’); *zăluzele* (**DI**) (cf. *zălud* ‘mad’; in **DLR** only the noun *zăluzeală* is registered, with the plural form *zăluzeli* ‘madness’).
- (d) with **onomatopœic** themes: *șoșele*, in the idiom (*a umbla*) *cu șoșele* (*și cu momemele*) ‘to cheat, to deceive’ (cf. *șoșo*(*șo*), onomatopœia, by analogy with *momemele* ‘bait’).

Some nominal derivations are analysable with a **complex** suffix: *drăgănele* ‘attraction; a variety of cherry’ (borrowed from Serbian. *draganela*, *draganlija*, cf. **DLR**, s.v. *drăgănel*, *-ea*) is analysed from *drag* and the suffix *-ănele*; *perițele* ‘(reg.) cinquefoils’ is analysed from (*a*) *pieri* ‘(to) perish’ (**DLR**) and the suffix *-ițele*; *pertelușele* ‘(reg.) a textile material applied on the pillars’ is derived from *perdea* ‘curtain’ (**DLR**) with *-(e)lușele*; *pietrucele* ‘dianthus; *Lychnis chalcidonica*’ is derived from *piatră* ‘stone, rock’ and the suffix *-ucele* (**DLR**); *prescurărele* ‘(bot., Trans.) the plant hen and chicks (*Sempervivum tectorum*)’ is derived from *prescură* ‘bread in the shape of a cross’ with *-ărele* (**DLR**); *rototele* / *rototele* ‘(bot., reg.) the plant *Bellis perennis*’ is derived from *roată* ‘wheel’ (**DLR**) with *-otele/-oțele*; *sălbănele* ‘(Trans.) sewing on the sleeves of a traditional blouse’ is derived from *salbă* ‘necklace’ (**DLR**) with *-ănele*; *ursărele* ‘(bot., Bucov.) dianthus’, derived from *urs* ‘bear’ with *-ărele* (**DLR**).

Some derivatives are **semi-analysable**: *hîrjele*, in the idiom *a grăi în hîrjele* ‘to joke’ (cf. *hîrjeate* ‘slates for games’, in **DA**); *paipanele* ‘(Olt.) stilts’ (**DLR**), cf. *paipanoage*, variant of *papainoage*, similar meaning; *popdele* ‘snow rose’, cf. *podbal* (**DLR**); *săftiele* ‘thin leather used in the leather goods industry’ (**DLR**), cf. *saftian*, similar meaning; *strambele* ‘(Wallachia) moodiness’, cf. *strambite*, similar meaning (**DLR**); *paraiele*, in the idiom *luat din paraiele* ‘paralysed’, semi-analysed with *para-* ‘very strong, powerful’ and the suffix *-iele*⁹.

In the inventory of *-ele* derivatives, there is only one adjective, with feminine, plural form: *borețele* ‘(reg.) full of milk’ (attested in ALRT II, 60/9), derived from *borețe*, an adjective with the same meaning (according to **MDA**; the word is not registered in **DA**).

The derivatives above are plural nouns, which either don’t have a singular correspondent form (in *-ea* or in *-el*, for the neuter ones), or they have a singular correspondent form attested after the plural form (therefore we can presuppose that the singular is **ulterior** to the plural form, derived with *-ele*). For instance, in the dictionaries we looked into (especially **DA** and **DLR**, but also **MDA**, **DEX**₂), we find several singular nouns with different meanings from the corresponding plural nouns: *măturea* ‘small broom’; *ocheșea*, hypocoristic diminutive of *oacheș* ‘swarthy’; *pupezea* ‘small hoopoe’; *scrijea* ‘slice of bread’; *secerea* ‘small sickle’; *uscățea*, diminutive of *uscat* ‘dry’; *vinețea* ‘cornflower’, etc. Because of these different meanings, we cannot consider that the noun in *-ele* is a plural form of the singular in *-ea*, we have to treat them as different words. If both a plural noun in *-ele* and a singular one in *-ea* are attested in the same

⁹There are numerous non-analysable feminine plural nouns ending in *-ele*, with singular or plural meaning, in **DI** and **DLR**. Many of them have an unknown etymology, others are related to other words. Although they cannot be considered derived formations, it is worth mentioning them because they reinforce this morphological pattern in Romanian: *arvele* ‘(obsolete) cone’ (**DA**); *befele* ‘(bot., reg.) forget-me-not’ (**MDA**); *bibițele* ‘(reg.) small businesses’ (**MDA**); *bomborele* ‘(reg.) grains’ (**MDA**); *borodele* ‘(reg.) fermented fruit for brandy’ (**MDA**); *căruțele* ‘(bot., reg.) narrow plintain’ (**MDA**; it cannot be semantically analysed through *căruță* ‘cart’); *chistosele* ‘(Trans.) aspic’; *crepenele*, in the idiom *în crepenele* ‘(reg.) rolling’ (**MDA**); *didinele* ‘(bot., reg.) two types of flowering plants from the Amberboa genus’ (**DLR**); *gîgîțele* ‘(bot.) crocus’ (**DA**); *hodrobele* ‘(Trans.) luggage’ (**DA**); *mițușele* ‘spring crocus’ (**DLR**); *ochinpele* / *ochincele* ‘foxgloves (*Digitalis purpurea*)’ (**DLR**); *pandele* ‘(bot., reg.) a variety of plums’ (**DLR**); *pășunele* ‘(reg.) flax or hemp fibres of inferior quality, which remain in the cam’ (**DLR**); *posincele* ‘(Banat) wheat flour of inferior quality; bran’ (**DLR**); *prichidele* ‘(reg.) the name of some parts of the cart’ (**DLR**); *rocodelle* / *rogodele* ‘(small) fruit’ (**DLR**); *solele* ‘(reg.) yellow lilies’ (**DLR**); *tarapangele* ‘(reg.) vegetables’ (**DLR**); *vînturele* ‘anemone’ (**DLR**; it cannot be semantically analysed through *vînturi* ‘winds’); *zămfirele* ‘(Mold.) ground grains’ (**DLR**; it cannot be analysed through *zămfir*, variant of *safir* ‘sapphire’).

period, with the same meaning, than the form in *-le* is the morphological plural of the form in *-ea*, not a different derivative. The distinction is sometimes difficult to make, as the attested examples from the dictionaries are not many.

