

The Vocative Case¹

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————— **DEFINITION** ————— *ExSyn* 65–66

The vocative is the case used for addressing someone or, on occasion, for uttering exclamations. It technically has no syntactical relation to the main clause. In this respect it is much like the nominative absolute.

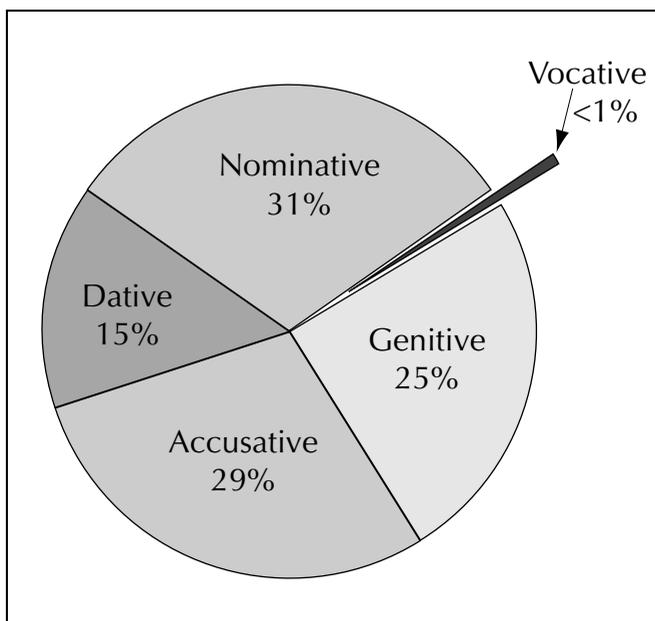


Chart 5
Frequency of Cases in the New Testament²

¹ See *ExSyn* 65–71. The vocative in exclamations (70) is a rare and disputed category; the average intermediate Greek student can ignore it.

² The breakdown of vocatives is as follows: 292 nouns, 0 pronouns, 0 articles, 1 participle (Acts 23:3), 24 adjectives.

As in English, the connotations of direct address vary on the circumstances, ranging from delight to astonishment to anger. Although the context plays a major role in determining the force of the vocative, the absence or presence of $\hat{\omega}$ is also significant (see below).

————— SPECIFIC USES —————

ExSyn 67–71

There are two basic uses of the vocative: direct address and apposition. The second category, as in all simple appositions, is not really a separate syntactical category (for the case merely “piggy-backs” on the substantive to which it is in apposition). The first category, direct address, is by far the most frequent use.

There are two main keys to remembering the use and significance of the vocative. (1) *Without* $\hat{\omega}$ preceding it (except in Acts), the vocative is simple address. (2) *With* $\hat{\omega}$ preceding it (except in Acts), the vocative is emphatic address or vocative of exclamation.

Vocative as Direct Address

ExSyn 67–70

A substantive in the vocative is used in direct address to designate the addressee. Except for two texts in the NT, the addressee is always personal. This category may be divided into two main subgroups. The first category is used frequently; the second, only nine times.

1. Simple Address

ExSyn 67–68

a. Definition. This is the use of the vocative *without* $\hat{\omega}$ preceding it. For the most part, no special significance is to be attached to the use of the vocative in such instances. (In many instances, however, there will obviously be great emotion in the utterance. In such cases, the context will be determinative.)

b. Illustrations

Matt 9:22 $\acute{\omicron}$ Ἰησοῦς . . . εἶπεν, Θάρσει, **θυγάτερ**· ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε.

Jesus said, “Take heart, **daughter!** Your faith has saved you.”

Heb 1:10 Σὺ κατ’ ἀρχάς, **κύριε**, τὴν γῆν ἐθεμελίωσας
You, **Lord**, established the earth in the beginning

2. Emphatic (or Emotional) Address

ExSyn 68–69

a. Definition. This is the use of the vocative *with* $\hat{\omega}$ preceding it. Here the presence of the particle $\hat{\omega}$ is used in contexts where deep emotion is to be found.

b. Illustrations

Matt 15:28 $\acute{\omicron}$ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτῇ, **ὦ γύναι**, μεγάλη σου ἡ πίστις
Jesus said to her, ‘**O woman**, great is your faith!’

Jas 2:20 θέλεις δὲ γνῶναι, **ὦ ἄνθρωπε κενέ**, ὅτι ἡ πίστις χωρὶς τῶν ἔργων ἀργή ἐστίν;
Do you want to learn, **O empty man**, that faith without works is worthless?

3. The Exceptional Usage in Acts

ExSyn 69

Classical Greek was different from Hellenistic Greek in the use of the vocative in two ways: (1) the vocative with **ὦ** was unmarked—that is, it was the normal usage, employed in polite or simple address; (2) the vocative, whether with or without **ὦ**, was usually located deep in the sentence rather than at the front. Hellenistic usage has reversed especially the first trend, but also, to some degree, the second. Thus, generally speaking, **ὦ** with the vocative, is marked or used for emphasis, emotion, etc., and the vocative is usually near the front of the sentence. The usage in Acts is more like the classical norm than typical Koine. One cannot say, however, that this is due to Luke's more literary Koine, precisely because *the idiom occurs only in Acts, not in Luke*. For **ὦ** in the middle of a sentence without emphasis, see Acts 1:1; 18:14; 27:21; for **ὦ** at the beginning of a sentence, where it is emphatic, see Acts 13:10.

Vocative in Apposition

ExSyn 70–71

4. Apposition

ExSyn 70–71

a. Definition. The substantive in the vocative case can stand in apposition to another vocative. In such instances the first vocative will most likely be a direct address. The presence of an appositional vocative almost always indicates that the whole vocative construction is emphatic/emotional address rather than simple address.

b. Illustrations

Acts 1:24 Σὺ κύριε, **καρδιογνώστα** πάντων, ἀνάδειξον ὃν ἐξελέξω ἐκ τούτων τῶν δύο ἕνα
You, Lord, **Knower of the hearts** of all men, show us which of these two you have chosen

Rev 22:20 Ναί, ἔρχομαι ταχύ. Ἀμήν, ἔρχου, κύριε **Ἰησοῦ**.
Yes, come quickly. Amen, come Lord **Jesus!**

The Genitive Case¹

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¹ See *ExSyn* 72–136. The following genitives are rare categories that the average intermediate Greek student can ignore: genitive of destination (100–101), genitive of production/producer (104–6), genitive of product (106–7), genitive of price (122), genitive of place/space (124–25), and genitive after certain nouns (135).

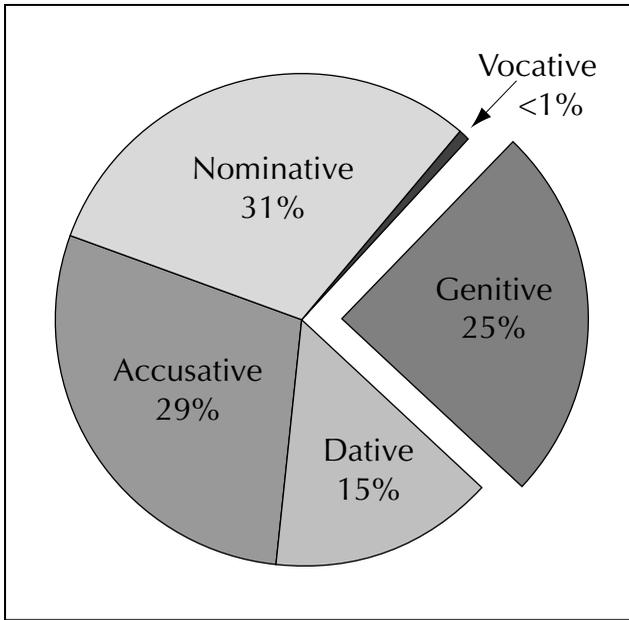


Chart 6
Frequency of Cases in the New Testament²

INTRODUCTION

ExSyn 73–77

Preliminary Remarks

1. Relation to the English Preposition “Of”

The genitive case is one of the most crucial elements of Greek syntax to master. Fortunately, for English speakers, many of the uses of the Greek genitive are similar to our preposition “of.” This not only makes learning the genitive easier, but it also makes it easier to explain to a lay audience the meaning of a passage that might hinge, in part, on the use of a genitive. For example, in Rom 8:35, when Paul wrote, “What shall separate us from the love of Christ?” it is clear in both English and Greek that he meant “the love Christ has for us” rather than “the love we have for Christ.”

At the same time, we should be cautioned that the Greek genitive has some different uses from the English “of” (e.g., comparison, purpose, etc.). Explaining such to a lay audience needs to be handled carefully, especially when your interpretation differs from the “of” translation the audience is using. Further, only with diligence and a desire to look at the text from the Greek viewpoint will you be able to see for yourself such interpretive possibilities.

² The genitive breakdown is as follows: 7681 nouns, 4986 pronouns, 5028 articles, 743 participles, 1195 adjectives.

2. Semantics and Exegetical Significance of the Genitive Case

Learning the genitive uses well pays big dividends. It has a great deal of exegetical significance, far more so than any of the other cases, because it is capable of a wide variety of interpretations. This, in turn, is due to three things: elasticity in its uses, embedded kernels, and antithetical possibilities.

a. Elasticity. The genitive is more elastic than any other case, able to stretch over much of the syntactical terrain. In part this is due to this one form encompassing what are frequently two case-forms in other Indo-European languages (viz., genitive and ablative—the “of” and “from” ideas).

b. Embedded kernels. Language, by its nature, is compressed, cryptic, symbolic. One of the areas of great ambiguity in language involves the genitive case. Genitives are routinely used in compressed situations that need to be unpacked. The genitive is typically related to another substantive. But what that relation involves can be quite varied. “The revelation of Jesus Christ,” “the love of God,” “children of wrath,” “mystery of godliness” are all capable of more than one interpretation precisely because “of” covers a multitude of semantic relationships. In essence, the Noun-Noun_{gen.}³ construction is used to compress a number of different sentence types (such as subject-predicate nominative, transitive verb-direct object, subject-transitive verb, etc.). A large part of our task in this chapter is to *unpack* the N-N_g construction.

c. Antithetical possibilities. Unlike the nominative and vocative cases (whose structural clues are generally sufficient to show which usage is involved), the genitive case typically requires a nuanced examination of context, lexical meanings of the words involved (i.e., in the N-N_g construction), and other grammatical features (such as articularity or number). Furthermore, in certain constructions (such as those that involve a “verbal” noun) the meaning possibilities can be somewhat antithetical. Thus, “revelation of Christ” can be unpacked to mean “the revelation *about* Christ” or “the revelation *from* Christ.” Because of such widely divergent nuances, the genitive case requires careful examination.

Definition of the Genitive Case: The Unaffected Meaning⁴

1. A Note About Oblique Cases in General

The genitive is distinct from the accusative. The difference between these two is generally twofold: (a) The “genitive limits as to kind, while the accusative limits as to extent.”⁵ Another way to put this is that the genitive limits as to *quality*

³ Traditionally called *nomen regens-nomen rectum* or head noun-gen. noun. We will use compressed and symbolic terminology: from here on called N-N_g.

⁴ That is, unaffected by context, genre, lexical intrusions, etc. This is the meaning the gen. would have if it were seen in isolation.

⁵ Dana-Mantey, 73.

while the accusative limits as to *quantity*. (b) The genitive is usually related to a noun while the accusative is usually related to a verb.

The genitive is distinct from the dative. While the force of the genitive is generally adjectival, the force of the dative is basically adverbial. There is some overlap between the uses of these cases, but these distinctions should help you to see more clearly the significance of each case. Also, the genitive is usually related to a noun, while the dative (as the acc.) is usually related to a verb.

2. Within the Eight-Case System

In the eight-case system, the genitive defines, describes, qualifies, restricts, limits. In this respect it is similar to an adjective, but is more emphatic. One should note that several grammars and commentaries assume the eight-case system; when they speak of the genitive, this is all they mean (i.e., the ablative notion of separation is not included). But for those that embrace the five-case system, a more encompassing definition is needed.

3. Within the Five-Case System

Since the genitive and ablative have the same form, we shall consider them both as *one* case (“case” being defined as a matter of form rather than function). In some respects, the definition of the genitive case in the five-case system simply combines genitive and *ablative* from the eight-case system. The ablative notion is fundamentally that of *separation*. This is the *from* idea.

Another way to view the genitive case is to see all uses, both adjectival and ablative, generating from one idea. Whether such a root idea was that of possession, or restriction, or some other notion, is of greater interest to the philologist (and the field of diachronics) than the exegete. In Hellenistic Greek, the *of* idea and the *from* idea are usually distinct—so much so that the ablative concept is increasingly expressed with *ἀπό* or *ἐκ* rather than with the “naked” genitive form. (In the least, this suggests a growing uneasiness on the part of Koine speakers to use the gen. case to express the idea of separation.⁶)

Therefore, under the five-case system, the genitive case may be defined as *the case of qualification (or limitation as to kind) and (occasionally) separation*.

SPECIFIC USES

ExSyn 77–136

Our approach to the genitive is to break its uses down into a few major categories with many subgroups under each of these. This approach (followed by many grammarians) is helpful in showing the similarities that different types of genitives have toward one another.

⁶ Some grammars mix the naked case uses with those of preposition + case (e.g., Brooks-Winbery, 7–64).

N.B. The layout in this chapter may seem a bit industrious. The immediate reaction of looking at the following categories might be to rush through the material before the categories, like rabbits, multiply any further! What appears at first glance to be microscopic hair-splitting is governed by the principles of *semantic reality* and *exegetical significance*. That is, in light of the great diversity of established uses of the genitive, as well as of the often profound exegetical significance that this case can play in given texts, an acquaintance with these categories is justified.

Adjectival

ExSyn 78–107

This broad category really touches the heart of the genitive. If the genitive is primarily descriptive, then it is largely similar to the adjective in functions. However, although the genitive is primarily adjectival in force, it is more emphatic than a simple adjective would be.

†1. Descriptive Genitive (“Aporetic” Genitive⁷) [characterized by, described by]

ExSyn 79–81

a. Definition and amplification. The genitive substantive describes the head noun in a loose manner. The nature of the collocation of the two nouns in this construction is usually ambiguous.

The descriptive genitive is the “catch-all” genitive, the “drip pan” genitive, the “black hole” of genitive categories that tries to suck many a genitive into its grasp! In some respects, *all adjectival genitives are descriptive, yet no adjectival genitive is descriptive*. That is to say, although all adjectival genitives are, by their nature, descriptive, few, if any, belong only to this specific category of usage. This use truly embodies the root idea of the (adjectival) genitive. It is often the usage of the genitive when it has not been affected by other linguistic considerations—that is, when there are *no* contextual, lexemic, or other grammatical features that suggest a more specific nuance.

