

THE ASSOCIATIVE SEMANTICS OF ΣΥΜΜΑΡΤΥΡΕΩ:  
A DIACHRONIC STUDY

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**Abstract:** Though several scholars have argued that *συμμαρτυρέω* was readily used without the associative sense ‘testify *with* or *jointly*’ prominent in standard lexica, a fresh examination of a wide range of texts discloses an even stronger than expected correlation between the use of *συμμαρτυρέω* and the occurrence of concordant affirmations in its context. This supports the argument that the verb’s meaning is normally associative after all. Aspects of its extra-biblical use also help to resolve theological objections that have been lodged against it being ascribed an associative sense in the New Testament. (Article)

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1. *Introduction*

Among lexical resources for ancient Greek, the basic sense of *συμμαρτυρέω* is rendered as “bear witness with or in support of another” (LSJ); “to testify or bear witness with, to provide supporting evidence by testifying, confirm, support by testimony” (BDAG); “bear witness with” (MM); “to witness with” (Robinson); “to bear witness with, bear joint witness” (Thayer); “to bear joint witness with” (Wuest, *Word Studies*, 135); and for patristic texts, “bear joint witness, bear witness in support of one another” (Lampe). In these definitions, “with,” “support,” and “joint” stand out in differentiating the word from glosses of its simplex, *μαρτυρέω*. Several of these sources also foreground textual examples where a dative complement names

a party with whom the subject joins in affirming something.<sup>1</sup> Though “bear witness in support of” leaves room for the subject’s testimony to aid another party without agreement from the latter, that scenario is not found in the passages surveyed below.

Most of those passages are drawn from a study by Daniel Wallace arguing that *συμμαρτυρέω* is typically an *intensive* of *μαρτυρέω* and that its dative complements tend to be indirect objects: people to whom testimony is addressed or to whose advantage it is given, or things affirmed or supported by it.<sup>2</sup> I argue instead that the data consistently favors an *associative* meaning of the verb whether or not a dative is present. Unlike its simplex, *συμμαρτυρέω* in the surveyed texts typically denotes testimony that agrees with some other, often temporally separate, testimony or affirmation. The latter may come from a person or a more or less personified thing and may or may not be explicitly mentioned within the immediate context. Further nuances from the texts shed light on disputed aspects of the compound’s usage in the New Testament, especially regarding issues of witness authority and accessibility.

The plan of attack is as follows. I first analyze representative classical texts where an associative sense of *συμμαρτυρέω* is plain or undisputed, then texts where it is disputed but proves plausible (2.1). After approaching several Hellenistic (2.2) and Byzantine (2.3) texts in the same way, I draw general conclusions (3.1) and employ them to clarify New Testament usage (3.2).

The texts surveyed below are extra-biblical and span roughly a millennium.<sup>3</sup> This has three reasons. First, most of them are used by Wallace for his case *against* *συμμαρτυρέω* tending to have an associative sense, and in selecting them, he considered a high percentage of all instances of the verb then available in the

1. Such as the first quoted examples in LSJ and BDAG and the first cited example in Lampe, treated respectively in texts (2), (3), (24) below.

2. Wallace, “Witness,” 44–45, 298 n. 26.

3. The date ranges used for Classical, Hellenistic, and Byzantine Greek follow Joseph, “Greek,” 358–59.

*Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*.<sup>4</sup> The breadth of his search elevates the discussion with a robust data set, while the difference between his conclusions and mine minimizes likelihood that his choice of texts was biased in my analysis's favor. Second, the claim that this verb developed an intensive non-associative sense is made by some of the lexica cited above using classical texts as far back as the sixth century BCE; it is consequently appropriate to start there in reconsidering the word's semantic story in antiquity. Finally, tracing that story forward for a millennium enlarges the scope of my conclusion and reinforces my New Testament contentions by relating them to a diachronically stable factor: *συμμαρτυρέω* typically carried an associative sense before, during, and after its much-discussed use by Paul.

## 2. Survey

### 2.1 Classical

Of the classical texts selected by Wallace (6th–4th c. BCE), two furnish an apt starting point. In both of them, Wallace favors an associative sense for *συμμαρτυρέω*, and the associate is explicit as a dative complement of the verb. The genres vary: one text is from history, the other from tragedy. A third, comparable text not discussed by Wallace is cited by BDAG from Platonic dialogue.

1. Xenophon, *Hellenica* 3.3.2: Ἀλλὰ ὁ Ποτειδᾶν ὡς μάλα σευ ψευδομένῳ κατεμήνυσεν ἐκ τοῦ θαλάμου ἐξέλασας σεισμῷ εἰς τὸ φανερόν τὸν σὸν πατέρα. συνεμαρτύρησε δὲ ταῦτ' αὐτῷ καὶ ὁ ἀληθέστατος λεγόμενος χρόνος εἶναι. 'But Poseidon showed that you are entirely in the wrong, for he drove your father out of her chamber into the open by an earthquake. And time also, which is said to be the truest witness, gave testimony that the god was right.'<sup>5</sup>

Here Poseidon's evidence (what he showed), later events (seen as evidence given by time), and the speaker agree on a guilty verdict. Time explicitly corroborates Poseidon, thus

4. That is, 166 instances. See Wallace, "Witness," 298 n. 26. The TLG has since grown to include several hundred instances, along with several thousand of *μαρτυρέω*.

5. Xenophon, *Hell.* 1:216–17 (Brownson, LCL).

seconding him (“also”) in implicitly corroborating the speaker. The *συν-* prefix is readily interpreted as associative: ‘Time, too, which is said to be the most truthful, gave testimony affirming these things in agreement with him [Poseidon]’ (my translation). Or as Wallace says: “*αὐτῷ* seems to suggest ‘bore witness *with him*.’”<sup>6</sup>

2. Sophocles, *Philoctetes* 436–38a: τοῦτ' ἐκδιδάξω. πόλεμος οὐδέν' ἄνδρ' ἐκὼν / αἰρεῖ πονηρόν, ἀλλὰ τοὺς χρηστοὺς αἰεί. / ξυμμαρτυρῶ σοι. ‘I will tell you this: war never willingly destroys a villain, but always noble men.’ ‘I bear you witness.’<sup>7</sup>

Wallace accepts “agreement with” as the “obvious” sense of the last verb but suggests that this meaning merges with “I testify on your behalf” with a dative of advantage.<sup>8</sup> The latter sense, however, ignores the plurality of speakers affirming the truth of one same proposition: a factor that transparently agrees with the prototypical ‘with’ or ‘together’ sense of *συν-* and that proves markedly consistent in the texts below. The second speaker’s statement is therefore aptly rendered as, ‘I bear witness in agreement with you.’

3. Plato, *Hippias Major* 282b: Καλῶς γε σύ, ὦ Ἱππία, ὀνομάζων τε καὶ διανοούμενος, ὡς ἔμοιγε δοκεῖς. συμμαρτυρῆσαι δέ σοι ἔχω ὅτι ἀληθῆ λέγεις. ‘Yours, Hippias, is a most excellent way, at any rate, of speaking about them and of thinking, it seems to me; and I can bear you witness that you speak the truth.’<sup>9</sup>

Given the references to uttering and speaking, the last sentence is reasonably rendered as ‘I can testify/affirm in concord with you that you are saying true things,’ rather than the sense being ‘I aid you by affirming these things, but without any implication that you affirm them too.’<sup>10</sup>

6. Wallace, “Witness,” 294.

7. Sophocles, *Phil.* 436–38a (Lloyd-Jones, LCL).

8. Wallace, “Witness,” 294.

9. Plato, *Hipp. maj.* 282b (Fowler, LCL).

10. Strathmann, *TDNT*, 4:509, renders this sentence as, “‘I must agree with you that you are right’ (i.e., [agree] with the view [that you have] expressed)” (bracketed words mine).

In the next few instances, *συμμαρτυρέω* is given a non-associative sense by Wallace, yet the scenes and syntax are comparable to what we have just seen. The genres are again historical prose and tragic verse.

4. Xenophon, *Hellenica* 7.1.35–36: ἔλεγε δὲ ὁ Πελοπίδας ὅτι . . . ἡττημένοι εἶεν . . . συνεμαρτύρει δ' αὐτῶ ταῦτα πάντα ὡς ἀληθῆ λέγοι ὁ Ἀθηναῖος Τιμαγόρας, καὶ ἐτιμᾶτο δεύτερος μετὰ τὸν Πελοπίδαν. 'Pelopidas also said that [certain groups] had been defeated . . . And the Athenian, Timagoras, bore witness in his behalf that all these things which he said were true, and so stood second in honour to Pelopidas.'<sup>11</sup>

Pelopidas's testimony of the battle's outcome was confirmed by Timagoras, who was therefore honored second after him. The honor correlated with their two testimonies, Pelopidas being the Persian king's primary source for the information and Timagoras corroborating it. Timagoras's relation to Pelopidas is not that "he testified to him,"<sup>12</sup> but rather in concord 'with him.'

