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A commentary on αἰών in Pindar

Abstract. This article discusses Pindar's usages of the semantically complex noun αἰών. On the basis of a detailed analysis of the contexts in which the word appears, the author offers a classification of the key semantic motivations characteristic of Pindar's imaginative uses of αἰών. The results of this semantic analysis are also discussed in diachronic context and compared primarily with early epic and Presocratic uses of the word. In the light of this comparison, the article also touches upon the question of possible background of Plato's innovative philosophical usage of αἰών in *Timaeus* (37D-38C).

Key Words: Αἰών, Pindar, Word Meaning, Context.

From its earliest recorded usages in the Homeric poems, the noun αἰών exhibits curious semantic complexity, which was noted already by ancient scholiasts and lexicographers.¹ The curiosity of the noun's meaning in the Homeric poems consists in the fact that it unites two apparently inconsistent semantic categories, which inspired modern scholars to look for their common semantic ground. On the one hand, Homeric αἰών has a 'concrete' meaning and denotes an entity within the human body described as "leaving" a dying body (E 685, Π 453, η 224) or as "being taken away" from it (ι 523, Χ 58f., Τ 27),² and in the *Odyssey* also as being "wasted away" or as "flowing away" from a mourning person, without a fatal outcome (ε 152f., ε 160f., σ 203f.).³ These instances point to the meaning "vitality", "vital force" of the Homeric αἰών, which

¹ See especially schol. ad Τ 27: (Α) ὅτι τῆς ψυχῆς ἀπολιπούσης τὸ σῶμα εὐχερῶς αἱ μυῖαι λυμαίνονται τοῖς νεκροῖς σώμασι. (Τ) ὁ βίος καὶ ἡ ζωὴ πεφόνευται καὶ παρήηται. (Δ) ἦτοι ἀνήηται ὁ βίος, ὃ ἐστι ζωῆς ἐστέρηται. ἢ ὡς οἱ Γλωσσογράφοι, αἰών ἐφθαρται, ὃ ἐστὶν ὁ νωτιαῖος μυελός. See Hesych. and Erot. s.v. αἰών.

² In these instances αἰών is comparable to and classifiable with Homeric ψυχή, θυμός and μένος (Λ 334, φ 153f., 170f., Ε 296, Θ 123 and 315, Δ 470, Π 410, Μ 386, γ 455, μ 414, Γ 294, Ζ 27). See Janko 1992, 377.

is confirmed by Vedic parallels (*āyu-* n. “vital force” and adjective *āyú-* “mobile, vital”).⁴ On the other hand, in a couple of Homeric examples immediate contexts suggest a ‘durational’ meaning for αἰών, for the noun appears combined with adjectives or adverbial expressions indicating duration of life, “lifetime” (Δ 478 = P 302 μινυνοθάδιος δέ οἱ αἰών ἔπλεθ’ “his αἰών was short-lived”, I 415f. ἐπὶ δῆρὸν δέ μοι αἰών ἔσσεται “my αἰών will last long”). Although the ‘durational’ meaning of αἰών in these instances can be explained as a secondary development, the noun’s etymology, that is its connection with Homeric adverb α(ἰ)εἰ/αἰέν (“always, ever”) and the words in other IE languages that indicate duration,⁵ strongly suggests that the notion of “duration of vitality” also belongs to the semantic core of the common IE root **h₂ei-u-*.⁶ Scholarly dispute over the order of priority between these two senses⁷ was aptly settled by Degani in the following way: “La forza vitale, all’esperienza, non si rivela che nella durata: e l’una e l’altra erano la stessa cosa.”⁸

Semantic applications of αἰών in post-Homeric literature paint a no less interesting picture, even though we do not come across the word in the extant evidence of early lyric poetry and we find only one (albeit

³ On the basis of these instances, Onians 1951, 201f. suggests that αἰών in Homer denotes a life-giving liquid.

⁴ See Grassmann 1955, s.vv. Benveniste 1937, 107 connects Gr. αἰόλος “quick-moving, changeful”, αἰόλλειν “shift rapidly”, Lat. *iuvenis*, Skt. *yúvan-* “young”, etc. to the same word-family.

⁵ The above mentioned Vedic noun also shows tendency towards assuming the meaning “lifetime” (e.g., *RV* i 89.8). See Grassmann 1955, s.v. Cf. Avestan *āyu* n. and *yuš* “duration of human existence” (Benveniste 1937, 106), Lat. *aevus* m, *aevum* n. and adjectives Gr. δηναίος, Skt. *dīrghāyu-*, Av. *darəγāyu-*, Lat. *longaevus* “long-lasting”. For a comprehensive list of the words in various IE languages based on the same root, see Wodtko 2008, 277–278.

⁶ In Hesiod αἰών also denotes “vital force” (*Sc.* 331) and “duration of life” (ἰσχαίωνες in fr. 1.8; ἀπ’ αἰώνος in *Th.* 608 is inconclusive, but could be a corruption of δι’ αἰώνος).

⁷ The most prominent advocate of the priority of the sense “vitality” is Benveniste 1937. See also Degani 1961, 36, n. 55. Degani (ibid.) ascribes to Fränkel the view about the priority of the durational sense.

⁸ Degani 1961, 40.

very intriguing) instance of αἰών in the preserved fragments of the Ionian physicists (Heraclitus' B52 DK). In fifth century literature, however, the occurrences of αἰών are numerous and the noun most commonly assumes the general meaning "life", which encompasses both its quantitative and qualitative aspects (i.e., duration and content of individual existence). One of the two senses is usually emphasised by the linguistic context.⁹ Among the authors of this period Pindar deserves special attention, not only because his various usages of αἰών bear witness to the poet's highly imaginative style, which often places the word in new and original contexts, but also because some of these contexts seem to provide αἰών with a generalised sense of "time" that is often compared to the roughly contemporary uses of the word in Presocratic cosmologies (Heraclit. B52 DK and Emp. B16 DK). These instances of cosmic αἰών and Plato's striking usage of the word to name the concept of the immovable "eternity" of the ideal being (as compared to χρόνος denoting the measurable "time" of the world in *Tim.* 37D) have inspired scholars to look for the non-philosophical sources of what became a recognisable meaning of the word.¹⁰ However, the aim of this paper is not to try and account for the semantic transformation of αἰών from denoting "vitality" in Homer to "eternity" in Plato, although some of the scholarly attempts to do that will be discussed along the way. My goal is rather to explore all the contexts in which the noun appears in Pindar and thus get as close as possible to identifying particular semantic nuances that motivate Pindar's various uses of αἰών.

