

Αἰών and χρόνος. Their semantic development in the Greek poets and philosophers down to 400 BC

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A B S T R A C T

This thesis represents an investigation into the meanings of χρόνος and αἰών, which still name important intellectual concepts today, through the early history of their literary application. Starting from the reconstructions of their etymologies, this study registers semantic multiplications of αἰών and χρόνος in archaic and early classical Greek, trying to discover the nature of the semantic changes they went through and to reconstruct their possible causes.

In order to define the meanings of αἰών and χρόνος in early Greek literature as precisely as possible, every instance of usage of each word is submitted to the thorough contextual analysis and linguistic classification, and compared with other words or expressions with which αἰών and χρόνος stand in relation of synonymy, hyponymy, hyperonymy, etc. The two words themselves at times exhibit semantic kinship, and sometimes are apparently synonymous, for they share the common basic semantic nuance of ‘duration’: χρόνος denotes duration in general and αἰών duration of life, vitality.

Since χρόνος and αἰών early came to signify the general concepts of ‘time’ and ‘life’, the thesis also offers an insight into the way these ideas were represented in early Greek literature and highlights their literary relevance. The two words repeatedly appear in the same literary contexts, as parts of lively poetic images, which reflect intensive preoccupation with the ideas of passage of time (and its various effects), transience of life, and unpredictability of the future.

In addition to this, χρόνος and αἰών found specific applications in early philosophical and mythical cosmologies. This thesis discusses the characteristics of these uses of χρόνος and αἰών and compares them to those found in non-philosophical literature. It is argued that the philosophical contexts modify the meanings of χρόνος and αἰών and form a particular semantic tradition. Following in this tradition, Plato (*Tim.* 37 D-38E) came to use χρόνος and αἰών to name the concepts of *measurable cosmic time* and *immovable eternity*, respectively, and these meanings may still be found to resonate in the meanings that *eon* and *-chrono-* have in modern languages, including English.

P R E F A C E

The topic of the early Greek ‘terminology of time’ first caught my attention while I was working with Miloš Arsenijević and Gerald J. Massey on the paper about Zeno’s third argument against motion, the so-called “Flying Arrow”, which is based on the question of the composition of time.

The general Greek term for ‘time’, χρόνος, is preserved in many modern languages, both in technical terminology and in everyday speech. Plato defined χρόνος as the measurable cosmic time, reflected in the movements of the celestial bodies, and contrasted it with immovable eternity, αἰών, of the ideal being (*Tim.* 37D-38E). Both these words have interesting semantic history in Greek literature before Plato, which, along with the Platonic definitions, inspired the present investigation. Its main focus is the study of polysemy and semantic development of χρόνος and αἰών in the works of early Greek poets and philosophers.

I had a fortune of being awarded Chevening Scholarship to conduct a nine-month research on the topic at the University of Oxford, during which I was supervised by Martin West and Edward Hussey. Under their expert guidance, from which I benefited greatly, my research plan was further refined and first put into practice, and the results encouraged me to apply for the full-time doctoral studies at Oxford. I was awarded a place at the Faculty of Classics and the Jesus College, both of whom provided pleasant and stimulating environment for my life and studies. I am especially grateful to Jesus College Old Members Group and the Clarendon Fund, which jointly awarded me with the full-fee scholarship and thus enabled me to fully focus on my research and enjoy all the benefits of studying at Oxford. This, in my case, included the honour of working with Martin West, my thesis supervisor, whose academic guidance has been an inspiration to me.

I would like to thank my Belgrade colleagues at the Department of Classics of the Faculty of Philosophy, where I am employed, for supporting me during my research stay in Oxford. Special thanks are due to my friends and colleagues, Miloš Arsenijević, Gerald J. Massey, and Aleksandar Loma, who helped me during the application process and read parts of my thesis, to Nathanael Stein, who kindly proofread most of the final draft, and to Dragana Mladenović, who provided valuable advice and help at different stages of my research. A big thanks is due to all my dear friends and relatives, with whom I share my joys and disappointments. Most of all, however, I am grateful to my loving family, to whom I dedicate this work.

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A B B R E V I A T I O N S

AiW	C. Bartholomae, <i>Altiranisches Wörterbuch</i> (Strassburg, 1904)
B	A. Bernabé (ed.), <i>Poetarum epicorum graecorum testimonia et fragmenta</i> , 3 vols. (Lipsiae, 1987-2007)
Bq	É. Boisacq, <i>Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque étudiée dans ses rapports avec les autres langues indo-européennes</i> (Heidelberg-Paris, 1907-1916)
CEG	P. A. Hansen (ed.), <i>Carmina epigraphica Graeca</i> , 2 vols. (Berlin, 1983-1989)
D	H. Diels (ed.), <i>Doxographi Graeci</i> (Berlin, 1879)
DELG	P. Chantraine, <i>Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque: histoire des mots</i> , 5 vols. (Paris, 1968-1980)
DK	H. Diels and W. Kranz (eds.), <i>Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker</i> , 3 vols. (Berlin, ¹⁰ 1960-61)
E-M	A. Ernout and A. Meillet, <i>Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue latine: histoire des mots</i> (Paris, ⁴ 1985)
Epigr. Gr.	G. Kaibel (ed.), <i>Epigrammata Graeca ex lapidibus conlecta</i> (Berlin, 1878)
Erot.	E. Nachmanson (recens.), <i>Erotiani vocum Hippocraticarum collectio cum fragmentis</i> (Upsaliae: Appelbergs boktryckerei-aktiebolag, 1918)
EWG	J. B. Hofmann, <i>Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Griechischen</i> , 2 vols. (München, 1949-50)
GEW	H. Frisk, <i>Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch</i> , 3 vols. (Heidelberg, 1960-73)
Hesych.	M. Schmidt (ed.), <i>Hesychii Alexandrini lexicon</i> , 5 vols. (Jena: Maukuis, 1858-1868)
IEW	J. Pokorny, <i>Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch</i> , 2 vols. (Bern, 1959-1969)
ICS	O. Masson (ed.), <i>Les inscriptions chypriotes syllabiques</i> (Paris, 1961)
K	O. Kern (ed.), <i>Orphicorum fragmenta</i> (Berlin, 1922)
K-A	R. Kassel and C. Austin (eds.), <i>Poetae comici Graeci (PCG)</i> , 8 vols. (Berlin, 1983-)

KG	R. Kühner and B. Gerth, <i>Ausführliche Grammatik der griechischen Sprache</i> . (Hannover, 1898-1904)
KEWA	M. Mayrhofer, <i>Kurzgefaßtes etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindischen</i> (Heidelberg, 1953-)
Kock	T. Kock (ed.), <i>Comicorum Atticorum fragmenta</i> , 3 vols. (Leipzig, 1880-1888)
LfgrE	B. Snell et al. (eds.), <i>Lexikon des frühgriechischen Epos</i> (Göttingen, 1955-)
LP	E. Lobel and D. Page (eds.), <i>Poetarum Lesbiorum fragmenta</i> (Oxford, 1955)
M-W	R. Merkelbach and M. L. West (eds.), <i>Fragmenta Hesiodica</i> (Oxford, 1967)
N	A. Nauck (ed.), <i>Tragicorum Graecorum fragmenta</i> (Leipzig, 1889)
OCD	S. Hornblower and A. Spawforth (eds.), <i>The Oxford Classical Dictionary</i> (Oxford, ³ 2003)
ODEE	<i>The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology</i> (Oxford, 1966)
OED	<i>The Oxford English Dictionary</i> , available at < http://www.oed.com/ >
PMG	D. L. Page (ed.), <i>Poetae melici Graeci</i> (Oxford, 1962)
PMGF	M. Davies (ed.), <i>Poetarum melicorum Graecorum fragmenta</i> (Oxford, 1991)
RE	A. Pauly, G. Wissowa, W. Kroll (eds.), <i>Realenzyklopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> (Stuttgart, 1893-1980)
TrGF (Sn-K; K; R)	B. Snell, R. Kannicht, and S. Radt (eds.), <i>Tragicorum Graecorum fragmenta</i> (Göttingen, 1971-)
W	M. L. West, <i>Iambi et elegi Graeci ante Alexandrum cantati (IEG)</i> , 2 vols. (Oxford, ² 1989-1992)
WH	A. Walde and J. B. Hofmann, <i>Lateinisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch</i> (Heidelberg, 1930-1954)
WP	A. Walde and J. Pokorny, <i>Vergleichendes Wörterbuch der indogermanischen Sprachen</i> (Berlin, 1927)

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

“On the obscurity of words and clarity of things”

Charles Simić, *Late-night Chat*

It is probably not surprising that whenever someone reads or hears my thesis title – be they a classicist or not – they inevitably get the impression that I will be writing on ‘time’. This may serve as a proof of the special position that χρόνος and αἰών have within what can be called the *vocabulary of time*¹ and I drew on that fact when I was deciding on the topic of my thesis. I knew I wanted to write on ‘time’, the question was how I could contribute to this complex topic, which intersects with a wide variety of research approaches, even within the limited area of classical studies. My decision was to investigate the *language of time*, but this phrase again has a number of applications, for it is used to denote different aspects of verbalisation of human temporal experience (one need only look at the list of contents in the Oxford Reader in linguistics bearing just that title, *The Language of Time*²). A classicist can be said to work in the field if they investigate the tense system or aspect in the Ancient Greek and/or Latin languages and equally so if they examine the way time is expressed in and treated by different narratives. I chose to write on the *meanings of words*, bearing in mind the fact that words directly reflect our experience of reality, since we use them to name and categorise the world, and so also the phenomena related to time and time itself. My fondness for the works and teachings of the Presocratics, and ancient Greek philosophers in general, has increased my awareness of the importance of verbal

¹ This can be said to consist of numerous entries from different verbal categories. See e.g. chapter 14 (“Time”) in Buck 1949.

² Mani et al. 2005.

expressions of ideas through attribution of *novel meanings*, arising from the philosophers' unique speculations, to the *words* already existing in everyday vocabulary. These semantic innovations were not, of course, an exclusive characteristic of early Greek philosophy, though they do seem to appear more consciously there and these new philosophical meanings are usually well defined (or, at least, sufficiently well-explained). In literary texts, and especially in poetry, words are often used freely, in rather imaginative and surprising ways, but the ideas that motivate these creative new usages are not always easily recognisable. One can say that new meanings appear everywhere and all the time, both incidentally and intentionally ("the driving forces of meaning change are varied and diverse"³), but not all of them stick with the word and reappear later, nor do they always influence its further semantic development. We can therefore conclude, together with the editors of the 2003 *Trends in Linguistics* volume, that "Meaning changes proper are changes in the *conventions* that determine the referents of a word."⁴ [Italics added]

The importance of αἰών and χρόνος for the vocabulary of time lies in the fact that they have transcended the boundaries of *an* era and of *a* language and have become universally applicable in technical languages as well as in everyday communication of today. At the core of their present usages are their traditional meanings, the reconstruction and examination of which are of special importance not only for the investigation of the nature of lexical semantic changes but also because they enable us to have an insight into the history of the ideas which the two words denote(d).

³ Eckardt et al. 2003, 1.

⁴ Op. cit., 12: "When Latin *trahere* ('to pull') changed to French *traire* ('to milk'), speakers adopted the additional convention to restrict the word to actions of pulling at a specific place (an udder) and with a specific purpose."

Αἰών and χρόνος are present in the vocabularies of many modern European languages, including English. Apart from its technical meanings in geology and astronomy, *aeon/eon* has the following significations in modern English: “an age of the universe, an immeasurable period of time; the whole duration of the world, or of the universe; eternity” (*OED*, “eon” 1a). The Ancient Greek word *chronos* is preserved in English as a constituent of a number of words, such as *chronicle*, *chronological*, *chronometer*, *synchronise*, etc., which all have *time* as their common denominator. There are, however, 27 entries (excluding phrasal usages and combinations) on “time” in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. In its generalised sense, which I think is applicable to all the above mentioned usages of *-chron(o)-* in English, “time” is defined as “a continuous measurable quantity in which events occur in a sequence proceeding from the past through the present to the future”⁵. In a more restricted sense, it refers to “duration conceived as beginning and ending with the present life or material universe; finite duration as distinct from eternity” (*OED*, “time” 26).

