NOUNS: GENITIVE CASE
[see Waltke, § 9.5]

NOTE: In Hebrew, all nouns fall into one of three *cases*: the nominative, the genitive, and the accusative. A word is considered to be in the nominative case if it is used as the subject of the clause, a vocative, or a predicate nominative. Otherwise, a noun will be a genitive or accusative, and our grammatical analysis need only be concerned with these two.

INTRODUCTION TO THE GENITIVE

Function: To limit, qualify, or modify another noun.

Nouns considered in the genitive:

1) All words after a construct state (i.e., the "absolute" of a construct relationship)
2) Words governed by prepositions (unless the prep. serves to mark the object)
3) All suffixes to nouns and prepositions.
4) Genitival noun clauses
   (i.e., clauses which function as noun-equivalents after a construct noun or a preposition; the whole clause can be classified as a genitive; e.g., Gen 32:25 [Heb]).

CATEGORIES   (* = more common usage)

1. Possession (i.e., uses indicating possession)

   *a. **The Possessor** - indicates the possessor of an object or thing.

   1 Kgs 9:10   *"the house of the king"* (= the king's house)

			Gen		
הַמֶּלֶךְ	בֵּית	וְאֶת־	. . .	שְׁלֹמֹה	בָּנָה
the-king	palace-of	and	...	Solomon	he-built

   b. **The Possessed** - indicates the object or thing possessed by a possessor (not a quality or attribute, but an object or thing).

   Gen 42:30 *"the man, the lord of the land, spoke harshly"*

			Gen		
קָשׁוֹת	אִתָּנוּ	הָאָרֶץ	אֲדֹנֵי	הָאִישׁ	דִּבֶּר
harshly	to-us	the-land	lords-of	the-man	he-spoke

   c. **Family Relationship** - indicates a relationship between family members (can be proper names; this can also involve divine relations, e.g., "Moses the servant of YHWH").

   Gen 28:2 *"Bethuel, the father of your mother"*

	Gen		
אִמֶּךָ	אֲבִי	בְּתוּאֵל	. . .
mother-of-you	father-of	Bethuel	

2.   Source (uses indicating the source)

*a.   **Authorship (or Authorsource)** - indicates the subject (1) who is the author of something or (2) who is responsible for something or (3) with whom something originates (but not birth–for this, see "Family Relationship"). Especially after items that may be written, spoken, or revealed.

2 Chr 24:6 *"to bring in . . . the tax underlined prescribed by Moses"*

Gen

לְהָבִיא ... אֶת־ מַשְׂאַת מֹשֶׁה
to-bring-in   ***   tax-of   Moses

Jer 1:2   *"the Word of Yahweh"*

Jon 1:2   *"their wickedness"* (i.e., the wickedness for which they are responsible)

Jon 2:4   *"your waves"* (i.e., the waves which have their source with you)

*b.   **Subjective Genitive**   [this presentation differs from that of Waltke]

1)   **Agency**– to indicate the subject which <u>performs</u> or <u>initiates</u> the <u>action</u> denoted by the construct noun. [the "construct" could also be an inf. construct, a participle or adjective used substantively]

Deut 7:8   *"but it was because the LORD loved you"*

Gen

כִּי מֵאַהֲבַת יהוה אֶתְכֶם
but because-of-love-of Yahweh for-you

Note: Lit., *because of the love of Yahweh*; love is the action that Yahweh carries out.

> **Distinction from authorship:**
>
> With the subjective genitive of agency, the construct noun will usually denote verbal action, e.g., *love* (or attitude).

A similar situation can occur after passive participles:

Ps 22:7   *"I am . . . despised by the people"* (cf. Isa 53:4)

Gen

וְאָנֹכִי ... וּבְזוּי עָם
but-I   ... and-being-despised-of people

Note: The two examples above are similar, but the first involves a more "normal" construct relationship whereas the second has a passive ptc.

2)   **Characteristic/Quality**– to indicate the subject to which any quality, state, or attribute is <u>imputed</u> or <u>ascribed</u>.

1 Kgs 5:10   *"Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of ..."*

Gen

וַתֵּרֶב חָכְמַת שְׁלֹמֹה מֵחָכְמַת
and-she-was-great wisdom-of Solomon more-than-wisdom-of

Note: conveys the state in which he is found; not that Solomon possesses wisdom, but Solomon is wise. [Waltke puts this example under "possessive gen"]

*c. **Instrument** - indicates the <u>impersonal</u> agent in any action (especially after passive participles).

