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 derivational 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 câtea – cătele ‘bitch’, măsă – 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’, cerceava – cercevele ‘window frame’, cișmea – cișmele ‘fountain’, dușumea – dușumele ‘floor’, manea – manele ‘oriental song’, merdenea – merdenele ‘(cheese) pie’, rindea – rindele ‘scrapers’, țeschere – țescherele ‘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 (cucueva – cucuvel ‘little owl’, frigânea – frigânele ‘French toast’), from Hungarian (reg. česčenea – česčenele ‘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 –e (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, icela, ucea, ulea, –uea, –ușea, –ușeia, –oțea (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 –ed (for instance, politicale ‘political matters’ < Gr. πολιτικά, cf. DLR – see

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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 nouns, analysable with the suffixes –ale and –icale (developed from –ale, see FCLR, p. 124):

- diamantical (‘obsolete’) diamond jewellery; precious stones < Modern Gr. διαμαντικά; giuvaerical ‘jewellery’ < Modern Gr. τζοβαερικά; isterical ‘hysteric’ < Modern Gr. υστερικά (πάθη);
- revmatical ‘nervous breakdown’ < Modern Gr. νευρικά; poeticale ‘(obsolete) poems’ < Modern Gr. ποιητικά (the plural of ποιητικό);
- politicale ‘political matters’ < Modern Gr. πολιτικά; revmaticale ‘rheumatism’ < Modern Gr. ρευματικά; tipical ‘songs for some religious services’ < Modern Gr. τυπικά (according to DLRM it is a derivative from tipic);
- triical ‘a type of religious songs’ (DTM) < Modern Gr. τριαδιϰά τροπάρια; vasilical ‘a Greek compilation of Roman law, started by the emperor Basil I’ < Modern Gr. ταί βασιλικά βασιλικά; zabarical < Modern Gr. ζαβαρικά. The oldest attestations of these nouns are from the end of the 18th century, with the form unadapted to the Roman morphological system (the one in –a):
- giuvaerical ‘jewellery’ is attested in 1792 (apud șio, in DA, in a context where the interpretation is ambiguous, singular or plural: Giuvaerica, mărgăritar i ceasornic, Saharicală;... care să aibă știință și practis de uscături, de bucate și 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: zabricle ‘sweets’ (attested in 1814, in Dionisie, C. 187, cf. DLR, sn. zabarica); kasical ‘Basilika’ (attested in 1817, in Uricariul IV, 302/20, cf. DLR); revmaticale ‘rheumatism’ (at Piscocupescu, O. 297/2, in DLR);
- diamantical ‘diamond, jewellery’ (attested in 1831, in CR 42/34, cf. DLR); isterical ‘hysteric’ (at Gorjan, H. II, 123, in DA); poeticale ‘poems’ (at Alessandri, S. 44, in DLR);
- giuvaerical ‘jewellery’ (at Filimon, apud TDRG, cf. DA); politicale ‘political matters’ (in Conv. Lit. III, 98, in DLR);
- revmatical ‘nervous breakdown’ (at Vlahuță, 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. giuvaerical: [...] pronunțînd cu îngîmfare numele fiecărei mătășări sau giuvaerica, [...] lăsînd să se vadă cît se putea mai bine o cutie de giuvaerica, ‘saying smugly the name of every piece of silk or jewellery, ... letting a piece of jewellery show the best he could’ (N. Filimon, Ciocoi vechi și noi). Some borrowings have the first attestations in the 20th and the 21st century: tipical (in TDRG, cf. DLR), triical (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: actinomycetales < Fr. actinomycétales (MDN); aspergilale ‘Aspergillales’ < Fr. aspergillales (MDN); chimical ‘chemicals’ < Germ. Chemikalien (DEX2); mirtale ‘Myrtales’ < Fr. myrtales (MDN); piperale ‘Piperales’ < Fr. piperales (MDN).
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: hurtucâle ‘animal bowels’ (attested in Rev. Crit. III 91, cf. DA, s.v. burduf), cf. hurtuc ‘cow bowels’; trancanâle ‘meaningless words; small domestics objects, lumped together’ (first attestation at Pann, P. V. III, 95/8, cf. DLR, s.v. trancana), cf. (a) trâncâni ‘to babble’ and tranç ‘plump’ (in relation to the last one, the derivative is analysed with a complex suffix −anale); turtâle (reg.) some kind of cake prepared for great holidays’ (in Chest. V 8/5, cf. DLR), cf. turtă ‘pie’; vristâle (reg.) stripes (in a fabric)’ (Vircol, M. 88, Gr. Băn., in DLR), cf. virstă ‘stripe, band of a different colour’; zângânele ‘fashionable accessories which make noise’ (Internet), cf. (a) zângâni ‘to rattle’; zdrâncanâle ‘(regional) small domestic objects (making noise)’ (at Udrescu, Gl., cf. DLR, s.v. zdrâncana), cf. (a) zdrâncâni ‘(to) jingle’; zdrângânele ‘large accessories (for the neck), which rattle’ (Internet), cf. (a) zdrângâni ‘to rattle’; zorzoâle ‘(reg.) pretentious ornaments, without value’ (in Mat. Folk. 353, in DLR, s.v. zorzoână), cf. zorzon, zorzoână ‘ornament’. In standard language, this suffix was used to derive the plural noun cosmetica ‘cosmetics’ (DEX2).