Let me pause at this distinction between finite and measurable duration of *time* (*chronos*) and the infinite and immeasurable duration of *eternity* (*eon*), because it is a conception that we, again, owe to ancient Greek culture. It was Plato who in his dialogue *Timaeus* (37D-38E) clearly differentiated between, on one hand, the eternity (αἰών) of the ideal being, which is a tenseless, immovable ‘always’, and, on the other, its “moving image”, the time of the world (χρόνος), which is created together with the world and is measured according to the movements of the sun, the moon, and the five other stars which he calls “planets”, i.e. “wanderers”. Plato’s definitions of ‘time’ and ‘eternity’ and, accordingly, the senses he ascribed to the two words in that particular

⁵ *The American Heritage Science Dictionary*, time 1. Available at: <<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/time>> [Accessed 28 July 2011]

context seem to be in a way still valid, but they do not exhaust the semantic applications of *eon* and *-chrono-*⁶ in modern languages, nor were αἰών and χρόνος in the whole of Plato's work (or in Plato's time) used exclusively in the senses he ascribed to them in *Timeaus*. This brings us to the phenomenon of *polysemy*, which refers to the fact that most words have more than just one meaning at any given time.⁷ As a matter of fact, both αἰών and χρόνος have a rich polysemantic nature, as is obvious from their dictionary entries, but becomes even more manifest when one reads the literary texts in which they appear. For, as Blank remarks, it is only in oral or written contexts that words actualise their semantic values. Moreover, they normally appear in typical collocations, which, in addition, may belong to different discourse traditions.⁸ Polysemy, according to Bréal, arises as a consequence of *semantic change*, when a new meaning appears without the old one being cancelled as a result.⁹ Between these two coexistent meanings, Ullmann adds, a *semantic relation* has to exist.¹⁰ Now, if we look at the meanings of αἰών and χρόνος in pre-Platonic Greek literature, we cannot help but wonder how their semantic multiplicity and diversity arose and how they obtained their Platonic senses. For αἰών formerly signified "life", originally in the sense of "vital

⁶ The notions signified by *chronicle*, *chronology* and *chronometer* presuppose the existence of "a system of measuring or reckoning the passage of time" (*OED*, "time" 27a). The verb *synchronise* meaning "make happen at the same time" or "adjust (clocks etc.) to the same time" implies division of the indefinite temporal continuum, the elements of which (points and/or stretches of time, i.e. instants and/or intervals) are themselves called "time" (cf. *OED* "time", 1a and 13a).

⁷ Cf. Ullmann 1962, 159. See also Blank 1997, 406ff.

⁸ Blank 1997, 2.

⁹ Bréal 1899, 154f.: "Le sens nouveau, quel qu'il soit, ne met pas fin à l'ancien. Ils existent tous les deux l'un à côté de l'autre. Le même terme peut s'employer tour à tour au sens propre ou au sens métaphorique, au sens restreint ou au sens étendu, au sens abstrait ou au sens concret... A mesure qu'une signification nouvelle est donné au mot, il a l'air de se multiplier et de produire des exemplaires nouveaux, semblables de forme, mais différents de valeur. Nous appelons ce phénomène de multiplication la *polysémie*." Bréal actually coined the terms *sémantique* and *polysémie*.

¹⁰ Ullmann 1962, 164. This amendment is necessary in order to avoid confusion between homonymy and polysemy, which implies the possibility of interpreting homonymy as polysemy, as well as the semantic 'break-up' of a single word and the consequent development of secondary homonymy. For means of differentiation between homonymy and polysemy and the difficulties arising from the question see Blank 1997, 407f.

force”, “vitality”, and then also in a more general sense, implying both quality and quantity of existence and occasionally bordering on the sense of “destiny” (as allotted duration/content of life). Χρόνος denoted exclusively “period of time” in early epic poetry, but already in early lyric poetry it is found to imply a more ‘active’ notion of time as the bearer of things that happen and befall us (thus approaching the sense of “Destiny”), or, according to some early Greek philosophers, as the power responsible for the overall cosmic balance. In addition to this, Χρόνος is the name of a cosmogonic deity in the sixth-century protophilosophical cosmogonies of Pherecydes of Syros and ‘Orpheus’. Moreover, in some fifth-century poetic contexts αἰών and χρόνος are clearly semantically associated (if not equated).

In view of what has been said so far, this study can be defined as an investigation into the *meanings* of two words, which still name important intellectual concepts today, throughout the *early* history of their literary application. The goal of the study is:

- to register semantic multiplications of αἰών and χρόνος in archaic Greek;
- to discover the nature of the semantic changes they went through and reconstruct their possible causes;
- to establish, when possible, conceptual links (i.e. Ullmann’s *semantic relations*) between different usages and so get closer to the motivations underlying the Platonic employment of αἰών and χρόνος in *Timaeus*.

This specification of research goals places the study within the theoretical frame of *diachronic lexical semantics*. As is clear from the proposed title, its point of view is *semasiological*: it proceeds from words and asks for their meanings, and not vice versa

(which is characteristic of the *onomasiological* approach).¹¹ Drawing, further, on Blank's differentiation between "two levels of abstraction in diachrony: individual studies of words or of concepts and more theoretical approaches to types of semasiological or onomasiological processes",¹² the present investigation can be classified as an empirical case study, which should hopefully provide a basis for future theoretical work.

Although this investigation is not primarily concerned with the question of verbalisation of the ideas of time and eternity, it still cannot and should not avoid discussion of the nature of these notions, whenever the usage of αἰών and χρόνος in early Greek literature enables us to do that. However, an important clarification is in order here: αἰών and χρόνος in *Timaeus* are indeed used to name two general ideas, i.e. to denote two intellectual concepts explicitly defined by the author. This enables us to determine, relying on the single usages, what Plato's understanding of the concepts of time and eternity in fact was. However, this sort of leap from a single word usage to concept designation – which is characteristic of definitions – is otherwise rarely possible.¹³ Individual usages of words reflect meanings which are unique, because of their dependence on the given contexts, whereas, according to Busse, "‘Begriffe’, als überindividuelles Bedeutungsspektrum, können nur retrospektiv, in der theoretischen Analyse freigelegt werden."¹⁴ In addition to this, as is shown above, the present study examines the history of αἰών and χρόνος at the time when they *did not* denote general concepts of eternity and time, and follows them on their way to obtaining those senses.

¹¹ Blank 2003, 39: "Onomasiological studies try to discover the different lexical 'pathways' through which a particular concept has been designated by going back to the respective source concepts."

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Eckardt et al. 2003, 13: "Proper names offer one particularly clear case where the reference of a name determines its meaning. The complementary case can be exemplified by words that receive their meaning by explicit definitions."

¹⁴ Busse 1987, 304.

This is, therefore, not a research into “Begriffsgeschichte” but into “Bedeutungswandel”. The difference is far from trivial, for a concept can be verbally expressed even if there is no specific term to denote it (i.e. the lack of a name for a concept does not exclude the existence of the concept itself).¹⁵ Besides, in order to be able to discuss the conception of time in archaic Greece (or, more precisely, in archaic Greek literature) one has to take into account many different considerations, which have to do with the particularities of the expression as well as of the perception of time. That is indeed a complicated task which calls for collaboration of experts from different fields, such as anthropology, psychology, philosophy, classical philology, etc. An interdisciplinary approach is, however, required for the proposed semasiological study as well, in order to provide adequate reconstructions of the meanings of the words discussed.

ii) Methodology

“Semantic change, one of the most obvious aspects of language change, should be particularly visible in literary and philosophical writings, where speakers are careful and conscious in their choice of words. In such texts, we can expect to find characteristic, innovative and elaborated patterns in the semantic variation of a word.” (J. Meinschaefer)¹⁶

What determines a meaning of a word?

This is certainly not the place for a discussion or an overview of different theories of meaning and I will, instead, use a quotation from a recent volume on diachronic semantics, which sums up the views on the meaning of *lexical meaning* in the following

¹⁵ Cf. e.g. Plum 1994, 259: “Nähert man sich dem Thema Eifersucht mit einer historischen Fragestellung, so stößt man zunächst auf den Befund, daß zwar nicht der Ausdruck ‘Eifersucht’, wohl aber der Bedeutungsinhalt oder Begriff ‘Eifersucht’ ein hohes Alter aufweist”.

¹⁶ Meinschaefer 2003, 135.

way: “It is widely agreed that a word’s meaning arises in the tension between its referents and the pieces of knowledge that relate the word to other words of a language.”¹⁷ In a more elaborate discussion on the matter Blank differentiates between “außersprachlich-konzeptuelles Wissen”, “einzelsprachlich-sememisches Wissen”, and “einzelsprachlich-lexikalisches Wissen” as three levels of information that speakers (or writers) possess about a word they use. The first level concerns everything that a speaker (or writer) knows about the referent of a word (“Sach- oder Weltwissen”), the second relates to the place that a particular word meaning has within a specific lexical field,¹⁸ and the last level of information about a word regards its position within the lexicon of the given language and the rules of its use. In order to define the meanings of αἰών and χρόνος in early Greek literature as precisely as possible, all the three levels of semantic knowledge relating to them will be discussed, while every instance of usage of each word will be submitted to the following types of analyses:

- 1) *Philological text analysis*: with the help of textual analysis I will examine different usages of αἰών and χρόνος in early Greek literature and interpret their meanings within various contexts.¹⁹ I will pay special attention to the possible recurrence of typical collocations within the works of an author and also throughout the archaic and early classical Greek literature. Relying on this contextual analysis, I will try to interpret the conceptual content behind the examined usages of αἰών and χρόνος and elucidate changes in the ideas designated by the two words.²⁰

¹⁷ Eckardt et al. 2003, 13.

¹⁸ Blank 1997, 55: “Das Semem ist (...) die spezifische Merkmalsumme, die eine Wortbedeutung von den Bedeutungen der anderen im Wortfeld vertretenen Wörter und von den anderen Bedeutungen eines Wortes unterscheidet.”

¹⁹ On the importance of context for the reconstruction of a word’s meaning see e.g. Brunner et al. 1972, xiii-xxvii (“Einleitung”).

²⁰ On the inevitable subjectivity of such interpretations and the proposed ways of avoiding it see Eckardt et al. 2003, 17: “When we read and try to understand texts of the past, we are in fact confronted with a

- 2) *Linguistic classification* of different usages of αἰών and χρόνος implies linguistic description of the contexts in which these words appear, i.e. it refers to combinatorial properties of the two words.
- 3) Analysis of the *position of αἰών and χρόνος within the network of lexico-semantic relations* should help us define the meanings of the two terms in comparison with other words or expressions with which they stand in relation of synonymy, hyponymy, hyperonymy, etc.

Though clearly distinguished here, these different types of analyses should not be separated from each other in the examination of the chosen textual data. For only if applied simultaneously can they provide valid information about the meaning of αἰών and χρόνος in the given contexts.²¹ However, if we further suppose that meaning change represents change in the conceptualisation of our world,²² then the primary concern of this study is to discover the nature of the *concepts* underlying the early literary usages of αἰών and χρόνος, to mark the changes in these concepts and reconstruct the impulses that motivated the changes. The methodological tools described are meant to help us achieve that goal.

Finally, in tracking semantic changes in early Greek usages of αἰών and χρόνος, I will look for an additional aid in the classificatory works of linguists who have recognised and defined certain *types* of semantic changes and reconstructed characteristic groups of *factors* that instigate them. As Blank pointed out, the first typology of semantic changes, though at the time still not recognised as such, dates back

fundamental problem. Initially, all that contemporary readers have at their disposal is their semantic competence of the present day language. As their experience in reading historic texts increases, the readers may come to feel that they are acquiring a specific competence of older stages of the language. But how can we be sure that this is not just an illusion?" and further.

²¹ See Meinschaefer 2003, 136.