5. Euripides, *Hippolytus* 285–87: οὐ μὴν ἀνήσω γ' οὐδὲ νῦν προθυμίας, / ὡς ἂν παροῦσα καὶ σύ μοι ξυμμαρτυρῆς / οἷα πέφυκα δυστυχοῦσι δεσπότηαις. 'Yet I shall not even now relax my efforts, so that you standing by may also bear witness on my behalf what kind of servant I have been to my mistress in distress.'<sup>13</sup>

Wallace quotes instead from a different translation: "Yet will I not even now abate my zeal: / So stand thou by and witness unto me / How true am I to mine afflicted lords."<sup>14</sup> The speaker's self-praise, however, favors construing *συμμαρτυρέω* with *μοι* as 'testify in agreement with me,' i.e., 'in concord with my affirmation of how good a servant I have been.'

Intriguingly, two verbs in this tragedy are glossed by *συμμαρτυρέω* in the scholia.<sup>15</sup> Both verbs are compounds of which the components typically mean 'say' and 'with.' The first (*σύμφημι*) has a dative complement that seems associative (lines

11. Xenophon, *Hell.* 2:252–53 (Brownson, LCL).

12. Wallace, "Witness," 294.

13. Euripides, *Hipp.* 285–87 (Kovacs, LCL).

14. Euripides, *Hipp.* 285–87 (Way, LCL).

15. Cavarzeran, ed., *Scholia*, 175, 249.

264–66): τὸ λίαν ἥσσον ἐπαινῶ / τοῦ μηδὲν ἄγαν· / καὶ ξυμφήσουσι σοφοί μοι ‘I have much less praise for excess than for moderation. The wise will bear me out’ (i.e., ‘agree with me’).<sup>16</sup> The second (συνείπον) has no dative but still seems associative (556–58): συνεί-/ποιτ’ ἂν ἅ Κύπρις οἶον ἔρ-/πει, ‘You could second my account of how Aphrodite comes’ (i.e., ‘tell along with’ me what her coming is like, to quote LSJ, citing this clause).<sup>17</sup> In both cases, witnesses are called to voice agreement with what the speakers are saying.<sup>18</sup> Naming the called party by a dative in one instance and leaving it implicit in the other seems independent of the verbs’ meaning and specifically their capacity to be glossed by *συμμαρτυρέω*.

In the next several texts, an associative sense is plausible for *συμμαρτυρέω* without a dative. Wallace favors such a sense in the first text but not the others; I favor it in them all.

6. Sophocles, *Electra* 1224: ὦ φίλτατον φῶς. φίλτατον, συμμαρτυρῶ.  
‘O dearest light!’ ‘Dearest, I too can witness!’<sup>19</sup>

The ‘too’ here conveys the nuance of a co-witness contributed by *συμ-*; lit. ‘O dearest light!’ ‘[That it is] dearest, I testify in agreement with [you].’

The first speaker, Electra, has been holding an urn containing what she thinks are the ashes of her brother Orestes, who in reality has just stepped onto the scene. Neither sibling recognizes the other until Electra’s lament over the ashes enlightens Orestes. He has now taken the urn from her and made himself known. Her exclamation and his reply can be interpreted as, “O blissful

16. Euripides, *Hipp.* 264–66 (Kovacs, LCL).

17. Euripides, *Hipp.* 556–58 (Kovacs, LCL). συνείποιτ’=συνείποιτε, ἅ=ἡ.

18. The same seems likely for Euripides, *Danaë* frag. 319, possibly uttered from the chorus (see Karamanou, ed., *Danaë*, 19, and Collard and Cropp, LCL, 330; contra. Ribeiro, “Enganos,” 303), as was *Hipp.* 557. But the fragment, consisting of *συμμαρτυρῶ σοι* followed by a brief statement, is too short to support Wallace (“Witness,” 293) asserting without comment that the dative is non-associative. As for the *Hippolytus* scholia, he notes only that 557 (cited as 577) has no dative.

19. Sophocles, *El.* 1224 (Lloyd-Jones, LCL).

day!” “Blissful, in very deed!”<sup>20</sup> However, φῶς is often used as a metaphor for persons, especially in direct address and at moments of “deliverance, happiness, victory, glory, etc.” (LSJ, citing Homer, tragedy, and late prose). Thus, φῶς potentially refers to Orestes himself in Electra’s statement, his response, or both.

At all events, an associative sense suits Orestes’s συμμαρτυρῶ given the context supplied by his sister’s statement. Wallace agrees that an associative sense is likely, with the beneficiary of this concord being left implicit (sc. ‘I agree with [you]’).<sup>21</sup> Omitting a dative that relates to a verb’s prepositional prefix is not unusual in Greek.<sup>22</sup>

7. Euripides, *Iphigenia at Aulis* 1157–58: σοι καταλλαχθεῖσα περὶ σὲ καὶ δόμους / συμμαρτυρήσεις ὡς ἄμεμπτος ἤ γυνή. ‘Once I was reconciled to you, you will be my witness that as a wife I was blameless in regard to you and your house.’<sup>23</sup>

The wife is speaking on her own behalf and invokes her husband’s testimony as one that will agree with hers; lit. ‘you will testify in agreement with [me] that I was a blameless wife [or, how blameless a wife I was]’ (with ὡς as ‘that’ or ‘how’).

8. Isocrates, *Trapeziticus* 42: Αὐτὸν τοίνυν Πασίων’ ἔργω παρέξομαι τούτοις συμμαρτυροῦντα. ‘Pasion himself, moreover—in effect, at least—I will present as corroborating these statements.’<sup>24</sup>

Wallace writes, “That is, ‘I will show that Pasion himself has borne witness to [the truth of] these statements.’ That this is indirect object is evident by the fact that μαρτυροῦντα could

20. Jebb, ed., *Electra*, 167.

21. Wallace, “Witness,” 293.

22. Some examples with other verbs are given in n. 84 below.

23. Euripides, *Iph. aul.* 1157–58 (Kovacs, LCL). Wallace (“Witness,” 293) translates the second line as, “You testify how blameless a wife she was,” and comments: “the testimony confirms what she believes, but is not in association with her.” But I found no previously published translation with “how blameless a wife” other than Buckley’s (*Tragedies*, 344), in which the next words were “I was . . .” As LSJ notes, 1sg impf. indic. ἤ, from ἤα, is an Attic variant of 1sg ἦν.

24. Isocrates, *Trapez.* 42 (Van Hook, LCL).

easily be substituted here.”<sup>25</sup> But that neuter *τούτοις* serves as an indirect object does not show what *συμ-* contributes. Here and in the next text, Wallace evokes a proposed substitution principle that I will examine later (see 3.1 below). For now, it suffices to observe that Isocrates has just told witnesses to rise (*καί μοι ἀνάβητε μάρτυρες*) and is telling how their information confirms his. This context makes reasonable the translation, “I will present Pasion himself as testifying in agreement with [me] regarding these things.” It is not simply that Pasion can affirm the points at stake, but that he can second Isocrates in affirming them.

9. Isocrates, *Panegyricus* 31: *καίτοι περὶ τίνων χρῆ μᾶλλον πιστεύειν ἢ περὶ ὧν ὁ τε θεὸς ἀναιρεῖ καὶ πολλοῖς τῶν Ἑλλήνων συνδοκεῖ, καὶ τὰ τε πάλαι ῥηθέντα τοῖς παροῦσιν ἔργοις συμμαρτυρεῖ, καὶ τὰ νῦν γιγνόμενα τοῖς ὑπ’ ἐκείνων εἰρημένους ὁμολογεῖ;* ‘And about what, I should like to know, can we more surely exercise our faith than about matters as to which the oracle of Apollo speaks with authority, many of the Hellenes are agreed, and the words spoken long ago confirm the practice of today, while present events tally with the statements which have come down from the men of old?’<sup>26</sup>

Like the previous texts, this one presents multiple voices in concord affirming one same idea. More specifically, the context suggests that the topic is less directly how to use the past to ‘confirm the practice of today’ than the reverse. Isocrates has been recounting to his fellow Athenians the traditional tale of how they learned agriculture and taught it to other peoples, and now he says that the story is confirmed by not just the fact that everyone has always believed it but also the fact that other peoples have a habit of sending harvest fruits to Athens. Why else would foreigners do this, he says, unless the oracles and common opinion are correct about the traditional history? This sense favors construing *τοῖς παροῦσιν ἔργοις* as associative: ‘things spoken long ago bear joint witness with present practice,’ not as if the latter were on trial but rather joining it to validate a specific view of history. In other words, ‘things spoken long ago testify in concord with (*συμμαρτυρεῖ*) present practice, and

25. Wallace, “Witness,” 294 (brackets original).

26. Isocrates, *Paneg.* 31 (Norlin, LCL).



current events agree with (ὁμολογεῖ) what the former people said,’ about the transmission of agriculture.