There are altogether eighteen instances of αἰών in Pindar, all in the singular, of which eleven are nominatives, four accusatives, and three genitives. The apparent semantic ambivalence between the senses "lifetime" and "vital force", recognisable in early epic usages of the word, is no longer found. As a matter of fact, neither of the two early epic meanings of αἰών comes across quite so clearly and directly in the poems of Pindar. The early epic meaning "vital force", "vitality"

⁹ See, e.g., Pi. O. 2. 68, P. 3. 86, 4. 186, 5. 6, 8. 97, N. 9. 44 and 10. 58, Emp. B 17.11, A. Ag. 715, OC 1736, El. 1086, etc. for the meaning "quality of life". See, e.g., A. Ag. 553f., Pers. 262f., Supp. 581f., E. Bacch. 39, etc. for the meaning "duration of life".

¹⁰ See Lackeit 1916, 32: "Die Bedeutung αἰών = Ewigkeit war seit Plato der griechischen Sprache geläufig."

gradually developed into a designation of a specific part of the body in which vitality resides. This sense is found in the Homeric hymns (*h. Merc.* 42 and 119), in the Hippocratic corpus (according to Hesych., s.v. αἰών), as well as in Pindar's fragment 111 (Erotian. *Gloss. Hippocr.* 20. 20 Nachmanson, s.v. αἰών· ὁ νωτιαῖος μυελός = P. Oxy. 2446 [26, 1961], l. 5):¹¹ αἰών δὲ δι' ὀστέων ἐρραίσθη "and his **marrow** was shattered through his bones" (trans. Race).¹² In most other cases, however, Pindar's αἰών remains semantically classifiable as referring to "life" in its various senses, but in certain contexts particular components of its complex meaning prevail and apparently provide αἰών with new significations altogether. This intricacy of the word's semantic implications may perhaps be singled out as the key feature of Pindar's uses of αἰών. In the analysis that follows I offer a provisional classification of the word's meanings, which should help us follow different paths of the semantic history of αἰών.

i) Αἰών signifying course of life

In the second Nemean ode that celebrates the pancratium triumph achieved by Timodemus of Acharnae, Pindar observes that this victory should only be the beginning of the future winning streak for the offspring of the celebrated Timodemidae, for he is bound to enjoy numerous triumphs at the Isthmian and Pythian games (*N.* 2. 6ff.):

πατρίαν / εἶπερ καθ' ὁδόν νιν εὐθυπομπός
αἰών ταῖς μεγάλαις δέδωκε κόσμον Ἀθάναις,
"if the **life that guides him straight** on the road of his fathers
has given him as an adornment to the mighty Athens."

The guiding capacity of αἰών, indicated by the epithet εὐθυπομπός here, results from the word's expressing the idea of "course of life", envisaged as a stream of events that unroll one after another. It may appear that in this context αἰών assumes the role of a godlike power, but its influence is only mediatory.¹³ It is gods in general (θεοί, δαίμονες), or specifically some of them, that are named by Pindar responsible for that

¹¹ Cf. also B. 1. 153.

¹² Race 1997a.

¹³ The same may be said of χρόνος in *P.* 1. 46. The word denotes *passage of time* which is expected to "guide" (εὐθύνοιο) Hieron's wealth and happiness.

which befalls humans in the course of their unstable and temporary existence (see, e.g., *P.* 3. 81f., *P.* 12. 28ff., *P.* 5. 117ff., etc.). In *Isthmian* 5. 50 Zeus, “the lord of all”, is said to “distribute” ills and blessings to the mortal kind (Ζεὺς τὰ τε καὶ τὰ νέμει) and in *O.* 13. 26ff. Pindar prays to Zeus to “direct” (εὐθύνει) the winds of Xenophon’s fortune.¹⁴ In addition to this, destiny itself is occasionally represented as a divine force that directs human lives (e.g., Μοῖρα in *O.* 2. 21 and 35ff., *N.* 7. 57ff., 11. 42f.; Πότμος in *P.* 3. 86, *P.* 5. 3f., *N.* 4. 42; Τύχα in *I.* 4. 31ff.). This divine Destiny is also said to “provide”¹⁵ fortune and excellence (*P.* 5. 3 ὁ πλοῦτος εὐρυσθενής ... πότμου παραδόντος, *N.* 4. 41f. ἀρετὰν / ἔδωκε Πότμος ἄναξ)¹⁶ and to “guide” human lives (*N.* 6. 6f. ἄμμε πότμος / ἄντιν’ ἔγραψε δραμεῖν ποτὶ στάθμαν, *O.* 2. 35ff. Μοῖρ’ ... θεόρτω σὺν ὄλβῳ / ἐπὶ τι καὶ πῆμ’ ἄγει). It is, therefore, not surprising that some modern scholars apply to (εὐθυπομπός) αἰών in *N.* 2. 6f. the sense “destiny”,¹⁷ but there is more to Timodemus’ achievement than what fate granted him: Timodemus inherited athletic ability and a tradition of cultivating it from his father. The *circumstances of his life*, including both divine intervention and his own effort, *gradually* conducted the hero towards the goal of success.

That which gods intend for mortals remains, however, hidden from them (see, e.g., *I.* 4. 31 ἔστιν δ’ ἀφάνεια τύχας), and Pindar often reminds us of the fact that *in the course of life* people experience varying and unpredictable fortunes.¹⁸ This recurring theme seems also to be communicated by the gnomic statement at the end of Pindar’s *Isthmian* 3

¹⁴ See also *P.* 3. 95, *P.* 5. 122f., etc.

¹⁵ Note, however, that αἰών in *N.* 2. 8 is not said to *give to* Timodemus (which would be the role of Πότμος), but rather to *give him* as pride and honour to Athens.

¹⁶ But Destiny’s yoke is also said to “constrain” (*N.* 7. 6: εἰργει δὲ πότμῳ ζυγένηθ’ ἔτερον ἔτερον).

¹⁷ See, e.g., Farnell 1930, 163: “the fair-speeding breeze of his destiny” as opposed to Bowra 1969, 36: “life which guides him straight”. Cf. also Bury 1890, 33: “αἰών is not synonymous with μοῖρα and it is a mistake to render it fate (*fatum* Dissen), although the ideas are intimately connected. It is the time of life.”