²² Eckardt et al. 2003, 14.

to ancient rhetoric, in which three important figures of speech were identified: synecdoche, metaphor, and metonymy.²³ Modern scholarship, however, has noted that only when these figures of speech turn into habitual uses, can we speak about meaning change.²⁴

Though aware of the mutual dependence of words and thoughts, we still often feel that verbal expressions of our ideas and impressions are somehow inadequate and imprecise. The aim of discovering the conceptual content and semantic transformation of words used such a long time ago may, therefore, seem like a chase after an unattainable quarry. But such is the beginning of many human discoveries and it should not prevent us from trying to improve theoretical and methodological tools and offer convincing and verifiable answers to the question.

iii) Previous studies

The colourful semantic picture of the early literary usages of αἰών and χρόνος and the words' relevance for understanding the conception of time in early Greek literature have naturally inspired scholars to produce various studies devoted, more or less specifically, to the investigation of their meanings.

Herman Fränkel's study "Die Zeitauffassung in der frühgriechischen Literatur"²⁵ has certainly been the most influential among the scholarly works that tackle the question of meanings and usages of χρόνος in early Greek literature. However, as its title clearly indicates, the analysis of the word's meanings serves Fränkel as a basis for discussion about the early Greek conceptions of time. This methodological approach

²³ For a detailed account of the history of this classificatory work see Blank 1997, 7-46.

²⁴ Reisig 1972, 21.

²⁵ Fränkel 1968a. First published in *Zeitschrift für Aesthetik*, Beilagenheft, 1931.

has now been criticised from various points of view (see more below), although Fränkel's method initially found many followers.²⁶ In the course of my investigation, I will discuss Fränkel's views in more detail (and occasionally those of his followers and critics) and I will primarily be interested in his valuable analyses of the meanings of χρόνος in early literary contexts. One of the more prominent studies composed in the tradition of Fränkel's work is de Romilly's book *Time in Greek Tragedy*.²⁷ It examines the conception and imagery of time in fifth-century tragedy relying primarily on the analysis of the usages of χρόνος and occasionally of αἰών (which may be found to take on or approach the meaning "time" in some tragic passages).

A decidedly different approach was taken by Lackeit in his doctoral dissertation entitled *Aion: Zeit und Ewigkeit in Sprache und Religion der Griechen*,²⁸ for the author explicitly declares that the goal of his study is not to explore the concepts of time and eternity, but the meanings of *the word αἰών*.²⁹ The same is true about Degani's *AION da Omero ad Aristotele*, which investigates the semantic development of αἰών in the literary works from Homer to Aristotle.³⁰ Degani rightly indicates the need to contrast the semantic analysis of αἰών to that of χρόνος, primarily because of their important relation in Plato, and at the end of his book therefore adds a summary overview of the most striking examples of early usages of χρόνος. The questions raised by this incomplete but intriguing summary inspired the present research. Finally, the recent exhaustive work of Keizer, *Life, Time, Entirety*, a study of αἰών in Greek literature and philosophy, the Septuagint and Philo,³¹ continues in the same methodological tradition.

²⁶ See e.g. Philippon 1949, Treu 1955, Accame 1961.

²⁷ Romilly 1968.

²⁸ Lackeit 1916.

²⁹ Op. cit., "Vorwort".

³⁰ Degani 1961. See also Festugière 1949.

³¹ Keizer 2010.

These studies, however, offer different interpretations of various usages of αἰών, which will be discussed along the way of the present study.

Due to its relevance in Christian literature, αἰών (and its derivative αἰώνιος) is the subject of several studies that explore its meaning and usage in Biblical contexts and in patristic literature.³² These studies will not be much referred to in the present research because of the important difference in the focus within the subject matter.³³ There are, on the other hand, many specific studies, in the form of both books and articles, which will provide valuable assistance to the present discussion on the literary applications of αἰών and χρόνος in early Greek authors. These ancient authors and their texts will be in the centre of my attention, for the primary aim of my study is to help us get closer to understanding their usage of the vocabulary and imagery of life and time.

³² E.g. Owen 1936, Orbán 1970, Ramelli and Konstan 2007.

³³ See Keizer 2010, 4: “Hence, up until now studies devoted to *aiōn* have concentrated either on the ‘Greek’ or on the Biblical meaning of the word, but have not made a balanced assessment of both side by side.” Keizer herself then sets out to connect the two fields and “approach *aiōn* in a more consistent and comprehensive way” (op. cit., 5).

CHAPTER II

EARLY HEXAMETER POETRY

X P O N O Σ: ETYMOLOGY AND EARLY EPIC USE

When we take a look at the usages of χρόνος in the Homeric poems, we can see that in each of its 29 appearances χρόνος can naturally be rendered with the English word “time”. It is, however, less obvious from these epic instances what the content of the concept(s) expressed by the word is, especially because of the fact that in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* χρόνος appears in a small number of recurring formulaic phrases. As mentioned above, some scholars have nevertheless attempted to reconstruct the nature and the development of the archaic Greek idea of time relying on linguistic evidence, i.e. by examining the use of a number of the so-called ‘time words’ in early Greek literature. I will refer to these reconstructions in the course of my investigation of the early epic uses of χρόνος.

i) Etymology

The attempts to recover the original sense of the Greek word χρόνος have so far not produced conclusive results. On the one hand, a number of scholars have assumed a root χρ- with a suffix -ovo-, also apparently found in θρ-όνο-ς and κλ-όνο-ς,³⁴ and it was further suggested that this χρ- could be the same root as that of χόρτος and/or χορός, and/or that of Sanskrit *hárati*.³⁵ Because of the meaning of χόρτος in particular, an

³⁴ More examples of the same type of word formation in Risch 1974, 101. See, however, *DELG*, s.v. χρ-όνος: “L’analyse χρ-όνος, inspirée par κλόνος et θρόνος, ne fournit ni un suffixe, ni un radical acceptables.”

³⁵ See e.g. Porzig 1942, 346 and WP i 603, s.v. **gher-* 4. According to them, χεῖρ belongs in the same group, but it has now been traced back to IE **ghesr-*, see *GEW*, s.v. χεῖρ.

original signification like “boundary (of time)” has been supposed.³⁶ On the other hand, a connection with the Avestan term *zrvan-*, *zrūn-* “time” has also been suggested,³⁷ although this would involve abandoning any connection between *zrvan-*, *zrūn-* and Greek γέρων, γέρας, etc.³⁸ As in the case of Greek χρόνος, the origin of the Avestan term is not entirely clear.³⁹ The idea that the notion of time may be linked to the concept of ageing is certainly attractive and plausible, but again not uncontroversially verifiable.⁴⁰ On the other hand, it is even more difficult to account for the formal connection between *zrvan-* and χρόνος.⁴¹ Finally, Frisk suggests that scholars so inclined may try and accommodate χρόνος to some of a number of different IE roots that read **gher-* (or **ǵher-*).⁴² Most of them, however, do not appear to be suitable to represent the semantic core of the Greek word χρόνος, and in the cases in which it may seem possible to establish semantic and formal connection between some of the roots and χρόνος, the lack of evidence prevents us from making any bold suggestions (see e.g. **gher-* 3: “to stick out”, found in Gr. χαρία· βουνός Hesych.; χάρμη = ἐπιδορατίς (cf. Polish *grot* “arrow-point”, Welsh *garth* “promontory”); χοιράς “(a cliff) protruding above the sea”, “like a hog or hog’s back” (LSJ, s.v.), χήρ “hedgehog”, Hesych. One may think of χρόνος as originally implying something that “protrudes” temporally. For

³⁶ E.g. Curtius 1866, 182: “umfassende Zeitgränze”. Cf. EWG, s.v. χρόνος : “die alles packende und in ihre Bande schlagende (Zeit)”.

³⁷ E.g. Curtius, loc. cit. and DELG, s.v.

³⁸ Cf. WP i 599, s.v. *ǵer-*, *ǵerē-*.

³⁹ See AiW, col. 1704.

⁴⁰ Cf. Avestan *zaurvan-* “old age” > MP, NP *zarmān* “old man, old age”, but Avestan *zrvan-* > MP, NP *zamān* “time”. Bartholomae (AiW, loc. cit.) does not link these two word groups.

⁴¹ Müller 1895, 292 establishes a parallel between the two words by proposing that Greek χρόνος came from **χρFón-o-ς*. Bartholomae (AiW, col. 1704) discards this reconstruction as a “papierenes Wort”.

⁴² GEW 1122. Cf. IEW i 439-443; WP i 600-606: 1. **ǵher-* “begehren, gern haben”; 2. **ǵher-* “kratzen, ritzen, scharren”; 3. **ǵher-* “strahlen, glänzen, schimmern”; 4. **ǵher-* “greifen, fassen, einfassen”; 5. **ǵher-* “Darm”; 6. **ǵher-* “kurz, klein, gering”, as well as: 1. **gher-* in Schallworten; 2. **gher-* “hart worüber streichen, reiben”; 3. **gher-* “hervorstechen”.

a similar conception of time as something that “stands before”, see below).⁴³ As for the motivations behind the names for time in other IE languages, the Old Slavonic term **vermę* (< IE **wert-men-*) is linked to the verb meaning “turn, revolve” (the same basis is found in Skr. *vártman-* “wheel track, road, etc.”).⁴⁴ The idea of ‘revolving’ time reminded some authors of the Latin notions *annus vertens*, *mensis vertens*, *anniversarius*, and it is a piece of evidence for the existence of the conception of cyclical time.⁴⁵ The Germanic root **tī-*, the basis of English *time* (< Grmc. **tī-man*) and German *Zeit* (< Grmc. **tī-di*, also found in Eng. *tide*, originally “season”, “proportion of time”, “point of time”, etc.;⁴⁶ ON *tíð* “time”, etc.) is usually traced back to IE **dī-*, *dā(i)-* “divide, distribute” (cf. Gr. *δαίεσθαι* “divide, distribute”; Skr. *dáyate* “share”, etc.),⁴⁷ but this supposition is, again, not unanimously accepted.⁴⁸ It has been suggested that the Latin term *tempus* “time” may have also been inspired by the notion of *division*, which would be in accordance with the fact that the word generally implies portions of time, i.e. divisions of duration.⁴⁹ A semantic ground for this interpretation is found in the image of *cutting* wine by pouring water into it, the action expressed with the Latin verb *tempero*. According to the alternative explanation, both *tempus* and *tempero* were formed from an extended version (**temp-*) of the IE root **ten-* meaning “stretch, extend,

⁴³ One could think of a formation from the heavy stem *ghrō-* and a suffix *-n(o)-*, as in Got. **granō*, OHG *grana*, OE *gronu*, etc. “mustache, needle pin, spruce” and Slavonic **granъ* “sharp angle, edge” yielding Russ. *granъ* “border, edge”, SCr. *grana* “branch”, etc. However, Frisk (*GEW*, s.v. *χάρμη* 2) and Chantraine (*DELG*, s.v. *χαρία*) have both contested the validity of bringing these words together with those mentioned in the text. Even if one could prove that this grouping is justified, it would be virtually impossible to prove that *χρόνος* belongs there.

⁴⁴ Skok 1971, 626, s.v. *vrijeme*.

⁴⁵ See Preobrazhensky 1951, 101; Vasmer 1953, 253, s.v. *время*.

⁴⁶ *ODEE*, s.v. *tide*: “swelling of the sea or its alternate rising and falling (...) a special development of the ‘fixed time’”.

⁴⁷ Op. cit. and Kluge 1967, 878, s.v. *Zeit*.

⁴⁸ Vries 1961, 578.

⁴⁹ E-M 1203f., s.v. *tempus*. It has to be stressed that E-M cite this etymological explanation, as well as the one linking *tempus* to the IE root **ten-*, only as possibilities.

drag”, which suggests the sense “Zeitspanne, zeitliche Ausdehnung” for *tempus*.⁵⁰

Finally, there is a time word shared by some Germanic languages and Tocharian A, which is thought to be based on IE **prest-*, probably from **pres-sth₂-*, in the sense of “what stands before” (ON *frest* “period of time, interval”, OE *first* “period of time, interval; delay”, OHG *frist* “period of time, interval”; Tocharian A *prast* “time, occasion; season”).⁵¹

This short survey of possible semantic motivations behind some IE words for time shows that they might have originated from such ideas as *ageing* (suggesting the idea of the progression of time), *revolving* (implying the concept of cyclical time), *division* (suggesting the conception of periods of time, i.e. of time spans dividing different events) or *forward orientation, imminence*.⁵² However, none of these semantic reconstructions can be proved beyond doubt. We will now try and see if there are traces of these ideas in the Homeric usages of χρόνος.

ii) The Homeric usages of χρόνος

There are altogether 29 instances of χρόνος in the Homeric poems (10 in the *Iliad* and 19 in the *Odyssey*), but although the examples are fairly numerous, they are rather uniform and what we actually come across is a small number of repeating *adverbial phrases*. In Homer χρόνος is used exclusively in the adverbial accusative:

1) three times on its own (δ 599, ζ 295, ι 138);

1a) twice preceded by the preposition ἐπί (B 299, ξ 193).

