Old Romanian pluralized mass and abstract nouns

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Abstract

The analysis of a rich old Romanian corpus shows that the 'pluralization' of mass and abstract nouns is extremely frequent in old Romanian. The semantic effects of pluralization are similar for mass and abstract nouns, consisting in the creation of denotative and/or connotative semantic variants. Of the plural endings, *–uri* is specialized for the pluralization of mass nouns in Daco-Romanian. The evolution of the ending *–uri* illustrates the specific process by which a grammatical (plural) morpheme is converted into a lexical morpheme (the so-called 'lexical plurals'). 'Lexical plurals' have isolated occurrences in other Romance languages, but they have not reached the spread and regularity they display in Romanian.

1. Introduction

Mass and abstract nouns have common semantic and morphosyntactic characteristics, which accounts for the fact that they are engaged in common phenomena (see 'pluralization' and its effects), as well as that they are analysed together (as in this article).

The objective of this article is to examine the phenomenon of pluralization of mass and abstract nouns, and its semantic and grammatical effects, on the basis of a rich corpus of old Romanian (1560–1780).

2. Mass nouns

2.1. Characteristic features

The inherent [+mass] feature influences the grammatical behaviour of nouns, in the sense that mass nouns are distinguished from prototypical ones as far as their inflection (Nedelcu, 2013, p. 260–261) and morphosyntax are concerned (Pană Dindelegan, 2016b, p. 324–332). One inflectional feature of mass nouns is represented by their inclusion in the class of uncountable nouns, most mass nouns having no plural [*singularia tantum* nouns (1a–d)] and, only very rarely, having no singular form [*pluralia tantum* nouns (2a–b)].

(1) a. unulu   amu   **auru** dăruindu,   şi   altulu   **argintu**,   e   altulu   **păine**
         one   now   gold   give.GER   and   another silver   and other   bread
         'one giving gold now, and another one silver and yet another one bread'
                    (CC².1581, 321/1)

     b. Şi   v-am   dat   voauo   **grîu**   şi   **vin**   şi   **unt**
         and   CL.DAT.2PL=have   given you.DAT grain   and wine   and butter
         'and I gave you grain and wine and butter'
                    (CLRV, 172ʳ)

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    c. ca   să   nu   mai   aducă   **sînge**   de   capră   și   de   vițel   și

       CA   SĂ$_{SUBJ}$ not   more   bring   blood   of   goat   and   of   calf   and

       cenușe   de   juncu

       ash   of   young.ox

       'to no longer bring goat and calf blood and the ash of young oxen'

              (Ev.1642, 317)

    d. **Miiare**, **lapte** din   pămînt   vor   izvorî

       honey   milk   from   ground   will   spring

       'honey, milk will spring from the ground'

              (DPar.1683, III/134^r)

(2)   a. era   tremiși   în   cetate   să   cumpere   **bucate**

       were   sent   in   city   SĂ$_{SUBJ}$ buy   food

       'they were sent in town to buy food'

              (CC^2.1581, 151)

    b. Și   le-au   trimis   de   sațîu   **merinde**

       and   CL.DAT.3PL=have   sent   of   enough   food

       'And they sent them food to have enough'

              (DPV.1673, 541)

Another feature of mass nouns, which singles out Romanian in Romance, concerns their ability to occur in argument positions without a determiner or, in other words, in 'bare' nominal phrases [see (3a)]. Just like Spanish, Portuguese and southern Italo-Romance (see Ramat & Ricca, 2016, p. 52–53), Romanian has not developed a partitive article. Differently from modern Romanian, in old Romanian, besides structures without a determiner (3a), structures with partitive *de* in argument positions also occur [(3b–c); Pană Dindelegan, 2016a, p. 330–331], constructions which disappeared from standard use at a later date.