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

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 literature, probably because it was considered simply a plural form of the suffix with the feminine form −ea. In dictionaries, some formations with −ele have etymologies with −ea, although all the examples are with the plural form, in −ele (for instance: adormitele ‘anemone; Easter flower’ – in DLRM; ahunele ‘a type of plant with white flowers (Carum bulbocastanum)’ – in DA; ațitele ‘shavings’ – in MDA; gălăuțele ‘small dumplings’ – in MDA, etc.), other formations have etymologies with −ele in the dictionaries (adormitele ‘anemone; Easter flower’ – in MDA; fârmitele ‘small crumbs’ – in DEX; măguarele ‘small hummock; pieherele ‘a type of orchid (Cypripedium), scâlcele ‘dandelion, scîpurule ‘small arcades, spetele ‘inset’, stenurele ‘small rocks, strîmturele ‘piece of garment for women’ – all in DLR, etc.). Sometimes, the dictionaries indicate the eymology with the masculine suffix −el, although all the examples are with the plural form in −ele (sfaturele in an idiom meaning ‘to stammer’, sesurele ‘small plains, stucurele ‘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 diminuitive meaning. The fact that the suffix attaches to verbal themes as well is a sign that it has lost its initial diminuitive 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:

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6It will be discussed in the second part of the volume Formarea cuvintelor în limba română. IV. Derivarea nominală şi 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 câtel, câtea < catellus, catella; 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'); *bănuțele* '(bot.) the plant *Bellis perennis* (bănuț, the same meaning); *cîmpurele* n. 'small fields' (cf. *cîmpuri* 'fields'); *colturele* n. 'vernacular' small corners' (cf. *colturi* 'corners'); *cornurele* n. 'small corners' (cf. *cornuri* 'corners'); *fărimele* 'small crumbs' (cf. *fărimă* 'crumb'); *gălăștele* 'small dumpings' (cf. *gălușă* 'dumping'); *găurele* 'a thinned out sail' **(DLR)** (cf. *gaură* 'hole'); *gogoșele* 'small donuts' (cf. *gogoașă* 'donut'); *măgurele* '(reg.) small hummock; diminutive of măgu"; *nemurele* n. '(Mold.) relatives; diminutive of neam' (cf. *neamuri*, same meaning); *nodurele* n. '(reg.) small knots; diminutive of noduri'; *pacișele / păcăile* 'flax or hemp fibres of inferior quality, which remain in the cam' (cf. *pacișă*; similar meaning); *păcărele* 'small flecks of sheep, animals, cattle' (cf. *păcure* 'flecks of sheep, animals, cattle'); *pălținele* '(bot.) currant fruit' (cf. *pâltine* 'currant tree'); *pășulele* '(bot., Trans., Banat, Trans.) locust tree' (cf. *păsui* 'beans'); *păștele* '(bot., reg.) a plant with yellow flowers *Draba nemorosa* (cf. *paști* 'Easter bread'); *păturele* f. 