    Isa 22:2   *"Your slain were not slain <u>with the sword</u>"*

<div dir="rtl">

Gen

חֶרֶב חַלְלֵי־ לֹא חֲלָלַיִךְ

</div>

            sword   ones-slain-of   not   ones-slain-of-you

d. **Cause** - indicates the cause of a state or condition.

    Lev 22:4   *"And if one touches anything made unclean <u>by a corpse</u> . . ."* (Lit., unclean of body)

<div dir="rtl">

Gen

נֶפֶשׁ טְמֵא־ בְּכָל־ וְהַנֹּגֵעַ

</div>

          body   unclean-of   on-any-of   and-the-one-touching

    Note: May also indicate the cause of an action: "people of <u>my</u> wrath."

3.   Object (uses indicating the object)

    *a. **Dependent Genitive (obj. of prep.)** - follows a preposition and is thereby dependent on it.

        Gen 3:2   *"And the woman said to <u>the serpent</u> . . ."*

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Obj Prep

הַנָּחָשׁ אֶל־ הָאִשָּׁה וַתֹּאמֶר

</div>

    the-serpent   to   the-woman   and-she-said

        Note 1:   Quite frequently, a preposition will be used to *mark the object* of the verb, and in such cases the noun or pronoun following the preposition will be in the <u>accusative</u> case (the preposition itself is not translated).

            Gen 32:1   *"And Laban arose in the morning and kissed his grandchildren."*

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Prep

לְבָנָיו וַיְנַשֵּׁק בַּבֹּקֶר לָבָן וַיַּשְׁכֵּם

</div>

      [Eng. 31:55]

    on-grandchildren-of-him   and-he-kissed   in-the-morning   Laban   and-he-rose

            Other examples: with לְ, Lev 19:18 and 1 Sam 23:10; with בְּ, 2 Sam 14:10 and Gen 32:26 [Eng. 32:25].

        Note 2:   If we look at the prepositional phrase <u>as a whole</u>, this *may* function in an adverbial way as an accusative.

            Gen 3:14   *"You will crawl <u>on your belly</u>."*   [restrictive acc.?]

<div dir="rtl">

Prep

עַל־ גְּחֹנְךָ תֵלֵךְ

</div>

        you-will-crawl   belly-of-you   on

*b. **Objective Genitive** - indicates the object of the action denoted by the construct noun (frequent use after active participles).

Obad 10   *"Because of violence to your brother Jacob"*

<div dir="rtl">

מֵחֲמַס אָחִיךָ יַעֲקֹב
</div>

Jacob   brother-of-you   because-of-violence-of

Note: the brother is the object of the violence (cf. Ps 5:12).

The Objective Genitive can also specify the *topic* of an utterance or discourse. [Waltke, § 9.5.3e, opts to call this a "topical genitive"]

Gen 37:2   *"Joseph brought a bad report about them . . . ."*

<div dir="rtl">

וַיָּבֵא יוֹסֵף אֶת־ דִּבָּתָם רָעָה
</div>

bad   report-of-them   ***   Joseph   and-he-brought

c. **Indirect Object** - to indicate the indirect object since there is no <u>dative</u> per se in Hebrew (most examples are combined with a construct noun which is the object of the verb).

Gen 39:21 *"But the LORD was with Joseph . . . and granted him favor . . ."*

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חִנּוֹ וַיִּתֶּן . . . אֶת־ יוֹסֵף יְהוָה וַיְהִי
</div>

favor-of-him   and-he-granted   Joseph   with   Yahweh   but-he-was

Sometimes the stress is on <u>how</u> the object will be <u>affected</u>, as in cases "d", "e" and "f":

d. **Purpose** - indicates the purpose or design of an object
[Waltke calls this "abstract subjective genitive"]

Ps 44:23   *"we are considered as sheep for slaughter"*

<div dir="rtl">

טִבְחָה כְּצֹאן נֶחְשַׁבְנוּ
</div>

slaughter   as-sheep-of   we-are-considered

Note: = sheep (destined) for slaughter

e. **Action** - the word in the genitive indicates the action that someone/something will be affected by.

