Plural marking within the Romance DP

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Many Romance languages and varieties show different patterns of partial or complete lack of plural agreement within the determiner phrase (DP). Apart from full number agreement between the determiner (D), the adjective (A) and the noun (N) (cf. (1)a), one can distinguish at least three other cases of plural marking: In some varieties (cf. Maritime Provencal in (1)b) plural is marked more than once inside the DP, but not on all (possible) elements, i.e. there is multiple but not full marking of plural. Other varieties (cf. the dialect of Villafranca in (1)c) allow instead only single plural marking within the DP. Varieties with multiple or single plural marking can be further subdivided depending on which DP-element is marked for plural. And finally, there are also instances where plural is not marked at all within a plural DP (cf. the dialect of of Licciana in (1)d).

(1) Types of plural marking in Romance (D-A-N or D-N-A)

a. Full marking   Sp.   *l-a-s   chic-a-s   guap-a-s*
                             the-F-PL   girl-F-PL   beautiful-F-PL
                             'the beautiful girls'

                      It.   *l-e   bell-e   ragazz-e*
                             the-F.PL beautiful-F.PL girl-F.PL
                             'the beautiful girls'

                      Port. *a-s   minin-a-s   bonit-a-s*
                             the.F-PL   girl-F-PL   beautiful-F-PL
                             'the beautiful girls'

b. Multiple marking MProv. *l-ei   bell-ei   fih-o*
                             the-[F].PL   beautiful-[F]PL   girl-F[PL]
                             'the beautiful girls'

c. Single marking   Vill. *l-a   bēl-i̧-a   skarp-a*
                             the-F[PL]   beautiful-PL-F   shoe-F[PL]
                             'the beautiful shoes'

d. No marking   Licc. *l-a   bèl-a   krav-a*
                             the-F[PL]   beautiful-F[PL]   goat-F[PL]
                             'the beautiful goats'
                             (also 'the beautiful goat')

These different possibilities of plural marking within the Romance DP has scarcely been addressed in the literature and poses problems for any kind of analysis proposed so far, regardless of the theoretical background. In this talk I present and classify several cases of lack of plural agreement or plural marking within the Romance DP and critically discuss several proposed analyses in the research literature and their non-applicability to these Romance varieties. I finally present an alternative analysis for two Romance varieties, Italo-Romance dialects of Lunigiana (Tuscany) and phonic French, where the exponent of the syntactic category Num° (i.e. the plural marker) is best analysed as a clitic-like element.