The Ancient Greek partitive genitive in typological perspective
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As in other Indo-European, the genitive is used as a partitive in Ancient Greek. Possible usages include direct object, second argument of intransitive verbs, subject, time and space adverbial, complement of adposition:

(1) óphra ploī oínōio
for drink:3SG.OPT wine:GEN
“in order to drink some wine” (Od. 22.11);

(2) epeì k’ oloōio tetarpōmēstha gōoio
when PTC dire:GEN.M enjoy:PF.M/P.1PL groan:GEN.M
“when we have taken our fill of dire lamenting” (Il. 23.10);

(3) eisi gār autōn kai parà basiléi tôn Persēōn
be:PRES.3PL.PTC DEM.GEN.PL and by king:DAT ART.GEN.PL.M Persian:GEN.PL.M
“there are (some) of these (sc. ants) even by the king of the Persians” (Hdt. 3.102.2);

(4) pīnein te kai eupathēein, oun texts e hēmērēs ohte nuktōs aníenta
drink:INF PTC PTC enjoy:INF NEG day:GEN NEG night:GEN let.go:PART.PRS.ACC
“and would drink and enjoy himself, not letting up day or night,” (Hdt. 2.133.4):

(5) ē halōs ē epi gēs
or sea:GEN or on land:GEN
“either at sea or on land” (Od. 12.26-27)

In spite of such a wide variety of usages, the Ancient Greek partitive genitive is comparatively infrequent: partitive subjects and objects are not numerous and never obligatory; space adverbials with or without adpositions, which have no clear parallels in the other Indo-European languages, are peculiar of Homeric Greek and disappeared later. Typologically interesting issues include:
Partitive subjects: While partitive objects occur in principle with all types of verb, partitive subjects are limited to unaccusatives (Conti forthcoming): in a similar fashion, the Basque partitive occurs in negated sentences only in the place of the absolutive, i.e. limited to patients of transitive verbs and subjects of inaccusatives (umeratives take ergative subjects in Basque; note that the Finnish partitive can extend to unergatives, but apparently not to transitives, Huumo 2003).
Adpositional partitive: The feature of affectedness explains possible alternation of the genitive and the accusative as partially affected vs. fully affected object of transitive verbs, and is also relevant for alternation of the partitive genitive and the accusative with adpositions, connected with the internal structure of landmarks (discrete vs. continuous), the structure of the trajectory with motion verbs (unidirectional vs. multidirectional), the position of the trajector (covering a limited portion vs. the whole extension of a landmark; Luraghi 2003, 2009). Partitive complements of adpositions occur in typologically and genetically distant languages:

(6) juoks-i-mme ympāri kaupunki-a
run-PAST-1PL around city-PART
“We were running around in the city” (Finnish; from Lestrade 2006)

(7) complications dues à des erreurs techniques
complications due to PART errors technical
“complications due to technical errors” (French; from Le Monde)

Again, similarities can be found: in Finnish as in Ancient Greek some adpositions admit case alternation; in French, the partitive article is limited to mass nouns or count nouns in the plural, hence types of landmark are also constrained.

In our paper we will address the following issues:

• How does the Ancient Greek partitive genitive relate to the partitive genitive in other IE languages (types of usage; degrees of obligatoriness/grammaticalization);
• How does it compare with partitives across languages (restrictions on occurrence; semantic contribution);
• What reasons prevented its further extension.

References