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Turbela in Apuleius' Novel

Svetlana S. Dubova

St. Petersburg State University,
7–9, Universitetskaya nab., St. Petersburg, 199034, Russian Federation; st042609@student.spbu.ru

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The contribution deals with the word *turbela* and its stylistic coloring: after Plautus (meaning 'disturbance') it is attested in the writings of Apuleius and other late authors. Nevertheless, there is no consensus among the researchers concerning its semantic and stylistic characteristics in the *Metamorphoses*: even if it is a borrowing from Plautus, it has a different meaning ('a crowd') and may not be a colloquialism. In support of it being borrowed, one may refer to Apuleius' fondness for Plautine vocabulary and the testimony of Festus, who also points at the archaic nature of the word. The changing of meaning does not pose a serious problem, as it can be explained by the possibility of a metonymic transfer and Apuleius' avocation of using word-plays and redefining semantic meaning. The article also discusses the spelling issue, evident in many cases of words in *-ela*. Confusion between abstract nouns in *-ela* and diminutives in *-ella* can be discovered early in antiquity, so there is no opportunity to make a distinction between *turbela* and *turbella*. The idea of the colloquiality of the suffix *-ela* and possible diminutive meaning of the word are deemed unjustified: in most instances, the context does not suggest that *turbela* is to be regarded as a diminutive, and words in *-ela* are attested in a number of writings where colloquial words would seem improper.

Keywords: archaic vocabulary, colloquialisms, diminutives, Apuleius, Plautus, Ammianus Marcellinus.

Examination of Apuleius' vocabulary often entails a problem of distinction between archaisms and vulgarisms. It is especially critical when one tries to label a rare word, not attested in the Latin literature before Apuleius apart from comedies. By the second century AD comedic vocabulary could be perceived as archaic, even though there can be no doubt that Plautus and Terence used colloquial language in their plays. The case of *turbela* in this regard is exemplary.

In the *Metamorphoses* Apuleius uses this word three times:

1. Cum ... vicum quempiam frequentem et nundinis celebrem praeteriremus, inter ipsas *turbelas* Graecorum genuino sermone nomen augustum Caesaris invocare temptavi (3. 29. 2).

“When we were passing through a thronged village, filled with market-goers, in the very midst of these *crowds* I tried to shout the august name of Caesar in my Greek native tongue.”

2. Denique tanti doloris impatiens populi circumfluentis *turbelis* immisceor et ... sic indaginis principes dehortabar: «O grande» inquam «et extremum flagitium, magnam et vere pretiosam perdimus bestiam» (4. 20. 6).

“Finally, unable to bear such distress, I mingled with the *crowds* of people going around and tried to dissuade the leaders of the raid, crying: «What a huge disgrace! We are killing such a large and truly valuable animal».”

3. Postquam vos . castra nostra remeastis, immixtus ego *turbelis* popularium dolentique atque indignanti similis arbitrabar super investigatione facti cuius modi consilium caperetur (7. 1. 4).

“After you returned to our camp, I joined the *crowds* of people and, pretending to be sad and indignant, tried to find what kind of measures would be taken to investigate the crime”.

As is evident from these contexts, Apuleius uses *turbela* in the sense ‘a crowd, a multitude of people’, unlike Plautus, who instead prefers *turbela* when he describes some disturbance and confusion (*Bac.* 1057; *Ps.* 110).¹ The semantic difference cannot be an insuperable obstacle to understanding *turbela* as a loan word borrowed by Apuleius among many other Plautine lexical elements, as it can be easily explained as a metonymic transfer. Apuleius indeed likes to use common words in an unusual sense allowed by semantics: *candidatus* ‘dressed in white’ (*Met.* 9. 12. 4), *semenstris* formed by *semi-* + *-menstris*, not *sex* + *mensis* (*Met.* 11. 4. 1). Both meanings belong to the word *turba* which could have been the origin of the diminutive *turbella*, if it is, in fact, a diminutive. We also find *turbela* in Festus’ *De verborum significatu* (484 L): *turbelas dixisse antiquos, quas nunc turbas appellamus, testis est Plautus in Pseudolo*. Festus does not mark it as a diminutive, as he does, for instance, in cases of *blandicella* (*verba blanda per deminutionem sunt dicta*) or *curriculum* (*deminutivum est a curro*), but he evidently points at the archaic nature of the word that could be generally associated with Plautus’ language. The Groningen commentary on book 4. 1–27 considers Festus’ passage to be problematic due to orthographic differences:² while the manuscripts of Plautus’ plays suggest *turbella*, we read *turbela* in Festus and Apuleius. It gives us the opportunity to regard *turbela* and *turbella* as two different words (also allowing us to assume that *turbela* is an Apuleian neologism³). Still, it seems more probable that we are dealing with the same word.⁴