(3)   a. Cerșu   elu   să   bea   **apă**

       asked   he   SĂ$_{SUBJ}$ drink   water

       'he asked to drink water'

              (CC^2.1581, 158)

    b. Să   bea   **de apa**   ce-i   voi   da   eu

       SĂ$_{SUBJ}$ drink   of   water   that=CL.DAT.3SG   will   give   I

       'to drink from the water that I shall give him'

              (CazV.1643, 158^v)

    c. Că   unii   aleg   **de bucate**:   un   fealiu   de   bucate   mănîncă

       because   some   choose   of   food   one   kind   of   food   eat

       'because some choose the food: they eat one kind of food'

              (CC^1.1567, 194^r)

2.2. *Pluralization of mass nouns*

Customarily, the pluralization of mass nouns triggers changes in meaning, which, implicitly, lead to 'demassification' (4a). Pluralization can sometimes interfere with gender variation [*marmurile*$_{F//N.PL}$ vs *marmurii*$_{M.PL}$ 'marble.PL' (4b–c)], with the same semantic-grammatical effect: change of meaning and implicitly, 'demassification'.

(4)   a. să-șu   ia   pre   cale   numai   un   toiagu,   nece   bucate,

       SĂ$_{SUBJ}$=CL.REFL.DAT.3PL   take   on   way   only   a   staff   neither   food

nece   pîine,   nece   pre   brăne   **arămi**[1]
nor   bread   nor   on   belts   copper.PL
'to take for the trip only a staff and no food, no bread, no belts adorned with copper'
        (CT.1560–1, 79ᵛ)

b. daca   s-au   luat   **marmurile**   de   pre   gropniţă
    when   CL.REFL.ACC.3PL=have   taken   marble.PL.DEF   of   on   grave
    au   luminatu   soarele   ş-acolo
    has   light.PPLE   sun.DEF   also=there
    'when they lifted the marble [tombstones] from the grave the sun lit that place too'
        (Cron.1689, 98)

c. stîlpii   şi   **marmurii**
    poles.DEF   and   marble.PL.DEF
    'the poles and the marble [slabs]'
        (DVS.1682–6, 96ʳ)

Of the plural endings, there is one which is specialized for the pluralization of mass nouns, attaching to both feminine and neuter mass nouns. This is the ending *–uri*, which, attached to the mass noun, ensures its pluralization and, implicitly, its change in meaning[2]. From a functional perspective, with such uses, the ending *–uri* is close to a lexical suffix, as it does not change only the inflectional features of the noun, but also its meaning. This phenomenon takes place exclusively in the dialects spoken north of the Danube[3] and can be traced back to the beginning of the 17th century, having its first attestation in 1620 [Frâncu, 1982; (5a)]; later, examples multiply and diversify (5b–j). The following types of pluralization can be distinguished:

(i) *–uri* is attached to certain roots of feminine mass nouns[4], and its effect is either a new denotative meaning, "type, variety of a certain substance" (5a–j), or a pejorative connotative value (6). But while the first category is old in Romanian (attested at the beginning of the 17th century), the second one has its first attestations in modern Romanian[5].

(5) a. *Şi* **carne**₁ *o dede tătarilor de o m<î>ncară, şi ziseră că <este> mai dulce de toate* **cărnurile**₂ *pre lume*[6] (A.1620, 24ᵛ)
      'And they gave the Tartars meat to eat and they said that it was sweeter than all the meats in the world'

    b. *Toate* **cărnurile** *sărate, cum spete, limbi, cîrnaţi, păstrămi* (CBuc.1749, 52ᵛ)
      'all the salty meats, such as shoulders, tongues, sausages, pastramis'

    c. *învăţătură de a face* **dulceţuri** (CBuc.1749, 59ʳ)
      'knowledge to make jams'

    d. *cînd va fi aproape de fiert, pune-i o mînă de* **erburi** *tocate* (CBuc.1749, 6ʳ)
      'when it is close to the boiling point, add some chopped herbs'

    e. *călţun cu sîrmă şi cu alte* **mătăsuri** (CDicţ.1691–7, 136)
      'shoe with wire and other silks'

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[1]One should separate the plural from the singular etymological form *arame* of the mass noun (*darul carele de la ei veţi lua: aur, argint,* **arame** 'the gift that you will take from them: gold, silver, copper', PO.1582, 190; *poarta cea de* **arame** 'the copper gate', Ev.1642, 209).