10. Solon, *Fragment* 36.1–7: ἐγὼ δὲ τῶν μὲν οὐνεκα ξυνήγαγον / δῆμον, τί τούτων πρὶν τυχεῖν ἐπαυσάμην; / συμμαρτυροῖη ταῦτ’ ἂν ἐν δίκη χρόνου / μήτηρ μεγίστη δαιμόνων Ὀλυμπίων / ἄριστα, Γῆ μέλαινα, τῆς ἐγὼ ποτε / ὄρουσ ἀνείλον πολλαχῆ πεπηγότας / πρόσθεν δὲ δουλεύουσα, νῦν ἐλευθέρη. ‘Before achieving what of these goals for which I brought the people together did I stop? In the verdict of time I will have as my best witness the mighty mother of the Olympian gods, dark Earth, whose boundary markers fixed in many places I once removed; enslaved before, now she is free.’<sup>27</sup>

Solon, recounting his work of freeing slaves, says that in Time’s judgment his best supporting witness to concur with his own account of himself will be Earth, due to his actions’ impact on her. In effect, the fruit of his deeds corroborates his tongue; lit. ‘in Time’s court proceedings . . . Earth can affirm these things in agreement with [me]’ (i.e., ‘can reiterate what I am saying’). It is unclear why BDAG sees an intensive sense here<sup>28</sup> (“best” in Gerber’s translation renders ἄριστα), let alone why that intensification would certify loss of associative meaning.<sup>29</sup>

11. Euripides, *Helen* 1079–80 (in the text-form quoted by Wallace): τὰδ’ ἀμφίβληστρα σώματος ῥάκη / ξυμμαρτυρήσει ναυτικῶν ἐρειπίων.<sup>30</sup> ‘These rags thrown around my body will bear witness with me as to the shipwreck.’<sup>31</sup>

27. Solon, *Fragments* 36.1–7 (Gerber, LCL).

28. In a remark on συμμαρτυρέω that figures prominently in Wallace’s study (“Witness,” 43–45, 292–93), BDAG states: “as early as Solon 24, 3 D.2 the prefix συν- has in the highest degree the effect of strengthening.” It then observes this same effect in unspecified passages of tragedy as well as some of the texts (1, 3–4, 17–18) in the present study. (BDAG cites Solon from Diehl’s edition, p. 43, which, apart from -α for -η in the last word, is identical to text (10) above.)

29. See Porter, “Greek Prepositions,” 35: intensification “often” does not dispel “local meaning” “(e.g., κατεσθίω, ‘eat up’ or ‘chow down’; καταδιώκω, ‘hunt down,’ in which the preposition still maintains its idea of ‘ground’).”

30. Euripides, *Hel.* 1079–80 (Murray, Perseus Digital Library).

31. Euripides, *Hel.* 1078–80 (Oates and Eugene, eds., Coleridge, trans., Perseus Digital Library), with ‘me’ apparently implied.

Newer editions replace *ξυμμαρτυρήσει* with *ξυμμάρτυρές σοι*.<sup>32</sup> A literary rendering is ‘These rags I have cast about my body will second your story of my wreck at sea,’<sup>33</sup> while a closer translation is ‘To you these rags . . . will be [my] co-witnesses of [my] shipwreck.’ All these renderings convey the associative sense of multiple witnesses testifying in concord (a tongue telling of a shipwreck and some clothes corroborating this), in contrast with Wallace describing the verb simply as having “the intensive force of testifying.”<sup>34</sup>

12. Scholion on Pindar, *Pythian Ode* 1.46(87): *ὑποστίζω πρὸς τὸ παράσχοι, καὶ τινα τῶν βιβλίων συμμαρτυροῦντα ἔχων*.<sup>35</sup> ‘I add a comma after “would supply,” and I have (ἔχων) indeed (καί) some copies that attest [this reading] in agreement with [me]’ (author’s translation).

The scholion contrasts a comma with a period posited by other interpreters, noting that the latter entails reading Pindar’s sentence as a wish. The comma recasts the wording as the protasis of a conditional statement, with what follows being the apodosis. It makes little difference; the material is a series of desiderata, either way.<sup>36</sup> It seems unlikely that testimony on so minor a point of punctuation would be expressed intensively; by contrast, an associative sense of the verb fits the context.

## 2.2 Hellenistic

The trend that we have seen in classical texts continues with those selected by Wallace from the Hellenistic period, more specifically its second half (1st–3rd c. CE). Beginning with

32. See Diggle’s (TLG) and Kovacs’s (LCL) editions, with a ξ- variant of *σύμμαρτυς* “fellow-witness, joint-witness” (LSJ).

33. Euripides, *Hel.* 1079–80 (Kovacs, LCL).

34. Wallace, “Witness,” 293.

35. Pindar, *Pyth.* 1.46(87) (Abel, TLG). This is cited by Wallace to “confirm the intensifying force of *συμμαρτυρέω*” (Wallace, “Witness,” 294). Along with this text, Wallace cites Aristides’s *Περὶ τοῦ παραφθέγματος* 327.21 and a scholion on his *Περὶ τῆς Πηγορικῆς* 72.7. But these repeat texts (10), (19); see *Aristides* (Dindorf, TLG) vols. 2 and 3.

36. Gildersleeve (*Olympian and Pythian Odes*, 246) sees it as a conditional implicating a wish.

instances where Wallace favors an associative sense for *συμμαρτυρέω* with a dative complement (13) and without one (14), we proceed to texts where he does not (15), including some with no dative (16–17) or with an inanimate non-associative dative referring to claims or ideas that are in question and that are being affirmed by testimony (18, 21, and possibly 19 and 20; cf. 8 above). Though the syntax varies in multiple ways, I argue that an associative sense suits *συμμαρτυρέω* throughout.

13. Plutarch, *Moralia* 64c (*How to Tell a Flatterer* 23): *συνεργεῖν γὰρ δεῖ τῷ φίλῳ μὴ συμπανουργεῖν, καὶ συμβουλεύειν μὴ συνεπιβουλεύειν, καὶ συμμαρτυρεῖν μὴ συνεξαπατᾶν.* ‘For one should assist a friend in doing, not in misdoing, in advising, not in ill-devising, in supporting his conclusions, not his delusions.’<sup>37</sup>

Here the word *assist* renders the suite of *συν-/συν-* prefixes. A closer translation can render them each distinctly as ‘with’: ‘A friend (φίλῳ) [is a person whom] one should (δεῖ) work with, not work ill with; devise counsel with, not hatch plots with; speak in agreement with (*συμμαρτυρεῖν*), not share delusions with.’ I concur with Wallace that *συμμαρτυρέω* seems associative.<sup>38</sup>

14. Papyrus BGU 1.86.39–43: In a list of signatories’ names, each is followed by *συνμαρτ{υ/ι}ρῶ καὶ συνσφρα{γ/κ}ιῶ*<sup>39</sup> ‘I bear witness with [the first/other signatories] and will join with [them] in sealing [this]’ (my translation).

Here “*συμμαρτυρεῖν* . . . means ‘to bear witness with,’ ‘to attest or confirm something as one witness along with another or several others.’”<sup>40</sup> The very plurality of its recurrence underlines that sense of concord. Wallace agrees that the verb is associative.<sup>41</sup>

15. Plutarch, *Theseus and Romulus* 6.4–5: *ὁ χρόνος ἐστὶ μάρτυς . . . τῷ δὲ ποσούτῳ χρόνῳ συμμαρτυρεῖ καὶ τὰ ἔργα.*<sup>42</sup> ‘Time is witness’ to the

37. Plutarch, *Mor.* 64c (Babbitt, LCL).

38. Wallace, “Witness,” 295.

39. My condensation of spelling variants in the Duke Databank transcription, which dates the text “AD 155 Mar 21.”

40. Strathmann, *TDNT*, 4:508, citing this text.

41. Wallace, “Witness,” 292 n. 23, 298 n. 26.

42. Ziegler, ed., *Plutarchi vitae parallelae*, 76–81.

impact of certain deeds by Romulus, because for generations afterward no man violated the pattern they set, until one Spurius made an exception. ‘And the immediate results of his act, as well as the long lapse of time, witness in favour of Romulus.’<sup>43</sup>

The associative sense is clear: ‘time is a witness’ for Romulus, ‘and (δέ) in agreement with so much time, the deeds too testify’ in Romulus’s favor. The *καί* ‘too’ reinforces the sense of concordant testimonies.<sup>44</sup> Since ‘so much time’ is dative, the syntax of its clause would allow the works to be bearing witness to time, with the latter an indirect object of *συμμαρτυρέω*. But that is not viable semantically, since time here is neither judge nor jury nor a point in dispute. Instead, time is a witness (cf. text 1) and so are events (cf. 9–10); the latter testify in agreement with the former.