Frequently, however, it is close to the attributive genitive, being either *other than or broader than* the attributive use. (See chart 7 below.) Hence, this use of the genitive should be a *last resort*. If one cannot find a *narrower* category to which a genitive belongs, this is where he or she should look for solace.

b. Key to identification. For the word *of* insert the paraphrase *characterized by* or *described by*. If this fits, and if *none* of the other uses of the genitive fits, then the genitive is probably a genitive of description.⁸

⁷ That is, the “I am at a loss” gen. (from the Greek word, ἀπορέω, “I am at a loss,” a tongue-in-cheek title suggested to me by my colleague, J. Will Johnston).

⁸ Commentators are often fond of merely labeling a gen. as “descriptive” without giving any more precision to the nuance involved. We suggest that an attempt at least ought to be made to see if a given gen. plugs into another category.

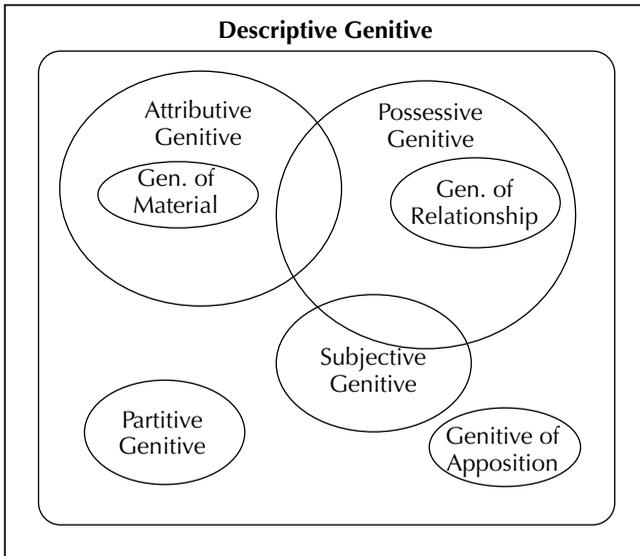


Chart 7
The Relation of Descriptive Genitive
to Various Other Genitive Uses

c. Illustrations

- John 2:16 μὴ ποιεῖτε τὸν οἶκον τοῦ πατρὸς μου οἶκον **ἐμπορίου**
Do not make my Father's house into a house **of merchandise**
The idea is "a house in which merchandise is sold."
- 2 Cor 6:2 ἐν ἡμέρᾳ **σωτηρίας**
in [the] day **of salvation**
This cannot be an attributive gen., for then the idea would be "a *saved* day"! A day that is "characterized by" salvation is acceptably clear.
- Rev 9:1 ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ἡ κλεῖς **τοῦ φρέατος** τῆς ἀβύσσου
the key **to the shaft** of the abyss was given to him
This is not a possessive gen., even though our idiom "belongs to" fits (for the shaft does not possess the key). The idea is "the key *that opens* the shaft of the abyss."

➔2. Possessive Genitive [belonging to, possessed by]

ExSyn 81–83

a. Definition. The substantive in the genitive possesses the thing to which it stands related. That is, in some sense the head noun is owned by the genitive noun. Such ownership at times can be broadly defined and need not imply the literal (and sometimes harsh) idea of possession of physical property. This usage is common.

b. Key to identification and amplification. Instead of the word *of* replace it with *belonging to* or *possessed by*. If this paraphrase fits, then the genitive is probably a genitive of possession.

Although this category can be broadly defined, it really ought to be used only when a genitive cannot fit more neatly under some other category (it will still be of common occurrence). A genitive should not be labeled possessive unless this is the *narrowest* sense it can have. If it is related to a verbal noun, then it is probably objective or subjective.⁹ Further, possessive *pronouns* will be the primary words used for the genitive of possession. In fact, when you see a possessive pronoun you can *usually* assume that its primary nuance is that of possession.

c. Illustrations¹⁰

Matt 26:51 αὐτοῦ τὸ ὠτίον his ear

John 20:28 Θωμᾶς εἶπεν αὐτῷ, ὁ κύριός μου καὶ ὁ θεός μου
Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God”

The idea of possession in such expressions is not to be pressed in the sense that the Lord is owned fully by Thomas. But in a broad sense, the Lord belongs to Thomas—now, on this occasion, in a way not true before.

3. Genitive of Relationship

ExSyn 83–84

a. Definition and key to identification. The substantive in the genitive indicates a *familial* relationship, typically the progenitor of the person named by the head noun. This category is not very common.

This is a subset of the possessive genitive (see chart 7 above for a visual representation). The key to determining whether or not a possessive genitive is a genitive of relationship is (1) whether the noun to which the genitive is related is a *family* relation noun (e.g., son, mother, etc.) or (2) whether the noun to which the genitive is related is *understood* (i.e., must be supplied from the context) and what one supplies is a family relation noun, then the possessive genitive is a genitive of relationship. As well, the genitive noun is routinely a proper name.

Often, especially in the Gospels, the noun related to the genitive is to be supplied. If so, the genitive alone *usually* suggests the idea of “who comes from” or

⁹ My colleague, Dr. John Grassmick, has suggested the following scheme: The subjective gen., possessive gen., and the gen. of source are closely related. Other things being equal, and if the context allows, *possession* takes precedent over source, and the *subjective* gen. takes precedent over possession *when* a verbal noun is involved.

¹⁰ Several grammars suggest that references such as “children of God” (John 1:12), “apostle of Christ Jesus” (2 Cor 1:1); “their brothers” (Heb 7:5), and “prisoner of Christ Jesus” (Eph 3:1) embody possessive genitives. All of these are indeed genitives of possession, but their nuances also go *beyond* mere possession. E.g., “children of God” is a gen. of relationship; “apostle of Christ Jesus” is also subjective gen. (indicating that Christ Jesus sent out Paul). Hence, although in a broad sense the gen. of possession is common, in a narrow sense the instances are more restricted.

“who is a descendant of.” Thus, when the noun to which the genitive is related is *not* named, it can usually be assumed that the genitive alone speaks of the ancestor.

b. Illustrations

John 21:15 Σίμων Ἰωάννου

Simon, [son] **of John**

Luke 24:10 Μαρία ἡ Ἰακώβου

Mary, the [mother] **of James**¹¹

➔4. **Partitive Genitive (“Wholative”) [which is a part of]**¹² ExSyn 84–86

a. Definition and explanation. The substantive in the genitive denotes *the whole of which* the head noun is a part. This usage is relatively common in the NT. Instead of the word *of* substitute *which is a part of*.

The semantics of this usage require a twofold explanation. First, this is a phenomenological use of the genitive that requires the head noun to have a lexical nuance indicating *portion*. For example, “some of the Pharisees,” “one of you,” “a tenth of the city,” “the branch of the tree.” Second, the partitive genitive is *semantically the opposite of the genitive of apposition*. While the partitive designates the whole of which the head noun is a part, the genitive of apposition designates a particular within the class described by the head noun. The important thing to keep in mind here is that, though semantically opposite, they can be structurally identical.

b. Illustrations

Luke 19:8 τὰ ἡμίσιά μου τῶν ὑπαρχόντων half **of my possessions**

Rom 15:26 τοὺς πτωχοὺς τῶν ἁγίων the poor **of the saints**

➔5. **Attributive Genitive (Hebrew Genitive, Genitive of Quality)** ExSyn 86–88

a. Definition. The genitive substantive specifies an *attribute* or innate quality of the head substantive. It is similar to a simple adjective in its semantic force, though more emphatic. The category is common in the NT, largely because of the Semitic mind-set of most of its authors.

b. Key to identification. If the noun in the genitive can be converted into an attributive adjective modifying the noun to which the genitive stands related, then the genitive is likely an attributive genitive.

Semantically, there are three important points to know about attributive genitives: (1) This genitive is more emphatic than an adjective would have been.

¹¹ Occasionally, the genitive speaks of descendant rather than ancestor, as here. Cf. also Mark 16:1.

¹² The term “partitive” is confusing, for it suggests that the gen. itself will designate the part of which the head noun is the whole. Hence, it has been suggested that “wholative” is a better designation.

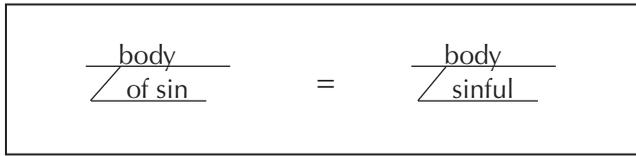


Chart 8
The Semantics of the Attributive Genitive

Thus, although the denotation is the same, the connotation is not. “Body of sin” has a stronger force than “sinful body.” (2) The genitive of *material* is technically a subset of the attributive genitive, but it involves other nuances as well. If a genitive could be classified as either attributive or material, it should be classified as the latter. (3) Certain words are frequently found in this construction, such as σῶμα as a head noun or δόξης as the genitive term.

c. Illustrations

Rom 6:6 τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας
body of sin (= “sinful body”)

Rom 8:21 τὴν ἐλευθερίαν τῆς δόξης τῶν τέκνων τοῦ θεοῦ
the freedom of the glory of the children of God (= “the glorious freedom of the children of God”)

Normally in gen. chains (a.k.a. concatenative genitives) each successive gen. modifies the one that precedes it, but there are many exceptions, especially with δόξης.

Jas 2:4 ἐγένεσθε κριταὶ διαλογισμῶν πονηρῶν
you have become judges with evil motives

The idea here is not “you have become judges of evil motives” (which would be an objective gen.). But the translation “evil-motivated judges” is cumbersome. This illustrates the fact that one should think about the *sense* of the passage more than merely do a translational gloss.

6. The Attributed Genitive

ExSyn 89–91

a. Definition. This is just the opposite, semantically, of the attributive genitive. The head noun, rather than the genitive, is functioning (in sense) as an attributive adjective. Although rarer than the attributive genitive, this is not altogether uncommon.

b. Key to identification. If it is possible to convert the noun to which the genitive stands related into a mere adjective, then the genitive is a good candidate for this category. One simple way to do this conversion is to omit the *of* in translation between the head noun and genitive and change the head noun into its corresponding adjective. Thus “newness of life” becomes “new life.”

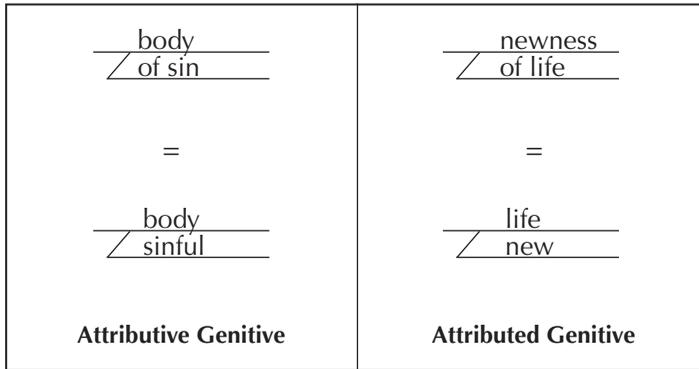


Chart 9

A Semantic Diagram of the Attributive Genitive and Attributed Genitive

c. Illustrations

- Phil 1:22 τοῦτό μοι καρπὸς ἔργου
 this [will mean] [the] fruit **of labor** to me
 Here “the fruit of labor” = “fruitful labor.” An attributive gen. would mean “laboring fruit”!
- 1 Pet 1:7 τὸ δοκίμιον ὑμῶν **τῆς πίστεως** πολυτιμότερον χρυσοῦ
 the genuineness **of your faith** that is much more precious than gold
 The idea is that their genuine faith is more precious than gold.

7. Genitive of Material [made out of, consisting of]

ExSyn 91–92

a. Definition and key to identification. The genitive substantive specifies the material out of which the head noun is made. This usage is rare in the NT (the notion of material is somewhat more frequently stated with ἐκ + gen.).

Replace the word *of* with the paraphrase *made out of* or *consisting of*. If this paraphrase fits, the genitive is probably a genitive of material.

b. Illustrations

- Mark 2:21 ἐπίβλημα **ῥάκους** ἀγράφου
 a patch [made out] **of unshrunk cloth**
- Rev 18:12 γόμον **χρυσοῦ** καὶ **ἀργύρου** καὶ **λίθου** τιμίου
 cargo **of gold** and **silver** and precious **stone** (= cargo *consisting of* gold and silver and precious stone)

8. Genitive of Content [full of, containing]

ExSyn 92–94

a. Definition and key to identification. The genitive substantive specifies the contents of the word to which it is related. This word may be either a noun, adjective or verb. This is fairly common in the NT.

If the word to which this genitive is related is a noun, replace the word *of* with the paraphrase *full of* or *containing*. If the word is a verb, the typical translational force of the genitive is *with*. (This key is not as helpful as the others, for there are many exceptions. For this category, the real key is to notice the lexical nuance of the word to which the gen. is related.)

Two other points to note: (1) There are *two* kinds of genitive of content: one related to a noun or adjective (*nominal* gen. of content), the other to a verb (*verbal* gen. of content).¹³ A genitive of content is a lexico-syntactic category in that the verb or head noun will be a term indicating *quantity*¹⁴ (e.g., for verbs: γέμω, πίμπλημι, πληρώω; for nouns/adjectives: βαθός, μέστος, πλήρης, πλήρωμα, πλούτος, etc.). (2) The nominal genitive of content is distinct from the genitive of material in that content indicates the item contained while material indicates the material made out of. The figure below illustrates this difference.

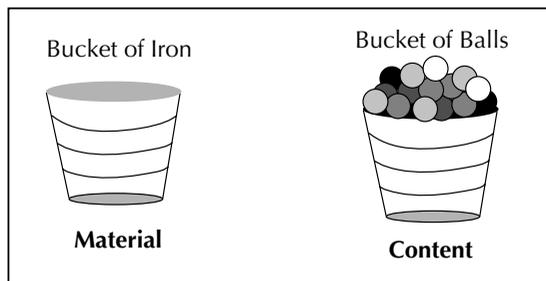


Figure 10
Genitive of Content Vs. Genitive of Material

The important thing to remember for the *verbal* use is that *in Greek the genitive, rather than the dative, is the case used to indicate the content of a verb*. Thus although the dative can frequently be translated “with,” when a verb of filling is used, it is vital to examine the Greek text to see whether a genitive or dative substantive follows. If it is genitive, the translation “with” is appropriate; if a dative, some other translation (such as “by, in, because of”) better reflects the Greek idiom—because *the dative case does not indicate the content of the verb*.

b. Illustrations

(1) NOMINAL GENITIVE OF CONTENT

John 21:8 τὸ δίκτυον **τῶν ἰχθύων** the net [full] of fish
 Col 2:3 πάντες οἱ θησαυροὶ **τῆς σοφίας καὶ γνώσεως**
 all the treasures of **wisdom and knowledge**

¹³ Most grammars treat the verbal type under gen. direct object (with verbs of filling). Though that is an equally valid location, to list it only there would not be as helpful (since it is an important category in its own right, exegetically as well as syntactically).