[2]Maiden (2014, p. 41) is the first to describe this new function of *–uri* as a 'derivational' rather than a grammatical one.

[3]Maiden (2015, p. 46) has noticed that, in contrast to Daco-Romanian, South-Danubian dialects (Megleno-Romanian and Aromanian) do not display the correlation between the extension of *–uri* to plural feminine nouns and the semantics of mass nouns, as *–uri* also occurs with non-mass nouns.

[4]See the complete list of feminine nouns with *–uri* in Maiden (2015, p. 44–45).

[5]For modern Romanian, see the detailed description of Avram (2003–2004).

[6]The two different forms occur in the same example; different meanings and, implicitly, different lexical units correspond to them.

f. *învățătură de a face multe feliuri de **sălături*** (CBuc.1749, 49ᵛ)
'knowledge to make many types of salad'

g. *căci **sîngiuri** multe ai vărsat preste pămînt înaintea Mea* (вв.1688, 302/XXII)
'because you shed much blood on earth in front of Me'

h. *țîitoare de **unsoruri*** (CDicț.1691–7, 321)
'recipient for grease'

i. *Și să mănînce cu adzîmă nedospită și cu **verdețuri** amară* (Cron.1689, 47)
'and they should eat it with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs'

j. *baie de zoaie, scăldătoare de **zoiuri*** (CDicț.1691–7, 493)
'bath of slops, tub of slops'

(6) *delicatețuri* 'delicacy.PL' (← *delicatețe* 'delicacy'), *gentilețuri* 'acts of kindness' (← *gentilețe* 'kindness'), *polițețuri* 'acts of politeness' (← *polițețe* 'politeness'), *străinătățuri* 'foreign countries' (← *străinătate* 'foreign countries'), *tandrețuri* 'acts of tenderness' (← *tandrețe* 'tenderness')

(ii) –*uri* attaches to some roots of *neuter* mass nouns, adding a different denotative effect: (i) "objects made from that substance" (7a–c); (ii) "sorts" (7d).

(7) a. *Au nu cu **arginture** te-ai tocmitu cu mine?* (ст.1560–1, 42ᵛ)
'Have you not bargained with me with silver coins?'

b. *Cînd vei vrea să speli **arginturile*** (CBuc.1749, 62ʳ)
'When you will want to clean the silverware'

c. *Untul de ceară (...) păstrează foarte bine **metalurile** de rugină* (CBuc.1749, 63ᵛ)
'Wax butter protects metal objects from rust very well'

d. *să să bea ca și alte **vinuri** noao* (CBuc.1749, 53ᵛ)
'one should drink them just other new types of wine'

Similar phenomena of 'lexical plurals' have been noticed in other Romance varieties (Asturian, Leonese, Neapolitan), being interpreted in the same way or differently (see Ramat & Ricca, 2016, p. 61). However, we need to point out that this phenomenon has not gained anywhere else the extension and regularity it has in the Romanian variants spoken north of the Danube.

In conclusion, for Romanian, in the case of feminine nouns, –*uri* functions mostly with a lexical role, being connected to the roots of mass nouns[7], while, in the case of neuter nouns, the ending –*uri* (or the inflectional morpheme sequence –*ur* + –*i*[8]) functions mostly as a grammatical device, marking the plural (the type *joc* – *jocuri* 'game – games', *loc* – *locuri* 'place – places', *lucru* – *lucruri* 'thing – things', *tablou* – *tablouri* 'painting – paintings') and only in rare cases, it also functions as a lexical suffix, when attached to the roots of mass nouns (*arginturi* 'silverware', *metaluri* 'metal objects', *vinuri* 'types of wine').