16. Vettius Valens, *Anthologiae* contains five examples: (a) 2.38.190–91: ἐὰν δέ πως καὶ ὁ τοῦ Διὸς συμμαρτυρήσῃ . . . ; (b) 1.3.52; (c) 2.38.58: ἐὰν Κρόνος τῇ Ἀφροδίτῃ συμμαρτυρήσῃ . . . (‘If Saturn is in aspect with Venus’); (d) 2.4.41–44: ἐὰν δὲ ὁ τῆς Ἀφροδίτης τετραγωνίση κατὰ κέντρον . . . ἐὰν δὲ Κρόνος συμπαρή . . . ἐὰν δὲ καὶ ὁ τοῦ Ἄρεως αὐτοῖς συμμαρτυρήσῃ (‘If Venus is in square at an angle . . . . If Saturn is in conjunction with [her] . . . . If Mars is also in the configuration with them’); and (e) 2.4.50: συμμαρτυρήσῃ ἢ συσχηματισθῆ (‘is in the aspect or in the configuration’ [i.e., along with one or more other bodies]).<sup>45</sup>

In (a) ὁ τοῦ Διὸς is the planet Jupiter, and *συμμαρτυρήσῃ* is a technical term (LSJ, sense 2: “to be in aspect with, configure with”). The other body with which Jupiter is configured is not named in the clause and must be inferred. Similar inference is required with the same verb in (b), but not in (c). In each of (d) and (e), both of the last two verbs have the prefix *συν-*, and its meaning is plausibly read as associative each time. The topical and syntactic similarity of these passages reinforces the verb’s associative sense both with and without a dative.

43. Plutarch, *Comp. Thes. Rom.* 6.4–5 (Perrin, LCL).

44. See also Strathmann, *TDNT*, 4:508–9. Wallace, “Witness,” 293, rejects the associative construction without comment.

45. Valens, *Anthologiae* (Pingree, TLG), English translation from Riley, trans., *Anthologies*, 51, 27 (italics mine).

17. Plutarch, *Moralia* 724c–d (*Table-Talk* 8.4): πύκτη μὲν Ἀπόλλωνι Δελφούς, δρομαίῳ δὲ Κρήτας ἱστοροῦσι θύειν καὶ Λακεδαιμονίους. σκύλων δὲ Πυθοῖ καὶ ἀκροθινίων καὶ τροπαίων ἀναθέσεις ἄρ' οὐ συμμαρτυροῦσιν ὅτι τῆς εἰς τὸ νικᾶν καὶ κρατεῖν δυνάμεως τῷ θεῷ τούτῳ πλεῖστον μέτεστιν; ‘They say that whereas the Delphians sacrifice to Apollo the Boxer, the Cretans and Lacedaemonians sacrifice to Apollo the Runner. Do not the dedications of arms and the finest of the battle-spoil and trophies at Pytho attest that this god has much influence in the realm of victory and the winning of power?’<sup>46</sup>

Quoting the second sentence, Wallace comments, “The meaning is clearly that the display of evidence strongly attests *to* the god’s abilities and record.”<sup>47</sup> That is, the cult is seen as attesting ‘that’ (ὅτι) Apollo has the stated powers. But this does not show what function συμ- has in συμμαρτυροῦσιν. Items that fit with assigning this verb an associative sense (e.g., ‘jointly testify’) include the plural subject’s diversity along with the other kind of witness (ἱστοροῦσι ‘they say’). The various kinds of dedications are presented as agreeing with each other and with human hearsay.

18. Josephus, *Antiquities* 19.154–55: καὶ Βινουκιανὸν μὲν Κλήμης, ἀνάγεται γὰρ ἐπὶ τοῦτον, μεθήσιν πολλῶν μετ’ ἄλλων συγκλητικῶν δικαιοσύνην τῇ πράξει συμμαρτυρῶν καὶ ἀρετὴν τοῖς ἐντεθυμημένοις καὶ πράσσειν μὴ ἀποδεδειλιακόσι. ‘Meanwhile, Vinicianus was brought up before Clemens, who released him; for Clemens, together with many others of senatorial rank, bore witness to the justice of the deed and to the valour of those who had made the plans and shown no weakness in the execution of them.’<sup>48</sup>

In the most recent mention of Clement’s name before this passage, the plot to kill Caligula is defended to Clement by one of the men most immediately involved: Cherea (37–44). Validation from other men follows (45–63, ending with emphasis on their enthusiastic words), plus a further defense by Cherea (78–83). Following the assassination (84–126) comes a description of how several sectors of the population are afraid to speak their minds or even accept any definite account of what

46. Plutarch, *Mor.* 724c–d (Minar et al., LCL).

47. Wallace, “Witness,” 295.

48. Josephus, *Ant.* 19.154–55 (Feldman, LCL).

has happened (127–37); then comes a passage on the threat posed by German guards who had loved Caligula (145–53). It is here that Clement and his senatorial associates are presented to us as publicly affirming the justice of what Vinicianus and his co-conspirators have done.<sup>49</sup> Thus, whether *συμμαρτυρέω* refers to Clement testifying in agreement with the other senators<sup>50</sup> or with various defenders of the plot mentioned or implied earlier, the context favors an associative sense for the verb. Given the multiplicity of people defending the assassination, there is no difficulty in reading *συμμαρτυρέω* associatively, regardless of exactly who is corroborating whom.

19. Aristides, *Oration 45 (To Plato on Oratory)* 72: *τουτὶ γὰρ προσέγρονε πλέον ἐκ τούτων αὐτῶ, πάλιν σὺν τῷ Σωκράτει Πλάτωνος Πλάτωνα αὐτὸν συμμαρτυρήσαι τῷ λόγῳ.*<sup>51</sup> ‘For he has gained this advantage from the passage, that Plato himself together with the Socrates of Plato has again testified for his argument.’<sup>52</sup>

Plato’s claim agrees with that of main-clause party *x* (αὐτῶ ‘he’) who has gained thereby. On this view, the text after the comma may mean either ‘Plato again together with Plato’s Socrates has borne witness to the argument<sup>53</sup> [made by *x* and has done so] in agreement with [*x*]’ or ‘Plato again together with Plato’s Socrates has borne witness in agreement with the argument [made by *x*].’<sup>54</sup> Either way, “has corroborated the argument” would be a fair translation, conveying not just the

49. For further summary and discussion of Josephus’s account, see Pagán, *Conspiracy Narratives*, 99–100.

50. Then *μετ’* is pleonastic with *συν-*, a usage dubbed common by Wallace, “Witness,” 292 n. 21, citing Gal 2:12 and Matt 17:3, the latter paralleled by Mark 9:4 without *μετά*.

51. Aristides, *Oration 45* (Dindorf, TLG).

52. Behr, trans., *Orations*, 123.

53. So Wallace, “Witness,” 294: “bears witness to the word,” with the noun identified as an indirect object and with no further comment.

54. This *x* may be Aristides, if Behr (*Orations*, 455) is right to mark the passage “as a later interpolation and gloss.” An alternative, that Plato is bearing joint witness with his character Socrates, also seems reasonable, but my TLG search for *σύν* within ten words of *συμμαρτυρέω* found no clear example of the independent preposition being pleonastic with the verb prefix.

idea of Plato making an assertion but also the idea that he is seconding someone else's. For this latter nuance to be carried by *συμ-* aligns with what we have seen from other texts so far.

20. Plutarch, *Moralia* 786e–f (*Old Men in Public Affairs* 6): θέαμα δὲ καὶ μνημόνευμα καὶ διανόημα τῶν ὄντων οὐδὲν ἔστιν ὃ τοσαύτην φέρει χάριν, ὅσην πράξεων ἰδίων ἐν ἀρχαῖς καὶ πολιτείαις ὥσπερ ἐν τόποις λαμπροῖς καὶ δημοσίοις ἀναθεώρησις. οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ χάρις εὐμενῆς συμμαρτυροῦσα τοῖς ἔργοις καὶ συναμιλλώμενος ἔπαινος, εὐνοίας δικαίας ἡγεμών, οἷόν τι φῶς καὶ γάνωμα τῷ χαίροντι τῆς ἀρετῆς προστίθῃσι. 'There is no sight, reminder, or perception in the world which brings such great pleasure as the contemplation of one's own acts in offices and positions of State in which one may be said to be in places flooded with light and in view of all the people. Yes, and moreover kindly gratitude, bearing witness to the acts, and praise, competing with gratitude and ushering in deserved goodwill, add, as it were, a light and brilliance to the joy that comes from virtue.'<sup>55</sup>

The statesman enjoys contemplating his public career. The people's gratitude chimes in to concur with his self-perception that he has done well; their praise vies alongside to say the same, and goodwill joins in on praise's heels. Thus *χάρις . . . συμμαρτυροῦσα τοῖς ἔργοις* may be interpreted as 'gratitude bearing witness with his deeds,' in the sense that both his conduct and people's thankfulness for it jointly attest to and so illuminate his virtue, thereby enhancing his joy in himself (lit. 'add light and brilliance to the person rejoicing [τῷ χαίροντι]'). Alternatively, translating *συμμαρτυροῦσα τοῖς ἔργοις* as "bearing witness to the acts"<sup>56</sup> is also reasonable, yet it does not show that *συμ-* intensifies the reference to witnessing. Rather, *συμ-* may convey the idea that, as to what the people's gratitude 'testifies about his deeds,' their gratitude speaks in harmony 'with' the other activity most recently mentioned: his own contemplation (*ἀναθεώρησις*) and mental view (*διανόημα*) of his conduct. If gratitude can be rhetorically treated as a witness to a man's behavior, what is there to prevent his self-evaluation from also

55. Plutarch, *Mor.* 786e–f (Fowler, LCL). A newer critical edition (Hubert, ed., *Plutarchus*, 30) rejects *συμμαρτυροῦσα* in favor of *ὀμαρτοῦσα* 'attending.'