¹⁴ For the nominal usage, “the word to which the genitive is related implies a quantity or amount of the thing in the genitive, rather than being a container which is actually containing something” (Williams, *Grammar Notes*, 6).

(2) VERBAL GENITIVE OF CONTENT

John 6:13 ἐγένευσαν δώδεκα κοφίνους **κλασμάτων**
they filled twelve baskets **with fragments**

Acts 2:4 ἐπλήσθησαν πάντες **πνεύματος ἁγίου**, καὶ ἤρξαντο λαλεῖν
ἐτέρας γλώσσαις
all were filled **with the Holy Spirit** and they began to speak in
other tongues

➔9. Genitive in Simple Apposition

ExSyn 94

See the following section for a discussion of this genitive use and the genitive of apposition. These two need to be distinguished carefully. (It should be noted that the gen. in simple apposition is a legitimate category, but because of confusion over its semantics we are treating it in the next section.) Simple apposition requires that both nouns be in the same case (whether nom., gen., dat., acc., voc.), while the genitive of apposition requires only the second noun to be in the genitive case. If the syntax of the sentence requires the head noun to be in the genitive, a possibility of confusion between these two appositional uses results.

➔10. Genitive of Apposition (Epexegetical Genitive, Genitive of Definition)

ExSyn 95–100

This use of the genitive is common, though largely misunderstood. It is sometimes lumped in together with the genitive of content or the genitive of material, though there are legitimate semantic differences among all three categories. It is also often confused with the genitive in simple apposition.

a. Definition. The substantive in the genitive case refers to the same thing as the substantive to which it is related. The equation, however, is not exact. The genitive of apposition typically states a specific example that is a part of the larger category named by the head noun. It is frequently used when the head noun is ambiguous or metaphorical.

b. Key to identification. Every genitive of apposition, like most genitive uses, can be translated with *of* + the genitive noun. To test whether the genitive in question is a genitive of apposition, replace the word *of* with the paraphrase “which is” or “that is,” “namely,” or, if a personal noun, “who is.” If it does not make the same sense, a genitive of apposition is unlikely; if it does make the same sense, a genitive of apposition is likely.¹⁵

c. Semantics: genitive of apposition distinct from simple apposition. With appositional genitives (both kinds), usually two kinds of *subject-predicate nomina-*

¹⁵ The next step, of course, is to analyze this and other possibilities by way of sound exegesis.

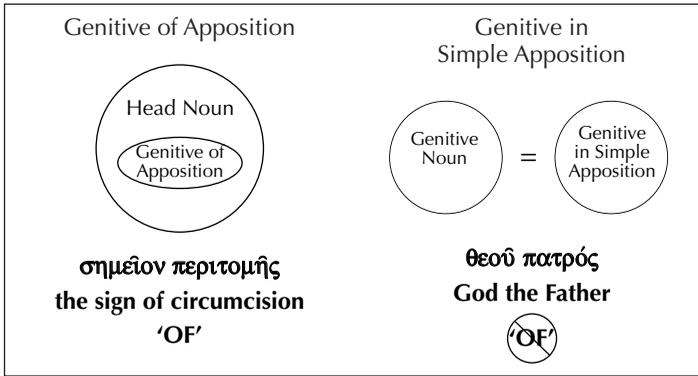


Chart 11
Genitive of Apposition Vs. Genitive in Simple Apposition

tive constructions are represented. In a *genitive of apposition* construction, the genitive is semantically equivalent to a subject that designates a particular belonging to a larger group (predicate nominative). Thus, “the sign of circumcision” can be unpacked as “circumcision is a sign” (but not “a sign is circumcision”). In this example, the lexical field of “sign” is much larger than that for “circumcision.” For a *genitive in simple apposition* the two nouns are equivalent to a convertible proposition. Thus, “Paul the apostle” could be unpacked as “Paul is the apostle” or “the apostle is Paul.”

d. Simplification. Two things should be noted for the appositional genitives: first, how to distinguish them from other genitive uses, and second, how to distinguish the genitive of apposition from the genitive in simple apposition. (1) *Appositional genitive vs. another genitive use:* By “appositional genitive” we mean *both* kinds of apposition (simple and gen. of apposition). The first thing to determine, of course, is whether one of the appositional uses is applicable. To do this, insert “which is,” “namely,” or “who is” between the head noun and the genitive noun. If this makes sense, an appositional genitive is likely. (2) *Genitive of apposition vs. simple apposition:* Both will fit the “which is” formula, so another test needs to be used to distinguish the two. If the word “of” can be used before the genitive in question, then it is a genitive of apposition. If it cannot, then it is simple apposition related to another genitive. (Keep in mind that the only time there could be any confusion is when both head noun and genitive noun are in the same case, but this does occur frequently.)

e. Illustrations

(1) OF A GENITIVE OF APPPOSITION

John 2:21 ἔλεγεν περὶ τοῦ ναοῦ τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ
he was speaking concerning the temple **of his body** (= “the temple, **which is his body**”)

Rom 4:11 καὶ σημεῖον ἔλαβεν **περιτομῆς**
and he received [the] sign **of circumcision** (= “the sign, **which is circumcision**”)

(2) OF SIMPLE APPOSITION

Matt 2:11 εἶδον τὸ παιδίον μετὰ Μαρίας **τῆς μητρὸς** αὐτοῦ
they saw the child with Mary, his mother

Eph 1:2 χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ **πατρὸς** ἡμῶν
Grace to you and peace from God our **Father**

If “of” were placed before “Father” the idea would be “from the God **of** our Father”! It is obviously simple apposition here.

11. Predicate Genitive

ExSyn 102

a. Definition. The genitive substantive makes an assertion about another genitive substantive, much like a predicate nominative does. The difference, however, is that with the predicate genitive the equative verb is a participle (in the genitive case) rather than a finite verb. This category is relatively uncommon. This kind of genitive is in reality an *emphatic kind of simple apposition* in the genitive (emphatic because of the presence of the participial form of the equative verb). Both adjectival participles and the genitive absolute participle (which is always circumstantial) can be used in this way.

b. Illustrations

Acts 7:58 νεανίου καλουμένου **Σαύλου** a young man called **Saul**

Rom 5:8 ἔτι **ἁμαρτωλῶν** ὄντων ἡμῶν Χριστὸς ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἀπέθανεν
while we were yet **sinner**s Christ died for us

12. Genitive of Subordination [over]

ExSyn 103–104

a. Definition and key to identification. The genitive substantive specifies that which is subordinated to or under the dominion of the head noun.

Instead of *of* supply the gloss *over* or something like it that suggests dominion or priority. This kind of genitive is a lexico-semantic category. That is, it is related only to certain kinds of head substantives—nouns (or participles) that lexically imply some kind of rule or authority. Words such as βασιλεῦς and ἄρχων routinely belong here. For the most part, this genitive is a subset of the subjective genitive, but not always.

b. Illustrations

(1) CLEAR EXAMPLES

Matt 9:34 τῷ ἄρχοντι **τῶν δαιμονίων** the ruler **over the demons**

Mark 15:32 ὁ βασιλεὺς **Ἰσραήλ** the king **over Israel**

(2) DISPUTED EXAMPLES¹⁶

- Eph 2:2 ποτε περιεπατήσατε . . . κατὰ τὸν ἄρχοντα **τῆς ἐξουσίας** τοῦ ἀέρος, **τοῦ πνεύματος** τοῦ νῦν ἐνεργούντος ἐν τοῖς υἱοῖς τῆς ἀπειθείας
you formerly walked according to the ruler **of the domain** of the air, [the ruler] **of the spirit** that now works in the sons of disobedience
- Col 1:15 ὃς ἐστὶν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου, πρωτότοκος πάσης **κτίσεως**
who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn **over all creation**

Ablatival

ExSyn 107–112

The ablatival genitive basically involves the notion of *separation*. (Though frequently translated *from*, such a gloss will not work for the genitive of comparison, which requires *than* as its gloss). This idea can be static (i.e., in a separated state) or progressive (movement away from, so as to become separated). The emphasis may be on either the state resulting from the separation or the cause of separation (in the latter, origin or source is emphasized).

13. Genitive of Separation [out of, away from, from]

ExSyn 107–109

a. Definition and key to identification. The genitive substantive is that from which the *verb* or sometimes head noun is separated. Thus the genitive is used to indicate the point of departure. This usage is rare in the NT.

For the word *of* supply the words *out of*, *away from*, or *from*. Another key is to note that *usually* this genitive will be dependent on a verb (or verbal form) rather than a noun. Two further points should be noted: (1) In Koine Greek the idea of separation is increasingly made explicit by the presence of the preposition ἀπό or sometimes ἐκ. Hence, a genitive of separation will be rare in the NT, while the preposition ἀπό (or ἐκ) + genitive will be commonly used for separation. (2) This is a lexico-syntactic category: it is determined by the lexical meaning of the word to which the genitive is related. Only if that word, usually a verb, connotes motion away from, distance, or separation can the genitive be one of separation.

b. Illustrations

- Eph 2:12 ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι **τῆς πολιτείας** τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ
having been alienated **from the commonwealth** of Israel
- 1 Pet 4:1 πέπαυται **ἀμαρτίας**
he has ceased **from** [doing] **sin**

¹⁶ For discussion of these texts, cf. ExSyn 104.

14. Genitive of Source (or Origin)**[out of, derived from, dependent on]**

ExSyn 109–110

a. Definition and key to identification. The genitive substantive is the source from which the head noun derives or depends. This is a rare category in Koine Greek.

For the word *of* supply the paraphrase *out of, derived from, dependent on, or “sourced in.”* As with the genitive of separation, the simple genitive is being replaced in Koine Greek by a prepositional phrase (in this instance, ἐκ + gen.) to indicate source. This corresponds to the fact that *source* is an emphatic idea; emphasis and explicitness often go hand in hand.

Since this usage is not common, it is not advisable to seek it as the most likely one for a particular genitive that may fit under another label. In some ways, the possessive, subjective, and source genitives are similar. In any given instance, if they all make good sense, subjective should be given priority. In cases where there is no verbal head noun, possessive takes priority over source as an apt label. The distinction between source and separation, however, is more difficult to call. Frequently, it is a matter merely of emphasis: separation stresses result while source stresses cause.

b. Illustrations

- Rom 10:3 ἄγνοοῦντες τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην,
being ignorant of the righteousness **that comes from God**
- 2 Cor 3:3 ἐστὲ ἐπιστολὴ Χριστοῦ
you are a letter **from Christ**

➔15. Genitive of Comparison [than]

ExSyn 110–112

a. Definition and key to identification. The genitive substantive, almost always after a comparative *adjective*, is used to indicate comparison. The genitive, then, is the standard against which the comparison is made (i.e., in “X is greater than Y,” the gen. is the Y). This usage is relatively common.

The definition gives the key: a genitive after a *comparative* adjective, which requires the word *than* before the genitive (instead of the usual *of*).

b. Illustrations

- Matt 6:25 οὐχὶ ἡ ψυχὴ πλεῖόν ἐστιν τῆς τροφῆς;
Is not your life worth *more* **than food**?
- Heb 1:4 κρείττων γενόμενος τῶν ἀγγέλων
[the Son] having become *better* **than the angels**

Verbal Genitive
(i.e., Genitive Related to a Verbal Noun) ExSyn 112–21

The subjective, objective, and plenary genitives are used with head nouns that involve a verbal idea. That is, the head noun has a verb as a cognate (e.g., βασιλεὺς has βασιλεύω as cognate). The verbal genitive construction, then, is a sentence embed involving, typically, a transitive verbal idea in the head noun. The order below (subjective, objective, plenary) displays the descending order of frequency.

➔ **16. Subjective Genitive**

ExSyn 113–16

a. Definition and key to identification. The genitive substantive functions semantically as the subject of the verbal idea implicit in the head noun. This is common in the NT.

If a subjective genitive is suspected, attempt to convert the verbal noun to which the genitive is related into a verbal form and turn the genitive into its subject. Thus, for example, “the revelation of Jesus Christ” in Gal 1:12 becomes “[What/the fact that] Jesus Christ reveals.”

b. Amplification. Two points should be noted regarding the semantics of this genitive: (1) This category is lexico-syntactic—i.e., it is related to a *specific lexical meaning* for one of the words involved (in this case, the head noun). The head noun, which is here called a “verbal noun,”¹⁷ must have an implicit verbal idea. Words such as “love,” “hope,” “revelation,” “witness,” and “word” can imply, in a given situation, a verbal idea. The perspective must, of course, be from Greek rather than English: e.g., “king” has no verbal cognate in English (there is no verb “to king”), but it does in Greek (βασιλεὺς has βασιλεύω).

(2) Where objective and subjective genitives occur in the same constructions—therefore allowing for semantically opposite interpretations—the head noun implies a *transitive* verb. This is by far the more frequent type of verbal noun, however. In a given context, “love of God” could mean “[my/your/their] love for God” (objective) or “God’s love for [me/you/them].” Since the lexico-syntactic features in such instances are identical, appeal must be made to context, authorial usage, and broader exegetical issues.

See Chart 12 below for a diagram of both subjective and objective genitives.

c. Illustrations

(1) CLEAR EXAMPLES

Matt 24:27 οὕτως ἔσται ἡ παρουσία τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου
 So shall the coming **of the Son** of Man be (= “so shall it be when the Son of Man comes”).

¹⁷ Not to be confused with an infinitive, which is *syntactically* a verbal noun. The expression as used here is a *lexical* title.

Mark 14:59 οὐδὲ οὕτως ἴση ἦν ἡ μαρτυρία αὐτῶν
 Nor was **their** testimony thus the same (=“nor did they testify
 the same thing”)

(2) POSSIBLE (AND EXEGETICALLY SIGNIFICANT) EXAMPLES

Arguably the most debated group of texts involves the expression πίστις Χριστοῦ: Should it be translated “faith *in* Christ” (objective gen.) or “the faith/faithfulness *of* Christ” (subjective gen.)?

