How the syntactic change interferes on morphology: Romance plural isogloss
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I claim that romance plural isogloss (that is i/s markers) can be explained by means of syntactic change in the structure of Latin nouns. The change can be interpreted as a phrase loss.

Latin *rosās* structure is given in (1). I claim that the loss of both the case and *ThP* is responsible for the actual form of nominal plurals in modern Italian. Once *ThP* is lost, can the language still display a thematic vowel? And, are there any romance languages still having *ThP*? I claim that once *ThP* is lost, if a lexical vowel is still spelled out, it can be associated if there is a free V position (this is the case in Italian, cf. V in (2)). The theory also predicts that if such structures exist (with *ThP*), plural nouns exhibit the thematic vowel: this is the case in Portuguese (3).

I claim that Italian plural is [i] and that it has an apophonic origin. Latin [s] has no more place in the structure: a vowel is needed and the only possibility is apophony, cf. Guerssel & Lowenstamm (1996): Ø → i (cf. (2)). Plural /i/ merges with feminine /a/ giving [e], as described by the Theory of Elements (cf. [KLV] (1995, 1990)).

In (1), *case/num* node hosts accusative and plural marker; it is provided by a syllable CV. In all structures, *n* hosts the gender, as in Lowenstamm (to appear); it bears a syllable CV but in Italian (2). In Latin (1), Th bears the information about the declension. Via an agreement operation with *n*, a vowel appears (the so called thematic vowel). The declensions have disappeared; nevertheless Italian keeps a double distinction in the expression of gender:

- group {i}: -a for F and -o for M  
  *rosa/lupo*  ‘rose/wolf’

- group {ii}: -e for both genders  
  *cane/arte*  ‘dog/art’

The final vowel is spelled out via the agreement between Spec\(\sqrt{P}\) and *n* (cf. (2)). In Italian just one vocalic position is left available to morphology (underlined in (2)); otherwise, if the language doesn’t lose *ThP*, the structure still has a place for the expression of the thematic vowel (a syllable CV in *n*). Moreover, in Portuguese, *numP* still bears a syllable CV, as it was the case in Latin. Each CV hosted by functional categories represents a morpheme (cf. Lowenstamm, (to appear)); its loss means then that the morpheme disappears.

This situation allows a prediction: if a given language has the structure as in (2), plurality is restricted to a reduced core group of nouns as the free V is a property of the root stem; otherwise, if the language has the structure as in (3), there’s no restriction on pluralisation. This is actually the case, as Italian can’t pluralize loan words, oxytone and/or abridged ones as *film* ‘movie’, *città* ‘town’ and *moto(cicletta)* ‘motorbike’. None of these restrictions applies to Portuguese.

![Diagram](http://ifa.amu.edu.pl/plm/)

(1) Latin  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latin</th>
<th>Decl I, F, Acc, pl</th>
<th>‘roses’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>rosās</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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(2) Italian

\[
\text{rose} \quad \text{group \{i\}, F, pl} \\
\text{numP} \\
\text{num} [-sg] \\
\text{n} [+f] \\
\text{group \{i\}} \\
\sqrt{\text{P}} \\
\sqrt{\text{CV}} \quad \sqrt{\text{CV}} \\
\text{ROS} \\
\text{s} \\
\text{Agr} \\
\text{O} \rightarrow \text{i} \rightarrow \text{a} \\
\]

(3) Portuguese

\[
\text{rosas} \quad \text{F, pl} \\
\text{numP} \\
\text{num} [-sg] \\
\text{n} [+f] \\
\text{ThP} \\
\sqrt{\text{CV}} \quad \sqrt{\text{CV}} \\
\sqrt{\text{ThP}} \\
\sqrt{\text{CV}} \quad \sqrt{\text{CV}} \\
\text{ROS} \\
\text{s} \\
\text{Agr} \\
\text{O} \rightarrow \text{i} \rightarrow \text{a} \\
\]

Bibliography
[KLV], (1990), Constituent structure in phonology, Phonology Yearbook 7, 2:193-231.