56. So Wallace, "Witness," 295.

serving as a testimony about or affirmation of his virtue? In the expression ‘praise, competing with gratitude’ (συναμιλλώμενος ἔπαινος), the associate of the συν- verb is implicit and is the previous phrase’s subject (χάρις ‘gratitude’); this adds to the plausibility of reading the συν- verb in that phrase (συμμαρτυροῦσα) as having an implicit associate which is the subject of the next previous phrase (ἀναθεώρησις), given the clear sense of rhetorical pileup in this ornate passage.

21. Hippolytus, *Commentary on Daniel* 1.19.8: Ἦν μὲν γὰρ ὄντως μετὰ ταύτης νεανίσκος ἀπ’ οὐρανῶν, οὐ συγγινόμενος αὐτῇ, ἀλλὰ συμμαρτυρῶν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ.<sup>57</sup> ‘For there really was a young man with her, a heavenly one: not having relations with her, but testifying to the truth [and doing so] in agreement with [her]’ (author’s translation).

The woman is Susanna, whom immoral elders are threatening to slander unless she agrees to be indecent with them. The young man is the prophet Daniel, acting under divine inspiration.<sup>58</sup> The Septuagint recounts that after Susanna declares her innocence and her unwillingness to sin (Sus 22–24, 42–43), God “arouse[s] the holy spirit of a young lad named Daniel” (v. 45 RSV), who corroborates her position (46–61). Since both he and she attest to her innocence, interpreting συμμαρτυρέω as associative in Hippolytus’s comment is straightforward. The inanimate dative “truth” is plausibly taken as an indirect object,<sup>59</sup> but as we have already seen in other texts, this does not hinder the verb from carrying an associative sense.

### 2.3 Byzantine

Our sample from this final surveyed period begins with several texts by Eusebius of Caesarea.<sup>60</sup> Wallace favors an associative sense for συμμαρτυρέω in the first of them but not in the others

57. Hippolytus, *Comm. Dan.* 1.19.8 (Lefèvre, TLG).

58. Migne (*Patrologia Graeca*, 10.693) notes: *Id est Daniel, spiritu prophético praesens* ‘i.e. Daniel, present in a/the prophetic s/Spirit’ (my translation).

59. So Wallace, “Witness,” 296.

60. The texts in this section range from the start of the 4th c., give or take a few decades, into the 6th c.



and not for any of the datives, without however giving a reason besides his arguments in other sections. I offer an associative interpretation for each verb and for most of the datives (22–25), while reading another dative non-associatively on contextual grounds (26).

22. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 1.11.3: ὁ δ' αὐτὸς Ἰώσηπος ἐν τοῖς μάλιστα δικαιότατον καὶ βαπτιστὴν ὁμολογῶν γεγονέναι τὸν Ἰωάννην, τοῖς περὶ αὐτοῦ κατὰ τὴν τῶν εὐαγγελίων γραφὴν ἀναγεγραμμένοις συμμαρτυρεῖ.<sup>61</sup> ‘The same Josephus admits that John was peculiarly righteous, and a baptist, *confirming* the testimony recorded in the text of the Gospels concerning him’ (Wallace’s translation and italics).

Wallace concludes that *συμμαρτυρέω* is probably associative here.<sup>62</sup> While he suggests that the adjacent dative has the role of a beneficiary, taking it simply as associative is straightforward: Josephus’s testimony is agreeing with that of the Gospels.

23. Eusebius, *Supplementa ad quaestiones ad Marinum*, PG 22.989.46–50: τούτου μάρτυς ὁ αὐτὸς εὐαγγελιστῆς Λουκᾶς . . . λέγων ὅτι ὄντως ἠγέρθη ὁ Κύριος καὶ ᾤφθη Σίμωνι. Συμμαρτυρεῖ δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ ὁ ἱερός Ἀπόστολος ᾧδε Κορινθίοις γράφων, ὅτι «Ὁφθη Κεφᾶ, εἶτα τοῖς ἕνδεκα.» [Simon saw the Savior after his resurrection.] The same evangelist [as I most recently quoted, namely] Luke, is a witness of this . . . saying that the Lord really rose and appeared to Simon. And also the holy apostle [Paul] testifies in agreement with him [Luke] here, writing to the Corinthians: “[The Lord] appeared to Cephas [Simon], then to the Eleven” (author’s translation).

Paul is corroborating Luke’s account. The *συμ-* of *συμμαρτυρέω* straightforwardly marks this concord. The dative αὐτῷ is also associative, since Paul is not just benefiting Luke but seconding his statement.<sup>63</sup>

24. Eusebius, *De ecclesiastica theologia* 2.2.1: ὁ μὲν οὖν Ἰουδαῖος, ὁ τὸν Χριστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ ἀρνούμενος, πρὸ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου γενέσεως οὐδὲν

61. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 1.11.3 (Bardy, TLG).

62. Wallace, “Witness,” 296.

63. The *καί* after αὐτῷ is pleonastic, as also in John 21:3: ἐρχόμεθα καὶ ἡμεῖς σὺν σοί ‘we too are coming with you’ (my translation), where the idea is just that the speakers go with the addressee, not that they do so in addition to anyone else.

οἶδεν πλὴν θεοῦ μόνου, συμμαρτυροῦντος αὐτῷ Μαρκέλλου.<sup>64</sup> ‘The Jew who denies God’s Christ recognizes nothing before the world began other than God alone, and Marcellus testifies in agreement with him’ (author’s translation).

This straightforwardly means ‘bear[s] joint witness . . . with’ (see Lampe, citing this text)—i.e., Marcellus affirms the same thing as the Jew who denies God’s Christ.

25. Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica* 6.8.24: ὥστε οὐδὲ τὰς τῶν ἀνθρώπων ὑπολήψεις οὐδὲ τὰς θέσεις τῶν τοιούτων ὀνομάτων συμμαρτυρεῖν τῇ Χρυσίππου δόξῃ συμβέβηκεν.<sup>65</sup> ‘So the result is that neither the notions adopted by mankind, nor the imposition of such names as have been mentioned, bear testimony to the opinion of Chrysippus.’<sup>66</sup>

To nuance that rendering: the first point being denied is that some common notions of fate accord *with* Chrysippus’s view. This sense of association aligns with a prior argument denying that Chrysippus would have ‘Homer voting with him in’ what he thinks (6.8.6 σύμψηφον ἂν ἔχοι τὸν Ὅμηρον Χρυσίππος ἐν τῷ . . . νομίζειν . . .).<sup>67</sup> As for the phrase ‘imposition of such names,’ it has to do with the origin of some fate-related terms (6.8.8). Chrysippus reads them etymologically as supporting his view, but Eusebius denies that the etymologies’ originators can be presumed wise enough to matter (6.8.17–18).<sup>68</sup> Thus, past and present alike fail to supply Chrysippus with adequate co-witnesses for his contention.<sup>69</sup>

26. Eusebius, *De laudibus Constantini* 16.11: τοσούτων ἐναργῶν ἀποδείξεων τὴν μετὰ τὸν θάνατον ἀρετὴν τε καὶ δύναμιν τοῦ σωτήρος ἡμῶν πιστουμένων, τίς οὔτω σιδήρεος τὴν ψυχὴν, ὡς μὴ συμμαρτυρεῖν

64. Eusebius, *Eccl. theol.* 2.2.1 (Hansen and Klostermann, TLG).

65. Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 6.8.24 (Mras, TLG).