Rom 3:22 δικαιοσύνη δὲ θεοῦ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ
 even the righteousness of God, through faith **in**/the faithfulness
of Jesus Christ¹⁸

►17. Objective Genitive

ExSyn 116–19

a. Definition and key to identification. The genitive substantive functions semantically as the *direct object* of the verbal idea implicit in the head noun. This is common in the NT.

When an objective genitive is suspected, attempt to convert the verbal noun to which the genitive is related into a verbal form and turn the genitive into its direct object. Thus, for example, “a demonstration of his righteousness” in Rom 3:25 becomes “demonstrating his righteousness.” A simpler and less fool-proof method is to supply for the word *of* the words *for*, *about*, *concerning*, *toward*, or sometimes *against*.

b. Amplification. Two things should be noted concerning the semantics. (1) This category is lexico-syntactic—i.e., it is related to a *specific lexical meaning* for one of the words involved (in this case, the head noun). The head noun, which is here called a “verbal noun,” must have an implicit verbal idea. Words such as “love,” “hope,” “revelation,” “witness,” and “word” can imply, in a given situa-

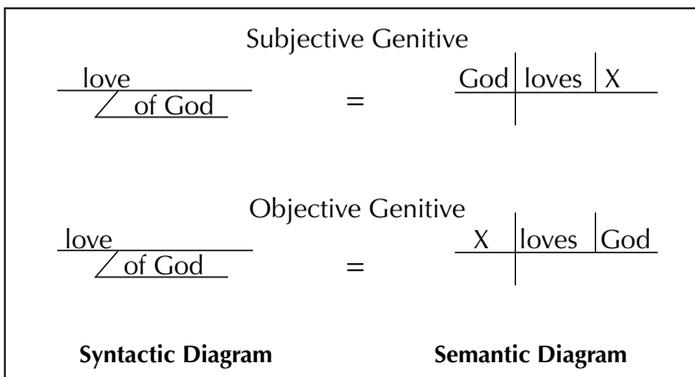


Chart 12
 Diagrams of Subjective and Objective Genitive

¹⁸ For discussion, cf. ExSyn 114–16.

tion, a verbal idea. The perspective must, of course, be from Greek rather than English: e.g., “king” has no verbal cognate in English (there is no verb “to king”) but it does in Greek (βασιλεύς has βασιλεύω).

(2) Where objective and subjective genitives occur in the same constructions—therefore allowing for semantically opposite interpretations—the head noun implies a *transitive* verb. This is by far the more frequent type of verbal noun, however. In a given context, “love of God” could mean “[my/your/their] love for God” (objective) or “God’s love for [me/you/them].” Since the lexico-syntactic features in such instances are identical, appeal must be made to context, authorial usage, and broader exegetical issues.

c. Illustrations

(1) CLEAR EXAMPLES

Matt 12:31 ἡ δὲ τοῦ πνεύματος βλασφημία οὐκ ἀφεθήσεται
But the blasphemy **of the Spirit** shall not be forgiven (= “blasphemy **against the Spirit**” or “blaspheming the Spirit”)

Luke 11:42 οὐὰ ὑμῖν τοῖς Φαρισαίοις, ὅτι . . . παρέρχεσθε τὴν κρίσιν καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην τοῦ θεοῦ
Woe to you Pharisees! For you have neglected justice and love **of God!**

(2) DISPUTED EXAMPLES

Rom 8:17; John 5:42; 1 Pet 3:21 (“the resurrection of Christ”).¹⁹ In addition, see the discussion under “Subjective Genitive” of the πίστις Χριστοῦ formula.

18. Plenary Genitive

ExSyn 119–21

a. Definition. The noun in the genitive is *both* subjective and objective. In most cases, the subjective produces the objective notion. To identify this, simply apply the keys used for the subjective and objective genitives. If *both* ideas seem to fit in a given passage *and do not contradict but rather complement one another*, then there is a good possibility that the genitive in question is a plenary (or full) genitive.

b. (Possible) Illustration

2 Cor 5:14 ἡ γὰρ ἀγάπη τοῦ Χριστοῦ συνέχει ἡμᾶς
For the love **of Christ** constrains us

It is possible that both subjective and objective genitive ideas were intended by Paul. Thus, “The love that comes from Christ produces our love for Christ—and this [the whole package] constrains us.” In this example, then, the subjective *produces* the objective.

¹⁹ The issue here and in similar expressions is whether we should see this as “Christ rising [from the dead]” or as “[God] raising Christ [from the dead].” Both are taught in the NT—even to the extent that Christ is considered an active participant in his own resurrection (cf. John 2:19, 21; 10:18).

Adverbial Genitive

ExSyn 121–30

This use of the genitive is similar in force to an adverb. As well, this use of the genitive often has the force of a prepositional phrase (which, of course, is similar in force to an adverb). Thus the genitive will normally be related to a *verb* or *adjective* rather than a noun. (Even in instances where it is dependent on a noun, there is usually an implicit verbal idea in the noun.)

➔19. Genitive of Time (within which or during which)

ExSyn 122–24

a. Definition. The genitive substantive indicates the *kind* of time, or time *within which* the word to which is stands related takes place. The easiest way to remember the genitive of time (as opposed to the dat. and acc. of time) is to relate the genitive back to its basal significance. The genitive is the case of quality, attribute, description, or *kind*.²⁰ Thus, the genitive of time indicates the *kind* of time. This usage is not common, but can frequently be expected with words that lexically involve a temporal element.

b. Key to identification and amplification. The noun in the genitive expresses an indication of time. The *of* typically becomes *during* or *at* or *within*.

The semantics of this genitive should be noted: When the simple genitive (i.e., without a preposition) is used for time, it expresses the *kind* of time. However, with *ἐκ* or *ἀπό* the meaning is quite different—with emphasis placed on the beginning (cf., e.g., Mark 9:21—*ἐκ παιδιότητος* [“from childhood”]).²¹ This is *not* a confusion of case uses—one indicating time within which and the other indicating extent of time. The classification of a genitive indicating a time element that follows *ἐκ* or *ἀπό* is properly “object of the preposition.” The preposition then needs to be classified.

An author has the choice of three cases to indicate time: genitive, dative, accusative. Generally speaking, their semantic forces are, respectively: kind of time (or time during which), point in time (answering the question, “When?”), and extent of time (answering the question, “How long?”). Such cases ought to be carefully observed to see what point an author is trying to make—a point not always easily translated into English.

c. Illustrations

Luke 18:12 νηστεύω δις τοῦ σαββάτου I fast twice a week

The idea is that the Pharisee fasted twice *during* the week.

John 3:2 ἦλθεν πρὸς αὐτὸν νυκτός
he came to him **during the night**

²⁰ That is, as the eight-case system defines it.

²¹ This shows the fallacy of lumping preposition + case uses with simple case uses. The preposition does not simply make explicit what the simple case means; in this instance, *ἐκ* + gen. indicates *source* or separation, while the simple gen. indicates *kind*. But there is no simple gen. use for *time* that indicates source. This notion requires a preposition. Cf. Phil 1:5, for example, *ἀπὸ τῆς πρώτης ἡμέρας ἄχρι τοῦ νῦν* (“from the first day until now”): this is *not* kind of time, but span of time.

20. Genitive of Means [by]

ExSyn 125

a. Definition and key to identification. The genitive substantive indicates the means or instrumentality by which the verbal action (implicit in the head noun [or adjective] or explicit in the verb) is accomplished. It answers the question, “How?” This usage is rare. (With the preposition ἐκ this nuance is more frequent, though that technically is not a gen. of means because of the preposition.)

For *of* supply *by*. This will be followed by a noun in the genitive case that is impersonal or at least conceived of as such.

b. Illustrations

- Rom 4:11 τῆς δικαιοσύνης **τῆς πίστεως**
the righteousness **by** [means of] **faith**
- Jas 1:13 ὁ γὰρ θεὸς ἀπειραστός ἐστὶν **κακῶν**
for God is not tempted **by evil**

21. Genitive of Agency

ExSyn 126–27

a. Definition and key to identification. The genitive substantive indicates the *personal* agent by whom the action in view is accomplished. It is almost always related to verbal adjective that is typically used as a substantive and has the characteristically passive ending -τος (e.g., ἀγαπητός, διδακτός, ἐκλεκτός); this is followed by a personal noun in the genitive. For *of* supply *by*. Thus, e.g., διδακτός θεοῦ, “taught of God,” becomes “taught by God.” This usage is fairly rare.

b. Illustrations

- John 18:16 ὁ μαθητῆς ὁ ἄλλος ὁ γνωστός **τοῦ ἀρχιερέως**
the other disciple, who was known **by the high priest**
- Rom 8:33 τίς ἐγκαλέσει κατὰ ἐκλεκτῶν **θεοῦ;**
Who will bring a charge against those chosen **by God?**

➔22. Genitive Absolute

See under “Circumstantial Participles” in chapter on participles.

23. Genitive of Reference [with reference to]

ExSyn 127–28

a. Definition and key to identification. The genitive substantive indicates that in reference to which the noun or adjective to which it stands related is true. This usage is not common.

For the word *of* supply *with reference to*, *with respect to*.

b. Amplification. This genitive usually modifies an adjective (although rarely it will be connected to a noun), and as such its adverbial force is self-evident. The genitive limits the frame of reference of the adjective.

All oblique cases, as well as the nominative (known as pendent nominative), can be used to indicate reference. The most common is the dative of reference. The first illustration below is with an adjective, while the second is with a noun.

c. Illustrations

Heb 3:12 καρδία πονηρὰ ἀπιστίας
a heart evil **with reference to unbelief**

Matt 21:21 οὐ μόνον τὸ τῆς συκῆς ποιήσετε
you shall do not only what [was done] **with reference to the fig tree**

24. Genitive of Association [in association with]

ExSyn 128–30

a. Definition and key to identification. The genitive substantive indicates the one with whom the noun to which it stands related is associated.

For *of supply with*, or *in association with*.

b. Amplification. The head noun to which this kind of genitival use is connected is normally prefixed with *συν-*. Such compound nouns naturally lend themselves to the associative idea. As well, some nouns and adjectives already embrace lexically the idea of “in association with” and hence can take a genitive of association without *συν-* prefixed to them.

This usage has particular exegetical weight in the Pauline letters, for it typically makes explicit some ramification of the ἐν Χριστῷ formula (since believers are said to be in Christ, because of their organic connection to him, they now associate with him in many and profound ways).

c. Illustrations

(1) CLEAR EXAMPLES

Eph 2:19 ἐστὲ συμπολίται τῶν ἁγίων
you are fellow-citizens **with the saints**

Col 4:10 Ἀρίσταρχος ὁ συναιχμάλωτός μου
Aristarchus, **my** fellow-prisoner (=“fellow-prisoner **with me**”)
In English usage “my” is more natural than “with me,” though the force is obviously not that Paul *possesses* Aristarchus.

(2) DISPUTED EXAMPLE

1 Cor. 3:9 θεοῦ γὰρ ἐσμεν συνεργοί
For we are **God’s** fellow-workers

Here, Paul *may* be saying that he and Apollos *and* God are in association with one another in the work of the ministry. However, it is better to see an ellipsis of “with one another” and to see θεοῦ as a possessive gen. (thus, “we are fellow-workers [with each other], belonging to God”).²²

²² See *ExSyn* 130 for a discussion of this verse.

After Certain Words

ExSyn 131–36

There are some uses of the genitive that do not *neatly* fit into any of the above categories. Or, if they do fit into one of the above categories, they are related to a word *other than* a noun. These constitute the large and amorphous group known as *the use of the genitive after certain words*.

→25. Genitive After Certain Verbs (as a Direct Object)

ExSyn 131–34

a. Definition and amplification. Certain verbs take a genitive substantive as direct object. These verbs commonly correspond in meaning to some other function of the genitive, e.g., separation, partitive, source, etc. The predominant uses can be grouped into four types of verbs: *sensation, emotion/volition, sharing, ruling*.²³

For the most part, the semantic significance of genitive as direct object relates to one of the genitive functions as discussed above. But note that several of the verbs that take genitive direct objects also take accusative direct objects. Thus, when an author has a choice for the case of his direct object, the case he chooses in which to express his idea may be significant.

*b. Illustrations*²⁴

(1) SENSATION

Mark 5:41 *κρατήσας τῆς χειρὸς τοῦ παιδίου λέγει αὐτῇ, Ταλιθα κουμ*
touching the hand of the little girl, he said to her, “Talitha cum”
 There is a note of tenderness seen in the gen., contrasted with the acc.

(2) EMOTION/VOLITION

Luke 10:35 *ἐπιμελήθητι αὐτοῦ* *take care of him*

(3) SHARING

Heb 12:10 *ὁ δὲ ἐπὶ τὸ συμφέρον εἰς τὸ μεταλαβεῖν τῆς ἀγιότητος αὐτοῦ*
 but he [disciplines us] for our benefit, that we might *share in his holiness*

This is an instance of the *partitive* direct object. (Generally speaking, if a verb can take either a gen. or acc. direct object, the *accusative* will be used when the object is apprehended *as a whole*; the *genitive* will be used when the object is apprehended *in part*.) The participation that believers can have in God’s holiness is not complete, but derived and partial. The gen. seems to be used to reflect this.

²³ Cf. BDF, 93–96 (§§169–78) for a list of such verbs (broken down into ten categories). Rather than duplicate the list here, since such genitives can easily be noted via the lexicon, the student is advised to consult BAGD under the verb in question if in doubt.

²⁴ Because this is such a broad category, and because the liberal use of a good lexicon reveals this usage, only a few examples will be given.

(4) RULING

Luke 22:25 οἱ βασιλεῖς τῶν ἐθνῶν κυριεύουσιν αὐτῶν
 the kings of the Gentiles *lord it over them*

26. Genitive After Certain Adjectives (and Adverbs)

ExSyn 134–35

a. Definition. Certain adjectives (such as ἄξιος, “worthy [of]”) and adverbs normally take a genitive “object.” In many instances the adjective/adverb is an embedded transitive verb, thus taking an objective genitive (e.g., “he is deserving of X” means “he deserves X”) or involving a partitive idea.

b. Amplification. As with the genitive direct object, you should check BAGD under various adjectives and adverbs or BDF (98 [§182]) for a list. In reality, most of these examples also fit under some other genitive use equally well—such as partitive, objective, content, reference, etc. However, the fact that certain adjectives, by their very nature, take genitives after them renders this a predictable and stable category.

c. Illustrations

Matt 26:66 ἔνοχος θανάτου ἐστίν he is *deserving of death*
 This is the equivalent of “he deserves **death**,” an objective gen.