⁵⁰ WP i 721f., s.v. *temp-*: “vgl. von **ten-* air. *tan* ‘Zeit’, ai. *tanóti* auch ‘dauert’.” It is difficult to see how *tempero* (“mix, blend”, “have measure, abstain”) fits into this semantic explanation.

⁵¹ Mallory and Adams 1997, 583, s.v. TIME.

⁵² Cf. WP ii 34 D.: “*p_eres, p_eros* (und als 1. Zsglied *pres-*) ‘vor’... ‘voran, vorn...’ (...) Gr. πρέσ-βυς ‘alt’ (im Alter vorangehend)...); ahd. *Frist* m. n, etc. ... vgl. ai. *puraḥ-sthita-h* ‘bevorstehend’”. English ‘before’ = ‘earlier’ and ‘in front’ shows the same double semantic application.

In the remaining examples it is paired with an adjective or correlative pronoun (with a number in O 511) with or, more often, without preceding ἐπί:

2) πολὺν χρόνον occurs 14 times (B 343, Γ 157, M 9, β 115, δ 543, 594 and 675, ε 319, λ 161, ο 68 and 545, π 267, φ 70, ω 218);

2a) πολλὸν ἐπὶ χρόνον appears twice in the *Odyssey* (μ 407, ο 494);

2b) δηρὸν χρόνον is found twice in the repeated verse of the *Iliad* (Ξ 206 and 305);

3) ὀλίγον χρόνον comes twice in the *Iliad* (Τ 157, Ψ 418);

4) τόσσον χρόνον (ὅσσον) occurs in three verses (Ω 670, τ 169, 221).

These adverbial expressions are here grouped according to their meaning:

1/1a) “for a time, for a while”;

2/2a/2b) “for a long time”;

3) “for a short time”;

4) “for as long as” (= “for as much time”), “for *the* time”.

So, in spite of the fact that χρόνος is never used as a subject or an object in Homer, there seems to be no doubt that we can understand the word as implying a notion of “time”.

However, this is a rather imprecise rendering and we need to take a closer look at the passages with χρόνος to be able to establish a more precise definition of its meaning.

As is obvious from the examples listed, the adverbial χρόνον most often appears in the phrases implying *long time* (πολὺν χρόνον, δηρὸν χρόνον, πολλὸν ἐπὶ χρόνον). It will also be shown that χρόνον can refer to a long time even when it is not paired with an adjective meaning “long”. It is no wonder, then, that Fränkel concluded, on account of the fact that χρόνος *almost never* appears in small amounts, that “wenn Homer von ‘Zeit’ oder ‘Dauer’ spricht, so meint er ‘viel Zeit’.”⁵³ Although Fränkel probably did not

⁵³ Fränkel 1968a, 2.

intend this remark as a strict qualification of the nature of the Homeric idea of time,⁵⁴ I will later show how it led to some rather daring hypotheses about the archaic conception of time in general. I will also try to prove that a more suitable definition of the Homeric usage of χρόνος would be that it refers to a *period of time*, whose length varies from situation to situation. Χρόνος is most often used in direct speeches. The contexts in which it usually appears bear a certain subjective value and express speakers' feelings about the situations in which they find themselves or their impressions of the circumstances (in which they may not be personally involved). As Fränkel remarks, situations and events to which χρόνος refers in Homer are almost exclusively of negative value,⁵⁵ and that may have contributed to the fact that the period of time in question is often perceived as long (or, viewed from the opposite direction, a long time is in certain circumstances perceived as bad). This negativity of the context is especially noticeable in the examples in which πολὺν/ ῥῃρὸν χρόνον is used to describe lengthy suffering, absence, delay, etc.

Suffering, enduring: Elderly Trojan leaders, after spotting Helen, praise her beauty by saying that no one could blame the Trojans and Achaeans for suffering so long a time for such a woman (Γ 157 πολὺν χρόνον ἄλγεα πάσχειν). On the other hand, we witness impatience in Penelope's suitors, when Antinous complains to Telemachus at the prospect of his mother's continuing to vex the sons of Achaeans for a long time (β 115 εἰ δ' ἔτ' ἀνιῆσει⁵⁶ γε πολὺν χρόνον ὕϊας Ἀχαιῶν). Πολὺν χρόνον is here used not only to provide information about the duration of the given circumstances, but also to

⁵⁴ He does, however, seem to suggest that χρόνος itself implied long time in Homer, for he refers to it as "das Wort 'lange Dauer'" (Fränkel, loc. cit.).

⁵⁵ Fränkel 1968a, 2.

⁵⁶ Fränkel 1968a, 15 defines the situation to which πολὺν χρόνον refers here as "Hinhalten". See, however, LSJ, s.v. ἀνιάω "grieve, distress". See also Dawe 1993, 100: "But if she continues for a long time to annoy..."

add to the negative atmosphere which is described. This is also the case in ε 319, where we witness Odysseus' struggle with the mighty wave that kept him under water for a long time (τὸν δ' ἄρ' ὑπόβρυχα θῆκε πολὺν χρόνον, οὐδ' ἐδυνάσθη / αἶψα μάλ' ἀνσχεθέειν μεγάλου ὑπὸ κύματος ὀρμῆς).

Being away, being apart: In the *Odyssey* the phrase πολὺν χρόνον is typically used to refer to Odysseus' long wanderings and absence from home: e.g. in λ 161 in Odysseus' encounter with his mother in the house of Hades (ἧ νῦν δὴ Τροίηθεν ἄλῳμενος ἐνθάδ' ἰκάνεις / νηί τε καὶ ἐτάροισι πολὺν χρόνον; "have you only now come here from Troy, after wandering for a long time with your ship and your companions?"). In φ 70 we find the phrase in Penelope's bitter address to the suitors, who have besieged her home, for its master has long been gone (ἄνδρὸς ἀποικομένοιο πολὺν χρόνον). Finally, in ω 218 Odysseus intends to test his own father in order to see whether he will be able to recognise him after he has been gone for such a long time (ἦέ κεν ἀγνοιῇσι πολὺν χρόνον ἀμφὶς ἔοντα). Odysseus' long absence is indirectly referred to in τ 169 and 221 where the hero, still unrecognisable to his wife, explains to Penelope, who is enquiring about his background and his alleged encounter with the 'real' Odysseus, that it is hard for a man who has been away "for that much time" to talk about these things properly (τ 221 ἀργαλέον τόσσον χρόνον ἀμφὶς ἔοντα εἰπέμεν). The adverbial temporal phrase used here is τόσσον χρόνον. Notice, however, that in Ω 670, where Achilles promises to Priam that he will hold up the fighting for the time Priam demanded (σχίσω γὰρ πόλεμον τόσσον χρόνον ὅσσον ἄνωγας), the same adverbial expression refers to *a period* of time which is not long and the situation it implies is not of negative character.⁵⁷ In the fourteenth book of the *Iliad* we read about

⁵⁷ For Fränkel 1968a, 15 the passage refers to "Unterbrechung" and is therefore negative.

gods who experience long duration: Hera is asking Aphrodite to give her love and desire, so that she can bring back together Oceanus and Tethys, who have been holding aloof from one another for a long time (Ξ 206 = 305 ἤδη γὰρ δηρὸν χρόνον ἀλλήλων ἀπέχονται).⁵⁸ This example is somewhat curious, for, strictly speaking, eternally living gods are not supposed to be sensitive to the flow of time. Finally, we can add to these instances the only mention of the adjective χρόνιος (“lasting”, “long-lasting”, “long”) in the Homeric poems, which refers to a son who has returned *after a while* (ρ 111f. υἱὰ ἐλθόντα χρόνιον νέον ἄλλοθεν).⁵⁹

Waste of time, delay, holding back: Nestor uses the adverbial πολλὸν χρόνον in addressing his fellow Achaeans to remark that they have been in the assembly for a long time without reaching any solution (B 343 πολλὸν χρόνον ἐνθάδ’ ἐόντες).⁶⁰ Proteus advises Menelaus, who has burst into tears after finding out about his brother’s murder, not to cry so long a time (δ 543 μηκέτι, Ἀτρεὺς υἱέ, πολλὸν χρόνον ἀσκελές οὔτω κλαῖε), for it is of no help. The point of this utterance seems to be not simply that Menelaus has cried too long, but that his crying (however long) was a waste of time. After finding out from Menelaus that his father is still alive, Telemachus is eager to return to Ithaca and declines Menelaus’ invitation to stay in his home for a while by saying “Do not hold me a long time here” (δ 594 μὴ δὴ με πολλὸν χρόνον ἐνθάδ’ ἔρυκε). In each of these examples the duration of negative circumstances appears to be extended in the eyes of

⁵⁸ Cf. π 267, where Odysseus promises Telemachus they will soon get help from Zeus and Athene, for they will not keep aloof from battle cry for a long time (οὐ μὲν τοι κείνω γε πολλὸν χρόνον ἀμφὶς ἔσεσθον / φυλόπιδος κρατερῆς). In Fränkel’s opinion, the gods’ being aloof is a negative situation that will soon change in favour of the speaker.

⁵⁹ This adjective appears in the same kind of contexts (being absent, away for a while, returning, arriving after a while) in fifth-century drama: E. *Andr.* 84, *Supp.* 91, *El.* 1157, *IT* 258, *Ion* 403, *Hel.* 566, 1232, *Or.* 740, *IA* 1625, *Rh.* 559; Ar. *Th.* 912. These authors use the adjective in other contexts as well, but always to indicate *protracted duration*. One can compare the use of the verb χρόνιζω “spend time”, “stay a while”, “hesitate”, “delay” (E. *HF* 619, 930, *IT* 1219), which clearly implies *duration* as well.

⁶⁰ Cf. Latacz 2003, 104 (ad 343): “πολλὸν χρόνον ἐνθάδ’ ἐόντες; wohl nicht auf die neun Jahre vor Troia, sondern auf die gegenwärtige Situation zu beziehen: ἐνθάδε ‘hier in die Versammlung’...”

the participants or the observers, which points to the subjectivity of human experience of time.⁶¹

Χρόνον alone: A few verses further on Telemachus utters a similar sentence, but this time χρόνον alone, without the accompanying attribute, bears the adverbial meaning “(for) a long time”. While his friends are growing weary in holy Pylos, Telemachus expresses his eagerness to leave Menelaus’ hospitable home by saying: “You are keeping me here a long time” (δ 599 σὺ δέ με χρόνον ἐνθάδ’ ἐρύκεις).⁶² One should be careful not to take this example as evidence that χρόνος alone might have had the meaning “long time” in Homer. The predominance of the instances in which χρόνος is defined as long or short by using different attributes proves that the word itself meant simply “period of time”. Besides, in the sentence cited above χρόνον can be suitably translated with “for a while”, and that is exactly the sense ἐπὶ χρόνον has in B 299 and ξ 193. In the first of the two verses Odysseus is advising his fellow Achaeans not to leave Ilios yet, but to remain “for a while” to see whether Calchas’ prophecies are true or not (τλήτε, φίλοι, καὶ μείνατ’ ἐπὶ χρόνον). In the latter instance Odysseus in disguise begins his reply to Eumaeus’ enquiries by saying “May the two of us now have food and sweet wine [to last] for a while...” (εἴη μὲν νῦν νῶϊν ἐπὶ χρόνον ἡμὲν ἐδωδὴ / ἥδὲ μέθυ γλυκερὸν ... δαίνυσθαι), for Odysseus would be able to talk about the toils he has been through “for the entire year”, without even finishing his tale.⁶³ If we now try to ‘measure’ the length of the ‘times’ referred to with (ἐπὶ) χρόνον in the previous three examples, we could say that in δ 599 χρόνον implies a long time, at least from

⁶¹ Cf. Bakker 2002, 11: “We make continuous progress in our scientific understanding of time, but this does not bring us any closer to an objective temporal experience; perhaps we merely add another layer of cultural mediation.”