'small beds' (cf. *paturi* 'beds'); *pijele* n. 'nails' (cf. *pij* 'wooden nail'); *penele* '(Mold.) strips used to make ropes' (cf. *panâ* 'sliver'); *piersecele* '(Olt.) a type of orchid *Cypripedium* (cf. *pierică* 'peach'); *ploiele* (reg.) pellet bullets bigger than the raindrops' (cf. *ploie* 'rain'); *pomîtele* '(reg.) strawberry plant' (cf. *pomîță* 'small fruit'); *prinzurele* n. 'small lunches' (cf. *prînz* 'lunch'); *prezenturele* n. 'small presents' (cf. *prezent* 'obsolete present'); *prînzurele* f. '(pop.) small gravel' (cf. *prondu* 'gravel'; *pudârele* (reg., *Hâțegan*) ornaments' (cf. *pudâ* 'powder', in **DLR**); *răcărele* 'marshworth' (cf. *râcăță* 'willow'); *răcârele / răcărele* 'bindweed' (cf. *râcoare* 'coolness'); *sămărele* f. 'small hems' (cf. *sam* 'hem'); *săpunele* 'imperfect'; *ștecurele* (reg.) *dandelion* (cf. *scârcele* 'the plant *Caltha palustris*'); *schimburele* f. 'diminutive of change, exchange, shift' (cf. *schimburi* 'changes'); *sclipurele* n. 'small arcs' (cf. *sclipuri, plural of sclip* 'arcade'); *ștăturele* n., in the idiom **a face şfături* 'to stammer' (cf. *șfături* 'advice'); *spetele* (reg.) inset (in a male shirt)' (cf. *spete*, plural of *spată* 'back'); *stenurele* f. 'vernacular' small rocks' (cf. *stean*, variant of *stână* 'rock'); *strîmurele* '(Bucov.) piece of garment for women' (cf. *strîmturi, plural of strîmtură* 'gorge, narrow place'); *sesurele* n. '(pop.) small fields' (cf. *sesuri* 'plains'); *soimulele* 'female falcon' (cf. *soin* 'falcon'); *ștucurele* n. 'small fragments' (cf. *ștucuri*; plural of *știc* 'fragment, piece'); *șusele / susulele* (Mold., Bucov.) slats on the wall or the ceiling' (cf. *șuşă* 'slat'); *tătărcele* '(bot., reg.) celandine' (cf. *tâtarca*, the name of several plants); *tulpânele* n. '(Bucov.) the name of some small flowers' (cf. *tulpan* 'muslin'); *țundrele* **(DI)** (cf. *țundră* '(Trans., Banar) a large and long peasant coat, made from thick fabric of wool colour'); *vinețele* 'obsolescent small veins' (cf. *vină* 'vein') **(DLR)**, with the complex suffix  –etele, 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 nominal neuter themes with the plural ending –uri are neuter (cîmpurele, colturele, cornurele, nemurele, nodurele, prinzurele, prezenturele, prînzurele, schimburele, sămăurele, 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**: *pătorele, sâmurele, schimburele, stenurele*.