¹⁸ See, e.g., *O.* 12. 10ff. πολλὰ δ’ ἀνθρώποις παρὰ γνώμην ἔπεσεν, / ἔμπαλιν μὲν τέρψιος, οἱ δ’ ἀνιαραῖς / ἀντικύρσαντες ζάλαις / ἐσλὸν βαθὺ πῆματος / ἐν μικρῷ πεδάμειψαν χρόνῳ. The image of changing winds or storms is often used to depict changeability of human fate (cf. *P.* 4. 291, *I.* 4. 5f.).

(18–18b). The ode opens with the poet’s observation that successful yet modest men deserve universal praise (1–3). He then names Zeus as the cause of mortals’ great achievements and marks reverence as the means for extending people’s prosperity (4–6). Melissus of Thebes, the poem’s addressee, was blessed with twin victories, which made him a worthy successor of his family’s glorious tradition (9–17b). He, therefore, presents a good example of what a noble man ought to do in the face of the vicissitudes which mortals cannot avoid or predict, for (18–18b):

αἰὼν δὲ κυλινδομέναις ἀμέραις ἄλλ’ ἄλλοτ’ ἐξ
ἄλλαξεν. ἄτρωτοί γε μὰν παῖδες θεῶν.

“Life with its rolling days changes now this now that.

Invulnerable are only the children of gods.”

Αἰὼν is said here to consist of days, which semantically accentuates the temporal aspect of life.¹⁹ The idea that human fortunes change as their lifetime progresses (literally, “daily”) is illustrated by the metaphor of days rolling like waves (cf. Hom. Λ 307 τρόφι κύμα κυλίνδεται, ι 147 κύματα μακρὰ κυλινδόμενα)²⁰ and Pindar resorts to similar imagery several times, including another context involving αἰὼν. The passage in question delivers a striking and elaborate poetic image, which, however, obscures the intended meaning of the noun. It comes in *Isthmian* 8 devoted to Cleander of Aegina, which opens with an indirect reference to the danger of Persian occupation that recently threatened Greece. The Persian invasion of 480 is metaphorically described as the rock of Tantalus, which a god had removed from above the heads of the Greeks (9–11).²¹ Now that the threat is eliminated, Pindar advises to “look at that which is before one’s foot” (12: τὸ πρὸ ποδός... βλέπειν), for (14f.):

... δόλιος γὰρ αἰ-
ὼν ἐπ’ ἀνδράσι κρέμαται,
ἐλίσσων βίου πόρον·

¹⁹ Modern commentators render αἰὼν in this context either by “life(time)” (e.g., Thummer 1968, 171; Privitera 1982, 51) or by “time” (e.g., Dornseiff 1921, 60; Farnell 1930, 253).

²⁰ Cf. S. *Aj.* 131f.: ὡς ἡμέρα κλίνει τε κἀνάγει πάλιν / ἅπαντα τὰνθρώπεια. For the “ephemeral” human nature in Pindar (*P.* 8. 95, fr. 157 and 182), see Fränkel 1960 and Theunissen 2000, 45–58.

²¹ See Bowra 1969, 55 for the explanation of Pindar’s personal experience of these events.

“**Treacherous αἰών** hangs over people
as it unrolls the course of life.”

The figure of “treacherous” αἰών “hanging over people” is clearly chosen with reference to the preceding metaphor of the Tantalean stone. It is followed by the image of the “pathway of life” (βίου πόρος)²² which αἰών is now said to “roll along” (cf. schol. ad loc. c: κυλίων και προΐών). This combination of poetic images effectively illustrates the recurring theme of the uncertainty of human existence, which is introduced by the immediately preceding advice that one should live each day as it comes.²³ Similar imagery, albeit communicating a different message, is found in *N.* 6. 55ff., where Pindar depicts the *present* occasion of his ode (Alcimidas’ victory in boys’ wrestling) as a wave rolling *nearest* to the ship and as such causing the most excitement (τὸ δὲ παρ ποδὶ ναὸς ἐλισσόμενον αἰεὶ κυμάτων / λέγεται παντὶ μάλιστα δονεῖν / θυμόν). He uses the image to compare his choice of the *contemporary* subject with the older poets’ practice of celebrating Alcimidas’ home island of Aegina by singing about the *past* exploits of the Aeacidae (vv. 45ff.). This passage helps us picture for *I.* 8. 12ff. and *I.* 3. 18 an image of lifetime as a series of successive waves,²⁴ with the one “before the foot” (πρὸ ποδός, παρ ποδί) corresponding to the present. The rolling course of life in both passages should therefore be understood as primarily implying temporal progression. However, I do not think that αἰών should be taken to refer to “time” in general here, as some scholars suggest,²⁵ since the contexts clearly have as their subject the changeability of human life.²⁶

In his commentary on *Isthmian* 8. 15 Carey notes that the inter-

²² For πόρος signifying the stream of rivers, see LSJ, s.v. i 3 (including *Pi. O.* 1. 92); metaphorically also “the path of song” (π. ὕμνων) in *Emp.* B35. 1. See also schol. c ad loc.: τὸν τοῦ βίου πόρον, τουτέστι τὴν ὁδὸν τοῦ βίου.

²³ See Carey 1981, 191 (ad loc.): “We must look to the present because life is uncertain (too uncertain to nurse yesterday’s grief).”

²⁴ See Verdenius 1987, 93f.: “κυλίνδομαι does not refer to a vertical but to a horizontal movement, cf. *P.* 1. 24 κυλινδομένα φλόξ (a lave stream), *Ar. Nub.* 375 κυλινδομένα (clouds), *Pl. Phd.* 81d (ψυχὴ) περὶ τὰ μνήματά τε καὶ τοὺς τάφους κυλινδομένη, *Thc.* 172c οἱ ἐν τοῖς δικαστηρίοις κυλινδομένοι.”

²⁵ Degani 1961, 49f. Cf. West 1971, 158: “Life or Time as a changer of fortunes”. See above n. 19.