⁶² Another variation of the same utterance, this time coming from Menelaus’ mouth, is found in ο 68:

Τηλέμαχ’, οὗ τί σ’ ἐγώ γε πολὺν χρόνον ἐνθάδ’ ἐρύξω / ἰέμενον νόστοιο·

⁶³ Cf. ξ 196ff.

Telemachus' point of view; in B 299, however, Odysseus certainly did not intend to suggest that the Achaeans should stay in Ilios for a long time, for they had already been there too long. In the last example (ξ 193), what the speaker has in mind is certainly a long time, for it is explicitly said that Odysseus could talk for the entire year. So the length of a Homeric χρόνος clearly depends on the circumstances and the speakers' relation to them. There is no evidence that it implies exclusively either a long or a short time. In addition, one should not ascribe too much significance to the qualitative assessment (positive vs. negative) of the situations to which χρόνον applies. It is sometimes used in emotionally neutral contexts, as in the following two cases of (unaccompanied) χρόνον.

Waiting:⁶⁴ In the *Odyssey* χρόνον is used alone two more times in one and the same phrase μείναι χρόνον, εἰς ὃ “wait a while, until”. Nausicaa utters it when advising Odysseus to stop in the grove sacred to Athene before going to the city (ζ 295 ἐνθα καθεζόμενος μείναι χρόνον, εἰς ὃ κεν ἡμεῖς / ἄστυδε ἔλθωμεν). The same phrase recurs in Odysseus' description of the island of the Cyclopes, where one can beach one's ship without throwing out anchor stones and then wait until the sailors decide it is time to leave and favourable winds start to blow (ι 138 ἀλλ' ἐπικέλσαντας μείναι χρόνον, εἰς ὃ κε ναυτέων / θυμὸς ἐποτρύνῃ καὶ ἐπιπνεύωσιν ἄηται).⁶⁵ These two passages are neutral both in respect to the qualitative and to the quantitative definition of waiting to which χρόνον applies. There is, however, an instance of χρόνον that undoubtedly refers to a short time, and apparently so short that it poses problems of interpretation.

⁶⁴ For Fränkel 1968a, 15 *waiting*, in general, is a negative situation. He also believes that Penelope's *not long* “unawareness” of her suitors' plans (δ 675 οὐδ' ἄρα Πηνελόπεια πολὺν χρόνον ἦεν ἄπυστος) presents a negative context.

⁶⁵ For the context of waiting see also the aforementioned B 299 as well as ο 545 (Τηλέμαχ', εἰ γάρ κεν σὺ πολὺν χρόνον ἐνθάδε μίμνῃς, / τόνδε τ' ἐγὼ κοιμῶ ...). According to Fränkel (loc. cit.), ο 545 is an unintelligible verse.

Short / not long time:

O 511f. reads as follows:

βέλτερον ἢ ἀπολέσθαι ἓνα χρόνον ἢ ἐ βιώναι,

ἢ δηθὰ στρεύεσθαι ἐν αἰνῇ δηϊοτῆτι

“It is better to die at one time or to survive,⁶⁶

than to suffer⁶⁷ thus in vain for a long time”

The unique phrase ἓνα χρόνον in O 511 is to be understood in opposition to δηθὰ (“for a long time”) in the line that follows. Because of the obvious parallel with μ 350-51,⁶⁸

commentators normally interpret the unusual ἓνα χρόνον as having the same sense as

ἅπαξ,⁶⁹ but the attempt to define the nature of the time expressed in such a way

inevitably leads to confusion. So, for example, Leaf states: “The phrase is a strange one,

as χρόνον in H. (...), as in later Greek, always means ‘a while,’ *duration* of time,

whereas ἅπαξ marks a *point* of time”,⁷⁰ and Accame concludes “Qui dunque nell’ *Iliade*

χρόνος corrisponde a *istante*.”⁷¹ Moreover, he suggests that χρόνος has lost its

‘instantaneous’ sense by the time the *Odyssey* was composed, so that the poet of the

later epic felt the need to replace ἓνα χρόνον with the more appropriate ἅπαξ in μ 350.⁷²

Accame’s general thesis – which he develops carefully, though, as I will shortly show,

without success – is that in the *Iliad* one can find traces of an earlier temporal

conception, namely that of short time, whereas in the *Odyssey* the notion of time as long

⁶⁶ Leaf 1902, 137: “βιώναι must be taken in the strict sense of the aor. ‘to win life’, not simply ‘to live’.”

⁶⁷ Ibid. “στρεύεσθαι is explained by the Schol. with στραγγίζεσθαι, ‘to be wrung, squeezed out,’ (...) The metaphor of squeezing vividly expresses the situation of the Achaeans.”

⁶⁸ βούλομ’ ἅπαξ πρὸς κῦμα χανὼν ἀπὸ θυμὸν ὀλέσσαι
ἢ δηθὰ στρεύεσθαι ἐὼν ἐν νήσῳ ἐρήμῃ.

⁶⁹ Leaf, loc. cit.: “ἓνα χρόνον here is clearly equivalent to ἅπαξ there, and answers exactly to our idiomatic use ‘three times’ = thrice, etc.” See also Janko 1992, 284: “ἓνα χρόνον is a unique idiom for ‘once for all’: cf. χρόνον meaning ‘(for) a while’ (LSJ s.v., 3a), and ... (*Od.* 12.350f.).”

⁷⁰ Leaf, loc. cit.

⁷¹ Accame 1961, 363.

⁷² Ibid.

duration prevails.⁷³ For Fränkel, however, Homeric χρόνος “bezeichnet immer eine *Dauer*, nie einen Punkt; es gibt also kein ‘zu dieser Zeit’ oder ähnliches.”⁷⁴ Accame’s claim that χρόνος in the *Iliad* O 511 corresponds to an *instant* is misleading, to say the least. The event that ἕνα χρόνον refers to should be understood as *definite* rather than *instantaneous* and Janko’s rendering of the phrase with “once for all” (see n. 69) suitably reflects this sense. It also fits the comparison intended with the lines 511-512: it is better to have one’s destiny decided, whether it means to die or to survive, than to continue to live by actually slowly dying.

In the Homeric poems there are three ways to express, by using χρόνος, the idea that a situation or an event lasts a short period of time: (1) to use a sole χρόνον (B 299, O 511), (2) to negate adverbial phrases indicating long time (μ 407, ο 494), and (3) to use the adverbial phrase “for a short time” (Ψ 418). However, both Fränkel and Accame rely on just one of these groups in supporting their own ideas about the nature of the Homeric conception of time. So Fränkel continues his statement about the predominance of long duration as referent of χρόνος in Homer by claiming “Will man von wenig Zeit sprechen, so sagt man ‘nicht viel Zeit’; man muß dann sozusagen die Zeit negieren.”⁷⁵ Accame, however, stresses the fact that only in the *Iliad* can one find instances of χρόνος paired with ὀλίγος, either in a positive (ὀλίγον χρόνον) or in a negative phrase (οὐκ ὀλίγον χρόνον).⁷⁶ The truth is, however, that in the two Homeric poems the usages of the adverbial temporal phrases with χρόνος are more or less equivalent.

⁷³ Op. cit., 365.

⁷⁴ Fränkel 1968a, 3f. Cf. his explanation of the controversial line (op. cit., 15): “O 511 wird spitz und ganz singulär zu δηθὰ στρέυγεσθαι das Gegenstück gestellt ἢ ἀπολέσθαι ἕνα χρόνον (!) ἢ ἐβίῳναι ‘in einem raschen Angriff auf Leben und Tod die Entscheidung erzwingen.’”

⁷⁵ Fränkel 1968a, 2. Cf. idem, 15: “‘Wenig χρ.’ nur Ψ 418 (‘nicht wenig χρ.’ T 157).”

⁷⁶ Accame 1961, 364f.

In T 157 Odysseus warns Achilles he should not urge the Achaeans to go against the Trojans hungry, for “the battle will not be short” (οὐκ ὀλίγον χρόνον ἔσται φύλοπις). For Accame, the fact that the poet refers to a long time by denying shortness indicates the predominance of the idea of short time in the *Iliad*.⁷⁷ But what about the instances of πολλὸν / δηρὸν χρόνον in the same poem? In addition to this, in Ψ 418 we read how Antilochus’ horses gain speed for a short while (μᾶλλον ἐπιδραμέτην ὀλίγον χρόνον), frightened by their master’s threat. The fact that the poet felt the need to mark the shortness of the situation by the addition of the attribute “short” to χρόνον contradicts Accame’s theory about the originally intrinsic shortness of the notion expressed by χρόνος in the *Iliad*.⁷⁸ There is no need to argue at length against the described attempts to subject Homeric usages of χρόνος to strict quantitative and qualitative distinctions. I have shown that when used on its own (ἐπὶ) χρόνον in Homer means “for a while”, i.e. for a period of time, which can be either long or short, depending on the situation described. When the poet feels the need to stress the lengthiness or shortness of time referring to certain circumstances, he adds the attributes πολλὸν or ὀλίγον to χρόνον (occasionally with a preceding negation). In μ 407 Odysseus explains how Zeus punished him and his comrades for killing the Sun’s cattle by setting a storm on their ship, “which ran on for no long while” (ἧ δ’ ἔθει οὐ μάλα πολλὸν ἐπὶ χρόνον). The intended sense of the utterance is that “the ship could not proceed for long”⁷⁹ and no further consequences should be derived from this negation of a long

⁷⁷ Accame 1961, 365.

⁷⁸ His response to this objection is that book twelve is a late one and that by the time it was composed χρόνος had already lost its ‘instantaneous’ sense (ibid.).

⁷⁹ Heubeck 1989, 141.

temporal period about the nature of time in the *Odyssey* as compared to that in the *Iliad*, or in the Homeric poems in general.⁸⁰

It may be concluded that Homeric χρόνος signifies a *period of time*, which can be long or short, but it most often appears as a part of the phrases, uttered by different epic protagonists, referring to long temporal duration. Fränkel notices that, for the most part, not much really happens in these long (or occasionally not that long) periods of time: epic protagonists suffer and endure, they are absent, they are kept and they wait;⁸¹ they are said to *be* apart, unaware, under water, in the assembly, but they rarely *do* something in a clearly defined period of time. Antilochus' horses run for a short while; Odysseus cries and wanders for a long time - and that is about all the action referred to by χρόνον. A battle lasts or is delayed, food and wine suffice "for a while". "Von χρόνος wird ganz überwiegend nur dann geredet, wenn die Zeit leer bleibt", states Fränkel.⁸² This eventless time could almost be called "meantime", for Homeric χρόνος does not seem to be a part of the narrative, it is neither a frame for what is going on in the poems nor does it in any way influence the events. In addition, the existence of chronological inconsistencies in the *Iliad* and Homer's apparent lack of interest in temporal distinctions⁸³ prompted Fränkel to conclude that what we find in Homer is an "undeveloped sense of time" in comparison to that of the fifth-century literature.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Cf. ο 494: Odysseus and Eumaeus fell asleep after finishing their conversation, but "not for a long time, for the enthroned Dawn soon came" (καδδραθέτην δ' οὐ πολλὸν ἐπὶ χρόνον, ἀλλὰ μίνυνθα / αἶψα γὰρ Ἦως ἦλθεν εὐθροπος). It is interesting to note that Fränkel believes that the circumstances in question are negative. In M 9 we read how the wall the Danaans built to protect their ships did not last long (τὸ καὶ οὐ τι πολλὸν χρόνον ἔμπεδον ἦεν), for it was built without divine consent. Fränkel admits that οὐ πολλὸν χρόνον "has a positive content" there, but adds "dieser steht unter dem Zeichen der vorher genannten Gegenkräfte, die ihm ein Ende machen werden" (Fränkel 1968a, 15).

⁸¹ Fränkel 1968a, 2 concludes: "Beim Warten hat man also die Zeit entdeckt".

⁸² Fränkel, loc. cit.

⁸³ Fränkel 1968a, 3ff.

