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**Ilja Serzants**  
(Universität Bergen)

**Referential, discursive  
and syntactic properties  
of the bare partitive genitive  
in Ancient Greek**

**27. Januar 2011, 17.45 Uhr**  
Meister-Ekkehart-Str. 7 (2. Stock links)

gez. Prof. Dr. José Luis García Ramón

gez. Dr. Daniel Kölligan

## **Abstract:**

The present paper aims to investigate the main semantical functional, discursive and syntactic properties of partitives on the bases of the bare (independent) partitive genitive in Ancient Greek. Contrary to the previous views that the bare partitive genitive (PG) primarily encodes a partitive relation I argue that the PG marks a participant as being un(der)determined as to reference, quantity and, partially, as to its theta role. This indeterminacy of the PG is only by default, i.e., the PG may take an overt determiner or quantifier and, hence, be definite in number and/or reference. The lack of determinacy mirrors the discourse functions of the PG: it makes the participant it refers to discursively inherently backgrounded while, at the same time, it “promotes” the underlying set to which the denoted participant belongs to in the discourse. This is why the PG is often found in generic use. As regards morphosyntax, the PG in Ancient Greek has a number of atypical, typologically rare features such as its ability to trigger verbal agreement (while being in the subject position) along its semantic number. Furthermore, the PG in the subject position behaves also otherwise as a nominative marked constituent: it can be coordinated with nominatives and it can agree with nominative case-marked participles.

Furthermore, the PG, in a way, “disturbs” the nominative-accusative alignment in that it can equally encode both intransitive subjects and transitive objects, levelling out, thereby, the morphological distinction between S and O (in Dixon’s terms).