²⁶ See Lackeit 1916, 83: “αἰών ist für Pindar Menschenleben, nichts weiter”

pretation offered by the ancient scholia, according to which *ἐλίσσω* implies “rolling along” of the stream of life,²⁷ “adds nothing. As we need an indication of the mutability of fortune, ‘whirling, causing to eddy’ would be better.”²⁸ Although my understanding of the passage very much agrees with that of the scholia, I accept Carey’s reasoning in principle, especially in view of the initially established parallel between *αἰών* and the Tantalean stone of the Persian invasion. We should, therefore, understand *αἰών* in this passage, as well as in the two passages discussed above, as implicitly associated with the idea of destiny, namely as “lifetime” in the course of which unpredictable blows of fate befall us.²⁹ The reference to “wavelike rolling” should be taken as an illustration of the *changes* people experience in the course of life³⁰ or rather of the *unsteadiness* of the stream of life. The connection between *αἰών* and the idea of destiny is aptly explained by Wilamowitz, who argues that *αἰών* essentially denotes “time relatively”, that is the lifetime of an individual, which is as such in its length and content determined by Destiny.³¹ The following instances of *αἰών* in Pindar accentuate this aspect of the word’s meaning.

ii) *Αἰών* signifying destined life(time)

Having proclaimed, by way of a priamel, that he will honour Theron for the victory his four-horse chariot achieved at Olympia, Pindar begins the

²⁷ See schol. ad *I.* 8. 27b–c: δόλιος γὰρ αἰών ἐπ’ ἀνδράσι κρέματα: b. ὁ δὲ νοῦς ὁ γὰρ δὴ τῆς ζωῆς χρόνος ἐνήρηται τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τὸν τοῦ βίου πόρον κυλίωσι καὶ προΐωσι. c. ἢ οὗτος ὁ γὰρ χρόνος πολλὰς εὐρίσκει μεταβολὰς ἐλίσσωσι τὸν τοῦ βίου πόρον, τουτέστι τὴν ὁδὸν τοῦ βίου.

²⁸ Carey 1981, 192. In support of this sense, Carey refers to Hom. *Φ* 11, Hes. *Th.* 791, E. *IT* 7, 1103. He notes, however, that the explanation that schol. 27c gives for πόρον = ὁδόν does not accord with ἐλίσσωσι thus interpreted (see Bowra 1969, 51: “It is always best to look at whatever lies before our feet;/ for treacherous Time hangs over men/ and twists awry the path of life”).

²⁹ Cf. *O.* 2. 32–33: ῥοαὶ δ’ ἄλλοτ’ ἄλλα/ εὐθυμῶν τε μέτα καὶ πόνων ἐς ἀνδρας ἔβαν.

³⁰ Cf. E. *HF* 671f.: ἀλλ’ εἰλισσόμενός τις αἰῶν πλοῦτον μόνον αὔξει. See Bond 1981, 236 (ad 671): “εἰλισσόμενος ... αἰών ‘the course of life’, ‘time like an ever-rolling stream’—but limited to the life-time of the individual concerned.”

³¹ Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1914, 170, n. 3.

encomium in the second Olympian by remembering Theron's ancestors. "They were the eye of Sicily,³² and their **destined life** came upon them adding wealth and joy to their inborn virtues" (10f. αἰών δ' ἔφεπε μόρσιμος, πλοῦτόν τε καὶ χάριν ἄγων / γηυσίαις ἐπ' ἀρεταῖς). Linguistically, the expression αἰών ἔφεπε μόρσιμος is an imaginative inversion of the common epic phrase πότμον/ θάνατον/ ὀλέθριον ἤμαρ/ αἴσιμον ἤμαρ ἐφέπειν "to meet one's death".³³ The ascription of the epithet μόρσιμος to αἰών reveals Destiny's influence on the life of Theron's ancestors and at the same time indicates life's apparent mediatory role³⁴ in bringing wealth and joy in addition to their inborn virtues.³⁵ The emphasis here, I believe, is not so much on life's progression – as in the previous three passages discussed – nor indeed on its apparent active value (though both semantic nuances are recognisable),³⁶ but rather on its content.³⁷ The sense of the passage is well rendered by Dornseiff's translation: "Die... hatten ein Leben, wie es das Schicksal gab, es brachte Reichtum und Glanz".³⁸

Content of life is clearly what αἰών in N. 10. 59 refers to. The noun is used in the context of the famous story of the Dioscuri, twin brothers of whom one was mortal and other immortal. When Castor was killed in a battle, Polydeuces chose not to continue his immortal existence bereft of his brother, but rather to share in his brother's mortality (N. 10. 55ff.):

μεταμειβόμενοι δ' ἑναλλάξ
ἀμέραν τὰν μὲν παρὰ πατρὶ φίλω
Δι νέμονται, τὰν δ' ὑπὸ κεύθεισι γαίαις

³² See Kirkwood 1982, 67: "to be the 'eye' of Sicily is to be its glory. Probably the metaphor is from the brightness of the eyes (...), as it is at P. 5.56 (ὄμμα φαεννότατον)."

³³ Hom. Z 412, ω 31, H 52, δ 562, T 294, Φ 100, etc.

³⁴ See Leeuwen 1964, 58.

³⁵ Cf. schol. ad O. 2. 19a: βούλεται δὲ λέγειν ὅτι ὁ βίος αὐτοῖς ἐπηκολούθησεν ἐκ πεπρωμένης τινὸς τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν αὐτοῖς καὶ τὴν χάριν ἐπιπέμπων ἐπὶ ταῖς γηυσίαις αὐτῶν ἀρεταῖς.

³⁶ Cf. Degani 1961, 49: "qui αἰών è apportatore di gioia e di ricchezza ed ha anche in tale passo un valore attivo". Some scholars render the noun by "time" (e.g., Fennell 1879, 28 and Gildersleeve 1890, 144f.).

³⁷ Schol. 19d ἢ οὕτως· εὐμοῖρος βίος ἐπηκολούθησεν αὐτοῖς ἐκ πεπρωμένης τινὸς.

³⁸ Dornseiff 1921, 77f.

ἐν γυάλοις Θεράπνας,
πότμον ἀμπιπλάντες ὁμοῖον: ἐπεὶ
τοῦτον, ἢ πάμπαν θεὸς ἔμμεναι οἰκεῖν τ' οὐρανῶ,
εἴλετ' αἰῶνα φθιμένου Πολυδεύκης
Κάστορος ἐν πολέμῳ.
"Changing in succession"³⁹
they spend a day with their dear father
Zeus, and the next in the depths of the earth,
in the hollows of Therapna,
fulfilling the same destiny.
For Polydeuces chose **this kind of life**,
instead of being wholly divine and living in heaven,
when Castor was killed in war."