⁸⁴ Fränkel 1968a, 6. Cf. Treu 1955, 123: "Die eine große Linie der Entwicklung darf dabei als bekannt vorausgesetzt werden. Sie führt von einer 'fast völligen Indifferenz der Zeit gegenüber' bei Homer zu einer 'fast überschwänglichen Huldigung an Chronos als 'Vater aller Dinge' am Eingang des 5. Jhdts.'"

However, the cases of chronological incoherence have now been accounted for by their poetic function and the formulaic method of composition of the Homeric poems.⁸⁵ It has also been convincingly argued that the so-called “lexical method”, according to which “the absence of a lexeme in a text signifies the absence of the concept it denotes”, is misleading when it comes to the reconstruction of the Homeric conception of time.⁸⁶ Kullmann has also proved that both composition of the Homeric poems and the attitude of their protagonists express the sense for temporal relations of events. What we can say with certainty, however, is that in the Homeric poems the word χρόνος does not signify any kind of general or superordinate notion of “time”. The striking difference between the Homeric use of χρόνος and its meaning and role in the literary works of the late archaic and early classical era calls for a careful examination of all the usages of this term in early Greek literature.⁸⁷

iv) Χρόνος in Hesiod and the Homeric Hymns

There are altogether seven instances of χρόνος in Hesiod’s poems (four examples) and the Homeric hymns (three examples). Apart from the occasional lexical variations (παῦρον, παυρίδιον in Hesiod for Homeric ὀλίγον), the usage of χρόνος there corresponds to what we have already seen in Homer: the word appears exclusively in the adverbial accusative with or without preceding ἐπί. Χρόνον refers to a *period of time*, which can be defined as long or short by the addition of an attribute:

- 1) ἐπὶ χρόνον (*Op.* 754) “for a while”;
- 2) παυρίδιον / παῦρον ἐπὶ χρόνον (*Op.* 133 and 326) “(for a) short time”;

⁸⁵ See e.g. Bergren 1979.

⁸⁶ See e.g. Kullmann 1968, Rengakos 1995, 10-12.

⁸⁷ See Degani 1961, 118.

- 3) πολὺν (πουλὺν) / δηρὸν χρόνον (*Th.* 190, *h.Cer.* 94 and 282; *h.* 28.14) “(for a) long time”.

Ἐπὶ χρόνον: The only instance of non-quantified χρόνον in Hesiod confirms the conclusions we made in connection with the Homeric use of the word. Ἐπὶ χρόνον in *Op.* 754 refers to a quantitatively non-defined *period of time* during which a man who has cleaned his body with the water previously used by a woman is doomed to suffer painful punishment (μηδὲ γυναικείῳ λουτρῶι⁸⁸ χροῖα φαιδρύνεσθαι / ἀνέρα· λευγαλέη γὰρ ἐπὶ χρόνον ἔστ’ ἐπὶ καὶ τῶι / ποινή). The poet does not specify the exact duration of the penalty, but ἐπὶ χρόνον indicates that the punishment is temporary.⁸⁹ Time-limits set on impurity, according to West, “reflect the psychological fact that the feeling of being polluted is most acute immediately after the occurrence that has caused it, and wears off after a time.”⁹⁰

Short time: In the rest of the early epic examples χρόνος signifies a temporal period defined as long or short by the addition of the corresponding qualifiers. In *Op.* 133 Hesiod talks about the features of the so-called Silver Generation. Its members are said to have been nothing like those of the Golden Race: they had a hundred-year long childhood, but after reaching their full prime, “they lived only for a little while”, and that in sorrow (ἀλλ’ ὅτ’ ἄρ’ ἠβήσαι τε καὶ ἥβης μέτρον ἵκοιτο, / παυρίδιον ζώεσκον ἐπὶ χρόνον ἄλγε’ ἔχοντες ἀφραδίης).⁹¹ Παῦρον χρόνον is used in a similar way in *Op.* 326, in the context of the poet’s explanation of the consequences of snatching property. The gods make sure that the one who grabs great wealth (in an inappropriate way) falls into obscurity; they diminish that man’s household and his “wealth lasts for a short while”

⁸⁸ See West 1978, 343: “γυναικείῳ λουτρῶι: water in which a woman has already washed. The danger is again, no doubt, loss of masculinity.”

⁸⁹ Mazon 1914, 149. Cf. Accame 1961, 364.

⁹⁰ West 1978 (ad 754).

⁹¹ See West 1978, 185 (ad 133).

(ῥεῖα δέ μιν μαυροῦσι θεοί, μινύνθουσι δὲ οἶκον / ἀνέρι τῷ, παῦρον δέ τ' ἐπὶ χρόνον ὄλβος ὀπιθεῖ). Accame believes that for both the Hesiodic examples cited one should presuppose a conception of χρόνος as, by that time, already a “normally long” temporal period.⁹² This conclusion, however, is not acceptable, for it defies the obvious fact that the authors of *Th.* 190, *h. Cer.* 94 and 282, and *h.* 28.14 felt the need to define χρόνος as “long” by the addition of the appropriate attributes.

Long time: Fränkel curiously claims that there is no mention of χρόνος in Hesiod's *Theogony*.⁹³ The word, however, does appear in the story of Uranus' castration: Hesiod explains how after Kronos had cut off his father's genitals and cast them into the sea, “they were borne along the water for a long time” (l. 190 ὥς φέρειτ' ἄμ πέλαγος πουλὺν⁹⁴ χρόνον). The same temporal phrase appears in *h. Cer.* 94, where it is described how Demeter, angry with Zeus, left the divine assembly and Olympus and went among the cities of men and their fertile fields, “disguising her face for a long time” (ὥιχετ' ἐπ' ἀνθρώπων πόλιας καὶ πίονα ἔργα / εἶδος ἀμαλδύνουσα⁹⁵ πολὺν χρόνον).⁹⁶ In addition to these, there are two instances of the adverbial δηρὸν χρόνον in the Homeric hymns and their usage corresponds to that in the *Iliad* X 206 and 305.⁹⁷ In the hymn to Demeter (*h. Cer.* 282) the phrase is used to refer to the duration of Metaneira's speechlessness, which arose as a reaction to the divine epiphany (δηρὸν δ' ἄφθογγος γένετο χρόνον). The phrase reappears in line 14 of hymn 28 (devoted to

⁹² Accame 1961, 365.

⁹³ Jacoby suggested that verses 188-206 should be omitted from the poem since they allegedly present a secondary interpolation (Jacoby 1926, 161ff. = Jacoby 1961, 222ff.). We do not know, however, whether Fränkel accepted this deletion or perhaps just overlooked the passage.

⁹⁴ For πουλὺν see Jacoby 1961, 222.

⁹⁵ See Allen et al. 1936, 141 and Richardson 1974, 177.

⁹⁶ The given translation is the most common and, apparently, the most ‘natural’ one. However, πολὺν χρόνον probably goes with ὥιχετ', etc. of the verse 93 (cf. Càssola 1975, 47: “andava tra le città degli uomini e i pingui campi, celando il suo aspetto, per molto tempo”).

⁹⁷ Richardson, op. cit., 254 (ad 282): “cf. parallels ... *Hy.* 28.14, *Ibyc. PMG* 283, *A. Supp.* 516 etc. (always δαρὸν χρόνον in tragedy). Δηρὸν (or δαρὸν) alone, as an adverb, is more common in epic and also later.”

Athena), which describes the birth of that goddess. The power of the newborn deity shook Olympus and moved the sea, while the earth cried fearfully. Even the bright Helios “held back his swift horses for a long time” (στῆσεν δ’ Ὑπερίονος ἀγλαὸς υἱὸς / ἵππους ὠκύποδας δηρὸν χρόνον), until Athena had stripped the divine armour from her immortal shoulders.

We may conclude that the usage of adverbial χρόνον in the early Greek epic is consistent. That may be the reason why Fränkel does not pay much attention to the instances of χρόνος in Hesiod and he does not mention the examples from the Homeric hymns at all.⁹⁸ However, he discusses at length the meaning and usage of the Homeric concept of *day* (ἡμαρ/ἡμέρη).⁹⁹ He establishes an interesting theory according to which χρόνος “in its development to the absolute notion of time” gradually *took over* the meaning of the Homeric ἡμαρ/ἡμέρη,¹⁰⁰ which was, according to Fränkel, conceived as “that which brings” (Θ 541, N 828). A couple of centuries later – after what Fränkel and his followers deem a change of attitude towards time in early Greek lyric poetry – Pindar describes χρόνος as the “time that is coming” (ἔρπων N. 4. 43 and 7. 68), “approaching from far away” (O. 10.7 ἔκαθεν ἐπελθών), bringing along good or bad (O. 6. 97 μὴ θράσσοι χρόνος ὄλβον ἐφέρπων). It is my intention to record and account for this change of role that χρόνος played in early Greek literature. I also hope to help explain the early history of an important intellectual concept following the path of diachronic semantic analysis of χρόνος. There is no doubt that the question of the early Greek conception of time can and should be discussed from different perspectives, but

⁹⁸ Cf. Fränkel 1968a, 18f.

⁹⁹ See, however, his remark on Hesiod’s treatment of “day” (op. cit., 19).

¹⁰⁰ Fränkel 1968a, 10.

the issue of naming and defining this concept in early Greek literature is, in my opinion, of great importance for every such discussion.

A I Ω N: AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROPOSED RECONSTRUCTIONS OF ITS BASIC MEANING

The etymology of the Greek term αἰών is convincingly reconstructed, at least from a formal point of view, owing to the existence of a plentitude of corresponding forms in a number of Indo-European languages. All these words can be formally analysed and reduced to the common IE root **aiw-*. However, the semantic value of this etymology is less clear, for there is no consensus among modern scholars about the basic meaning of the reconstructed IE root. In addition to this, scholars also differ in the way they interpret the earliest usages of the Greek αἰών in the Homeric poems. In order to illustrate formal clarity and semantic ambiguity of the etymology of αἰών, I will list and analyse related forms in different IE languages. I will also cite their usual translations as well as variations offered by some scholars. By comparing these cognate forms and their meanings, I hope to get closer to the assumed basic meaning of the common IE root, which should further help me clarify the earliest semantic applications of the Greek noun αἰών.

Greek αἰών, -ῶνος m. (sometimes also f.)¹⁰¹ “vital force”,¹⁰² “duration of life” (> “duration”, “time”, “eternity”),¹⁰³ “lifetime”, “life”¹⁰⁴ is an *-n-* stem noun (originally **aiḥwón*) as is the adverb αἰέν < **aiḥén* “always”. There are also traces of an *-s-* stem in Greek accusative αἰῶ (< **aiḥosa*) and in the adverb αἰές / ἄές < **aiḥés* / **ḗfés*. The most common Greek adverb of the same root is α(ι)εῖ, whose original form

¹⁰¹ It is generally believed that the instances of the feminine αἰών result from its analogy with ψυχή (cf. Hom. X 58, Hes. Sc. 331), with which it is sometimes paired (II 453, ι 523) or paralleled (I 408 and 415, E 685 and 696). See Witte 1912, 109.

¹⁰² Benveniste 1937, *DELG*, s.v. αἰών.

¹⁰³ Bq. s.v. αἰών, *GEW*, s.v. αἰών. Frisk remarks that all the given meanings appear “seit Homer”.

¹⁰⁴ *LSJ*, s.v. αἰών.

αἰφεῖ is epigraphically confirmed in Cyprus and Phocis.¹⁰⁵ It has been suggested that this adverb is a locative of a Greek -o-stem-form corresponding to Lat. *aevum*, but it is at least possible that it is a locative of an -s- stem (< *αἰφεσι).¹⁰⁶ The meaning of all the mentioned adverbs is “always”, “ever”. There are two adverbs derived directly from the root-form with the addition of adverbial ι, αἰ(ν), ἄ(ν) < *αἰφι(ν), which Herodianus (Gr. i 497) defines as Aeolic.¹⁰⁷ Two dialectal Greek forms are difficult to analyse: αἰή (Tarentine, according to Herodianus, loc.cit.) and ἄέ (Doric; Pi. P. 9. 86), which is probably derived from the compound ἀενάοντα (< ἀενάων) (Hom. v 109, Hes. Op. 550), ἀένναος (Hes. Op. 595).¹⁰⁸ For the great number of compounds and derivatives in Greek based on the same root see *DELG*, s.v. αἰών.