The spelling differences pose a problem which cannot be solved. K. Lachmann discusses the word *luela* in his commentary to *Lucr.* 3. 1014: referring to “orthographia vulgaris” of those manuscripts that he studied, he claims that one ought to write a single letter *l* if it follows a long vowel and a double *l* if it follows a short vowel (in Lachmann’s opinion *turbella* should be written).⁵ This rule does not explain the muddle in the manuscripts

¹ It is notable that both times *turbela* is found in slaves’ lines.

² Hijmans et al. 1977, 154.

³ cf. Zimmerman 2000, 414.

⁴ *Turbela* and *turbella* are considered one word in most dictionaries (not in Du Cange).

⁵ Lachmannus 1850, 203–205.

which is present in case of all the words in *-ela*: even *clientela* is attested with double *l* (though only in the 8th century).⁶ Virtually, ancient grammarians (Flavius Caper (GL 7. 96), Marius Victorinus (*Ars* 80), Beda Venerabilis (*De orthographia* 45), Alcuin (*De orthographia* 26)) supposed that these words were to be written with a single *l*. Cassiodorus explains this more thoroughly (*De orth.* GL 7. 159): *querella apud antiquos per unum l scribebatur, sicut suadela tutela candela corruptela, quamvis usus sibi etiam apud eos vindicaret ut aliqua in figura deminutivorum per duo l scriberentur, ut capella fabella tabella. nunc autem etiam querella per duo l scribitur.*

The assumption that *turbela* could allude directly to Plautus is supported both by Festus and the rarity of the word itself. At the same time, Apuleius is particularly fond of it: we read it three times in the *Metamorphoses* and also in the *De Deo Socratis* (12) where *turbela* is used in its usual, Plautine, meaning ‘disturbance, agitation’:

Ac ne ceteros longius persequar, ex hoc ferme daemonum numero poetae solent haudquam procul a veritate osores et amatores quorundam hominum deos fingere: hos prosperare et evehere, illos contra adversari et adfligere; igitur et misereri et indignari et angi et laetari omnemque humani animi faciem pati, simili motu cordis et salo mentis ad omnes cogitationum aestus fluctuare, quae omnes *turbelae* tempestatesque procul a deorum caelestium tranquillitate, exulant.

“And not to go through the other instances, from this number of demons poets are accustomed to making up gods as haters and lovers of certain men (which is not far from the truth), so they favor and raise some but oppose and afflict others. Therefore, they have pity, fall in rage, get perturbed, feel joy and experience all affections of the human soul; affected by similar passions of the heart and mind, they wallow in the surge of thoughts of every kind. All these *commotions* and storms are far distant from the tranquility of celestials.”

This passage had a great influence on Saint Augustine who retells and discusses it multiple times using *turbela* in the same meaning (*De civ. D.* 8. 17; 8. 18; 9. 3; 9. 8; 10. 27). This Plautine meaning is also used by Gaudentius when he refers to the commotion of the mind (*Brix. serm.* 19). Apart from that, *turbel(l)a* = ‘disturbance’ is attested beyond the period of antiquity.⁷ The only one instance besides Apuleius where we can read *turbela* as ‘a crowd’ is a passage in the *Res Gestae* by Ammianus Marcellinus (14. 10. 2):

Herculanus advenit protector domesticus, Hermogenis ex magistro equitum filius, apud Constantinopolim, ut supra rettulimus, popularium quondam *turbela* discerpti.

“Herculanus arrived, protector domesticus, the son of Hermogenes, former commander of the cavalry, who (as we have related before) was once torn to pieces by a crowd in Constantinople.”

Ammianus must have recounted this incident in full in the previous (non-extant) part of his work. The context actually does allow us to understand *turbela* both in its clas-

⁶ Vertegaal 2015, 77.

