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**‘Sharing in the polis:  
Greek conceptualizations of the political community’**

Many ancient Greek texts and genres speak of ‘sharing’ in various material and material and abstract resources. This project explores the concept of citizenship and community membership expressed metaphorically as ‘sharing in the polis’. It aims to analyze the language of belonging to the polis community primarily in sources from the classical period (fifth and fourth centuries BCE).

When searching for a proper definition of what constitutes a ‘citizen’, Aristotle in his *Politics* found one in the idea of male enfranchised citizens’ share in the political institutions of the city-state. This idea can also be found in Greek legal texts and is very common in rhetoric, in live appeals to mass civic audiences dynamically referring to communal norms. This project aims to study all instances of this concept in classical Greek sources. It examines the conceptual links and cultural roots behind the language of ‘sharing’, its role in public discourse, and reflection on these notions in political philosophy. It aims to give insight into a cultural concept and a political metaphor pivotal to ancient Greek culture, and to develop a new approach to Greek citizenship and politics.

The extent to which cognition in general and abstract concepts specifically are ‘grounded’ in both sensorimotor and social experiences is debatable, but that such grounding is a common and dynamic phenomenon in language is now widely recognized in many research areas, not least based on empirical studies. The most evidently grounded concepts tend to be verbs (e.g., ‘to have a share’, ‘to take part’), as they are most directly rooted in action and experience, while metaphors help in bridging the gap between the concrete and the abstract in language and cognition. With respect to new significant developments in cognitive linguistics, this study will aim to trace the possible routes of conceptual developments in Greek political discourse.

The shared world of the Greeks may be seen as very remote from modern conceptions of community. Yet sharing is again becoming a common societal interaction. We share more in the real and virtual (also conceptual) space in a world that is rethinking ownership and access to resources, so the time is ripe in the Humanities more generally but also in Classics to reconsider historical experience and understanding of sharing.

What is particularly important to this project is that Greek ideas about ‘sharing in the polis’ may reflect a more primary experience and more fundamental cultural way of thinking about property, community, and distribution of material and symbolic resources than commonly believed. Such notions need to be properly contextualized and examined, so that we can properly understand the thinking behind ideas of belonging and status in discourse. This includes the patterns of describing the normative ‘share’ of fully enfranchised male citizens on the one hand and other members of the community, sharing more broadly but also not fully ‘in the matters of the polis’, on the other.