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[7]Without having the same extent, a similar use occurs in the case of plural feminine forms in –*(a)le*: the type *cosmeticale* 'cosmetics', *istericale* 'hysterical fits', *mitologicale* 'mythologies', *politicale* 'politics', *zaharicale* 'sweets' (Pană Dindelegan, 2009, p. 19), where the ending –*(a)le*, next to its association with the value "plural feminine", also bears a supplementary lexical value, adding a pejorative, ironical connotation to the formation. The process is similar, consisting in the conversion of a plural marker into a lexical marker.

[8]The type of analysis *timp-ur-i*, put forward in Maiden (2016a,b), allows one to detach two distinct plural morphemes: –*ur*– and –*i*, both indicating the feminine. Maiden's solution (2016a,b) takes into account the historic date, according to which, in the 16ᵗʰ century, in the inflectional complex –*ure*, the plural ending –*i* replaces the older ending –*e* (–*ure* > –*uri*: *timpure* > *timpuri* 'times'). The change –*e* > –*i* follows the same process observed with other feminine nouns (plurals like *bălți* 'pools', *boli* 'diseases', *gropi* 'holes', *răni* 'wounds', *roți* 'wheels', *tălpi* 'soles' replaced the older forms *balte, boale, groape, rane, roate, talpe*; many other non-standard forms like *băniți* 'units of measure', *catarămi* 'buckles', *crătiți* 'pots', *făbrici* 'factories', *hăini* 'coats', *înghețăți* 'ice creams' are used in parallel with older standard forms in –*e*). The double plural marking, with co-occurring inflectional markers, supports the idea that the Romanian plural is "hypermarked" or characterized by "extended exponence"; this means that plural marking is not limited to the ending, but also affects the root, making segmentation very difficult.

3. Abstract nouns

3.1. Characteristic features

Just like mass nouns, abstract nouns are inflectionally characterized by the fact that they are uncountable and morphosyntactically by their preferential occurrence in argumental structures with a bare determiner. Both characteristics have been attested since old Romanian.

3.2. Pluralized abstract nouns (the type **cinste** 'honesty', **miloste** 'mercy'))

The richness of abstract formations of Romanian, in general, and of old Romanian, in particular, has already been noticed (FCLRV; Pană Dindelegan, 2017), and it mainly represents the outcome of the rich inventory of abstract suffixes, many of them highly productive, and of the synonymy and competition among suffixes.

The propensity of old Romanian to frequently 'pluralize' abstract nouns is remarkable: instead of *singularia tantum* uses, characteristic for modern Romanian, abstract nouns occur frequently with a plural form[9] (see also Frâncu, 2009, p. 28). For the formations with a Slavic correspondent, one explanation that was given is that they were 'modelled after the plural form of corresponding Slavic words' (Candrea, 1916, p. CLXXXII).

Quite frequently, pluralized abstracts occur in a cascade; see (8), Chivu (1993, p. 176).

(8) a. *Carile sînt năravurile trupulu<i> ceal<ea> realele?* **Măriile, trufele, mîniile, uciderile, curviile (...), saltăturile (...), urgiile, clevetele** (CS.1609–18, 114ᵛ)
'Which are the bad habits of our bodies? Acts of haughtiness, pride, fits of anger, killings, acts of fornication, dances, acts of wrath, gossip'

b. *Nu spunem strîmbătățile (...),* **clevetirile, voile** *veghiiate,* **fățăriile, mozaviriile, vînzările** *și* **pîrăle** *ce facem unul altuia* (AD.1722–5, 85ᵛ)
'We do not tell about the wrong doings, intrigues, favourings, hypocrisies, calumnies, acts of treason and denounces that we cause to one another'