Αἰὼν here signifies the "way of life" Polydeuces chose for himself and his twin brother after the latter's death. The preferred mode of existence is also described as their "destiny" (πότμος), which indicates that the common fate they were thus fulfilling was granted to them by the gods.⁴⁰ This passage also reveals Pindar's double application of πότμος (and this is the case with other destiny-terms as well): on the one hand it denotes a personified power and on the other its effects. This double application of "destiny" is also found in Pindar's address to Hieron in *Pythian* 3, which is again introduced with a warning about the vicissitudes of human existence (80ff.): "the immortals apportion to humans a pair of evils for every good." As for Hieron, his "share of happiness attends him" (τὴν δὲ μοῖρ' εὐδαιμονίας ἔπεται), for "great Destiny" (ὁ μέγας Πότμος) looks with favour upon a tyrant (85f.). However, the poet reminds the ruler of Syracuse that even the most fortunate among mortals, Peleus and Cadmus, did not have an **untroubled life** (86ff. αἰὼν δ' ἀσφαλῆς / οὐκ ἔγεντ' οὐτ' Αἰακίδα παρὰ Πηλεῖ / οὔτε παρ' ἀντιθέῳ Κάδμῳ).⁴¹ Αἰὼν clearly refers to quality of

³⁹ See schol. ad N. 10. 103: μεταμειβόμενοι δ' ἐναλλάξ· μεταβάλλοντες δ' αὐτοὶ οἱ Διόσκουροι καὶ ἐκ διαδοχῆς ἐναλλάσσοντες τὰς ἡμέρας, μίαν διάγουσιν ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ ὡς θεοί, μίαν δὲ ἐν τοῖς ὑπογείοις τῆς Θεράπνης, ὁμοίαν καὶ ἴσην ἐκπληροῦντες τύχην.

⁴⁰ Cf. schol. ad N. 10. 107: ... εἴλετο Πολυδεύκης ... αὐτὸς ἀθάνατος ὦν μᾶλλον παρ' ἡμέραν ἀνθρώπος εἶναι ἅμα τῷ ἀδελφῷ, καὶ πάλιν θεὸς ἅμα τῷ ἀδελφῷ ἀπολουμένου αὐτοῦ· **καὶ οὕτως ἐποίησαν οἱ θεοί**.

⁴¹ Cf. Emp. B17. 11: οὐ σφισιν ἔμπεδος αἰὼν (of the unstable life of the four roots).

human existence, as it is described as “free from slips, upsets” (see under iii below).

An interesting turn in semantic relation between *πότμος* and *αἰών* is reflected in their usages in *O.* 9. 60. There Pindar recounts the story of Zeus’ impregnating the daughter of Opus of Elis and then giving her as a bride to the king of Locrians, “lest life(time) overpower him having fixed childlessness as his doom” (60f. *μὴ καθέλοι νιν αἰών πότμον ἐφάψαις*⁴² / *ὀρφανὸν γενεᾶς*). It may seem, at first sight, that there has been an exchange of roles between “life” and “destiny” here, since *αἰών* is said to determine Opus’ *πότμος*. In this context *πότμος* does indeed denote “that which is destined” (as in *N.* 10. 57 and *μοῖρα* in *P.* 3. 84), childlessness in particular, whereas *αἰών*, I believe, can be understood in the same way as *εὐθυπομπὸς αἰών* in *N.* 2. 7f. It denotes “progression of life”,⁴³ along with all the consequences which that entails, in this case especially growing old.⁴⁴

One final instance of explicit connection of *αἰών* with the notion of destiny is found in *Isthmian* 7. The theme of the passage in question is again the notorious changeability⁴⁵ and transience of human existence. In the beginning of the third antistrophe the poet recommends enjoying each day as it comes (40ff.):⁴⁶

ὅ τι τερπνὸν ἐφάμερον διώκων
ἔκαλος ἔπειμι γῆρας ἔς τε τὸν μόρσιμον
αἰῶνα· θνάσκομεν γὰρ ὁμῶς ἅπαντες.
“By pursuing the pleasure that comes day by day
I shall calmly approach old age and my **fated**
lifetime. For we all alike die.” (trans. Race)⁴⁷

⁴² See Gerber 2002, 51 (ad 60): “ἐφάψαις: for the sense of ‘fastening’ in connection with *πότμος* cf. εἰργει δὲ πότμω ζυγένθ’ ἔτερον ἔτερα, etc.”

⁴³ Cf. Pfeijffer 1999, 646f. and Gerber 2002, 51, who points to Gildersleeve’s translation “time”.

⁴⁴ Farnell 1930, 49, Bowra 1969, 154.

⁴⁵ The vicissitudes of life are expressed through the metaphor of storm (*I.* 7. 39). See above n. 18.

⁴⁶ See Willcock 1995, 68: “the poet is not speaking literally of himself; he is presenting a moral lesson in his own voice.”

⁴⁷ Race 1997a.

The message of the passage is the same as the one expressed in *I.* 8. 12–14 (“take each day as it comes”),⁴⁸ but the meaning of αἰών is quite different. Here it denotes “lifespan”,⁴⁹ defined as “allotted” by the attribute μόρσιμος.⁵⁰ The context suggests the idea of death, to which every mortal is getting closer as days go by, and we should understand the phrase as implying “(the completion of) my allotted timespan.”⁵¹

The motto of attending to what is near, current, seems to be recognisable in another Pindaric context involving αἰών, for in a passage of *Nemean* 3 we read (74f.):

... ἐλᾶ δὲ καὶ τέσσαρας ἀρετάς
<ό> **Θνατός αἰών**, φρονεῖν δ' ἐνέπει τὸ παρκειμένον.
“**Mortal life** drives a four-in-hand of virtues,
and it tells us to heed what is at hand.”

Different interpretations have been offered regarding the meaning of the “four excellences”. The prevailing view, which originates from Aristarchus and accords with the immediately preceding lines in *Nemean* 3 (70ff.), takes them to be three virtues characteristic of each stage of life, youth, maturity, and old age, plus φρονεῖν τὸ παρκειμένον, as the fourth virtue.⁵² A number of modern scholars contest this view by suggesting that the four virtues refer to “those of the old popular morality inherited by Plato, courage, temperance, justice, wisdom”, and insist that φρονεῖν τὸ παρκειμένον is just “a prudent maxim dear to the poet”.⁵³ Without going into details of this discussion, I believe it is safe to suggest that in this context αἰών again refers to the “course of life” and this signification accords well with the first interpretation of the four

⁴⁸ Cf. *I.* 7. 43f.: τὰ μακρὰ δ' εἴ τις / παπταίνει, βραχὺς ἐξικέσθαι χαλκόπεδον θεῶν / ἔδραν.

⁴⁹ Cf. *Pi.* fr. 165 (ισοδένδρου τέκμαρ αἰῶνος λαχοῖσα) about the lifespan of the Hamadryades.

⁵⁰ See schol. ad *I.* 7. 55b: εἰς τὸν μεμοιραμένον χρόνον. Cf. Farnell 1930, 276, Willcock 1995, 68, Pfeijffer 1999, 646. See also Simon. 542 PMG (= F260 Poltera), where the phrase μοῖρα αἰῶνος has the same meaning, “allotted span of life”.