Phil 1:27 ἀξίως τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τοῦ Χριστοῦ πολιτεύεσθε
 conduct yourselves *worthily of the gospel* of Christ

⇒27. Genitive After Certain Prepositions

ExSyn 136

a. Definition. Certain prepositions take the genitive after them. See the chapter on prepositions for discussion. For review of which prepositions take which cases, cf., e.g., Mounce, *Basics of Biblical Greek*, 55–62.²⁵

b. Significance. When a genitive follows a preposition, you should *not* attempt to identify the genitive’s function by case usage *alone*. Rather, consult either BAGD or the chapter on prepositions for the specific usage of that case with that preposition. Many of the simple genitive uses overlap those of the preposition + the genitive (especially with ἐκ + the gen.). But the parallels are not exact; there are some simple genitive uses that cannot be duplicated with prepositions and some preposition + genitive uses that find no parallel with the simple genitive. Furthermore, where there is overlap of usage, there is usually *not* overlap of frequency of occurrence.

²⁵ In addition, forty of the forty-two “improper prepositions” take the gen. case (e.g., ἄχρι(ς), ἔμπροσθεν, ἔνεκα, ἕως, ὄψε, πλησίον, ὑπεράνω, ὑποκάτω, χωρίς). One should consult the lexicon if in doubt.

The Dative Case¹

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INTRODUCTION

ExSyn 138

Preliminary Remarks

The dative case is not as exegetically significant as the genitive. This is not to say that the dative does not play a vital role in exegetical decisions. Rather, a particular instance of the dative is usually easier to classify than a given genitive. This is due to two things: (1) the broad classes of dative uses are generally more easily distinguishable; and (2) the embedded clause needs less “unpacking” since the dative is already related to a verb, while the genitive is more cryptic and elliptical since it is usually related to a noun.

¹ See *ExSyn* 137–75. The following datives are rare or debatable categories that the average intermediate Greek student can ignore: ethical dative (146–47), dative of recipient (148–49), dative of thing possessed (151), predicate dative (152), dative of rule (157–58), dative of material (169–70), and dative of content (170–71).

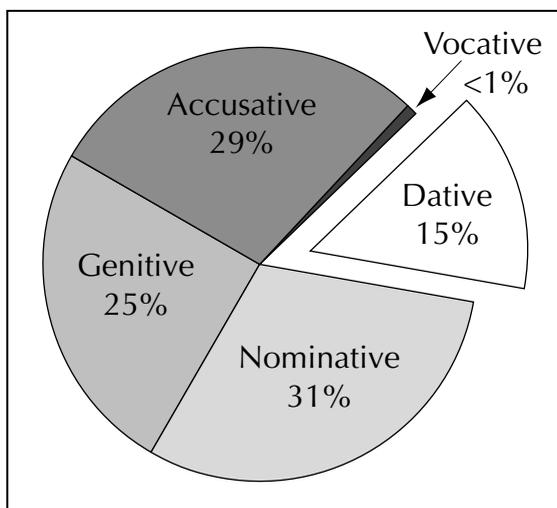


Chart 13
Frequency of Cases in the New Testament²

At the same time, there are some instances in which a given dative may function in more than one capacity (e.g., both instrumental and local), and not a few in which a decision is still hard to come by. In such places, the dative takes on greater significance.

Finally, the simple dative is phasing out in Koine Greek, being replaced largely by prepositions, especially $\epsilon\upsilon$ + the dative. This is not to say that the simple dative and $\epsilon\upsilon$ + dative mirror each other completely, as will become clear in our examination of various uses of the dative case.

Definition of the Dative Case

1. Within the Eight-Case System

“The dative, locative, and instrumental cases are all represented by the same inflectional form, but the distinction in function is very clear—much more so than the distinction between the ablative and genitive.”³ However, this does *not* mean that, within the eight-case system, it is always easy to tell to which case this particular inflectional form belongs. Furthermore, there will be a few occasions in which the same case form will have a double-duty function. The eight-case system cannot handle such a double function because such would involve two different cases. Thus, the definition of case as a matter of function rather than form can sometimes be so rigid that it excludes part of the meaning intended by the author.

² The dative breakdown is 4375 nouns, 3565 pronouns, 2944 articles, 936 adjectives, 353 participles.

³ Dana-Mantey, 83.

The true dative is used to designate the person more remotely concerned. It is the case of *personal interest*, pointing out the person *to* or *for* whom something is done. This is not to say that the dative cannot relate to things, for there are numerous examples of this. When it does so, it has a referring force. In general, when the dative is used of persons, it speaks about the one(s) concerned about (or affected by) the action; when it is used of things, it addresses the *framework* in which an act occurs.

2. Within the Five-Case System

However, since the dative, instrumental, and locative share the same form, we will consider them as *one* case (“case” being defined as a matter of form rather than function within the five-case system).⁴ The *instrumental* idea involves means and generally answers the question, “How?” The *locative* notion involves place and answers the question, “Where?” Thus, a broad view of the dative case (including pure dative, locative, and instrumental uses) suggests that it answers one of three questions: To/for whom? How? or Where?

Thus, within the five-case system the dative case may be defined as the case of *personal interest*, *reference/respect* (pure dative), *position* (locative), and *means* (instrumental).

————— SPECIFIC USES —————

ExSyn 140–75

Pure Dative Uses

ExSyn 140–53

The subgroups here are specific uses built on the root idea of *personal interest* and *reference/respect*.

➔1. Dative Indirect Object

ExSyn 140–42

a. Definition. The dative substantive is that to or for which the action of a verb is performed. The indirect object will *only occur with a transitive verb*. When the transitive verb is in the *active* voice,⁵ the indirect object receives the direct object (“the boy hit the ball *to me*”); when the verb is in the *passive* voice, the indirect object receives the subject of the verb (“the ball was hit *to me*”).

Stated more succinctly: “The noun or pronoun in the dative is the person or thing to which is given (or which receives) the direct object (of a transitive verb) (or [receives the] subject of a passive verb).”⁶ This category is by far the most common of the dative uses.

⁴ It is not insignificant that even Dana-Mantey vacillate slightly here in saying “we cannot ignore form entirely while we are in the realm of syntax, for it often happens that we would be utterly unable to determine what the intended function is except for the form” (Dana-Mantey, 86).

⁵ That is, active from the standpoint of English. In Greek it can sometimes be in the middle (deponent middles are treated as though they are actives).

⁶ Williams, *Grammar Notes*, 15.

b. Key to identification and semantics. The key to identification is that the verb must be transitive; and if the dative can be translated with *to* or *for* it is most likely indirect object.

(1) To translate a dative as *to* or *for* with a transitive verb is easily the most common translation (like *of* for the genitive). There are many uses of the dative that actually fall under the larger umbrella of the indirect object (e.g., interest, ethical). The indirect object, therefore, is normally recognized as the most common dative.

(2) In the sentence “He gave the book to the boy,” “to the boy” is the indirect object. It receives the direct object, “the book,” of the transitive (and active) verb, “gave.” Such a sentence can be put into a *passive transform*: “The book was given to the boy by him.” Here, “the book” has become the subject (formerly the direct object), but “to the boy” is still the indirect object. The subject of the active voice verb “gave” has become the agent of the passive voice verb “was given.” In both sentences the indirect object remains the same and receives the same thing semantically, though not grammatically (i.e., it receives the *book* each time, but does not receive the same part of the sentence each time).

c. Illustrations

John 4:10 καὶ ἔδωκεν ἅν σοι ὕδωρ ζῶν
and he would have given **to you** living water

2 Cor 12:7 ἐδόθη μοι σκόλοψ τῆ σαρκί
a thorn in the flesh was given **to me**.

This is a passive transform of the clause, ἔδωκεν μοι σκόλοπα τῆ σαρκί, “He gave **me** a thorn in the flesh.”

➔2. Dative of Interest (including Advantage [*commodi*] and Disadvantage [*incommodi*])

ExSyn 142–44

a. Definition. The dative substantive indicates the person (or, rarely, thing) interested in the verbal action. The dative of advantage has a *to* or *for* idea, while the dative of disadvantage has an *against* idea. The dative of advantage occurs more frequently than disadvantage, though both are common enough. It is important to distinguish between dative of advantage and disadvantage (since the resultant meanings are opposite).

b. Key to identification. Instead of the words *to* or *for*, supply *for the benefit of* or *in the interest of* for the dative of advantage, and *for/unto the detriment of* or *to the disadvantage of* or *against* for the dative of disadvantage. The translation *for the benefit of* and the like is helpful for getting the sense of the dative, though not as a final translation, since it is too awkward.

c. Semantics/significance. Dative of interest typically (but not always) belongs to the larger category of indirect object. The difference in the two is that in the former, interest is stressed, while in the latter it is not.

Since the root idea of the pure dative is personal interest (i.e., with reference to person), one should not think in such clear-cut categories as to divorce this idea from other uses of the pure dative. That is, *every pure dative use is a dative of interest in a general sense*. However, the category *dative of interest* really involves a more specific use of the dative, which emphasizes either advantage or disadvantage. Thus, for example, “This is food to me” would be a dative of interest in a general sense. However, a lousy meal would mean a dative of disadvantage, while *my* wife’s culinary fare would mean a dative of advantage! A dative of advantage/disadvantage will usually belong to some other category as well; but when the idea of advantage/disadvantage is prominent, it is to be classified as such.

d. Illustrations

(1) ADVANTAGE (*COMMUDI*)

1 Cor 6:13 τὰ βρώματα **τῇ κοιλίᾳ**
food is **for** [the benefit of] **the stomach**

2 Cor 5:13 εἴτε γὰρ ἐξέστημεν, **θεῷ** εἴτε σωφρονοῦμεν, **ὑμῖν**.
for if we are beside ourselves, it is **for God**; if we are in our right minds, it is **for you**.

(2) DISADVANTAGE (*INCOMMUDI*)

Matt 23:31 μαρτυρεῖτε **ἑαυτοῖς** You testify **against yourselves**

1 Cor 11:29 ὁ γὰρ ἐσθίων καὶ πίνων κρίμα **ἑαυτῷ** ἐσθίει καὶ πίνει
For the one who eats and drinks eats and drinks judgment **on himself**

➔3. Dative of Reference/Respect [with reference to]

ExSyn 144–46

a. Definition. The dative substantive is that in reference to which something is presented as true. An author will use this dative to qualify a statement that would otherwise typically not be true. This dative can thus be called a frame of reference dative, limiting dative, qualifying dative, or contextualizing dative. This is a common use of the dative case; further, the dative is the most common case used for reference/respect.⁷

b. Key to identification and amplification. Instead of the word *to*, supply the phrase *with reference to* before the dative. (Other glosses are *concerning*, *about*, *in regard to*, etc.) When the noun in the dative is a *thing*, the sentence typically makes no sense if the dative is removed, as, e.g., in Rom 6:2—“How shall we who died [to sin] still live in it?”

⁷ The acc. is the next most common, but it is a distant second (acc. stands first in classical Greek). There is also a gen. of reference, and, in fact, a nom. of reference (i.e., *nomina-tivus pendens*).

The pure dative, when referring especially to things, reduces the element of interest and relation to that of reference or framework. It is frequently found with adjectives. But the dative of reference can also occasionally be used of persons.

c. Illustrations

Rom 6:11 λογίζεσθε ἑαυτοὺς εἶναι νεκροὺς μὲν **τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ**, ζῶντας δὲ **τῷ θεῷ**
Consider yourselves to be dead **to sin**, but alive **to God**

Luke 18:31 πάντα τὰ γεγραμμένα διὰ τῶν προφητῶν **τῷ υἱῷ** τοῦ ἀνθρώπου
all the things written by the prophets **concerning the Son** of Man

4. Dative of Destination

ExSyn 147–48

a. Definition. This dative is similar to an indirect object, except that it appears with *intransitive* verbs (esp. ἔρχομαι). It is the “to” idea when an intransitive verb is used. There is typically a transfer of something from one place to another. It indicates the final point of the verb, where the verb is going. This usage is relatively infrequent, being replaced in Koine Greek with explicit prepositions (such as ἐν, ἐπί, εἰς).

b. Key to identification. Remember that this broad “to” idea is in relation to *intransitive* verbs (i.e., verbs that do *not* take a direct object). The dative with ἔρχομαι accounts for most examples.

c. Illustrations

Matt 21:5 ὁ βασιλεύς σου ἔρχεται **σοι**
your king is coming **to you**

Luke 15:25 ὡς ἐρχόμενος ἤγγισεν **τῇ οἰκίᾳ**
when he came, he approached **the house**

5. Dative of Possession [belonging to]

ExSyn 149–51

a. Definition. The dative of possession functions like a genitive of possession under certain conditions, occurring with equative verbs such as εἶμί, γίνομαι, and ὑπάρχω. The dative substantive possesses the noun to which it is related. In other words, it is that person or thing to which the subject of an equative verb belongs. The usage is not especially common.

b. Key to identification. Instead of the word *to*, supply *possessed by* or *belonging to*. On occasion (especially if the dative is in predicate position after an equative verb), it may be more helpful to regard the dative as the semantic equivalent of a nominative subject and put the actual subject in the predicate (i.e., treat it as direct object). For example:

- Acts 8:21 οὐκ ἔστιν σοι μερίς οὐδὲ κλήρος ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τούτῳ
neither a share nor a lot in this matter **belong to you**
This could be converted to “you have neither a share nor a lot in this matter.” (The dat. becomes the subject and the subject is placed in the predicate—here, as direct object.)

c. Semantics. In general, the difference between an indirect object and a possessive dative has to do with *act* (as seen in the transitive verb) and resultant *state* (as seen in the equative verb). For example, ἔδωκεν τὸ βιβλίον μοι (“he gave me the book”) becomes τὸ βιβλίον ἐστὶ μοι (“the book is mine”).

d. Illustrations

- Matt 18:12 Τί ὑμῖν δοκεῖ; ἐὰν γένηται **πνι ἀνθρώπῳ** ἑκατὸν πρόβατα
What do you think? If a hundred sheep [**belong**] **to a certain man**
- Rom 7:3 ἐὰν γένηται **ἀνδρὶ ἑτέρῳ**
if she becomes **to another man** (= “if she becomes another man’s” or, “if she becomes possessed by another man”)

➔6. Dative in Simple Apposition

ExSyn 152–53

a. Definition. Though not technically a syntactical category,⁸ the dative case (as well as the other cases) can be an appositive to another substantive in the *same* case. An appositional construction involves two adjacent substantives that refer to the same person or thing and have the same syntactical relation to the rest of the clause. The first dative substantive can belong to *any* dative category and the second is merely a clarification of who or what is mentioned. Thus, the appositive “piggy-backs” on the first dative’s use, as it were.⁹ This usage is common.

b. Illustrations

- Luke 1:47 ἠγαλλίασεν τὸ πνεῦμά μου ἐπὶ τῷ θεῷ **τῷ σωτήρῳ** μου
my spirit rejoices in God my **Savior**
- Acts 24:24 Δρουσίλλη **τῇ ἰδίᾳ γυναικὶ**
to Drusilla, **his wife**

Local Dative Uses

ExSyn 153–58

The subgroups here are specific uses built on the root idea of *position*, whether spatial, nonphysical, or temporal.