Isa 10:6   "against the people <u>of</u> my <u>wrath</u>"   (i.e., who will be the object of God's wrath)

<div dir="rtl">

וְעַל־ עַם עֶבְרָתִי אֲצַוֶּנּוּ
</div>

I-dispatch-him   anger-of-me   people-of   and-against

f. **Result** - indicates the result or consequence of an action   (Cf. Isa 53:5!)

Prov 1:3   *"to acquire discipline for prudent behavior"*

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לָקַחַת מוּסַר הַשְׂכֵּל
</div>

to-be-prudent   discipline-of   to-acquire

Note: NIV has *"for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life"*
NASB has *"To receive instruction in wise behavior"*

4.   Qualification (uses indicating a qualification)

*a.   **Attribute**- indicates an attribute or quality of a person or thing. Often will <u>describe</u> or qualify
       a noun in construct, thereby acting like an adjective.

       Ps 2:6   *"I have installed My King upon Zion, My <u>holy</u> mountain"*

                                            Gen

                   נָסַכְתִּי   מַלְכִּי   עַל־   צִיּוֹן   הַר־   קָדְשִׁי
                   holiness-of-me hill-of   Zion   on   king-of-me   I-installed

                           Note: Lit., "mountain of my holiness"

       Cf. Lev 19:36 – *"balances of justice"* = <u>just</u> balances

       How does the Genitive of Attribute differ from the Subjective Genitive?

       Subj Gen   -   The attribute is implied by the construct in the construct relationship.
                                                   Gen   Nom
                             the wisdom of Solomon = חָכְמַת שְׁלֹמֹה

       Attrib Gen -   The attribute is implied by the absolute.
                                                   Gen
                             the mountain of my holiness = הַר־ קָדְשִׁי

       Very closely related to the Genitive of Attribute are idiomatic expressions involving terms like
       man (אִישׁ), *master* (בַּעַל) or *son* (בֶּן) in construct with a noun that represents the nature,
       quality, character, or condition of a person(s).

       2 Sam 16:7   "Get out, get out, you man <u>of bloods</u>" (i.e., bloodthirsty man)

                   צֵא   צֵא   אִישׁ   הַדָּמִים
                   the-bloods   man-of   get-out! get-out!

*b.   **Specification** - indicates the restriction, limitation, or specification of something <u>after</u> <u>an</u>
       <u>adjective</u> or rarely a passive ptc. (this is the opposite of "attribute").   With an attributive gen.,
       the modifier is in the absolute; with specification, the modifier is in the construct. [Waltke, §
       9.5.3c, calls these "epexegetical genitive"]

       Ex 32:9   *"they are a stiff-<u>necked</u> people"* (lit., a people stiff of neck; i.e., the stiffness is
                  specified to be in regard to one's neck)
                           Gen   Adj
                   רָאִיתִי   אֶת־   הָעָם   הַזֶּה   וְהִנֵּה   עַם־   קְשֵׁה־   עֹרֶף   הוּא
                   he   neck   stiff-of people-of and-see! the-this the-people *** I-saw

c.   **Proper Name** - indicates the proper name of a person or thing (sometimes called "genitive of
       apposition"). Cf. Ex 7:19.

       Amos 5:2 *"She has fallen . . . the virgin <u>Israel</u>"*   (i.e., the virgin *which is called* Israel)
                           Gen
                   נָפְלָה . . . בְּתוּלַת יִשְׂרָאֵל
                   Israel   Virgin-of   she-is-fallen

       Note: Waltke (§9.5.3h) calls this a "genitive of association."

d.   **Personal Worth** - indicates a person as "deserving of" or "worthy of" an action or attribute.

Ps 29:2   *"Ascribe to the LORD the glory <u>due to His name</u>"* (lit., "the glory of His name,"
i.e., the glory that His name is deserving of)

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הָבוּ לַיהוָה כְּבוֹד שְׁמוֹ
</div>

name-of-him   glory-of   to-Yahweh   ascribe!

2 Sam 16:8   *"you are taken in <u>your own</u> calamity, for you are a man of bloodshed"* (i.e.,
the calamity which <u>you</u> deserve)

<div dir="rtl">

וְהִנְּךָ בְּרָעָתֶךָ כִּי אִישׁ דָּמִים אָתָּה
</div>

you   bloods   man-of   for   in-ruin-of-you   and-see-you!