⁵¹ Cf. Privitera 1982, 223: “spera di vivere fino alla vecchiaia e alla morte (il binomio anche in *Nem.* 10, 83) senza dover subire l'invidia perturbatrice degli dei, visto che non contravviene alla loro norma.”

⁵² See schol. ad *N.* 3. 129a. Cf. Bury 1890, 59 and, especially, Pfeijffer 1999, 388f.

⁵³ Farnell 1932, 261. Cf. Bowra 1969, 105 (ad 70–75).

virtues. As it progresses, αἰών ‘provides’ the first three ἀρεταί characteristic of specific periods of life,⁵⁴ and the fourth excellence, according to Pfeijffer, implies awareness of the limitations imposed upon a mortal man by his age (at each of these stages).⁵⁵

iii) Αἰών as quality of existence

In a number of instances αἰών in Pindar’s odes denotes *quality of existence*, which is referred to without the explicit connection with destiny.⁵⁶ In *Nemean 9* Pindar draws attention to another of his recurrent themes, the need to excel in one’s youth in order to be able to enjoy old age and secure lasting glory (N. 9. 44): ἐκ πόνων δ’, οἱ σὺν νεότατι γένωνται σὺν τε δίκῃ, τελέθει πρὸς γῆρας αἰὼν ἡμέρα, “from labours which arise in youth and with justice, **life becomes pleasant** towards old age”. Ageing and, consequently, death represent the ultimate expressions of the limitations of human existence. Old age is usually described by Pindar as extremely unpleasant.⁵⁷ The accomplishments that result in acquiring wealth and glory should therefore be the main considerations of youth, for they bring consolation in old age and secure glory that survives individual death.⁵⁸ But apart from hard work and aspiration, men also need good fortune, or indeed divine inclination, to achieve happiness and success. Pindar repeatedly describes life in these terms, as a mixture of fortune and personal effort, and stresses now the one, now the other of the two factors. So, for example, at the end of *Pythian 8* Pindar addresses the question of what makes temporary and uncertain

⁵⁴ See Pfeijffer 1999, 389: “the association of three of the four ἀρεταί with the three consecutive periods of life makes it understandable that the course of human life is presented as ‘producing’ them; moreover ἐλαῖ is a metaphor, borrowed from the terminology of driving chariots, suggesting that the four ἀρεταί are a four-in-hand.”

⁵⁵ Pfeijffer 1999, 218f.

⁵⁶ A straightforward example is found in the poet’s advice to Hieron, preserved as fr. 126, not to diminish enjoyment in life, for “pleasant existence” (τερπνὸς αἰὼν) is the best thing.

⁵⁷ See O. 1. 82–84, P. 10. 41, N. 10. 83, *Pae.* 1. 1.

⁵⁸ See Braswell 1998, 131. Cf. O. 8. 70–73, I. 6. 10–15 (where the role of good fortune is mentioned as well), *Pae.* 1. 1–4.

human existence meaningful and pleasant by pointing to divine contribution (95–97):

ἐπάμεροι· τί δέ τις; τί δ' οὐ τις; σκιᾶς ὄναρ
ἄνθρωπος. ἀλλ' ὅταν αἴγλα διόσδοτος ἔλθῃ,
λαμπρὸν φέγγος ἔπεστιν ἀνδρῶν καὶ **μείλιχος αἰών**.
“Men are creatures of a day. What is someone? What is he not?
A man is a shadow’s dream. But when the god-given brightness comes,
glowing splendour is upon men and **life sweet as honey**.”

The expression *μείλιχος αἰών* refers to the quality of life influenced by the radiance from the gods. Taken more precisely to indicate the life of a victor, this *μείλιχος αἰών* can be understood as alluding to “the external circumstances which make a winner’s life sweet, such as celebrations and awards”.⁵⁹

Pindar’s praise of life characterised by effort and achievement comes to mind when, in a mythical context in *Pythian* 4, we read an unfavourable description of a “life free from peril”. The passage recounts Hera’s inspiring the Argonauts to join the expedition by kindling in them “all-persuasive, sweet longing for the ship *Argo*, so that no one should be left behind to remain with mother and coddle⁶⁰ a **life free from peril**” (184ff. μή τινα λειπόμενον / τὰν ἀκίνδυνον παρὰ ματρὶ μένειν αἰ/ῶνα πέσσοντ’). This representation of an idle life is utterly unmanly: staying at home with mother and leading a harmless life⁶¹ is not something a young man should be content with. The alternative to this inglorious eventless life is what Hera offers to the young heroes: the opportunity to gain “the most noble remedy for their manly worth” (187 φάρμακον κάλλιστον ἕως ἀρετᾶς), namely undying fame, even at the price of death.

Another metaphorical expression to some extent obscures the meaning of *αἰών* in *Pythian* 5. 7, although its pairing with the adjective

⁵⁹ Gentili and Bernardini 1995, 586. See also Theunissen 2000, 220ff. for a discussion on the duration of this “sweetness of life” against the background of life’s notorious changeability.

⁶⁰ Race’s “coddling” for πέσσοντ’ points to a cooking metaphor (Race 1997b, 291). See also Braswell 1988, 270. Alternatively, the participle could be taken to imply “brooding over” in negative sense (cf. Hom. Ω 617 and 636 with κήδεα; also Δ 513 and I 565 with χόλον).

⁶¹ Cf. E. *Med.* 248f.

κλυτός points to the qualitative aspect of life. The ode is dedicated to Arcesilas, ruler of Cyrene, whose chariot was victorious in 462. It opens with a gnomic reference to wealth (πλοῦτος), which, when granted by Destiny and combined with virtue (ἀρετά), is a companion that brings many friends (1–4). The poet then addresses Arcesilas thus (5–9):

ὦ θεόμορ' Ἀρκεσίλα,
σύ τοί νιν κλυτᾶς
αἰῶνος βαθμίδων ἄπο
σὺν εὐδοξίᾳ μετανίσειαι
ἕκατι χρυσαρμάτου Κάστορος
“O Arcesilas, blessed by the gods,
you have been pursuing it,
along with hounour
from the highest steps of your **glorious life**,
by the will of gold-charioted Castor.”

The king of Cyrene, the poet tells us, goes after wealth and fame “from the top of the stairs of his life”.⁶² The metaphor refers to his privileged position: he is after all a king and, as such, already occupies the highest place and has inherited a life of fame.⁶³ It is from that lofty status that Arcesilas begins his search for wealth and glory, to add to those he inherited, for he should not fall short of his predecessors’ achievements.⁶⁴ In doing this, he is favoured by Castor, the patron of chariot races.⁶⁵ Αἰών here, we may conclude, refers to the (illustrious) circumstances of Arcesilas’ life (cf. above on *N. 2. 6ff.*).