⁸ Hence, this category could belong in the dat., locative, or instrumental groups. It is listed here for convenience’ sake.

⁹ For more information on simple apposition, cf. the sections on the nominative and genitive.

→7. Dative of Sphere [in the sphere of]

ExSyn153–55

a. Definition. The dative substantive indicates the sphere or realm¹⁰ in which the word to which it is related takes place or exists. Normally this word is a verb, but not always. This is a common use of the dative.

b. Key to identification and clarification. Before the noun in the dative supply the words *in the sphere of* or *in the realm of*. In general, it is safe to say that the dative of *reference* views the word to which the dative stands related as detached or *separated* somehow from the dative, while the dative of *sphere* views the word to which the dative stands related as *incorporated* within the realm of the dative. For example, in Rom 6:2 Paul uses the dative of reference: “How shall we who died [with reference] to sin still live in it?” Here, “we who died” is detached or separated from “sin.” In Eph 2:1 we see the dative of sphere: “Though you were dead in [the sphere of] your sins.” Here, “you were dead” is incorporated within the realm of sin.

c. Illustrations

Matt 5:3	οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι	the poor in spirit
	Here the dat. is practically equivalent to an adverb, thus, “the spiritually poor.”	
1 Pet 3:18	Χριστὸς ἅπαξ περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν ἔπαθεν, δίκαιος ὑπὲρ ἀδίκων . . . θανατωθεὶς μὲν σαρκί	
	Christ died once for all for sins, the just for the unjust . . . having been put to death in the flesh	

→8. Dative of Time (when)

ExSyn 155–57

a. Definition. The noun in the dative indicates the *time when* the action of the main verb is accomplished. The dative routinely denotes *point of time*, answering the question, “When?” In the eight-case system, this would be the locative of time. Though common enough, this usage is being increasingly replaced in Koine Greek with ἐν + the dative.

b. Key to identification and semantics. Remember that the noun in the dative expresses an indication of time.

The dative of time is distinct from the genitive of time as well the accusative of time (occasionally it overlaps with this category). The easiest way to remember the distinction between these cases for time is to remember the root idea of each case. The root idea of the (pure) genitive is quality, attribute, or kind; thus, the genitive of time expresses *kind* of time (or time during which). The root idea of

¹⁰ Some people talk about the dative of place as a separate category, distinct from sphere. I disagree with this view. My sense is that sphere and place are simply different applications of the same category—one figurative, the other literal. The only difference is lexical, not semantic. Exegesis is not materially affected by such a distinction.

the accusative is limitation as to extent; thus, the accusative of time expresses *extent* of time. The root idea of the *local* dative is position; thus, the dative of time expresses a *point* in time.

c. Illustrations

Matt 17:23 τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ ἐγερθήσεται
[at a point in time] **on the third day** he will be raised

Matt 24:20 προσεύχεσθε δὲ ἵνα μὴ γένηται ἡ φυγὴ ὑμῶν χειμῶνος μηδὲ σαββάτῳ
But pray that your flight will not be during the winter nor **on the sabbath**

Instrumental Dative Uses

ExSyn 158–171

The subgroups here are specific uses built on the root idea of *means*, although some loosely fit under this umbrella.

➔9. **Dative of Association (Accompaniment, Comitative)**
[in association with]

ExSyn 159–61

a. Definition. The dative substantive indicates the person or thing one associates with or accompanies. This usage is relatively common.

b. Key to identification and clarification. Before the noun in the dative supply the phrase *in association with*. This usage of the dative only loosely belongs under the broad category of instrumental datives. Nevertheless, it belongs here more naturally than elsewhere.

Frequently, though not always, the dative word will be related to a compound verb involving συν. This is especially so in Acts, less frequently in the Pauline letters. But not every dative following a συν- prefixed verb is a dative of association (see discussion of the debatable example below).

The difference between genitive of association and dative of association is simply this: the genitive is used with *nouns* (which begin with συν-) while the dative is used with *verbs* (which are frequently prefixed with συν-).

c. Caution. Although there is a close relation between means and association, one should be careful to distinguish them. In the sentence, “He walked with his friend with a cane,” “with his friend” expresses association and “with a cane” expresses means. The difference is that for the purposes of walking the cane is necessary, while the friend is expendable!

d. Illustrations

(1) CLEAR EXAMPLES

Acts 9:7 οἱ δὲ ἄνδρες οἱ συνοδεύοντες αὐτῷ
the men who were traveling **with him**

2 Cor 6:14 μὴ γίνεσθε ἑτεροζυγοῦντες **ἀπίστοις**
do not become unequally yoked [in association] **with**
unbelievers

The first example is typical, in that there is a verb prefixed with συν. The second example has a verb root that carries an associative idea.

(2) A DEBATABLE EXAMPLE

Rom 8:16 αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα συμμαρτυρεῖ **τῷ πνεύματι** ἡμῶν ὅτι ἐσμὲν
τέκνα θεοῦ
the Spirit himself bears witness **along with** our **spirit** that we
are God's children

At issue, grammatically, is whether the Spirit testifies *alongside* of our spirit (dat. of association), or whether he testifies *to our spirit* (indirect object) that we are God's children. If the former, the one receiving this testimony is unstated (is it God? or believers?). If the latter, the believer receives the testimony and hence is assured of salvation via the inner witness of the Spirit. Most likely, πνεύματι should *not* be taken as association.¹¹

10. Dative of Manner (or Adverbial Dative)¹²

[with, in (answering “How?”)]

ExSyn 161–62

a. Definition. The dative substantive denotes the manner in which the action of the verb is accomplished. Like many adverbs, this use of the dative answers the question “How?” (and typically with a “with” or “in” phrase). The manner can be an accompanying action, attitude, emotion, or circumstance. Hence, such a dative noun routinely has an abstract quality. This usage is relatively common, though it is being supplanted by ἐν + dative (or μετά + gen.) in Koine Greek.

b. Key to identification and clarification. Supply “with” or “in” before the dative noun. Also, if the dative can be converted into an adverb (e.g., “with thanksgiving” becomes “thankfully”), it is likely a dative of manner. Note, however, that not always can one easily convert this dative into an adverb.

The real key is to ask first whether the dative noun answers the question “How?” and then ask if the dative *defines* the action of the verb (dative of means) or adds color to the verb (manner). In the sentence, “She walked with a cane, with a flare,” “with a cane” expresses means, while “with a flare” expresses manner. Thus, *one* of the ways in which you can distinguish between means and manner is that a dative of manner typically employs an abstract noun while a dative of means typically employs a more concrete noun.

¹¹ See ExSyn 160–61 for discussion.

¹² A subcategory of dat. of manner is the cognate dat. (discussed below).

c. Illustrations

John 7:26 **παρρησία** λαλεῖ
he speaks **with boldness** (= **boldly**)

1 Cor 10:30 εἰ ἐγὼ **χάριτι** μετέχω
if I partake [of the food] **with thanksgiving** (= **thankfully**)

➔11. Dative of Means/Instrument [by, by means of, with] ExSyn 162–63

a. Definition. The dative substantive is used to indicate the means or instrument by which the verbal action is accomplished. This is a common use of the dative, embracing as it does one of the root ideas of the dative case (viz., instrumentality).

b. Key to identification and amplification. Before the noun in the dative, supply the words *by means of* or simply *with*. The dative noun is typically concrete, as opposed to manner, where the noun is typically abstract. But the dative noun is also usually, though not always, *conceived of as impersonal*. It is distinguished from personal agency in two ways: (1) personality is not in view, and (2) means involves an agent who uses it (whether that agent is stated or implied).

c. Illustrations

John 11:2 ἐκμάξασα τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ **ταῖς θριξίν** αὐτῆς
she wiped his feet **with her hair**

Rom 3:28 λογιζόμεθα δικαιοῦσθαι **πίστει** ἄνθρωπον
we maintain that a person is justified **by faith**

†12. Dative of Agency [by, through] ExSyn 163–66

a. Definition. The dative substantive is used to indicate the *personal* agent by whom the action of the verb is accomplished. This is an *extremely rare* category in the NT as well as in ancient Greek in general.

b. Keys to identification, structure, and semantics. (1) According to the above definition, if the dative is used to express agency, the noun in the dative must not only be personal, but must also be the agent who performs the action. Much confusion exists among students of the NT over this category. In general, it is invoked far more often than is legitimate.¹³ There are *four keys* to identification for the dative of agency: (a) *Lexical*: the dative must be personal. (b) *Contextual*: the person specified by the dative noun is portrayed as exercising volition. (c) *Grammatical*: the only clear texts involve a perfect passive verb, as in the classical idiom. (d) *Linguistic*: a good *rule of thumb* for distinguishing between agent and means is sim-

¹³ Even by grammarians on occasion. Cf., e.g., Young, *Intermediate Greek*, 50 (his examples from Rom 8:14 and 1 Tim 3:16 are doubtful; see discussion of these texts in *ExSyn* 165–66); Brooks-Winbery, 45.

ply this: the agent of a passive verb can become the subject of an active verb, while the means normally cannot.

(2) When the dative expresses the idea of *means*, the instrument is used *by an agent*. When agent is indicated, the agent so named is *not used* by another, but is the one who either performs an act directly or uses an instrument.

c. How agency is expressed in the NT. Apart from naming the agent as the subject, there are two common ways to express agency in the NT: ὑπό + the genitive is used for *ultimate* agent; διά + the genitive is used for *intermediate* agent. For example, in Matt 1:22 we read that “all this happened in order that what was spoken **by the Lord** (ὑπὸ κυρίου) **through the prophet** (διὰ τοῦ προφήτου) might be fulfilled.” The Lord is the ultimate agent, though he communicates his message through the prophet.

In summary, this clarification is important because when one sees a dative used with a person and some sort of instrumentality is implied, he/she should seek to discover the *agent* who uses the (personal) instrument.

d. Illustrations

(1) CLEAR EXAMPLES

Luke 23:15 οὐδὲν ἄξιον θανάτου ἐστὶν πεπραγμένον αὐτῷ
nothing worthy of death had been done **by him**

As is apparently always the case in the NT, the only clear examples involve a perfect passive verb form.

Jan 3:7 πᾶσα γὰρ φύσις θηρίων . . . δεδάμασται τῇ φύσει τῇ ἀνθρωπίνῃ
For every kind of beast . . . has been tamed **by humankind**

(2) DEBATABLE EXAMPLE¹⁴

Gal 5:16 πνεύματι περιπατεῖτε καὶ ἐπιθυμίαν σαρκὸς οὐ μὴ τελέσητε
walk **by the Spirit** and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh

Taking πνεύματι as a dat. of agency is a popular view among commentators, but there are two basic problems with this interpretation: (1) This usage is rare in the NT (unless, of course, we assume that πνεύματι on many occasions belongs here!); (2) πνεύματι does not occur with a passive verb, let alone a perfect passive; yet every clear example of dat. of agency in the NT occurs with a perfect passive verb.

13. Dative of Measure/Degree of Difference [by]

ExSyn 166–67

a. Definition and key to identification. The dative substantive, when following or preceding a comparative adjective or adverb, may be used to indicate

¹⁴ Cf. *ExSyn* 165–66 for more discussion of this text as well as discussion of other passages.

the extent to which the comparison is true or the degree of difference that exists in the comparison. This usage is fairly rare.

Rather than supply “than” as with the genitive of comparison (the two ideas are similar, but not identical), supply “by” before a quantitative word in the dative. Typically the formula in Greek will be πολλῶ (the dative word) + μᾶλλον.

b. Illustrations

Phil 2:12 ὑπηκούσατε . . . πολλῶ μᾶλλον ἐν τῇ ἀπουσίᾳ μου
you obeyed . . . **much** more in my absence

Heb 1:4 τοσοῦτῳ κρείττων γενόμενος τῶν ἀγγέλων
having become **by so much** better than the angels

A key theme in Hebrews is the superiority of the Son. In 1:4–14 the Son is contrasted to angels, with the clear implication (made explicit in v. 8) that he is God incarnate.

➔14. Dative of Cause [because of]

ExSyn 167–68

a. Definition and key to identification. The dative substantive indicates the cause or basis of the action of the verb. This usage is fairly common.

Before the dative insert the phrase *because of* or *on the basis of*. This use of the dative is similar to but not the same as the dative of means. (At times, however, it is impossible to distinguish the two.)¹⁵ The dative of *means* indicates the *how*; the dative of *cause* indicates the *why*; the dative of *means* indicates the *method*; the dative of *cause* indicates the *basis*.

b. Illustrations

Rom 4:20 οὐ διεκρίθη τῇ ἀπιστίᾳ
he did not waver **because of unbelief**

Gal 6:12 μόνον ἵνα τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ Χριστοῦ μὴ διώκωνται
only that they might not be persecuted **because of the cross**
of Christ

15. Cognate Dative¹⁶

ExSyn 168–69

a. Definition and key to identification. The dative noun¹⁷ is cognate to the verb either formally (where both noun and verb have the same root) or conceptually (where the roots are different). This is not common.

¹⁵ This is because the ultimate cause may also, at times, be the accomplishing means of an action.

¹⁶ See dat. of manner for the larger category to which this dat. belongs.

¹⁷ This use of the dat., by definition, cannot be found with pronouns, since the *lexical* meaning of the dat. word is related to that of the verb.

The key to this use of the dative is its cognate *force*. Another clue is that the dative can usually be translated as an adverb modifying the verb.¹⁸ The force of the cognate dative will be primarily to *emphasize the action of the verb*.

b. Illustrations

(1) COGNATE IN FORM

Luke 22:15 ἐπιθυμία ἐπεθύμησα
I desired **with desire** (= “I earnestly desired”)

Jan 5:17 Ἠλίας . . . προσευχή προσηύξατο
Elijah . . . prayed **earnestly**

(2) COGNATE IN MEANING

1 Pet 1:8 ἀγαλλιᾶσθε χαρῶν you rejoice **with joy**

Rev 5:11–12 ἤκουσα φωνὴν . . . λέγοντες φωνῇ μεγάλῃ
I heard a voice . . . saying **with a loud voice**

The Uses of the Dative After Certain Words ExSyn 171–75

Some uses of the dative do not *neatly* fit into any of the above categories. These constitute the large and amorphous group known as *the use of the dative after certain words*.