⁷ *Capitularia Caroli C. tit.* 17, Baldricus Dolensis in *Vita Roberti de Arbrisello* (with *procella* as a variant reading). The Groningen commentary on book IV of the *Metamorphoses* also mentions cod. P of Vet. Lat. II *Macc.* 15. 29 (Hijmans *et al.* 1977, 154). It is hard to explain how this rare word found itself in the text of the *Vetus Latina*: even though it is true that the *Vetus Latina* has many words which are less common than their synonyms in the Vulgate (Burkitt 1896, 13), the text is still a quite literal translation, unlikely to use borrowings from Plautus.

sical meaning ('disturbance') and Apuleian ('crowd'), as it all comes down to the meanings of the word *turba*. *Turba* is widely used for denoting a civil disorder or a riot (as synonym for *seditio*).⁸ However, it is not right to equate *turbela* with *turba*: *turbela* is undoubtedly a very rare word and plays its special role in the text, even if it is simply dictated by mannerism. It is common knowledge that Ammianus was not averse to borrowing lexical elements from various Latin authors, including Apuleius and Plautus. M. Hertz gives extensive and convincing lists of borrowings (where he includes *turbela*).⁹ E. E. L. Owens points out the similarity between Ammianus' *popularium turbela* and Apuleius' *turbelis popularium* (*Met.* 7. 1. 4).¹⁰ This makes it tempting to believe that it was Apuleius (and not Plautus) who influenced Ammianus' choice of words, and *turbela* in the *Res Gestae* means 'a crowd'.

The question of the correct spelling (single or double *l*) ultimately resolves into the question of meaning, namely, is the word *turbela* a diminutive? The Forcellini dictionary states that it is, also making reference to G. Vossius. In his *Etymologicon linguae latinae* (s. v. *turba*) he compares this word with other diminutives like *popellus*, *tenellus*, *umbella*, and not with abstract nouns in *-ela* like *suadela*, *loquela* etc.¹¹ Conceivably, his opinion is founded on his personal idea about the meaning conveyed by *turbela*. It appears that the spelling confusion was caused by the fact that the unproductive suffix *-ela* could be mistaken for the diminutive suffix as early as antiquity.¹² This vacillation between different suffixes is a conundrum for it is hard to imagine it in a language where the distinction in vowel length and gemination is relevant, let alone the semantic differences. Still, in some cases this addlement is evident: for example, *querela* is attested in manuscripts 195 times with a single letter *l* and 186 times with a geminate.¹³ Consequently, this poses the question of semantic subtleties even in the Plautus' plays.

F. Conrad¹⁴ distinguishes a wide range of diminutives which he supposes to have no diminutive meaning. For instance, there is a particular group of words with such examples as *cavilla*, *pauperculus*, *persolla*, *turbella*.¹⁵ G. Strodach¹⁶ writes that the diminutive *turbella* was formed from the noun *turbela* a long time before Plautus, and *turbella* was regarded as a diminutive in his day. Therefore, G. Strodach does not call into question the diminutive meaning in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*. J. Hanssen¹⁷ straightforwardly raises a question whether *turbela* is a diminutive or a verbal abstract felt as a diminutive (apparently with no doubt that the readers of both Plautus and Apuleius considered the word to be a diminutive). He also draws attention to another problematic word, *fugella*, which he places in the same category. *Fugella* is attested only twice, in Cato and Apuleius: *Sed a benefactis, ab optimis artibus fugit maxima fugella perpetuissimo curriculo* (Cato *Orat.* 81 = Priscianus

⁸ Ammianus indeed uses *turba* in this meaning in the following passages: 14. 7. 15; 15. 7. 5; 17. 9. 5; 20. 4. 6; 22. 8. 49; 25. 3. 23.

⁹ Hertz 1874, 267–268.

¹⁰ Owens 1956, 100.

¹¹ Vossius 1695, 619.

¹² Leumann 1977, 312; Zucchelli 1970, 34, n. 14.

¹³ Vertegaal 2015, 9.

¹⁴ Conrad 1930, 143. In his article he looks into Plautine words with diminutive suffixes which do have an appropriate "Gefühlswert" but do not denote small dimensions.

¹⁵ Still, the expression *quantas turbellas* in Pl. *Ps.* 110 provides a remarkable contrast thanks to the diminutive form, cf. Deufert 2002, 165.

¹⁶ Strodach 1933, 63, n. 18.

¹⁷ Hanssen 1951, 130.

GL 2. 87), *cum a nobis regeretur, ad magistros itabat; ab iis nunc magna fugella in ganeum fugit* (Apul. *Apol.* 98. 6). Apuleius is speaking here about his stepson Pudens who altered his behavior after he had fallen under Aemilianus' influence. Unfortunately, no context is known about *fugella* in Cato, though J. Hanssen believes that as *fugella* here does not refer to the real flight, Cato puts a diminutive next to *maxima* as a means of irony.