66. Gifford, trans., *Preparation for the Gospel*, 286.

67. Gifford, trans., *Preparation for the Gospel*, 284.

68. Gifford, trans., *Preparation for the Gospel*, 284–85.

69. Next after this text, Wallace (“Witness,” 296) cites PG 60.428, but the text is a quotation, not Chrysostom’s explanation, of Rom 2:15, falling outside Wallace’s stated parameters (“Witness,” 292 n. 24). For Paul’s usage, see section 3.2 below.

τῇ ἀληθείᾳ καὶ τὴν ἔνθεον αὐτοῦ ζωὴν ὁμολογεῖν;<sup>70</sup> ‘With such great [and] active demonstrations proving our Savior’s excellence and power after death, who would be so hard of soul as not to join in testifying to the truth and confess his divine life?’ (author’s translation).

Truth, the dative object of *συμμαρτυρεῖν*, is plainly the thing attested (parallel to the accusative object of *ὁμολογεῖν*). But this does not hinder *συμ-* from having an associative sense. Faced with such great proofs of Christ, anyone not eminently hardhearted is expected to become a witness with them.

27. Eusebius, *Demonstratio evangelica* 8.2.121–3: Δέχου δὴ καὶ τὰς περὶ τούτων Ἰωσήπου μαρτυρίας . . . αὐτὰ δὴ ταῦτα καὶ ὁ Φίλων συμμαρτυρεῖ.<sup>71</sup> ‘Take also Josephus’s testimony about these things . . . Philo, too, corroborates these same things’ (author’s translation).

Though there is no dative complement here, the word ‘same’ in the accusative phrase ‘these same things’ reinforces the already plainly associative sense of *συμμαρτυρέω*: Philo is testifying in concord with Josephus. The point is not support for Josephus, but the two authors’ joint support of something else.

The next four texts (not presented in full here) are similarly transparent, though in each of them *συμμαρτυρέω* lacks a dative complement. Paul ‘testifies in agreement with’ a statement by Christ mentioned just before;<sup>72</sup> angels ‘testify in agreement with’ a priest’s baptismal invocation.<sup>73</sup> Jeremiah asks the Lord to ‘bear witness in agreement with’ his declaration of his own charity<sup>74</sup> and denounces the wicked in similarly reflexive terms: “Your deeds accuse you, and your conscience testifies in agreement with [them]” (τὰ πράγματά σου κατηγορεῖ, καὶ τὸ συνειδὸς σου συμμαρτυρεῖ).<sup>75</sup> As in earlier eras, a dative indirect object does

70. Eusebius, *Laud. Const.* 16.11 (Heikel, TLG).

71. Eusebius, *Dem. ev.* 8.2.121–3 (Heikel, TLG).

72. Text 28 (numbering continues for the sake of discussion in section 3.1): PG 31.1561b (Basil, *De baptismo* 1.21).

73. Text 29: PG 31.1684.54 (Pseudo-Basil, *Orationes sive exorcismi*).

74. Text 30: PG 64.905 (Chrysostom, *In Jeremiam*).

75. Text 31: PG 81.604.16–18 (Theodoret, *In Jeremiam*). Wallace (“Witness,” 297) adds σοι at the end of this text. I would take this as an indirect object (adding *to you* to my translation) but did not find it in the source.

not hinder the verb's prefix from retaining an associative sense; e.g., an apologist cites Peter as 'testifying to the truth, in agreement with' what the apologist has just said (τῇ ἀληθείᾳ συμμαρτυρῶν).<sup>76</sup> In all these cases, the expression that I have put after *with* is, in the Greek, implicit from preceding clauses. There are also instances of datives translated by Wallace without comment as indirect objects but better interpreted, I think, as associative. Thus supplementary arguments are presented as 'corroborating former ones' (τοῖς προτέροις συμμαρτυροῦντα), not in the sense of validating them but of joining with them in validating a stated conclusion.<sup>77</sup> Again, Plato claims 'that the study of nature is one of probability, and Aristotle testifies in agreement with him' (τὴν φυσιολογίαν εἰκοτολογίαν ἔλεγεν εἶναι, ᾧ καὶ Ἀριστοτέλης συμμαρτυρεῖ), not in the sense of proving him but of joining him to affirm one same claim.<sup>78</sup>

We will end this section with two texts. One is of interest because Wallace offers considerably more discussion of it than of any prior entry in his extra-biblical survey. The other contains a semantic analysis that exhibits the aptness of συμμαρτυρέω for relating connections within a multifaceted argument—a suitable note on which to transition to a semantic discussion.

35. Theodoret, *De incarnatione*, PG 75.1428.46–52: ὁ Δεσπότης Χριστὸς τὴν ἡμετέραν ἔχων φύσιν, τὴν ἡμετέραν οὐ κατεδέξατο πονηρίαν, ἀλλ' ἀπάσης ἐλεύθερος, ὡς ὁ προφήτης βοᾷ, ὅτι «ἀνομίαν οὐκ ἐποίησεν, οὐδὲ εὐρέθη δόλος ἐν τῷ στόματι αὐτοῦ.» καὶ ὁ τῆς ἐρήμου πολίτης Ἰωάννης συμμαρτυρεῖ λέγων· «Ἴδε ὁ ἀμνὸς ὁ αἴρων τοῦ κόσμου τὴν ἁμαρτίαν». 'Christ the Lord, though having our nature, did not [in tandem with it] receive our wickedness, but [was] free of it all, as the prophet loudly declares [in Isa 53:9]; and the desert-dwelling John bears witness with [him], saying, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world"' (author's translation).

Here, Isaiah and John the Baptist corroborate Theodoret's statement. Quoting Ἰωάννης through ἁμαρτίαν, Wallace comments, "Five times in John chapter 1 μαρτυρέω is used of

76. Text 32: Theodoret, *Eranistes* 87.24 (Ettliger, TLG).

77. Text 33: PG 83.569a (Theodoret, *De providentia*).

78. Text 34: Simplicius, *In Aristotelis physicorum libros commentaria* 9.18.29–32 (Diels, TLG).

John's testimony, yet Theodoret here introduces his testimony with a Pauline word [συμμαρτυρέω]. It is evident that it bore the same essential meaning as μαρτυρέω and was selected, in all probability, because of its intensifying force. This instance is significant, too, because there is no dative substantive, and nothing in either Theodoret's context or that of John 1 would suggest an associative notion here."<sup>79</sup> However, because Theodoret is explicitly coordinating Isaiah and John the Baptist's statements, it is not surprising for him to use *συμμαρτυρέω* rather than *μαρτυρέω* (cf., e.g., texts 27, 33–34 above). The compound's occurrence here is motivated by its typical, distinctly associative sense. From what we have seen in an ample number of other texts, the lack of a dative is immaterial. And no evidence has been found so far for a distinctly intensive sense of the verb.

36. Simplicius, *In Aristotelis categorias commentarium* 8.261.34–262.9: τινές δὲ τὴν μὲν μορφήν ἐπὶ ζώου μόνου λέγεσθαι νομίζουσιν, τὸ δὲ σχῆμα ἐπὶ τοῦ ἀψύχου εἶδους, οὔτε κατὰ τὴν τεχνικὴν συνήθειαν καλῶς οὔτε τὴν τῶν πολλῶν χρῆσιν· ἐπαλλάττει γὰρ ταῦτα τὰ ὀνόματα, ὁμοίως μὲν καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἐμψύχων τὸ σχῆμα, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἀψύχων τὴν μορφήν λέγουσα. καὶ ὁ λόγος δὲ ἑκατέρου τῆς τοιαύτης χρῆσει *συμμαρτυρεῖ*· εἰ γὰρ κατὰ τὸ πέρασ τῆς ἐπιφανείας καὶ τὴν τύπωσιν αὐτῆς ἢ μορφήν λέγεται, οὐδὲν ἐμφαίνει ζωῆς ἐχόμενον· δύναται γὰρ καὶ τοῖς ἀψύχοις ἐφαρμόζειν· ὁ τε ὄρος τοῦ σχήματος οὐδὲν κωλύεται καὶ τοῖς φυσικοῖς καὶ τοῖς τῶν ζώων σώμασιν ἐφαρμόζειν.<sup>80</sup>  
 ‘Some think that *form* (μορφή) is said only of what is alive, and *shape* (σχῆμα) of what is lifeless. [But this] accords well with neither technical convention nor popular usage. For it uses these [terms] interchangeably, saying *shape* of what is animate and likewise *form* of what is inanimate. And the meanings of the two terms “testify in agreement with,” or “testify together to,”<sup>81</sup> such usage. For if *form* is said according to the outline of [a thing’s] appearance and what impression it makes, then [the word] does not show that [the thing] is

79. Wallace, “Witness,” 297.

80. Simplicius, *In Aristotelis categorias commentarium* 8.261.34–262.9 (Kalbfleisch, TLG).

81. Lit. ‘the meaning (λόγος) of each of the two (ἑκατέρου) [terms] testifies in agreement with such usage’ or ‘in agreement with [the meaning of the other term] as to [the rightness of] such usage.’ I take the terms’ λόγοι as being either their rationales (cf. LSJ *λόγος* III “explanation,” “argument,” “reason”) or ‘what they say’ (and thus ‘what they mean’).

at all alive, since [the term] can fit inanimates too; by the same token, the definition of *shape* is not at all hindered from applying to both natural things and the bodies of living things' (author's translation).