➔16. Dative Direct Object

ExSyn 171–73

a. Definition. A number of verbs take the dative as their direct object. Such datives are usually related to verbs implying personal relation. Thus the meanings of the verbs correspond in meaning to the basic idea of the pure dative. This category yields many illustrations.

b. Key to identification and clarification. See BAGD, a good concordance, or BDF for a list of such verbs.¹⁹ Usually it will be obvious when the dative is the direct object. But since the dative is normally related to a *verb* rather than to a noun, there may be times of confusion.

A good rule of thumb is that verbs taking a dative direct object can usually be translated with “to” or “in.” Thus ὑπακούω can be translated, “I am obedient to”; διακονῶ, “I minister to”; εὐχαριστῶ, “I am thankful to”; πιστεύω, “I trust in.” (One has to use a little imagination with these verbs because they are normally rendered “I obey,” “I serve,” “I thank,” and “I believe.”)

¹⁸ Some of the examples below do not fit this adverbial notion, but are cognate datives in a broader sense.

¹⁹ Although many intermediate grammars list all such verbs, it is our conviction that grammars do much unnecessary duplication with lexica. Our approach is to try to refrain from trespassing into the domain of the lexicon as much as possible.

c. Significance. It has already been pointed out that such dative direct objects are usually related to verbs implying personal relation. This, in part, is the significance of dative direct objects. As well, some of the verbs that take dative direct objects also take accusative direct objects. Thus, when an author has a choice for the case of a direct object, the case chosen may be significant.

d. Illustrations

- Gal 3:6 Καθὼς Ἀβραὰμ ἐπίστευσεν **τῷ θεῷ**, καὶ ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην.
Just as Abraham believed **God**, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness
- Heb 1:6 ὅταν δὲ πάλιν εἰσαγάγῃ τὸν πρωτότοκον εἰς τὴν οἰκουμένην, λέγει καὶ προσκυνησάτωσαν **αὐτῷ** πάντες ἄγγελοι θεοῦ.
And when he again brings the firstborn into the [inhabited] world, he says, “And let all the angels of God worship **him**.”

17. Dative After Certain Nouns

ExSyn 173–74

a. Definition. A few nouns take datives after them. Again, the notion of personal interest is almost always seen. This category is not particularly common. The nouns in question are *verbal* nouns (i.e., they are cognate to a verb, such as ὀφειλέτης [ὀφείλω], ὑπάντησις [ὑπαντάω]).

b. Illustrations

- Matt 8:34 πᾶσα ἡ πόλις ἐξῆλθεν εἰς ὑπάντησιν **τῷ Ἰησοῦ**
all the city came out for a meeting **with Jesus**
The verbal cognate, ὑπαντάω, takes what could be called a dat. of association or dat. direct object (cf. Mark 5:2; John 4:51).
- 1 Cor 16:15 διακονίαν **τοῖς ἁγίοις** service **to the saints**

18. Dative After Certain Adjectives

ExSyn 174–75

a. Definition and key to identification. A few adjectives are followed by the dative case. Once again, when the idea of personal interest appears, the dative is naturally used. This broad category is common.

There is no one key to identification since this is a rather amorphous group; the most common group is adjectives of “likeness” (i.e., correspondence) such as ὁμοιος, ἴσος. As well, many of the adjectives belong to the larger category of dative of *reference*.

b. Illustrations

- Matt 13:31 ὁμοία ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν **κόκκῳ** σινάπεως
the kingdom of heaven is like a mustard **seed**
- Rom 1:30 **γονεῦσιν** ἀπειθεῖς disobedient **to parents**

→19. Dative After Certain Prepositions

ExSyn 175

a. Definition and key to identification. Certain prepositions take the dative after them. See the chapter on prepositions for complete discussion of this category. For review of which prepositions take which cases, cf., e.g., Mounce, *Basics of Biblical Greek*, 55–62.

b. Significance. When a dative follows a preposition, you should *not* attempt to identify the dative's function by case usage *alone*. Rather, consult BAGD for the specific usage of that case with that preposition. Although many of the case uses overlap with the uses of the preposition + the dative (especially with ἐν + the dative), the parallels are not exact. Furthermore, where there is overlap of usage, there is usually not overlap of frequency of occurrence (e.g., although the naked dative as well as ἐν + the dative can express sphere, the frequency of such usage is much higher with ἐν + the dative).

The Accusative Case¹

Overview of Accusative Uses

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———— INTRODUCTION ———— *ExSyn 176–79*

In classical Greek, the accusative case was the “unmarked” or default case among the oblique cases (gen., dat., acc.). It was the routine case used unless there was some reason for using the genitive or dative. Unlike classical Greek, however, the NT has more nominatives than accusatives. Furthermore, typically in classical Greek the accusative outnumbers genitives and datives together, but in the NT the combination of these two cases has a significantly higher yield than accusatives.

What is to account for these differences? (1) Many of the subtleties of the language naturally began to drop out as Greek passed from classical to Koine. (2) Prepositions take a decidedly more prominent role in the NT in places where a simple case (especially the acc.) would have been used in earlier times. Many such prepositions take other than the accusative case. (3) The high proportion of genitive uses is apparently due, in part, to the Semitic influence (e.g., the “Hebrew” or attributive gen.).

General Definition

Although the accusative can justifiably be considered the default case in classical Greek, more nuancing is required to understand its role in the NT. Yes, the accusative was certainly the unmarked case as far as direct objects were concerned.

¹ See *ExSyn* 176–205. The following accusatives are rare categories that the average intermediate Greek student can ignore: cognate accusative (189–90), pendent accusative (198), and accusative in oaths (204–5).

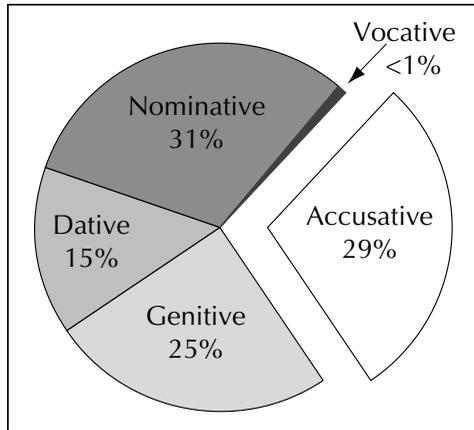


Chart 14
Frequency of Cases in the New Testament²

But for most other categories, it carried some semantic force. It is for this reason that we cannot simply call it the undefined case in the NT.

Instead, the least objectionable umbrella for the accusative uses is to describe it as the case of *extent*, or *limitation*. “The accusative measures an idea as to its content, scope, direction.”³ It is primarily used to *limit* the action of a verb as to *extent*, *direction*, or *goal*. Thus it most frequently answers the question, “How far?” In many respects, this will be a fluid, undefined idea. The precise force of the accusative is determined by its lexeme and that of the verb.

Relation to the Other Oblique Cases

The accusative is similar to the genitive in that both cases have as part of their root idea limitation. But the *genitive* limits as to *quality* while the *accusative* limits as to *quantity*.

Also, the accusative and the dative are similar in that both cases are primarily related to the verb. However, the dative is concerned about that to which the action of the verb is related/located/or by which it is accomplished, while the accusative is concerned about the extent and the scope of the verb’s action.

SPECIFIC USES

ExSyn 179–205

The accusative categories can be generally grouped under one of three rubrics: substantival, adverbial, and after certain prepositions. These groupings are not entirely discrete, but may be viewed as helpful guides.

² The breakdown of acc. forms is as follows: 8815 nouns, 5009 pronouns, 5889 articles, 957 participles, 2435 adjectives (for a total of 23,105).

³ Robertson, *Grammar*, 468. Even this does not cover every usage.

Substantival Uses of the Accusative

ExSyn 179–99

➔1. Accusative Direct Object

ExSyn 179–81

a. Definition. The accusative substantive indicates the immediate object of the action of a transitive verb, receiving the action of the verb. In this way it limits the verbal action. This usage is so common as to be routine: when one sees an accusative substantive, one normally should think of it as the direct object; conversely, when one anticipates the direct object, the case expected is usually the accusative.

b. Clarification and significance. In this use, the accusative will be related to a transitive verb. The verb is typically in the active voice, but some verbs in the middle or even the passive (deponents) take a direct object. Note that the accusative case is not the only case for the direct object; the genitive and dative also can, with certain kinds of verbs, function as the direct object. The exegetical significance of the direct object will normally be when a case *other than* the accusative is used (thus the acc. is the unmarked case as far as direct object is concerned).

c. Illustrations

Matt 5:46 ἔαν ἀγαπήσητε τοὺς ἀγαπῶντας ὑμᾶς
if you love *those who love you*

Just as ὑμᾶς is the direct object of the participle ἀγαπῶντας, so ἀγαπῶντας is the direct object of the finite verb, ἀγαπήσητε.

Mark 2:17 οὐκ ἦλθον καλέσαι δικαίους ἀλλὰ ἁμαρτωλούς
I did not come to call **the righteous** but **sINNERS**

Rom 8:28 τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν τὸν θεὸν πάντα συνεργεῖ [ὁ θεός] εἰς ἀγαθόν
God causes **all things** to work together for good to those who love God

Sometimes it is difficult to tell whether a particular sentence even has a direct object. In this instance, such doubt is due to textual uncertainty and the syntactical range of the verb. If ὁ θεός is not authentic, then the verse could be translated “All things work together for good.”⁴

➔2. Double Accusative of Person-Thing

ExSyn 181–82

a. Definition. Certain verbs take two direct objects, one a person and the other a thing. The thing is the nearer object; the person is the more remote object. Another way to put this is that the person is the object *affected*, while the thing is the object *effected*. This is a fairly common category.

b. Amplification. Typically we would expect the accusative of person to be in the dative rather than the accusative case. Thus “I teach you Greek,” means the

⁴ For a more detailed discussion of this text, see ExSyn 180–81.

same thing as “I teach Greek to you.” But in Greek certain verbs take two accusatives rather than a dative of person and accusative of thing. In most instances the person *receives* the thing, just as a dative indirect object receives a direct object (hence, the person is considered the more remote object). The verbs used with person-thing double accusatives involve: (1) teaching, reminding; (2) clothing, anointing; (3) inquiring, asking; and (4) other causative ideas.

c. Illustrations

Mark 6:22	αἴτησόν με ὃ ἐάν θέλῃς ask me _[p] [for] whatever _[th] you wish
John 14:26	ἐκεῖνος ὑμᾶς διδάξει πάντα he will teach you _[p] all things _[th]
Heb 1:9	ἔχρισέν σε . . . ἔλαιον he anointed you _[p] with oil _[th]

➔3. Double Accusative of Object-Complement

ExSyn 182–89

a. Definition. An object-complement double accusative is a construction in which one accusative substantive is the direct object of the verb and the other accusative (either noun, adjective, participle, or infinitive) complements the object in that it predicates something about it. The complement may be substantival or adjectival. This common usage occurs only with certain kinds of verbs.

The proper label for the direct object in such a construction is “object in object-complement construction”; for the complement, “complement in object-complement construction,” or simply “the object complement.”⁵

b. Structural and semantic clues. This usage of the accusative is exegetically strategic in many texts. It is therefore important to understand how to identify it as well as how to interpret it. There is no one key to identification, but several features of this construction should be noted:

- The direct object usually combines with the verb to form a new verbal idea that has another accusative (the complement) as its object.
- Like the person-thing double accusative, this usage is lexically nuanced. That is to say, it is related to a particular kind of verb.⁶ But every verb that *can* take such a construction is not *required* to do so. This creates special problems in exegesis: not infrequently a crucial issue in the text is decided on the basis of whether the two accusatives are appositional or object-complement.
- Occasionally, the construction is marked by the presence of εἰς or ὡς before the complement, or εἶναι between the two accusatives. Although such ele-

⁵ Note that the lack of hyphen indicates this acc. term; the hyphen (object-complement) refers to the whole construction.

⁶ See *ExSyn* 183, n. 24 for a list of verbs used.

ments are usually lacking, one should normally translate the construction with “as,” “to be,” or “namely” between the two accusatives.

- Frequently, the complement is an adjective. When this is the case, it is always a *predicate* adjective. The object is, in such cases, usually articular.

c. Identification and semantics of the components

(1) IDENTIFICATION OF THE COMPONENTS

Identification of the components in the construction is also not a given. Although normally the object comes first, twenty percent of the examples reverse this order. However, it is easy to determine which is which because *the object-complement construction is semantically equivalent to the subject-predicate nominative construction*. This is because such a construction is an embedded subject-predicate nominative clause. Thus, the principles used to sort out subject from predicate nominative can equally be used here. Specifically:

- If one of the two is a *pronoun*, it will be the object;
- If one of the two is a *proper name*, it will be the object;
- If one of the two is *articular*, it will be the object.⁷

(2) SEMANTICS OF THE COMPONENTS

In general, the *semantics* (not the identification) of the components is guided by word order. On a continuum from definite to qualitative to indefinite, the object will normally fall in the definite range, while the complement will tend toward the qualitative-indefinite range. Thus, for example, in Acts 28:6 the islanders on Malta claim Paul to be “*a god*” (ἔλεγον αὐτὸν εἶναι θεόν).

But when the order of the elements is *reversed*, the complement *tends* toward the definite-qualitative range. This is no doubt due to the prominence of its location in the clause: the more it is thrust forward, the more specific it becomes.

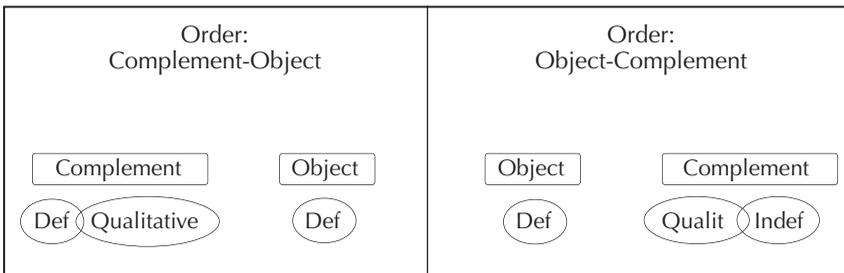


Chart 15
The Semantics of the Object-Complement Construction

⁷ The “pecking order” between these elements seems to be the same as for the S-PN construction (see Predicate Nominative [use 2] in the chapter on the nominative): pronouns take priority, followed by (apparently) proper names, then articular nouns.

d. Illustrations. The principal verbs that can take an object-complement construction can be organized into six semantic fields: calling, designating, confessing; making, appointing; sending, expelling; considering, regarding; having, taking; and declaring, presenting.