(b) with **verbal** themes: *acățele* '(bot.) tendrils of the vine' (cf. *(a) acăța*, variant of *(a) agăța* '(to) hang'); *adormitele* '(bot.) anemone' (cf. *adormit* 'asleep; slept'); *ațîțele* '(Trans.) slivers' **(MDA)** (cf. *(a) ațîța* '(to) make fire'); *bodrogânele* 'obsolescent discussions'; *bodogâni* '(to) grumble'; *gâbioni* 'Turkish word, affectation' **(DA)** (cf. *(a) gâbion* '(to) caress'; *măgulele* 'flattery' (cf. *(a) măgulţ* '(to) flatter'); *păcănele* '(Wallachia) the wings of a weaving machine' (cf. *(a) păcăni* '(to) click, crack'); *păcănele*; *(slang) electronic poker; mechanical games' (Volcanov)**8**; *păcătele* '1. dots, small spots; 2. (reg.) doughnut' (cf. *picate* 'dropped'); *pupătele* (Bucov.) kisses' (cf. *pupat* 'kissed'); *sărgele* (reg.) annual gypsophila' (cf. *(a) sârge* '(to) break'); *toconele* *(Olt.) the name of a traditional song' (cf. *toconi*, an unattested variant of *(a) tocăni* '(to) hammer'); **DLR**

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8It is very unlikely that *păcănele2* is etymologically related to *păcănele1*; they are probably different words, and *păcănele2* is a recent colloquial derivative (for a discussion about this derivative, see Zafiș, 2013).
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refers to tocăliță ‘a carol’; fișnele ‘(reg.) a variety of plums’ (cf. (a) fișni ‘(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 / românele ‘red make-up, blusher’ (cf. rumen ‘red, sanguine’); sărbezele ‘bearberry’ (cf. sârba ‘fâd’); vinetele ‘the name of several plants’ (cf. vină ‘purple’); zâlulele (D) ‘(cf. zâlud ‘mad’; in DLR only the noun zâluleală is registered, with the plural form zâlulele ‘madness’).

d) with onomatopoeic themes: șoțele, in the idiom (a umbla cu șoțele (și cu momele) ‘to cheat, to deceive’ (cf. șoșa(șo), onomatopoeia, by analogy with momele ‘bait’).

Some nominal derivations are analysable with a complex suffix: drăgănele ‘attraction; a variety of cherry’ (borrowed from Serbian. draganele, draganița, cf. DLR, sv. drăgâne, –ea) is analysed from drag and the suffix –anele; periețele ‘(reg.) fivefoil’ is analysed from (a) pieri ‘(to) perish’ (DLR) and the suffix –ete; pertelutele ‘(reg.) a textile material applied on the pillars’ is derived from perdea ‘curtain’ (DLR) with –etele; pietrulele ‘dianthus; Lychnis chalcedonica’ is derived from piață ‘stone, rock’ and the suffix –ulele (DLR); prescurărele ‘(bot., Trans.) the plant and hens and chicks (Semperivium tectorum)’ is derived from prescură ‘bread in the shape of a cross’ with –urele (DLR); rototele / rotoțele ‘(bot., reg.) the plant Bellis perennis’ is derived from roată ‘wheel’ (DLR) with –otele / –oțele; sălbânele ‘(Trans.) sewing on the sleeves of a traditional blouse’ is derived from salbă ‘necklace’ (DLR) with –anele; ursărele ‘(bot., Bucov.) dianthus’, derived from urs ‘bear’ with –arele (DLR).

Some derivatives are semi-analisable: birjele, in the idiom a grâi în birjele ‘to joke’ (cf. birjate ‘slates for games’, in DA); paipanele ‘(Olt.) stilts’ (DLR), cf. paipanoiage, variant of papainoage, similar meaning; popdele ‘snow rose’, cf. podbal (DLR); sâltele ‘thin leather used in the leather goods industry’ (DLR), cf. saftian, similar meaning; strambule ‘(Wallachia) moodiness’, cf. strambite, similar meaning (DLR); parătele, in the idiom luat din parătele ‘paralysed, semi-analysed with para- ‘very strong, powerful’ and the suffix –tele.