Here the clear plurality of concordant assertions supports interpreting *συμμαρτυρέω* as associative, whether the preceding *χρήσει* is read as the thing in agreement with which the meanings of *form* and *shape* bear witness or as the party on trial and being defended by *form* and *shape*'s meanings acting in mutual corroboration (each seconding what the other says). There is no practical difference between the two analyses, precisely because *usage* is also testifying; that is, usage speaks.

### 3. Discussion

#### 3.1 General

Syntactically, *συμμαρτυρέω* takes a dative complement in nearly two thirds of the texts surveyed in this study. Of those datives, most of the animates can plausibly be read associatively (texts 1–5, 13, 16cd, 23–24, 34). That this is not as easy with the inanimates (9, 15, 22, 25, 33; possibly 19–20, 36) makes sense given the idea of concordant declaration, since inanimates are less likely to be treated as agents of affirmation. Most of the inanimate datives can be plausibly interpreted as objects about which testimony is given (8, 18, 21, 26, 32; possibly 19–20, 36), though in still other texts an instrumental sense is appealing.<sup>82</sup>

An associative sense also fits *συμμαρτυρέω* in the texts where it lacks a dative complement (texts 6–7, 10–12, 16ab, 14, 17, 27–31, 35). Thus, while the data is compatible with the claim that most instances of *συν-* verbs with “an associative nuance are found with an explicit dative of association in the context,”

82. E.g., PG 95.392.12–16 (Pseudo-John Damascene, *De azymis*): “There are three . . . . For John, too, *συμμαρτυρεῖ τῷ λόγῳ* ‘There are three . . .’ [1 John 5:7],” where the untranslated part is easily taken as ‘testifies in agreement with [my claim] by the statement [in which he says]’ (though ‘testifies in agreement with the [above] statement [by saying]’ would also make sense) (my translations). Cf. Heb 2:3–4, with *συνεπιμαρτυρέω* plus inanimate dative of means.

confirming that claim would require more evidence, and it still would not follow (nor from cursory further examination does it seem likely) that exceptions are “rare.”<sup>83</sup>

What of the notion that the *συμ-* in *συμμαρτυρέω* often serves mainly to intensify the meaning of the simplex? Wallace posits that if the prefix can be removed “without an alteration in the meaning,” it should “be regarded as . . . intensifying” rather than “associative.”<sup>84</sup> Yet apart from non-native intuition about what counts as semantically the same or different, it is not clear what criteria Wallace offers for detecting this alteration in meaning. In the surveyed texts, changing ‘in agreement with’ (or the like) to ‘about’ or ‘to,’ or deleting the prepositional phrase altogether, alters just those elements of a statement while leaving the rest unchanged. If we view any content in the changed elements as a significant part of the whole, we will conclude that the meaning has changed; if not, then not. But that is stipulative, not revealing; a matter of premise, not conclusion. Instead of hypothetical alteration, it seems more promising to scrutinize actual distribution in a different way: if *συμμαρτυρέω* strongly tends to be used in situations that involve affirmational concord and not in others, while *μαρτυρέω* is used in both, then *συμ-* most likely does correlate with, and so signify, the concord. The texts that we have examined conform to that conclusion.

In sum, the subject of *συμμαρτυρέω* seconds an affirmation made or claim maintained by another party, whom we may call the primary party. The primary and secondary parties’ contributions need not be simultaneous, and that of the primary party may not be explicit in or even very near the clause

83. Quoting Wallace, “Witness,” 45. In a note (p. 292 n. 22), he cites 28 New Testament instances where *συν-* verbs take datives of association. Sampling just the New Testament, however, we also find dativeless associative *συγκακοπαθέω* (2 Tim 2:3), *συγχαίρω* and *συμπάσχω* (1 Cor 12:26), *συναποστέλλω* (2 Cor 12:18), *συναυξάνω* (Matt 13:30), *συνεπιτίθημι* (Acts 24:9), *συνεργέω* (Mark 16:20), etc., as well as associative *συν-* verbs with non-associative datives (as in Phil 1:27; 2 Tim 1:8). My impression from perusing a lexicon is that such examples are not abnormal in extra-biblical texts.

84. Wallace, “Witness,” 44. It is unclear why, on p. 43, *συμβαίνω* ‘happen’ is classed as an intensive of *βαίνω* ‘go.’

containing *συμμαρτυρέω*. A further point of interest is that none of the parties necessarily has any special weight or authority. Often, of course, co-witnesses are invoked as having notable weight, sometimes even more than the primary party. But in text (26), for instance, the primary party's power is so great that it is expected to move all manner of observers to become co-witnesses regardless of their credibility. There, the primary party has strong qualifications while the subject of *συμμαρτυρέω* is defined too broadly to have any. It is on this note that we now take up some controversies about the definition of testimony and the interpretation of *συμμαρτυρέω* in the New Testament.

### 3.2 *New Testament Usage*

In Luke 4:20, 22, all the people in the synagogue in Jesus's hometown react to his handling of Scripture by "testifying about him [NASB: speaking well of him] and marveling at the gracious words proceeding from his mouth, and saying, 'Isn't this Joseph's son?'" (my translation). Their surprise stems from hearing him speak better than they expected, given their view of his origins. Yet there seems no reason to deny the possibility that some of the people had learned about Jesus's paternity from others. The thrust of the text seems to be not how they knew what they knew but that they said what they said. Though they are described as testifying, their reliability is not at stake.

This fact, in tandem with the remarks on text (26) at the end of the previous section, undercuts objections to reading *συμμαρτυρέω* associatively where the co-witnesses are dramatically unequal, as in Rom 8:16 where the parties are Christians and God.<sup>85</sup> Qualms that Christians have no "right" to testify jointly with the Holy Spirit,<sup>86</sup> or that their doing so would

85. Rom 8:16: *αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα συμμαρτυρεῖ τῷ πνεύματι ἡμῶν ὅτι ἐσμὲν τέκνα θεοῦ*. Read associatively, 'The Spirit himself testifies (in agreement) with our spirit that we are children of God.' This agrees with numerous English versions and commentaries, while the non-associative interpretation 'testifies to our Spirit' is found in the Vulgate, Luther's Bible, and several modern commentaries (see Wallace, "Witness," 40–41; Gundersen, "Adoption," 33 nn. 11–12).

86. Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:403, followed by Morris, *Romans*, 317, and



be superfluous and would assume too much “responsibility” or obscure God’s “primacy,”<sup>87</sup> collapse if testifying does not per se imply such weight or authority. Also, self-evidently, whenever the God “from whom are all things” (Rom 11:36) has co-witnesses,<sup>88</sup> he authors their adequacy. In Rom 8:14–15, he authors his children’s status and their affirmation of it to him.<sup>89</sup> Since that affirmation matches his Spirit’s testimony in v. 16, taking συμ- there as indexing this concord suits the context in a manner similar to the texts surveyed above, regardless of whether the following dative (τῷ πνεύματι) is parsed as an associate,<sup>90</sup> instrument,<sup>91</sup> or recipient<sup>92</sup> of the Spirit’s testimony.

Wallace, “Witness,” 46.

87. Wallace, “Witness,” 46, and Du Toit, “Romans,” respectively.

88. Owen, *Works*, 3:205–6, helpfully adduces John 15:26–27, Acts 1:8, Heb 2:3–4, and Rev 22:17.

89. Rom 8:14–15b: ὅσοι γὰρ πνεύματι θεοῦ ἄγονται, οὗτοι υἱοὶ θεοῦ εἰσιν . . . ἐλάβετε πνεῦμα υἰοθεσίας ἐν ᾧ κράζομεν· ἀββα ὁ πατήρ. ‘For as many as are led by God’s Spirit are God’s sons . . . . You received a s/Spirit of adoption, in/by means of which [s/Spirit] we cry out, “Abba! Father!”’

90. See Owen, *Works*, 3:205 and 2:241, particularly on concerns raised by Wallace (“Witness,” 48) under 1 John 3:20. Since Rom 8:15 (plus 5:5; 8:2–14; 1 Cor 2:12; 1 John 4:13; etc.) credits the Spirit with the Christian state of heart and mind (cf. Wallace, “Witness,” 47–48), any risk that reading “with our spirit” in v. 16 “may imply that the Spirit has nothing to do with the believer’s assurance of salvation” (39–40) is excluded by both immediate context and biblical pneumatology.