As for the Indo-Iranian languages, the Vedic noun *áyu* n. (with the lengthening of the initial vowel) “Lebensfrische, Lebenskraft”,¹⁰⁹ “Leben”¹¹⁰ represents the simple root-form, with the addition of -n- in locative *áyuni*. An -s- stem is found in *áyuh* n., which signifies “vital force” as an individual principle (RV i 89. 9) or as a universal principle (*áyur* viśvá^á*yuḥ* x 17. 4) and is liable to identification with “life” itself (*áyur ná prāṇó* i 66. 1) or “duration of life” (*deváhitam áyuḥ* i 89. 8).¹¹¹ There is also a Vedic adjective *áyú-* “mobile, vital”, which in its masculine form is an attribute of the fiery god *Agni* (“soweit er angezündet ist”),¹¹² sometimes also used as a noun to denote either

¹⁰⁵ See ICS 217, 31 and *Epigr. Gr.* 742, *CEG* 344.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. *DELG*, s.v. αἰών, *Lfgre*, s.v. αἰών.

¹⁰⁷ See *DELG*, s.v. αἰών for the evidence of this form found on Lesbos, in Arcadian, in Miletus, in Thessalian, and in Cyprian. In Cyprian there is a form υφ-αις “for ever” (ICS 217, 10) in which υ should be a preposition, φ a transitional sound, and αις (< *αἰφίς) probably our adverb with an adverbial -ς.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. *DELG*, s.v. αἰών.

¹⁰⁹ Grassmann 1955, s.v. *áyu* n.

¹¹⁰ *KEWA*, s.v. *áyuh*.

¹¹¹ See Benveniste 1937, 105. Grassmann 1955, s.v.: “ursprünglich: *Rüstigkeit* [s. *áyú-*], dann *Lebenskraft, Lebensdauer*, besonders häufig da wo der Wunsch oder die Bitte um lange Lebensdauer ausgesprochen wird.” *KEWA*, ad. loc.: “Lebenskraft”.

¹¹² Grassmann 1955, s.v. *áyú-*.

that god or a human, meaning “endowed with vitality”,¹¹³ “mobile, agile, vital”,¹¹⁴ “der bewegliche, wandernde”.¹¹⁵ To the ‘temporal’ meaning of *āyu-* referring to “life as duration”, points also the adjective *dīrghāyuh* (from *dīrgháh* “long-lasting”) as well as its derivatives.¹¹⁶ Iranian testimonies are less ancient than the Indian. Avestan *āyu* n. and *yuš* m. both signify “duration of human existence”.¹¹⁷ These terms are sometimes combined with the adjective *darəya-* “long” in expressions *darəyam āyu* and *darəyo yuš* “long duration” summed up by the adjective *darəyāyu-* analogous to Skt. *dīrghāyu-*, Gr. *δηναιός*, Lat. *longaeus*.¹¹⁸ A similar meaning appears in the adjective *utayūti-* “long-lasting”, “eternal”.

Latin forms based on **aiw-* are two *-o-* stems, *aevus* m. and *aevum* n. “Lebenszeit, lange Zeit, Ewigkeit”,¹¹⁹ “‘temps’ considéré dans sa durée”,¹²⁰ along with many derivatives such as *aeternus*, *aeternitas*, etc.

In the Germanic and Celtic lexicon the IE root **aiw-* is represented by the following words: Goth. *aiws* m. “time, eternity”¹²¹, “Zeit”,¹²² “Zeit, Ewigkeit”.¹²³ This noun is an *-i-* stem, as is obvious from its acc. pl. *aiwins* (cf. the adjective *aiweins* (= *αἰώνιος*)), and also ON *aēvi*, *aefi* f. “life, age”.¹²⁴ OHG *ēwa* f. “Ewigkeit”¹²⁵ is an *-o-*

¹¹³ Benveniste 1937, 106.

¹¹⁴ Degani 1961, 31.

¹¹⁵ Grassmann 1955, s.v. He believes that this adjective is derived from *i* “to go” (“wie, z. B. *cāyú* aus *ci*, *kārú* aus *kr*”).

¹¹⁶ Cf. Grassmann 1955, 612. See also Degani 1961, 32: “Con questi dati offerti dal Rigveda concordano perfettamente quelli delle *Upaniṣad*: infatti, anche nel sanscrito vero e proprio, il vocabolo *āyuh* – e con esso i suoi numerosi derivati e composti – può esprimere sia la nozione temporale di ‘longevità’, ‘durata della vita’, che quella atemporale di ‘salute’, ‘energia’”.

¹¹⁷ Benveniste 1937, 106.

¹¹⁸ Benveniste (loc. cit.) gives following examples: Y. 31. 20: *darəyām āyū tamañhō* “un long âge de ténèbres; Y. 43. 13: *darəghyā yaoš ... vairyā stōiš* “de la longue durée de l’existence desirable”; for the compound see Y. 28. 6 and Y. 41. 4.

¹¹⁹ WH, s.v. *aevus*.

¹²⁰ E-M, s.v. *aeuus*.

¹²¹ Lehmann 1986, s.v. *aiws*.

¹²² *LfgrE*, 402.

¹²³ Kluge 1967, 95, s.v. *ewig*.

¹²⁴ Lehmann 1986, s.v. *aiws*

stem. There are also a few forms of the guttural stem, Got. *ajuk-*, only in acc. sg. in the phrase *in ajukdūps* (= εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα), as well as OS *ēce* “eternal”.¹²⁶ There are also several adverbs such as ON *ae*, *ei*, OS *eo*, OHG *io* = Gmc. *je* “always”. In Irish, from the root-form **aiw* are derived two nouns, *áis* (*óes*) n., gen. *áis* “life, age”, which is an *-o-* stem, and *áis* n., gen. *óessi* “human beings”, an *-u-* stem (**aiwestu-*).

This abundance of related forms in several IE languages helped scholars establish the common IE root **aiw-* and discover certain patterns in which these forms are generally used. However, not all of them are equally relevant for the discussion about the original meaning of the IE root, since Latin, Germanic and Celtic evidence is rather late in comparison to Greek and Indian, and reflects a more advanced stage in semantic development. If we compare the given translations of the words from different IE languages listed above, even excluding the later sources, we get the following notions as possible renderings of the IE root **aiw-*: “vital force”, “lifetime”, “life”, “duration”. Modern scholars have tried to organise this semantic variety by clearly differentiating between the senses, and they have attempted to define their mutual relations by arranging different meanings in a chronological order. One particular distinction seems to have affected scholars the most: the circumstance that words based on the root **aiw-* already in the earliest preserved sources reflect two seemingly ‘incompatible’ notions, a *temporal* (“lifetime, duration”) and *non-temporal* one (“vital force”).¹²⁷ Some scholars, however, do not seem to recognise the existence of the non-temporal value of **aiw-*,¹²⁸ while others clearly point to the earliest Greek and Vedic

¹²⁵ Kluge 1967, loc.cit.

¹²⁶ Lehmann 1986, s.v. *ajukdūps*.

¹²⁷ Cf. Degani 1961, 35ff.

¹²⁸ GEW, s.v. αἰών: “Lebenszeit”, “Zeitdauer”, “lange Zeit”, “Ewigkeit”, E-M, s.v. *aeuus/aeuum*: “[**aiw-*] le nom indo-européen de la ‘durée’ (en general la ‘longue durée’, la ‘durée sans limite’), WP, s.v. *aiw-*, *āiw-*: “Leben, Lebensdauer, lange Zeit, Ewigkeit”, LSJ, s.v. αἰών “lifetime, life”.

testimonies in which αἰών and āyu- denote the concept of “vital force”.¹²⁹ Moreover, in some Homeric passages αἰών is used in a sense that seems to refer to something more concrete, to an entity which appears to have a material value. Homeric scholiasts mention that, according to the ancient glossographers, the spinal cord (imagined as a seat of life) was a physical equivalent of αἰών.¹³⁰ On the other hand, there seems to be no doubt that Homeric adverbs αἰεί, ἄεί, αἰέν allude to duration. The apparent ‘irreconcilable duality’ of the meanings of the Homeric words derived from *aiw- prompted some scholars to raise a question about semantic order of precedence and to search for an explanation of the supposed semantic transition.

Degani’s reference to Fränkel as someone who suggested chronological priority of the temporal over the non-temporal implication of *aiw- seems to be misleading.¹³¹ True, in a short general remark near the end of his article “Die Zeitauffassung in der frühgriechischen Literatur” Fränkel argues that, judging from the uses of Homeric adverb αἰεί, the meaning “life” of Homeric αἰών is only secondary, whereas the basic meaning (“Grundbedeutung”) of the IE *aiw- is likely to be “duration”.¹³² Since he does not mention that he takes “life” in its non-temporal sense, i.e. as vital force or as a part of the body that animates it, it cannot be said that he is suggesting semantic transition from the temporal to the non-temporal signification of αἰών. Fränkel rather belongs to that group of authors who do not recognise the non-temporal aspect of αἰών/*aiw-, if anything can be concluded with certainty from his short and rather vague

¹²⁹ Benveniste 1937 emphasised this meaning of αἰών in Homer. Even earlier, Lackeit suggested that in Homer the sense of αἰών “inclines to” and “approaches” the idea of “vital force” recognisable in Indian sources (Lackeit 1916, 9).

¹³⁰ See schol. D ad T 27. More on the Homeric passage in the following section of this chapter.

¹³¹ Degani 1961, 36.

¹³² Fränkel 1968a, 18.

remark.¹³³ After all, Degani himself observes that all the scholars who follow Fränkel seem completely to ignore the senses “vital force” and “spinal cord”.¹³⁴

The other group of scholars, who acknowledge that αἰών and āyu- in their earliest usages sometimes bear the sense “vital force”, suggest that this meaning is primary and that the sense of “duration” is derived from it.¹³⁵ The most prominent representative of this view is Benveniste, whose 1937 article “Expression indo-européenne de l’ ‘éternité’” offers an elaborate analysis of the forms derived from IE *aiw- and reexamines some early Indo-Iranian and Greek testimonies to prove the authenticity and dispersion of the meaning “vital force”. Benveniste concludes that the Indo-Iranian evidence clearly shows that āyu- (yu) is a term loaded with concrete sense, that it denotes “vital force”, which is responsible for realisation of human existence but is originally independent of its duration. He also analyses a number of Homeric uses of αἰών in order to show that their semantic value corresponds to that of āyu- in the earliest Indo-Iranian sources: “Chez Homère, αἰών s’entend encore dans sa pleine signification humaine: non ‘temps de la vie’ mais ‘force de vie, source de vitalité’”.¹³⁶ Moreover, Benveniste gives an additional argument in support of his claim that the meaning “vital force” was characteristic of the IE root *aiw-. Following suggestions of Johansson and Danielsson¹³⁷ he draws attention to the probable semantic link between the words

¹³³ See Fränkel, *ibid.*: “Für αἰών und verwandten Wörter wird man, nach dem was sich über den ältesten Zeitbegriff ergeben hat, weder eine idg. Grundbedeutung ‘Zeit’ annehmen wollen, noch braucht man andererseits ganz das Zeitelement aus der Grundbedeutung auszuschließen (wie Lackeit, *Aion*, Diss. Königsberg, 1916, S. 6ff. vorschlägt). Alles fügt sich gut, wenn man einen gemischten Begriff wie ‘Bestand’, ‘Dauer’, insbesondere ‘Leben’, zugrunde liegen läßt (ähnlich Wilamowitz, *Herakles II*² S. 363f.)”

¹³⁴ Degani 1961, 36.

¹³⁵ Degani 1961, 36, n. 55: “Già il Reynaud, *RPh* XIX, 280, sosteneve, con poca chiarezza, che “la notion de temps derive bien ... de celle de vigueur, vie”; ad una anteriorità di “Lebenskraft” pensarono pure l’Eisler, *WuH*, 707; il Lackeit, *Aion*, 6, il Troje, *AfRw* XXII, 89 ed altri; vi accennano pure l’Hofmann, *GEW*, s.v. αἰών, l’Ernout-Meillet, *DEL*, s.v., aeuus, il Juret, *Dict.*, 93, e, come vedremo, il *Lfgre*.”