The plural is either identical with the singular, indicating that the noun is invariable (SG≡PL *blîndeațe* 'gentleness', SG≡PL *cinste* 'honour', SG≡PL *datoare* 'duty', SG≡PL *dragoste* 'love', SG≡PL *pace* 'peace' (9a–g), or different from the singular, following the model of feminine nouns with the singular in –*e* [*cinste – cinsti* 'honour – honours', *foamete – foameți* 'hunger – hunger.PL', *miloste – milosti* 'mercy – mercy.PL', *năpaste – năpăști//năpasti* 'calamity – calamities', *pace – paci* 'peace – peace.PL', *rușine – rușini* 'shame – shame.PL' (10a–o)] or of feminine nouns with the singular in –*ă* and the plural in –*e* [*măreață – măre(a)țe* 'haughtiness – haughtiness.PL', *sfadă – sfade* 'quarrel – quarrels', *slavă – slave* 'glory – glories' (11a–c)] or in –*i* [*pîră – pîri* 'denounce – denounces', *pizmă – pizmi* 'envy – envies', *gîlceavă – gîlcevi* 'quarrel – quarrels', *vrajbă – vrăjbi* 'wrath – wraths' (11d–h)]. Some pluralized abstracts have an oscillating form in plural contexts, occurring either as invariable nouns, or with a form that is different from the SG (PL *cinste // cinsti* 'honour.PL', PL *dragoste // dragosti* 'love.PL', PL *pace // paci* 'peace.PL', PL *pizme // pizmi* 'envy.PL').

(9) a. *Ascultați, oameni iubitori la oameni, adîncul și* **blîndeațele**ₚₗ.ᴅᴇꜰ[10] *ce feace Dumnedzău* (CLRV.1621–33, 195/170ʳ)
'Listen, humans loving humans, to God's deeds'

b. *ca să te ajute cu bani și cu alte multe* **cinste**ₚₗ (Dî.1600, XXXII)
'to help you with money and with many other honours'

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[9] One should notice that all the abstract nouns in (9)–(11) no longer occur with a plural form in modern standard Romanian.

[10] The other formations with the abstract suffix –*e(a)țe* are also included here: SG≡PL *bătrîneațe* 'old age', *tinereațe* 'youth'.

    c.   *Unde-s cinstele*$_{\text{PL.DEF}}$ *ceale de frunte?* (Mărg.1691, 145$^{\text{r}}$)
         'Where are the most important honours?'

    d.   *vor înpărți cinstele*$_{\text{PL.DEF}}$ (FN.1693–704, 167)
         'they shall divide the honours'

    e.   *pentru dragostele*$_{\text{PL.DEF}}$ *muierești* (Cron.1689, 27)
         'for women's love'

    f.   *Doamne, miluiaște noi cu pacele*$_{\text{PL.DEF}}$ *tale* (CL.1570, 8$^{\text{r}}$)
         'God, have mercy on us with your peace'

    g.   *nu iaste mai bună decîtu pacele*$_{\text{PL.DEF}}$ *și dragostele*$_{\text{PL.DEF}}$ (CC².1581, 129/33)
         'it is not better than peace and love'

(10) a.   *cu multe cinsti*$_{\text{PL}}$ *cinstiră* (CV.1563–83, 49$^{\text{v}}$)
         'they honoured them with many honours'

    b.   *și-i făcea trei cinsti*$_{\text{PL}}$ *și trei rușini*$_{\text{PL}}$ (FD.1592–604, 599$^{\text{r}}$)
         'and he did three honourable and three shameful deeds'

    c.   *la alte cinsti*$_{\text{PL}}$ (PA~1630, CAP.250)
         'for other honours'

    d.   *mai sus (…) decît toate cinstile*$_{\text{PL.DEF}}$ (DPar.1683, III/98$^{\text{r}}$)
         'more than all the honours'

    e.   *Laudele părinților și cinstile*$_{\text{PL.DEF}}$ (Mărg.1691, 4$^{\text{v}}$)
         'the parents' praises and their honour'