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, DEX2), we find several plural nouns with different meanings from the corresponding plural nouns: mâtură ‘small broom’; ochesea, hypocoristic diminutive of oachea ‘swarthy’; pürpeza ‘small hoopoe’; scrijēa ‘slice of bread’; secerea ‘small sickle’; usățea, diminutive of uscat ‘dry’; vinetea ‘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

9 There 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 reinforce them how they reinforce this morphological pattern in Romanian: aretele ‘obsolete cone’ (DA); befele ‘(bot.; reg.) forget-me-not’ (MDA); bibițele ‘(reg.) small businesses’ (MDA); bombolele ‘(reg.) grains’ (MDA); borodele ‘(reg.) fermented fruit for brandy’ (MDA); căruțele ‘(bot., reg.) narrow plaitain’ (MDA); it cannot be semantically analysed through căruță ‘cart’; chirsoatele ‘(Trans.) aspic; crepenele, in the idiom în crepenele ‘(reg.) rolling’ (MDA); didinale ‘(bot., reg.) two types of flowering plants from the Amberboa genus’ (DLR); gigițele ‘(bot.) crocus’ (DA); bodrobele ‘(Trans.) luggage’ (DA); mituțele ‘spring crocus’ (DLR); ochinpele / ochinele ‘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); poștele ‘(Banat) wheat flour of inferior quality; bran’ (DLR); prichițele ‘(reg.) the name of some parts of the cart’ (DLR); robolele / rogodele ‘(small) fruit’ (DLR); solele ‘(reg.) yellow lilies’ (DLR); tarapängele ‘(reg.) vegetables’ (DLR); vinetele ‘anemone’ (DLR); it cannot be semantically analysed through vininti ‘winds’; zămbirele ‘(Mold.) ground grains’ (DLR); it cannot be analysed through zamfir, variant of safr ‘sapphire’.

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period, with the same meaning, than the form in –ele 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: diamantica, giuvaericale, istericale, poeticale, politica, revmaticale, tipica, triadica, vasicale). 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. fese (DA); ghionghionele ‘(Turkish word) affection’ < Tur. ğûna-ţûn ‘any kind, all kind of...’ (DA; the verb (a) ghionghioni ‘(to) caress’ was created from the noun); lovele ‘(argot) money’ < Gypsy love (m.pl., from sg. lovo); mezele ‘cold cuts, meat products’ < Tur. mez (DLR, Scriban); şacamele ‘(reg.) truffles’, cf. Tur. şaka ‘joke’ (DLR); pîtele ‘(Trans., Banat) shoes; boots’ < Hung. cipelô, cf. also Serbo-Croatian cipela (with the singular forms shaped after the plural pîpeau, pîpel, in DLR).

As we can see, the suffix –ele 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: acâţele, adormiţele, alunéle, aștiţele, cimpurele, cornurele, gâlbenele, găurele, nodurele, păcurere, pâştele, penele, periţele, piersecele, pietrele, ploiele, prunurele, pulăţele, rotoţele, sălbâncel, săpănele (but also through Modern Greek), secerele, spărgele, spatele, sexeurele, ursarele, uscătele, vinetele, vineţele;
- created in Romanian: bănuţele, crepenéle, durluţele, flocoşele, ocheţele, pâcânele, pâcănele, păltinele, piciţele, pomiţele, răcorele, scâlcele, schimburele, strîmturele, soşele, tătărcele, toconele, țînele, zângânele, zdrângânele;
- Slavic: colţurele, gâluştele, iuţele, măgulele, păciţele, pijele, popdele, prescuviarele, prundurele, râchitele, rumenele, scilipurele, scrajele, șfatele, șenurele, viristele, zăluzele, zorele;
- from Modern Greek: păsuile, pătulele, tulpânele;
- Turkish: ghionghione;
- from Latin and Romance languages: prezenturele, pudârele;
- Hungarian: nemurele, șoimele;
- German: sâmurele, ștucurele;
- from the substrate (probably): fârimele, măgurele, pupezele;
- with unknown etymology: bodrogânele, borețele, măturele, sârbezele, șusele/susele, țundrele.

In the contemporary language this suffix is not very productive; there are only a few new derivatives (see pâcănele, zângânele, zdrângânele).

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 suffix –le accumulates a derivative
The plural ending –ă and influences between the inflectional and the derivational morphology

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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