Still, in spite of the confidence of the above-mentioned researchers concerning the diminutive meaning in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, it is hard to see it in the *De Deo Socratis* and Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*, where he obviously borrows from Apuleius. The Groningen commentary on book VII of the *Metamorphoses* points out that the word "seems to have some diminutive force" as it is used in the plural.¹⁸ The diminutive meaning also fits the context quite nicely: the robber is eavesdropping on small groups of people discussing the robbery of Milo's house. On the other hand, the plural form does not really clarify the meaning in this case, especially when one notices that before Ammianus Marcellinus *turbela* is attested only in its plural form.

The question of diminutive undertones is closely related to the question of stylistic connotation: was *turbela* perceived as a vulgar or archaic word? R. T. Van der Paardt¹⁹ states that *turbela* is a diminutive and the suffix *-ela* is vulgar. L. Callebat did not agree with him, calling these statements "incertaine et arbitraire", but he never presented his own opinion on the topic.²⁰ Marking *-ela* as a vulgar suffix, R. T. Van der Paardt refers to H. Rönisch, who gives a list of nouns in *-ela*.²¹ They are indeed mainly attested in the Late Latin and in comedic writers of the archaic period. Nevertheless, it does not mean that one can label them as vulgar. For example, *loquela* can be found in works which can hardly be described as colloquial: Verg. *Aen.* 5. 842, Ov. *Tr.* 5. 2. 68, Lucr. 1. 39. It is more likely that *loquela* is a poetic word with an archaic tint: *quidam loquelam dixerunt verbum quod in loquendo efferimus* (Varro *Ling.* 6. 57). Horace names the Venus' companion Peitho *Suadela* (*Ep.* 1. 638). There can also be no doubt that Festus regards the *-ela* words as archaic: *confugelam antiqui confugium dicebant* (35 L), *custodelam dicebant antiqui, quam nunc dicimus custodiam* (44 L). As for *turbela*, it is improbable that it could be considered vulgar in Apuleius' *De Deo Socratis* or Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*.²² The Ernout-Meillet etymological dictionary marks as archaic such words as *medela*, *loquela*, *suadela*, *custodela*, *fugella*, leaving *turbela* unlabeled.²³ A lot of words in *-ela* are attested mostly in the late authors, a number of them being juridical terms (*mandatela*, *tutela*, *sequela*). The Institutes of Gaius preserved the following formula for the conveyance of property to a fiduciary: *familiam pecuniamque tuam endo mandatela tua custodelaque mea esse aio* (2. 104); and juridical formulas are likely to contain archaic terms, not vulgar.²⁴

¹⁸ Hijmans *et al.* 1981, 83.

¹⁹ Van der Paardt 1971, 203.

²⁰ Callebat 1972, 1105. L. Callebat did not include the word *turbela* in his treatise *Sermo cotidianus dans les Métamorphoses d'Apulée* (1968) which could mean that he did not consider it to be colloquial.

²¹ Rönisch 1869, 45–47.

²² Still, the Lewis and Short dictionary labels *turbela* (meaning 'a bustle, stir, row') as used "only in vulg. lang.": Lewis, Short 1891, 1917.

²³ However, it notes that the word was borrowed from Plautus by Apuleius: Ernout, Meillet 1951, 1251.

²⁴ *Turbela* is believed to be archaic by several researchers of Apuleian vocabulary, cf. Roncaioli 1966, 334; Gargantini 1963, 35.

Apuleius was definitely fond of the words in *-ela*, they are attested in all the extant works of his, but most often, in the *Metamorphoses*. For instance, we find *medela* 8 times in the *Metamorphoses*, once in the *Apologia*, once in the *De Platone*, *tutela* — 14 times in the *Metamorphoses*, 3 times in the *De Platone* and twice in the *De mundo*.²⁵ It is probable that Apuleius borrowed many of them from the archaic writers: a similar situation as with *turbela* can be found in other cases (before Apuleius *custodela* and *cautela* are attested only in Plautus, *fugela* — only in Cato). Tertullian also has an inclination to the nouns in *-ela*: in his works we find such hapaxes as *captatela*, *fovella*, *peccatella*.²⁶