⁶² Fennell 1879, 213f. suggests that life is here imagined as a “journey” and Gildersleeve 1890, 307 sees it as a “flight of stairs”. Degani 1961, 47 takes αἰών to have a temporal sense here.

⁶³ Cf. *O. 1. 113f.*: ἐπ’ ἄλλοισι ἄλλοι μεγάλοι. τὸ δ’ ἔσχατον / κορυφοῦται βασιλεῦσι.

⁶⁴ Cf. Fennell 1879, 213f. Another line of interpretation is based on the explanation given by scholia on the passage (ἀπ’ ἄκρων βαθμίδων τῆς αἰῶνος, τουτέστιν ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς τοῦ βίου) and suggests the meaning “from the beginning of life” for the αἰών-phrase (e.g., Gentili and Bernardini 1995, 513: “fin dall’ inizio della vita”). This interpretation, however, renders the epithet κλυτᾶς redundant.

⁶⁵ See Gildersleeve 1890, 307: “Kastor plays the part of Πότμος, and the king goes after the wealth that he is to bring home as a πολύφιλον ἐπέταν.”

iv) Αἰών and afterlife

There are, finally, two instances of αἰών mentioned in eschatological contexts. One of them belongs to the famous passage from *Olympian 2*, which describes posthumous destiny of “those who joyfully kept their oaths” (65–67):

... παρὰ μὲν τιμίους
θεῶν οἵτινες ἔχαιρον εὐορκίαις
ἄδακρυον νέμονται
αἰῶνα...
“... besides the honoured gods⁶⁶
those who joyfully kept their oaths
spend a **tearless existence**...”

The αἰών-phrase clearly refers to the quality of the afterlife envisaged for righteous men.⁶⁷ They are rewarded with a “life free from toil” (ἀπονέσ-τερος βίος), in which there are no extremes of hot and cold to be suffered, for they enjoy permanent equinoxes (61f. ἴσαις δὲ νύκτεσσιν αἰεὶ/ ἴσαις δ’ ἀμέραις ἄλιον ἔχοντες),⁶⁸ and no physical pain caused by excessive labour, for they do not have to do bodily work for their living (63f. οὐ χθόνα ταράσσοντες ἐν χερὸς ἀκμᾶ / οὐδὲ πόντιον ὕδωρ / κεινὰν παρὰ δίαιταν).

The second eschatological context in which αἰών is mentioned is rather unusual and striking. The word appears in the famous fragment 131b, which treats the theme of the survival of the soul in an unprecedented way (1–3):

σῶμα μὲν πάντων ἔπεται θανάτῳ περισθενεῖ,
ζῶν δ’ ἔτι λείπεται **αἰῶνος εἶδω-**
λον: τὸ γὰρ ἔστι μόνον
ἐκ θεῶν
“The body of every man follows overpowering death,

⁶⁶ See Kirkwood 1982, 74 (ad 65–66): “παρὰ τιμίους θεῶν: ‘beside the honored gods’, partitive gen., rather than ‘those honored of the gods.’”

⁶⁷ See Willcock 1995, 156: “Honesty, keeping one’s word, is the quality identified with the righteous.”

⁶⁸ These words have been interpreted either as referring to continual equinox or to perpetual sunlight (fr. 129 says that the sun shines in Hades during night-time on earth). See Kirkwood 1982, 73 and Woodbury 1966 in favour of the first interpretation.

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but there still survives the living **image of life**,
for it alone is from the gods;”

The expression αἰῶνος εἶδωλον corresponds to the Homeric ψυχή that denotes the shadow of the dead which survives the death of the body.⁶⁹ The Homeric ψυχή, used in this sense, is described as the “image of the dead” (ψυχαὶ εἶδωλα καμόντων in Ψ 72 and ω 14) and Pindar here points to the same entity by calling it the “image of life (i.e. of the living)” (cf. λ 475–76 νεκροὶ ... βροτῶν εἶδωλα καμόντων). However, the analogy with Homer ends there, for the claim that this surviving element that resembles the individual comes from the gods occurs here for the first time in extant Greek literature.⁷⁰ The rest of the fragment speaks about the role that this entity has in the living body (something that is not paralleled in the Homeric ψυχή) and describes it as being active in dreams. Since this view does not reflect any known traditional belief, West suggests that it expresses some contemporary esoteric speculation.⁷¹

v) Conclusion

Shifting between the ‘concrete’ meaning “vital force” and indications of the sense “lifetime”, Homeric uses of αἰών do not quite foreshadow rich semantic complexity found in Pindaric applications of the word. While further concretisation of the noun’s sense, preserved in Pindar’s fr. 111, does not really take root after early epic, the generalised meaning “life” gradually takes over in fifth-century literature. Remaining within the realm of this general sense, αἰών in Pindar conveys some specific semantic nuances that are not always clearly distinguishable. The passages discussed in this paper point out that Pindar views individual life as a mixture of inherited status, divine influence and personal effort, and his usages of αἰών reflect this combination of ideas. In addition to this, Pindar’s imaginative poetic contexts sometimes generate surprising and confusing semantic implications, which seemingly suggest for αἰών significations like “death” (I. 7. 41f.) or even “the dead” (fr. 131b). How-

⁶⁹ Ps.-Plu. *Consol. ad Apoll.* 35. 120c: λέγεται δ’ ὑπὸ μὲν τοῦ μελικοῦ Πινδάρου ταυτὶ περὶ τῶν εὐσεβῶν ἐν Ἄιδου.

⁷⁰ See Kirkwood 1982, 344.

⁷¹ See West 1985, 56 and West 1971, 148f.

ever, I hope to have shown that in all the examples analysed Pindar's αἰών remains semantically definable as referring to "life", while a summary classification of main semantic motivations for its usage is nevertheless possible.