    f.   *fără alte cinsti*$_{\text{PL}}$ (FN.1693–704, 203)
         'without other honourable acts'

    g.   *îi sînt acestea necinsti*$_{\text{PL}}$ (FN.1693–704, 376)
         'these are his dishonourable acts'

    h.   *vor fi foameți*$_{\text{PL}}$ *și griji* (CT.1560–1, 99$^{\text{r}}$)
         'there will be times of famine and worries'

    i.   *Lăsa-voiu pre voi omet și geru greu și foameți*$_{\text{PL}}$ *și pară* (CLRV.1621–33, 195/171$^{\text{v}}$)
         'I shall set upon you snow and harsh frost and times of famine and fire'

    j.   *plinră de milosti*$_{\text{PL}}$ (CV.1563–83, 63$^{\text{v}}$)
         'full of mercy'

    k.   *și mai mare năpăști*$_{\text{PL}}$ *ne face* (DÎ.1599, XVIII)
         'and it causes us greater calamities'

    l.   *cîndu întru năpasti*$_{\text{PL}}$ *(…) cădeți* (CV.1563–83, 55$^{\text{r}}$)
         'when disasters happen to you'

    m.   *să lăsați (…) paci*$_{\text{PL}}$ *și tocmeale bune* (DÎ, CIII)
         'to leave peace and good agreements behind'

    n.   *Pacile*$_{\text{PL.DEF}}$ *lumiei tale dăruiaște besearecilor tale* (CL.1570, 42$^{\text{v}}$)
         'give the peace of your world to your churches'

    o.   *s-au prinsu la niscare rușini*$_{\text{PL}}$ (Mărg.1691, 1$^{\text{v}}$)
         'they agreed to do some shameful deeds'

(11) a.   *Cine iubeaște măreațele*$_{\text{PL.DEF}}$ *easte rob jucătorilor* (FD.1592–604, 576$^{\text{r}}$)
         'Whoever loves acts of haughtiness is a slave of jesters'

    b.   *Și începu fratele a face sfade*$_{\text{PL}}$ *cu starețul, dosădindu-l și zîcînd* (DVS.1682–6, 56$^{\text{v}}$)
         'And the monk started quarreling with the prior, making him sad and saying'

    c.   *le făgăduesc mari slave*$_{\text{PL}}$ *și cinsti* (FN.1693–704, 52)
         'I promise them great praises and honours'

    d.   *să lepădăm de la noi toate răutățile, toate pizmile*$_{\text{PL.DEF}}$ (CLRV.1621–33, 193/191$^{\text{r}}$)
         'to give up on all kinds of evil, all the envy'

    e.   *avînd Vladul pîrcălabul pîri*$_{\text{PL}}$ *și gîlcevi*$_{\text{PL}}$ *cu Stoica logofătul* (DRH,B.1645, XXX)

'as Vlad the nobleman and Stoica the nobleman denounced one another and fought with one another'

f. *la **clevete**_{PL}, la **zavistii**_{PL}, la **vrăjbi**_{PL} și **goniri**_{PL}* (AIP.1705, 4ʳ)
   'for gossip, for jealousies, for quarrels and oppressions'

g. *de faptele sale **cu amestecaturile**_{PL.DEF} ce avuse cu Racoții?* (CLM.1700–50, 295ᵛ)
   'of his deeds with the intrigues he had had with Racoții?'

h. *Că pe acea vreme ave **gîlcevi**_{PL} cu sfedzii* (NL~1750–66, 44)
   'because in that time he was quarrelling with Swedes'

Whenever they occur, plural forms are disambiguated either through the selection of the plural article (*blîndeațele* 'gentleness.PL.DEF', *cinstele* 'honour.PL.DEF', *dragostele* 'love.PL.DEF', *pacile* 'peace.PL.DEF'), or through their agreement with a proper adjective, a quantifier, a demonstrative or a possessive adjective, to whom they impose the feminine plural (*multe cinste* 'many.F.PL honours.F.PL', *toate cinstile* 'all.F.PL honours.F.PL.DEF', *dragostile muierești* 'love.F.PL women.F.PL' [women's loves], *pacile tale* 'your.F.PL peace.F.PL').