91. PG 60.527. Chrysostom interprets πνεύματι here as a charism with which the Spirit has endowed God’s adopted children (likewise Theodoret [PG 82.136]; and Gennadius, *Romanos* [Staab, ed., *Pauluskommentar*, 378]) and “through which,” as the children participate in and are illuminated by it, he confirms their adoption to them. For discussion, see Lorrain, *Théodore*, 163–64.

92. Thus Murray, *Romans*, 297, sees v. 16 συμμαρτυρεῖ as associative with κράζομεν in v. 15, yet reads “to our spirit” in v. 16; so too Hodge, *Romans*, 419–20, and Godet, *Romains*, 173–74. Whether the dative is a recipient, with the event’s associativity understood from the relation of v. 16 to v. 15 (as in these writers), or is an associate, with believers’ recipient status inferred from what v. 15 and others teach about the Spirit’s providential roles (Owen, n. 90 above; Thomason, “Romans 8:16,” 36), may be moot. But the subtlety of that difference offers a more positive explanation for some of the diversity and ambiguity in the literature than would a charge of recurrent carelessness

(Additionally, an associative sense for συμ- in this verse aligns with the same prefix carrying associative meaning in a host of ensuing occurrences: three in the following verse, and four more in vv. 22, 28–29.<sup>93</sup>)

Along with apparently not requiring co-witnesses to have notable reliability, συμμαρτυρέω seems not to imply them being distinctly accessible to an external audience. In text (12), we saw a writer claiming to have co-witnesses in the form of books. He did not name them or show concern with whether his readers could consult them; rather, it was in his own estimation that the books bolstered his case, reinforcing his confidence to say what he did. Similarly, in Rom 9:1,<sup>94</sup> whether we parse the key phrase as “testifies with me” or “testifies to/about me in agreement with [what I am saying],” Paul and his conscience are speaking concordantly.<sup>95</sup> We hear of his conscience only through him, so his invocation of it adds solemnity without expanding our empirical basis for believing him. Yet the lack of such expansion does not indicate that the verb “[p]robably . . . means simply ‘witness to,’”<sup>96</sup> any more than we need suspect that the verse’s “reference to both Christ and the Holy Spirit could be Paul’s attempt to meet the biblical requirement of ‘two or three

(Wallace, “Witness,” 289 n. 1: “Many have translated the text with ‘with our spirit,’ but interpreted the text to mean ‘to our spirit.’ To some degree, this is sloppy exegesis.”)

93. See Gundersen, “Adoption,” 22–23, 26, 29, citing Sinclair Ferguson and others, along with another argument (for “testifies with”) from Ferguson, comparing believers’ cry of “Abba” in v. 15 with the Spirit crying it inside them in Gal 4:6.

94. Rom 9:1: Ἀλήθειαν λέγω ἐν Χριστῷ, οὐ ψεύδομαι, συμμαρτυρούσης μοι τῆς συνειδήσεώς μου ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ. ‘I am speaking truth in Christ, I am not lying; my conscience . . . in the Holy Spirit’ (for the ellipsis, see next note).

95. Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:452, finds it “probable” that what Paul is about to say and what his conscience says are two witnesses testifying “together” and that the συμ- refers to this fact. Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 60, 227, also think so. With a different associative interpretation of the prefix, Godet, *Romains*, 241–42, sees Paul’s Spirit-led conscience and the force of his connection to Christ jointly attesting “to” Paul (μοι) the verity of what he is saying.

96. Moo, *Romans*, 556 n. 5, citing Dunn, Schlier.

witnesses' to establish lawful testimony."<sup>97</sup> Instead, *συμμαρτυρέω* more simply conveys a sense of multiple concordant affirmations.

Likewise, the remaining New Testament instance of *συμμαρτυρέω* (Rom 2:15)<sup>98</sup> has as its subject the conscience of people who are simultaneously serving as the primary party (in the sense defined above in 3.1). But while Paul in Rom 9:1 testifies verbally, these people testify by their deeds.<sup>99</sup> Their conscience thus bears witness *with* their conduct's demonstration that they have knowledge of God's moral law,<sup>100</sup> as well as *with* what the law says about their conduct,<sup>101</sup> though this is not to say that they need all of those witnesses for themselves and though their conscience is not distinctly accessible to outside observers of their conduct.

The resultant picture is compatible with Strathmann's opinion that *συμμαρτυρέω* developed the broad sense of 'agree' and that *μαρτυρέω* developed a similarly broad sense of 'declaration',<sup>102</sup> this does not, however, entail that the two ever became synonymous (or different only in intensity). Strathmann does say, "*συμμαρτυρεῖν* . . . first means 'to bear witness with'" (citing texts 14–15 above), "but then recollection of the basic meaning

97. Moo, *Romans*, 556 n. 7; cf. Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:452; Godet, *Romains*, 242. See rather Gundersen, "Adoption," 24–25.

98. In Rev 22:18, Critical and Majority Texts (NA28; Robinson and Pierpont) have *μαρτυρῶ* where Textus Receptus has *συμμαρτυροῦμαι*, marked by BDAG as an Erasmusian reading and rendered by Thayer (who rejects it) with an associative sense: "*I testify on my own behalf besides* . . . i.e. besides those things which I have already testified in this book."

99. Rom 2:14–15a: *ὅταν γὰρ ἔθνη τὰ μὴ νόμον ἔχοντα φύσει τὰ τοῦ νόμου ποιῶσιν. . . ἐνδείκνυνται τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου γραπτὸν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν, συμμαρτυρούσης αὐτῶν τῆς συνειδήσεως* 'When Gentiles who do not have the law do by nature the things of the law . . . they show the law's work written in their hearts, their conscience concurring.'

100. So Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 60; Strathmann, *TDNT*, 4:509; Seifrid, "Natural Revelation," 123.

101. Barrett, *Romans*, 51; Schreiner, *Romans*, 123–24. Cf. Chrysostom, PG 60.423.41–44 (under Rom 2:2), describing consciences as voting in agreement with their owners' statements about various human behaviors.

102. Strathmann, *TDNT*, 4:509, 496; see also 479.

fades, and *συμμαρτυρεῖν* simply means ‘to confirm’ (i.e., the statement of another of any kind, whether about a fact or an opinion), or, with the dat., ‘to agree’” (citing texts 4–3, 17).<sup>103</sup> Yet by alleging a “first” sense seen in and a few decades after Plutarch, and “then” a broader sense seen in Plutarch and sources centuries older, Strathmann must mean not that the broader sense replaced the narrower, but that the two came to coexist. Also, while glossing *συμμαρτυρέω* as ‘confirm,’ he tends to add terms showing that the thing confirmed is affirmed by one or more other people. Thus the idea of multiple concordant affirmations dominates his portrayal of *συμμαρτυρέω*—unlike in the frequent English use of *confirm* or *agree* for an ostensibly conclusive solitary affirmation responding to a mere question or doubtful conjecture—and his citations show this sense well before and after the New Testament period.<sup>104</sup>

#### 4. Conclusion

We have seen numerous clear examples of *συμμαρτυρέω* being used associatively, and the less plain examples are readily interpreted with an associative sense as well. In every instance surveyed, the verb relates to concordant affirmations that can be regarded as testimonies, whether or not each affirming party is distinctly reliable or accessible to the text’s audience. In most cases, both the plurality and the concord are plain from context.

103. Strathmann, *TDNT*, 4:508–9.

104. Strathmann, *TDNT*, 4:509, thus seems to offer a false dilemma on Rom 8:16. In his view, if the Spirit co-testifies, he is the associate *either* of a man, implying that the man voices his status “already” (i.e., not as a result of the Spirit working?), *or* of his own fruit in the man’s life, implying reflexive redundancy (“the Spirit of God confirms Himself”), both of which Strathmann finds problematic (so too Leenhardt, *Romans*, 123; similarly Käsemann, *Romans*, 228–29, except he embraces the redundant option). But as long as the Spirit’s declaration (v. 16) and what “we cry” “by” him (v. 15) agree, their distinct subjects exclude reflexive redundancy, and the “by” excludes human independence or priority (see Gundersen, “Adoption,” 26–27). Compare the Spirit’s role in Rom 9:1 (e.g., Schreiner, *Romans*, 479), where the human agency is clear.

The party indexed as an associate by the *συμ-* in *συμμαρτυρέω* may benefit from and/or hear what that verb's subject is affirming, but beneficiary, addressee, and similar roles are not nearly as consistent in the surveyed texts as plurality of concordant affirmations is. This indicates that various roles commonly served by Greek datives were relatively likely, in clauses with *συμμαρτυρέω*, to be conveyed implicitly from context, while an associative sense—notwithstanding modern contrary arguments and subtle expository objections—remained pervasive in *συμμαρτυρέω* through the centuries surrounding and including the New Testament era, distinguishing the compound from its simplex in ways not so different after all from the prototypical force of *σύν*.

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