One type of semantic applications of αἰών exhibits a distinct 'dynamic' value, for it refers to temporal "progression of life". This signification appears in two types of contexts: on the one hand, it refers to the unsteady and unpredictable course of human life in general (*I.* 3. 18–18b and *I.* 8. 14f.)⁷² and on the other, to evolving circumstances of an individual existence (*N.* 2. 6ff., *N.* 3. 74, *O.* 9. 60).⁷³ In both kinds of contexts, as we have seen, αἰών may assume guiding capacities, partly due to its 'dynamic' character⁷⁴ and partly owing to its more or less explicit association with the idea of destiny (e.g., *O.* 2. 10f.). Although the latter aspect of Pindar's applications of αἰών is rather prominent (see ii above), this still does not allow for an identification of the complex concept of αἰών with the complex concept of μοῖρα, which is what Degani suggests.⁷⁵ He argues that the idea of 'totality', which he believes to be contained in the semantic root of αἰών,⁷⁶ helped the process of generalisation of the word's meaning and enabled it to assume a role

⁷² I believe that αἰών in Heraclitus B52 DK can be explained in this way too (see my forthcoming article in *Proceedings of the Fifth Symposium Praesocraticum*, Cambridge 2012).

⁷³ Cf. Simonides PMG 541.12: ὥσ]τε μὴ δι' αἰῶνος ὅσιαν [δύνασθα] θεῖν κέλευθον "so that it is not possible to run a holy course throughout one's life". See Henry 1998.

⁷⁴ Cf. *S. Tr.* 34f. τοιοῦτος αἰὼν εἰς δόμους τε καὶ δόμων / ἀεὶ τὸν ἄνδρ' ἔπεμπε λατρεύοντά τωι "such was his life ever sending him to and from home in service to some master".

⁷⁵ Degani 1961, 49ff.

⁷⁶ According to Degani 1961, 42, Homeric adverb αἰεὶ / αἰέν and the expression δι' αἰῶνος, both meaning "always", point to the notion of "totality (of life)". However, Benveniste 1937, 109 argues that αἰεὶ / αἰέν originally implies repetition (as in *A.* 52, *Θ.* 342, *Ψ.* 5, etc.). Moreover, the phrase δι' αἰῶνος does not always imply duration "from one end of life to the other", as Degani explains it, but rather permanence, especially in view of the changeability of human fortune (see, e.g., *A. Pers.* 1008, *Eu.* 563ff., *S. El.* 1024, *Emp.* B110.3, *E. Alc.* 475, etc.). The ultimate expression of the notion of permanence is found in Aeschylus' *Supplikes*, where the phrase is attributed to the rule of Zeus "throughout his unstoppable life" (574 δι' αἰῶνος ... ἀπαύστου).

equivalent to that of μοῖρα: “né ζωή né βίος poterono infatti assumere queste sfumature fatalistiche, appunto perché solo αἰών aveva il pregnante valore di ὅλος ὁ βίος”.⁷⁷ I hope to have shown in the discussion above that the main difference between the two notions in Pindar consists in the fact that, in its ‘active’ sense, αἰών can have a mediatory role of delivering to people that which Destiny or gods provide. The same kind of role can be ascribed to χρόνος denoting “passage of time” (see, e.g., P. 1. 46, N. 4. 43,⁷⁸ P. 12. 30, etc.). The relationship between the three notions may be conveniently illustrated by the following passage in Euripides’ *Heraclidae* (899f.): πολλὰ γὰρ τίκτει Μοῖρα τελεσσιδῶτειοῖ Αἰών τε Χρόνου παῖς “Destiny that gives completion and Life, the child of Time, bring about many things.”

The dynamic sense of αἰών, I believe, can also be recognised in early Presocratic uses of the word, such as Heraclitus’ fr. B52 and Empedocles’ fr. B16 DK, in which αἰών has a cosmic application (ἄσπετος αἰών = “ceaseless life” of the universe). Ultimately, this may be the sense behind Aristotle’s philosophical argumentation in *De caelo*, which tries to account for the fact that αἰών has apparently rather different ‘human’ and ‘cosmic’ applications (*Cael.* 279a22–28):

Καὶ γὰρ τοῦτο τοῦνομα θεῖως ἐφθεγκται παρὰ τῶν ἀρχαίων. τὸ γὰρ τέλος τὸ περιέχον τὸν τῆς ἐκάστου ζωῆς χρόνον, οὐ μὴθὲν ἔξω κατὰ φύσιν, αἰών ἐκάστου κέκληται. κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν δὲ λόγον καὶ τὸ τοῦ παντός οὐρανοῦ τέλος καὶ τὸ τὸν πάντα χρόνον καὶ τὴν ἀπειρίαν περιέχον τέλος αἰών ἐστίν, ἀπὸ τοῦ αἰεὶ εἶναι τὴν ἐπωνυμίαν εἰληφώς, ἀθάνατος καὶ θεῖος.

“As a matter of fact this word (sc. αἰών) possessed a divine significance for the ancients; for the fulfilment which includes the period of life of any creature, outside of which no natural development can fall, has been called its *lifetime* (αἰών). On the same principle the fulfilment of the whole heaven, the fulfilment which includes all time and infinity, is *eternity* (αἰών) – a name based upon the fact that it is always (αἰεὶ ὄν) – being immortal and divine.” (after Barnes)⁷⁹

It seems to me that, as Barnes’ translation suggests, τὸ τέλος τὸ περιέχον should be taken to imply an active sense and refer to an *ongoing*

⁷⁷ Degani 1961, 50f. Cf. Keizer 2010. See Theunissen 2000, 221: “Es scheint sogar, als folge die Ausrichtung auf Totalität einer im Wort selbst liegenden Tendenz.”

⁷⁸ ἐμοὶ δ’ ὅποιαν ἀρετάν / ἔδωκε Πότμος ἀναξ / εὖ οἶδ’ ὅτι χρόνος ἔρπων πεπρωμέναν τελέσει.

⁷⁹ Barnes 1984, 463. Barnes renders every instance of αἰών in this passage by “duration”.

rather than *completed* duration. Besides, Aristotle offers a very probable explanation of the motivation for Plato's ascription of the sense "eternity" to αἰών, namely its connection with the expression αἰεὶ ὄν "being always". This rather convincing ancient explanation may be taken as an additional reason to question the validity of the aforementioned modern view that points to supposed semantic tendency of αἰών to refer to 'totality'.

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Апстракт

У овом чланку разматрају се Пиндарове употребе значењски сложене именице αἰών. На основу детаљне анализе контекста у којима се реч јавља, аутор предлаже могућу класификацију кључних семантичких мотивација карактеристичних за употребу именице αἰών код Пиндара. Резултати ове семантичке анализе смештају се у дијахронијски контекст и упоређују пре свега са хомерским и предсократовским употребама и значењима исте речи, а разматра се и могућа веза са Платоновом оригиналном филозофском употребом именице αἰών у *Тимају* (37D-38C).

Кључне речи: αἰών, Пиндар, значење речи, контекст.