As far as the GEN-DAT.SG of abstract feminine nouns is concerned, old Romanian already shows the syncretism specific to Romanian feminine nouns and adjectives, namely GEN-DAT.SG≡NOM-ACC-GEN-DAT.PL. Since the plural of these nouns, when used, oscillates, the GEN-DAT.SG form reflects the same variation encountered in the plural, meaning that the genitive-dative is either invariable[11] [(12a–b): *cinste(i)* 'honour.GEN≡DAT'], or variable, with a form that is syncretic to the plural [(12c–d): *cinsti(i)* 'honour.GEN≡DAT'; (12e): *foameți(ei)* 'hunger.GEN≡DAT'].

(12) a. *unii dulceți și unii **cinste**_{GEN≡DAT.SG}* (CC².1581, 319/17)
       'to some gentleness and some honour'

   b. *mărirea aceștii **cinste**_{GEN.SG}* (Mărg.1691, 64ʳ)
      'the increase of this honour'

   c. *te aleasă Dumnedzău și te spodobi aceștiia **cinsti**_{DAT.SG}* (FN.1693–704, 371)
      'God chose you and considered you worthy of this honour'

   d. *te-au spodobit (=a considera demn) **cinstii**_{DAT.SG.DEF} aceștiia a firea împărat* (FN.1693–704, 376)
      'they considered you to be worthy of the honour of being emperor'

   e. *anii **foameției**_{GEN.SG.DEF}* (PO.1582, 112)
      'the years of hunger'

Frâncu (2009, p. 28) notices that, although they are present in different types of texts, pluralized abstract forms have a higher frequency in the northern regions. For example, the following pluralized abstracts occur in CV.1563–83, many of them disappearing from the language at a later stage; see examples such as: PL *lăsăciuri* 'forgiveness.PL' (CV.1563–83, 39ᵛ/6); PL *urăciuri(le)* 'blessings' (CV.1563–83, 62ᵛ/14); PL *clevete(le)* 'accusations, defamations' (CV.1563–83, 37ʳ/6, 72ᵛ/11); PL *milosti* 'mercy.PL' (CV.1563–83, 63ᵛ/7); PL *sfade(le)* 'quarrels' (CV.1563–83, 63ᵛ/14); PL *strasti* 'passion.PL' (CV.1563–83, 70ᵛ/14); *mîniicii(le)* 'immoral behaviour.PL' (CV.1563–83, 79ʳ/12; < *mîniac*; *apud* Costinescu, 1981, p. 190); *pîșenii(le)* 'arrogance' (CV.1563–83, 65ᵛ/14; < *pîșen* 'arrogant'; *apud* Costinescu, 1981, p. 192); *scîrbi* 'sufferance' (CV.1563–83, 70ʳ/10, 75ʳ/5).

In standard modern Romanian, the pluralized forms of abstract nouns are less frequently used, as these nouns behave like *singularia tantum*, so that the situation of invariability under (9) only occurs for the singular (see the forms recommended by the DOOM²: *cinstei* 'honour.GEN≡DAT', *foamei* 'hunger.GEN≡DAT', *foametei* 'hunger.GEN≡DAT', *onoarei* 'honour.GEN≡DAT', *setei* 'thirst.GEN≡DAT'). Even when they are used in the plural, pluralization is associated with different concrete meanings and even with gender changes (see *onoare*_F vs *onor*_N – *onoruri*_N 'honour.SG – honour.PL').