It is natural that Apuleius felt the need for these words in order to provide greater lexical diversity. The fashion in which Apuleius puts together the words of different stylistic connotations shows that he uses the archaisms not so much as ancient elevated words, but as lexical elements which can strike the reader with the uncommonness in comparison with the usual vocabulary and give the sense of new and ever-changing form. Apuleius indeed likes to use different stylistically-colored cognates to describe the same objects and actions:

turba — *turbela* (archaic) — *turbula* (a non-diminutive coined by Apuleius)
affamen (poetic neologism) — *affatus*
altrinsecus (archaic) — *alterorsus* (neologism, cf. *altrovorsum* in Pl. *Cas.* 555)
amicimen (neologism) — *amicus*
antelucio (neologism) — *anteluculo* (hapax)
asinarius (probably with an archaic tint)²⁷ — *asininus* — *asinalis* (neologism)
barbitium (neologism) — *barba*
canto — *cantito* (archaic) — *cantilo* (neologism)
cantamen (poetic) — *cantatio* — *cantio*
capillitium (neologism) — *capillamentum* — *capillus*
cavillatus (neologism) — *cavillum*
circumcirca (archaic) — *circumsecus* (neologism)
commino (neologism) — *promino* (neologism) — *mino*
commorsico (neologism) — *demorsico* (neologism) — *morsico*
domuscula (neologism) — *domuncula*
efflicte (neologism) — *efflictim* (archaic)
famulitio (neologism) — *famulitium* (cf. *famuletium* in Paul. *Fest.* 77 L)
flammidus (neologism) — *flammeus*
gaudialis (neologism) — *gaudibundus* (neologism)
inalbeo (neologism) — *inalbo* (neologism, cf. *indalbo* in Enn. *Ann.* 212)
infans — *infantilis* (neologism) — *infantulus* (neologism)
meaculum (neologism) — *demeaculum* (hapax) — *remeaculum* (hapax)
meditatus (neologism) — *meditatio*
parciloquium (neologism, cf. Plautine *pauciloquium*, *parumloquium*)
*polentacius*²⁸ (neologism, cf. *polentarius* in Pl. *Curc.* 295)
postica (neologism) — *posticula* (hapax, cf. *posticulum* in Pl. *Trin.* 194; 1085)

²⁵ See also Piechotta 1882, 28–29.

²⁶ Vertegaal 2015, 38.

²⁷ Gargantini 1963, 34.

²⁸ A hapax (*Met.* 6. 19. 2), some editors prefer printing *polentarius*.

rumigo (neologism, cf. *rumino*)
salebritas (neologism, cf. *salebra*)
semiamputatus (neologism, cf. *semiputatus*)
semisopitus (neologism) — *semisomnus*
subterrenus (neologism) — *subterraneus*
supplicue (neologism) — *suppliciter*
susurramen (neologism) — *susurrus*
tegile (neologism, cf. *tegillum*)

Given all the above considerations, it is logical to say that Apuleius must have borrowed the word *turbela* from Plautus and regarded it as an archaism. The assumptions of its vulgar nature are largely based on two weak arguments: diminutive meaning (not evident from the works of Apuleius) and the abundance of nouns in *-ela* in the Late Latin and comedic writers. In actuality, these words are present in the writings of all periods, and their context does not suggest that they were a part of the colloquial lexicon.

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***Turbela* в романе Апулея**

Светлана Сергеевна Дубова

Санкт-Петербургский государственный университет,
Российская Федерация, 199034, Санкт-Петербург, Университетская наб., 7–9;
st042609@student.spbu.ru

В данной статье рассматривается слово *turbela* и его стилистическая окраска. После Плавта, который использует его в значении «суматоха», оно засвидетельствовано в произведениях Апулея и других поздних авторов. Среди исследователей нет общего мнения по поводу семантических и стилистических характеристик данного слова в «Метаморфозах». Даже если *turbela* является заимствованием из Плавта, у Апулея оно, очевидно, имеет другое значение («толпа») и едва ли может быть разговорным. В пользу того, что слово надо признать заимствованием, говорят и частые заимствования Апулеем лексики Плавта, и свидетельство Феста, который отмечает архаическую природу слова. Изменение значения не может служить помехой: перемену можно объяснить возможностью метонимического переноса, словесной игрой или переосмыслением. В дискуссии о семантике *turbela* значимость приобретает, кроме прочего, и орфографическая проблема — возможность *turbela* с геминатой (ll). Сходная трудность возникает при рассмотрении и других слов на *-ela*. Смешение абстрактных существительных на *-ela* и деминутивов на *-ella* обнаруживается уже в архаическую эпоху, поэтому разграничить слова *turbela* и *turbella* не представляется возможным. Утверждения о том, что суффикс *-ela* является просторечным, а само слово имеет уменьшительное значение, следует признать недостаточно обоснованными: как показывает контекст, в большинстве случаев ничто не указывает на уменьшительное значение *turbela*, а слова на *-ela* засвидетельствованы в текстах, в которых коллоквиализмы выглядели бы неуместными.

Ключевые слова: архаическая лексика, вульгаризмы, деминутивы, Апулей, Плавт, Аммиан Марцеллин.