We should take into account a series of borrowed nouns to which Romanian language attached the ending *-le* as a plural marker, in order to integrate them into the Romanian morphological system (a similar situation to the one described above, the borrowings to which Romanian added *-ale*: *diamantiale*, *giuvaericele*, *istericale*, *nevricele*, *poeticele*, *politicele*, *revmaticale*, *tipicale*, *triadicele*, *vasilicale*). They are plural nouns, without a singular correspondent in Romanian (*pluralia tantum*). From a morphological perspective, this is a derivative process, not an inflectional one, because there is no opposition between a singular and a plural form: *fesfesele* '(Mold.) gimcrack' < Tur. *fesfese* (DA); *ghionghionele* '(Turkish word) affectation' < Tur. *ğüna-ğün* 'any kind, all kind of..' (DA; the verb (*a*) *ghionghioni* '(to) caress' was created from the noun); *lovele* '(argot) money' < Gypsy *lové* (m.pl., from sg. *lovo*); *mezele* 'cold cuts, meat products' < Tur. *meze* (DLR, Scriban); *şacamele* '(reg.) trifles', cf. Tur. *şaka* 'joke' (DLR); *ţipele* '(Trans., Banat) shoes; boots' < Hung. *cipelló*, cf. also Serbo-Croatian *cipela* (with the singular forms shaped after the plural *ţipeauă*, *ţipel*, in DLR).

As we can see, the suffix *-le* was productive in Romanian, in vernacular language and in regional varieties. The **themes** to which this suffix (or its complex variants) attached are of various origins:

- inherited: *acăţele*, *adormiţele*, *alunele*, *aţiţele*, *cîmpurele*, *cornurele*, *gălbenele*, *găurele*, *nodurele*, *păcurele*, *păştele*, *penele*, *periţele*, *piersecele*, *pietrucele*, *ploiele*, *prînzurele*, *pupărele*, *rotoţele*, *sălbănele*, *săpunele* (but also through Modern Greek), *secerele*, *spârgele*, *spetele*, *şesurele*, *ursărele*, *uscăţele*, *vineţele*₁, *vineţele*₂;
- created in Romanian: *bănuţele*, *crepenele*, *duruietele*, *flocoşele*, *ocheşele*, *păcănele*₁, *păcănele*₂, *păltinele*, *picăţele*, *pomiţele*, *răcorele*, *scâlcele*, *schimburele*, *strîmturele*, *şoşele*, *tătărcele*, *toconele*, *ţişnele*, *zăngănele*, *zdrăngănele*;
- Slavic: *colţurele*, *găluştele*, *iuştele*, *măgulele*, *păcişele*, *pijele*, *popdele*, *prescurărele*, *prundurele*, *răchiţele*, *rumenele*, *sclipurele*, *scrijele*, *şfaturele*, *stenurele*, *vîrstele*, *zăluzele*, *zorele*;
- from Modern Greek: *păsuiele*, *pătorele*, *tulpănele*;
- Turkish: *ghionghionele*;
- from Latin and Romance languages: *prezenturele*, *pudărele*;
- Hungarian: *nemurele*, *şoimele*;
- German: *sămurele*, *ştucurele*;
- from the substrate (probably): *fărîmele*, *măgurele*, *pupezele*;
- with unknown etymology: *bodrogănele*, *boreţele*, *mătorele*, *sărbezele*, *şuşele/susele*, *ţundrele*.

In the contemporary language this suffix is not very productive; there are only a few new derivatives (see *păcănele*₂, *zăngănele*, *zdrăngănele*).

4. Conclusions

We have shown that *-le* is used with a derivative value, in the suffixes *-ale* and *-ele* (for *-ale*, see FCLR), as well as in some complex suffixes formed from these two, in several types of derivatives:

- derivatives to which the ending *-le* was attached in order to adapt the borrowings to the Romanian inflectional system, as the etymon had an unusual ending for Romanian;
- derivatives created in Romanian with the suffixes *-ale* and *-ele* (and their complex suffixes), from themes of various origins;
- borrowings from Latin and Romance languages or from German (only with the suffix *-ale*).

The derivatives with these suffixes are frequently *pluralia tantum* feminine nouns (with some exceptions, of neuter gender in DLR, similarly to the theme). Some of them also have singular forms, ulterior to the plural one. Others have a different meaning than the singular correspondent (and singular meaning, as well), therefore they cannot be considered plural forms (and *-le* must be analysed as a derivative affix, not an inflectional one). For the formations with plural meaning, the affix *-le* accumulates a derivative

and an inflectional value, similarly to the gender switching suffix *-ă*, which is also an inflectional ending (marking gender and number), or the plural neuter ending *-uri* attached to mass nouns, triggering changes in meaning (see Pană Dindelegan, 2017; Maiden, 2014), including feminine nouns.

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