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[11]In the case of determined forms, the syncretism NOM-ACC.SG vs GEN-DAT.SG is resolved by the usage of the enclitic determiner (*cinstea* – *cinstei* 'honour.NOM≡ACC.DEF – honour.GEN≡DAT.DEF').

4. The pluralization of the collective noun zestre 'dowry'

This collective noun of Latin origin (< DEXTĔRÆ; Ciorănescu, 2003, p. 853) occurs in the law texts of the 17th century with syncretic forms for both numbers [(13a) vs (13b)]. Plural forms are the most frequent (13b–d); see the distribution of singular and plural forms in the table below. Distinguishing the singular from the plural is often done contextually, through the selection of a specialized article form (*dzeastrele* 'dowry.F.PL.DEF') or through adjectival agreement (**altă** *dzeastre* 'another.F.SG dowry' vs **aceale** *dzeastre* 'those.F.PL dowries').

(13)   a.   *să nu mai ceară **altă dzeastre**$_{SG}$* (PA~1630, 570)
            'not to ask another dowry'
       b.   *nu va lua nemică dentr-aceale **dzeastre**$_{PL}$* (Prav.1646, 113/27)
            'he will take none of that dowry'
       c.   *să-ş ia și **dzeastrele**$_{PL}$ toate cîte va fi avut* (PA~1630, 511)
            'to also take her dowry, all that she might have'
       d.   *să-și piardʒă muiarea toate **dzeastrele**$_{PL}$ ce va fi avînd* (Prav.1646, 110/3)
            'for the woman to lose all the dowry that she might have'

Text	*dzeastrele* F.PL	*dzestre(a)* F.SG	*dzestre* AMBIGUOUS (SG or PL?)
PA~1630	41	1	10
Prav.1646	30	3	2

Table 1: The plural form of the collective noun *zestre* 'dowry'

More than a century later, in Prav.1780, the singular forms are predominant (the singular of a collective noun): 8 attestations of the determined feminine form *zestrea/zestria* 'the dowry' (14a), 5 occurrences of the feminine form without a determiner, with the form being disambiguated as singular through agreement (14b), 5 forms of GEN-DAT.SG *zestrii/zestriei* 'dowry.F.SG.GEN≡DAT' (14c) and only one plural form (14d). The plural and the GEN-DAT.SG forms indicate the differentiation of the PL form (*zestre* 'dowry' – *zestri* 'dowry.GEN≡DAT.SG'). For modern standard Romanian, DOOM^2 does not indicate the plural form, which means that the noun is used as a *singulare tantum*.

(14)   a.   *mulțumită pe **zestrea** ce va fi luat* (Prav.1780, 98/27)
            'satisfied with the dowry that he may have taken'
       b.   *s-au mulțumit pe acea **zestre*** (Prav.1780, 94/6–7)
            'they were satisfied with that dowry'
       c.   *cîte lucruri de ale **zestri** să vor găsi* (Prav.1780, 94/17)
            'how many items that are part of the dowry will they find'
       d.   *cheltuielele **zestrilor*** (Prav.1780, 96/1)
            'the costs of dowries'.

5. Conclusions

– The phenomenon of pluralization of mass, abstract and collective nouns is extremely frequent in old Romanian.
– The pluralization of mass and abstract nouns often triggers a change in meaning and leads, in the case of mass nouns, to their 'demassification', and, in the case of abstract nouns, to 'de-abstractization' / 'concretization'.

- Daco-Romanian has developed a specialized ending, *–uri*, for the pluralization of mass nouns and, implicitly, for the change in meaning.
- The evolution of *–uri* (from the plural of feminine nouns – the type *mătăsuri* 'silks', *verdețuri* 'herbs', and from the plural of neuter nouns – the types *metaluri* 'metals', *vinuri* 'wines') shows a special process, that consists of converting a grammatical (plural) morpheme into a lexical one.
- Simultaneously, the ending *–uri* becomes ambiguous, as it expresses, cumulatively, two values: a grammatical (plural) one and a lexical (derivational) one.

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