(1) CLEAR EXAMPLES

- Matt 22:43 Δαυὶδ ἐν πνεύματι καλεῖ **αὐτὸν κύριον**
David in the Spirit calls **him**_[obj] **Lord**_[comp]
- John 4:46 ἐποίησεν τὸ ὕδωρ οἶνον
he turned **the water**_[obj] [into] **wine**_[comp]
- Rom 3:25 ὃν προέθετο ὁ θεὸς ἰλαστήριον
whom_[obj] God put forth [as] **a propitiation**_[comp]
- Rom 6:11 λογίζεσθε ἑαυτοὺς εἶναι νεκροὺς τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ
consider **yourselves**_[obj] to be **dead**_[comp] to sin

(2) DEBATABLE PASSAGES⁸

- John 4:54 **τοῦτο δεύτερον σημεῖον** ἐποίησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς
Jesus made **this**_[obj] [to be] **the second sign**_[comp]
- Rom 10:9 ἐὰν ὁμολογήσῃς ἐν τῷ στόματί σου **κύριον Ἰησοῦν** . . .
σωθήσῃ
if you confess with your mouth **Jesus** [as] **Lord** . . . you shall
be saved (or, “if you confess with your mouth [that] **Jesus** [is]
Lord . . . ”)
- Titus 2:10 **πάσαν πίστιν** ἐνδεικνυμένους **ἀγαθὴν**
showing **all faith** [to be] **good**

4. Predicate Accusative

ExSyn 190–92

a. Definition and amplification. The accusative substantive (or adjective) stands in predicate relation to another accusative substantive. The two will be joined by an equative verb, either an infinitive or participle. Neither type is especially frequent outside of Luke or Paul.

There are two types of predicate accusatives. The first one is similar to the predicate genitive and the predicate dative. That is, it is (normally) simple apposition made emphatic by a copula in *participial* form.

Second, there is the predicate accusative in which one accusative is the subject of the *infinitive* and the second makes an assertion about the first. Thus, it is similar to the nominative subject and predicate nominative construction. Frequently the infinitive will be in indirect discourse.⁹

⁸ For a discussion of these texts, see *ExSyn* 187–89.

⁹ The examples in this second category also usually belong to the object-complement category, though several are in result or purpose clauses introduced by εἰς.

b. Illustrations

Luke 4:41 ἤδεισαν τὸν Χριστὸν αὐτὸν εἶναι
they knew that he was **the Christ**

Eph 2:1 ὑμᾶς ὄντας νεκροὺς τοῖς παραπτώμασιν
although you were **dead** in [your] trespasses

→5. Accusative Subject of the Infinitive

ExSyn 192–97

a. Definition and amplification. The accusative substantive frequently functions semantically as the subject of the infinitive. Though older grammars insist that technically this is an accusative of respect, from a descriptive and functional perspective it is better to treat it as subject. This is a common use of the accusative, especially with personal pronouns.

Normally the subject of the infinitive is the same as the subject of the main verb and thus is in the nominative case. But when the infinitive requires a different agent, it is almost always put in the accusative case.

(1) ENGLISH ANALOGIES

Though this usage of the accusative is difficult to grasp, it is not without some parallels in English. In the sentence “She wanted me to learn something,” “me” is both the direct object of “wanted” and the subject of “to learn.” Greek usage is similar, though more varied.

(2) AN INFINITIVE WITH TWO ACCUSATIVES

Often in the NT a construction will have an accusative subject as well as an accusative predicate or an accusative direct object. In such cases, how can one tell which is which? For example, in Phil 1:7 does διὰ τὸ ἔχειν **με** ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ **ὑμῶς** mean “because **I** have you in my heart” or “because **you** have me in your heart”? Early analyses suggested that word order or proximity to the infinitive were the determining factors. But word order has since been shown to be at best a *secondary* consideration, and only with certain kinds of constructions. More recently, two types of constructions have been detected, each with its own set of “rules”:

- **Subject accusative-predicate accusative (S-PA)** constructions need to be treated just like their *nominative counterparts*. Neither word order nor proximity to the infinitive are helpful guides for determining the subject. What matters is whether one of the accusatives is a pronoun or articular or a proper name (in which case, it is the subject term).¹⁰
- **Subject accusative-direct object (S-DO)** constructions need to be analyzed differently since there is no semantic correlation between this construction and the S-PA construction. There are only a few potentially ambiguous passages and the rest, regardless of word order, can be deciphered

¹⁰ See our section on the predicate nom. (use 2 in the chapter on the nominative) for more information.

by applying *common sense* (e.g., noticing the context). Perhaps further analysis outside the NT may shed further light on this S-DO construction.

b. Illustrations

(1) UNAMBIGUOUS CONSTRUCTION (WITH ONE ACCUSATIVE SUBSTANTIVE)

Matt 22:3 ἀπέστειλεν **τοὺς δούλους** αὐτοῦ καλέσαι τοὺς κεκλημένους
he sent his **servants** to call those who had been invited

(2) POTENTIALLY AMBIGUOUS CONSTRUCTION (WITH TWO ACCUSATIVES)¹¹

The first example below is an S-PA construction involving an equative verb as the infinitive; the second is an S-DO construction with a transitive verb infinitive.

Acts 28:6 ἔλεγον **αὐτὸν** εἶναι θεόν
they were saying that **he** was a god

In the S-PA construction, just as with subject-predicate nom. constructions (S-PN), if one of the two is a pronoun, it is the subject.

Luke 2:27 ἐν τῷ εἰσαγαγεῖν **τοὺς γονεῖς** τὸ παιδίον Ἰησοῦν
when **the parents** brought in the child Jesus

Obviously, common sense is helpful in determining which acc. is the subject and which is the object!

6. Accusative of Retained Object

ExSyn 197

a. Definition. The *accusative of thing* in a double accusative person-thing construction with an active verb *retains its case* when the verb is put in the *passive*. The accusative of person, in such instances, becomes the subject. For example, “I taught you *the lesson*” becomes, with the verb converted to a passive, “You were taught *the lesson* by me.” In this case, the accusative of person (“you”) becomes the subject (nom.), the accusative of thing (“the lesson”) is retained. This use of the accusative occurs most frequently with causative verbs, though it is rare in the NT.

b. Illustrations

1 Cor 12:13 πάντες ἐν πνεύμα ἐποτίσθημεν
all were made to drink [of] **one Spirit**

“All” is the person, put in the nom. with passive verbs. The acc. of thing, “one Spirit,” is retained. If the verb had been in the active voice, the text would be read: “he made all to drink of one Spirit” (ἐπότισε πάντα ἐν πνεύμα).

2 Thess 2:15 κρατεῖτε τὰς παραδόσεις ὡς ἐδιδάχθητε
hold fast to the traditions **that** you were taught

¹¹ Cf. *ExSyn* 195–97 for a discussion of several passages, including Phil 1:7 and 2 Cor 2:13.

→7. Accusative in Simple Apposition

ExSyn 198–99

a. Definition. Though not technically a syntactical category, the accusative case (as well as the other cases) can be an appositive to another substantive in the *same* case. An appositional construction involves two adjacent substantives that refer to the same person or thing and have the same syntactical relation to the rest of the clause. The first accusative substantive can belong to *any* accusative category, and the second is merely a clarification of who or what is mentioned. Thus, the appositive “piggy-backs” on the first accusative’s use, as it were. It is a common use of the accusative, though occasionally the function of the trailing accusative substantive may be difficult to determine.

b. Illustrations

Acts 16:31 πῖστευσον ἐπὶ τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν καὶ σωθήσῃ σύ
believe in the Lord **Jesus** and you will be saved

Eph 1:7 ἐν ᾧ ἔχομεν τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν διὰ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ, τὴν
ἄφεσιν τῶν παραπτωμάτων
in whom we have the redemption through his blood, **the for-
giveness** of [our] trespasses

Adverbial Uses of the Accusative

ExSyn 199–205

The difficulty with most adverbial accusatives is that they do not find ready analogies with English. The accusative in classical Greek was the workhorse of the oblique cases, functioning in many different capacities. But when the Koine language was born and nonnatives began to speak Greek, the adverbial accusatives took on a more restricted role. Many were replaced by datives or prepositional phrases. Hence, the modern student can take some measure of comfort in knowing that the unnatural feel of many adverbial accusatives was shared by other peoples learning this language as well.

8. Adverbial Accusative (Accusative of Manner)

ExSyn 200–201

a. Definition. The accusative substantive functions semantically like an adverb in that it *qualifies* the action of the verb rather than indicating *quantity* or extent of the verbal action. It frequently acts like an adverb of manner, though not always (hence, the alternative category title is really a *subcategory*, although the most frequently used one). Apart from the occurrence with certain words, this usage is not common.¹²

¹² Many grammarians lump adverbial acc. and acc. of respect together. This is certainly legitimate, but our treatment of the adverbial acc. is more restrictive. Generally speaking, we consider an adverbial acc. *noun* to be one that can be translated like an adverb, while an acc. of respect should receive the gloss “with respect to. . . .”

b. Amplification and caution. This usage has structural similarities to a cognate accusative, but there the similarity ends. It is restricted to a certain group of words that, historically, were used adverbially. That is to say, many adverbs developed from the accusative form of the noun or (especially) the adjective.

There are two distinct kinds of adverbial accusatives: nominal and adjectival (one example of each is provided below). The noun *δωρεάν* is frequently used for an adverbial accusative. But few other nouns are so used. There is a much larger number of adjectives that are used adverbially.

c. Illustrations

Matt 10:8 *δωρεάν* ἐλάβετε, *δωρεάν* δότε
you received **freely**, **freely** give

Matt 6:33 ζητεῖτε δὲ **πρῶτον** τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ
but seek **first** the kingdom of God

➔9. Accusative of Measure (or Extent of Space or Time)

ExSyn 201–3

a. Definition. The accusative substantive indicates the extent of the verbal action. This can either be how far (extent of space) or for how long (extent of time). The usage is quite rare with space, though somewhat common with time.

b. Key to identification and clarification. Supply before the accusative *for the extent of* or (with reference to time) *for the duration of*.

This use of the accusative has in view the basic idea of this case: limitation as to extent. The accusative of space answers the question, “How far?” while the accusative of time answers the question “How long?” It is important to specify to which subgroup a particular accusative belongs (i.e., whether it is the acc. of time or the acc. of space).

With ὥρα the accusative functions like a *dative* of time in that it answers the question “When?” In such instances, the accusative should simply be labeled an accusative of *time* (rather than acc. of *extent* of time).

c. Illustrations

(1) ACCUSATIVE FOR EXTENT OF SPACE

John 6:19 ἐληλακότες οὖν ὡς **σταδίους** εἴκοσι πέντε ἢ τριάκοντα
therefore, when they had rowed about twenty-five or thirty
stades

(2) ACCUSATIVE FOR EXTENT OF TIME

Matt 4:2 νηστεύσας **ἡμέρας** τεσσεράκοντα καὶ **νύκτας** τεσσεράκοντα
fasting forty **days** and forty **nights**

Had the evangelist said that Jesus was fasting forty days and forty nights with the *genitive* of time, it would have meant that he was fasting *during* that time period, but not necessarily for the whole of it.

d. Summary of genitive, dative, and accusative of time. One way to remember the distinctions between the cases used for time is to remember the root idea of each case. However, under the five-case system this may prove a bit confusing. Therefore, for the cases used for time, it may be helpful to think in terms of the *eight-case system*. The root idea of the *genitive* is *kind*. Thus the genitive of time expresses the *kind* of time or time within which. The root idea of the *locative* (not dat.) is *position*, expressing *point* in time. The root idea for the *accusative* is *extent*. Thus the accusative of time expresses the *extent* of time.

One illustration may help. If I were to say, “I worked last night” it could mean (1) during the night, (2) all night, or (3) at a point of time in the night. But in Greek, the case of *night* would indicate what I meant. If I had said νυκτός (gen.), I would mean “during the night.” If I had said νυκτί (dat.) I would mean “at a point of time in the night (e.g., 1 a.m.)” If I had said νυκτά (acc.) I would mean “for the length of the night.” This can be illustrated graphically as well (see chart 16 below).

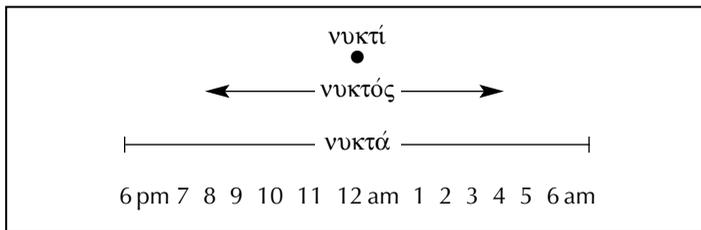


Chart 16
The Cases for Time

10. Accusative of Respect or (General) Reference

ExSyn 203–4

a. Definition and key to identification. The accusative substantive restricts the reference of the verbal action. It indicates *with reference to what* the verbal action is represented as true. An author will use this accusative to qualify a statement that would otherwise typically not be true. This accusative could thus be called a frame of reference accusative or limiting accusative. This is not common in Koine Greek.

Before the accusative substantive you can usually supply the words *with reference to* or *concerning*. Because this usage is rare in the NT, it should be employed as a last resort—that is, only after other categories are exhausted.

b. Illustrations

- Rom 10:5 Μωϋσῆς γὰρ γράφει **τὴν δικαιοσύνην** τὴν ἐκ τοῦ νόμου
for Moses writes that, **with reference to the righteousness**
that comes from the law
- Rev 1:20 **τὸ μυστήριον** τῶν ἑπτὰ ἀστέρων οὓς εἶδες ἐπὶ τῆς δεξιᾶς μου
... οἱ ἑπτὰ ἀστέρες ἄγγελοι εἰσιν ...
as for the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in my right
hand ... the seven stars are angels ...

Special Uses of the Accusative

➔11. Accusative After Certain Prepositions

ExSyn 205

Definition and clarification. Certain prepositions take the accusative after them. See the chapter on prepositions for discussion. For review of which prepositions take which cases, cf. Mounce, *Basics of Biblical Greek*, 55–62.

When an accusative follows a preposition, you should *not* attempt to identify the accusative's function by case usage *alone*. Rather, consult BAGD for the specific usage of that case with that preposition.