*e.   **Location** - indicates the location of something (also called "locative genitive").

Gen 22:17   *"like the stars <u>in the heavens</u>"* (lit., "of heaven")

<div dir="rtl">

אַרְבֶּה אֶת־ זַרְעֲךָ כְּכוֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם
</div>

the-skies   as-stars-of   descendant-of-you   ***   I-will-increase

f.   **Goal** - indicates the <u>goal</u> or destination of a stated or implied motion

Isa 38:18   *"those who go down <u>to the pit</u> cannot hope for your faithfulness"*

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לֹא־ יְשַׂבְּרוּ יוֹרְדֵי־ בוֹר אֶל־ אֲמִתֶּךָ
</div>

faithfulness-of-you   for   pit   ones-going-down-of   they-can-hope   not

g.   **Material** - indicates the material of which a thing is made.

Ex 20:24   *"You shall make an altar <u>of earth</u> for Me"*

<div dir="rtl">

מִזְבַּח אֲדָמָה תַּעֲשֶׂה־ לִּי
</div>

for-me   you-make   earth   altar-of

h.   **Measurement** - involves measurement or numbering.

1)   With a focus on that which is measured.

Jud 6:19   *"And Gideon . . . prepared . . . an ephah <u>of flour</u>"*

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וְגִדְעוֹן . . . וַיַּעַשׂ . . . וְאֵיפַת־ קֶמַח
</div>

flour   and-ephah-of   . . .   and-he-prepared . . .   and-Gideon

> Note: Actually the measurement is expressed by the construct, but we still call the
> absolute a "gen. of measurement."

2)   With a focus on the measure itself (or, the *extent* of measure).

Ezk 47:4   *"He ... led me through water that was <u>up to the waist</u>."*

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וַיַּעֲבִרֵנִי מֵי מָתְנַיִם
</div>

waists   waters-of   and-he-led-me

> Note: The measurement is expressed by the absolute.

3)   With numerals, showing that which is enumerated (also with general quantifiers like כֹּל, "all").

Jos 10:16   *"Now these five kings fled and hid"*

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וַיָּנֻסוּ חֲמֵשֶׁת הַמְּלָכִים הָאֵלֶּה וַיֵּחָבְאוּ
</div>

now-they-fled   five-of   the-kings   the-these   and-they-hid

(Gen above הַמְּלָכִים)

5.   Quantitative Degree (uses indicating a quantitative degree)

*a.   **Partitive Genitive** - indicates the whole of which the construct is a part or member (the genitive, i.e., the absolute expresses the whole).

Jud 5:29   *"The wisest of her ladies answer her"*

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חַכְמוֹת שָׂרוֹתֶיהָ תַּעֲנֶינָה
</div>

wisest-ones-of   ladies-of-her   they-answer-her

(Gen above שָׂרוֹתֶיהָ)

b.   **Superlative** - indicates a superior element within a group (usually the construct is singular and the absolute is plural, i.e., the genitive represents the group).

Deut 10:17   *"For the LORD your God is the God of gods"*

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כִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הוּא אֱלֹהֵי הָאֱלֹהִים
</div>

for   Yahweh   God-of-you   he   God-of   the-gods

(Gen above אֱלֹהֵי)

c.   **Class** or **Genus** - indicates the class or genus to which the construct noun belongs (similar to "partitive" but with more implicit relationship involved).

Prov 15:20   *"but a foolish man despises his mother"*

<div dir="rtl">

וּכְסִיל אָדָם בּוֹזֶה אִמּוֹ
</div>

but-fool-of   man   one-despising   mother-of-him

(Gen above אָדָם)

Note: fool is a sub-class of men in general   (cf. Gen 16:12).

d.   **Subspecies** - indicates a sub-class of a larger class or genus (inverse of "c" above).

Jer 24:2   *"One basket had very good figs, like first-ripe figs"* (lit., figs of the first ripe ones)

<div dir="rtl">

. . . כִּתְאֵנֵי הַבַּכֻּרוֹת
</div>

like-figs-of   the-early-ripening-ones

(Gen above כִּתְאֵנֵי)