¹³⁶ Benveniste 1937, 107.

¹³⁷ Danielsson 1888, 49, Johansson 1891, 139.

derived from **aiw-* and those denoting “youth” as the “(peak of) vital force”. There are, in Benveniste’s view, two root-stems resulting from the root **₂ei-* (= **ai-*) by the addition of the affix *-w-*:

1. **₂éi-w-* > **ai-w-*, from which all the above mentioned words originated, and
2. **₂y-éu-*, which, after the initial *ə* disappeared before consonant in Indo-Iranian, resulted in Avestan *yav-* (adv. *yavāi* “always”, and then also noun *yavaētāt* “eternity”). With the addition of the nominal affix *-en-* and a consequent reduction of the root-vocalism this stem turned into **₂y-w-en* > **y(u)wen-*, which can be easily recognised in Skt. *yúvan-* and Lat. *iuuenis* “young”. Benveniste offered the following semantic explanation for the given formal connection: “est dit **yuwen-* l’être pourvu de **aiw-*; en d’autres termes, être ‘jeune’, c’est être en possession de ‘force vitale’”.¹³⁸ The “prehistoric relation”¹³⁹ thus established between Skt. *āyu-* and *yúvan-*, Lat. *aeuus* and *iuuenis*, Got. *aiws* and *juggs* (< **yungaz* < **yu-w-n-ko* > Lat. *iuuencus*) was accepted by many later scholars (e.g. Dumézil, Mayrhofer, Chantraine, etc.).¹⁴⁰

Once the sense “vital force” (“vitality”, “vigour”, “youth”) is attached to the IE root **aiw-*, it becomes possible to offer a semantic explanation for its obvious formal affinity to some other similar words such as the Greek adjective αἰόλος “quick-moving, changeful”, and the verb αἰόλλειν (Hom. *υ* 27; Plat. *Crat.* 409) “to shift rapidly”.¹⁴¹ If we link αἰόλος to **aiw-*, the adjective can easily be explained as a derivative of an *-o-* stem form (**aifo-λος* < **aifo-*; cf. *δην-αἰός* and the Latin adjective **aiuos* > *aeui-tas*) and it becomes a convenient equivalent of the Vedic *āyú-* “vital, mobile”.¹⁴² Degani

¹³⁸ Benveniste 1937, 110.

¹³⁹ Op. cit., 104.

¹⁴⁰ Dumézil 1938, 289-301, *KEWA*, s.v. *āyuh*, *DELG*, s.v. αἰών.

¹⁴¹ Benveniste, op. cit., 107.

¹⁴² Degani 1961, 34, n. 49: “Questa spiegazione è generalmente accettata (Boisacq, Hofmann, ecc.). La rifiuta E. Fraenkel, *Gnomon* XXII, 239, che propone come base **(f)ai(f)óλος*, connettendolo con **wel*,

makes an interesting remark that just as *āyú-* is an attribute of Agni, so also is αἰόλος an attribute of Ajax (Αἴας), “l’eroe dalla vigoria impetuosa e violenta, il cui nome è certamente connesso con **aiw-*”.¹⁴³

All the evidence Benveniste presents speaks in favour of his attribution of the non-temporal notion “vital force” to early uses of the forms based on the root **aiw-*. In Benveniste’s view, this is the primary sense of αἰών, and he accounts for its transition into the more elaborate meaning “duration” in the following way: “Puisque l’αἰών est le principe interne qui maintient l’homme vivant, c’est la persistence de l’αἰών qui mesurera la durée de la vie; aussi longtemps l’αἰών demeurera intact, aussi longtemps vivra cet homme. Celui dont l’αἰών subsiste pendant une période étendue sera dit *δην-αἰός* ‘qui vit longtemps’ (cf. Skr. *dirghāyu-*, etc.).”¹⁴⁴ However, Benveniste does not seem to offer a satisfactory explanation for one particular problem mentioned above. He insists that all Homeric uses of αἰών have exclusively non-temporal value, and that the semantic transition to the meaning of “lifetime”, “duration” happened in post-Homeric times. The problem is, however, that at the same stage of the assumed semantic development Homeric adverbs αἰεῖ, ἀεῖ, αἰέν undeniably have temporal meaning. To meet this difficulty, Benveniste suggests that besides the masculine substantive αἰών, which denotes non-temporal “vital force”, one should presuppose the existence of a neuter form, which bears the temporal meaning “l’espace de temps où dure la force vitale”.¹⁴⁵ In his opinion, the adverbs that mean “always” are derived from this hypothetical neuter. However, as Degani rightly objects, there is no trace of such a

“wälzen, drehen, wenden” (cf. εἰλεῖν, *felve), sull’esempio di δαίδαλος-δαιδάλλειν, παιπάλη-παιπάλλειν. Per altre interpretazioni, cf. Frisk, s.v.; *Lfgre*, s.v.”

¹⁴³ Degani 1961, 34. See *DELG*, s.v. Αἴας.

¹⁴⁴ Benveniste 1937, 109.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

neuter form in Greek,¹⁴⁶ and the existence of neuters in some other IE languages is not sufficient proof of the validity of Benveniste's hypothesis.¹⁴⁷

In his articles on αἰεῖ, ἀεῖ, αἰέν and αἰών in the *Lexikon des frühgriechischen Epos*, Seiler adopts Benveniste's conclusion about the basic meaning of IE *aiw- and Greek αἰών,¹⁴⁸ but also notes that there are indications of a further development of this primary meaning in some Homeric uses of αἰών (ε 152 and 160, σ 204), and that in the case of the Homeric adverbs αἰεῖ, ἀεῖ, αἰέν this semantic development seems to have begun in pre-Homeric times. He obviously rejects Benveniste's explanation about the existence of two basic forms, masculine and neuter, referring to "vital force" and "lifetime" respectively, and tries to show that the temporal meaning of the Homeric adverbs αἰεῖ, ἀεῖ, αἰέν somehow developed from the original non-temporal notion of "vital force". In order to preserve their connection with the basic meaning of the IE root *aiw-,¹⁴⁹ Seiler explains these adverbs as referring to being *in flore*, "in force", in an adverbial sense "anew, again" ("ähnlich germ. nhd. *je, je-weise*, d.h. *je und je, jeweilen*, worin die Repetition beschlossen liegt")¹⁵⁰ and, surprisingly, illustrates this theory with some post-Homeric examples: τοῦ αἰεῖ βασιλεύοντος (Hdt. 2. 98), τὸν κρατοῦντ' ἀεῖ (A. Pr. 937). The original meaning of αἰεῖ, ἀεῖ, αἰέν, Seiler argues, "ist nicht durativ (die immerwährende Dauer bezeichnend), sondern segmentativ (einmalige [!] oder wiederholte Aktualisierung)". Finally, he suggests that the meaning "always", which is

¹⁴⁶ Degani 1961, 37, n. 57: "Di un neutro *aiFos parla anche il Bechtel, *Griech. Dialekte*, II, 360."

¹⁴⁷ See Degani 1961, 37, n. 58.

¹⁴⁸ *Lfgre*, 402: "Der hom. Gebrauch zusammengekommen mit dem anderer altidg. Sprachen weist auf die Ursprünglichkeit der unter 1. (*Lebenskraft, Jugendblüte des Mannes*) gegebenen Bedeutung (vgl. Benveniste l.c.) hin."

¹⁴⁹ *Lfgre*, 280 (s.v. αἰεῖ, ἀεῖ, αἰέν): "Grundbed.: nicht 'in der Zeit' (Hirt, IF 32, 1913, 295, wie *áhan* 'am Tage'), auch nicht 'in der Lebenszeit'. Derartige Bed.-Entwicklung wäre von dem bei αἰών festgestellten Tatbestande her unverständlich."

¹⁵⁰ Cf. *DELG*, s.v. αἰών (about the meaning of the adverb αἰεῖ): "Le sens est 'toujours' mais souvent avec la nuance de 'chaque fois'."

usually attached to the above mentioned adverbs, including their Homeric use, is only secondary, and that it developed in the phrases such as ἐμμενὲς αἰεὶ, συνεχὲς αἰεὶ, and generally in the contexts in which the adverb is paired with the verb “to be” (e.g. θεοὶ αἰὲν ἔόντες).

Seiler’s view was criticised by Degani on several grounds: first, Degani argues that the notion of duration is well attested for αἰεὶ / αἰὲν in Homer (he provides a list of examples in both *Iliad* and *Odyssey* where the adverb is paired with εἶναι),¹⁵¹ and that there is no evidence to back up Seiler’s claim that it is only secondary. Second, Degani doubts that the clearly temporal meaning of Homeric αἰεὶ, αἰεὶ, αἰὲν could have developed from a non-temporal one. Even in the notion of repetition one can find an immanent sense of continuity and hence duration. As Degani remarks,¹⁵² Seiler seems to contradict himself when he suggests that the same semantic development which is noticeable in some Homeric uses of αἰών, such as the one in ε 152 where αἰών is said to “flow away” (a verb undoubtedly suggesting duration),¹⁵³ has affected the Homeric adverbs αἰεὶ, αἰεὶ, αἰὲν (which are supposed not to have durative sense) “already in pre-Homeric times” (*LfgreE*, s.vv.).

This might be a convenient place to mention a rather idiosyncratic reconstruction of the basic meaning of αἰών proposed by Onians.¹⁵⁴ He rejects the generally accepted view about the affinity between the (Homeric) noun αἰών and the adverbs αἰεὶ, αἰεὶ, αἰὲν, and declares their grouping together a result of “popular association”.¹⁵⁵ Onians believes that, in order to clarify the original meaning of αἰών, we should look at αἰό-λλω “move rapidly”, αἰό-λος “quick-moving”, to which are

¹⁵¹ See Degani 1961, 39, n. 59.

¹⁵² Degani 1961, 39.

¹⁵³ Cf. schol. ad ε152: κατεῖβετο] ἐν δάκρυσιν ἦν αὐτῶι ὁ τοῦ βίου χρόνος καὶ κατετήκετο.

¹⁵⁴ Onians 1951.

¹⁵⁵ Op. cit., 209.

related English “soul”, Anglo-Saxon *sawol*, and Gothic *saiwala*. He also compares Gothic *saiws* “a body of water”, Sanscrit *āyúḥ* “mobile, living”, *āyuh* “vital element, life, lifetime”. Relying further on his unique interpretation of the meaning of αἰών in ε 152 as “tears” that “flow away” (κατεῖβeto δὲ γλυκὺς αἰών),¹⁵⁶ Onians offers the following interpretation of the early meaning of αἰών: “there was believed to be in the flesh, filling or forming it, liquid or liquefiable element, which could come out of it and be lost. This belief we have met already the liquid being recognized in sweat. Later also, as we know, tears and sweat were thought to be the same liquid. It is this liquid which Homer calls αἰών”.¹⁵⁷

Onians applies the meaning of αἰών in ε 152 to the Homeric instances where it is said to be “wasted” (ε 160 μηδέ τοι αἰών φθινέτω, σ 204 αἰῶνα φθινύθω). Moreover, he argues that this liquid αἰών was thought to be concentrated particularly in the head and to be dependent upon the cerebro-spinal fluid and marrow. He goes on to argue that the Homeric scholia that give “spinal marrow” as a possible explanation of αἰών in T 27¹⁵⁸ must have been based on the corresponding uses of αἰών in ‘Hippocrates’ (*Epid.* vii 122; cf. Hesych. s.v. αἰών), Pindar (fr. 111), and the Homeric *Hymn to Hermes* (*h. Merc.* 42. 119). This, however, does not prove that αἰών had the same sense in the related Homeric passage.

As for the development of the temporal meaning of αἰών, Onians explains that “a word designating life as ‘fluid’ might have easily come to mean the life which the fluid represents and so ... the lifetime dependent on it” (he cites I 415 and Δ 47 as examples of the semantic transition) and adds that “the temporal suggestion appears gradually to

¹⁵⁶ Onians 1951, 201. Cf. *ibid.*, notes 3 and 4 for the list of instances in which κατεῖβω is used in connection with tears and water.

¹⁵⁷ Onians 1951, 201f.

¹⁵⁸ Cf. p. 36, n. 130.

have increased by popular association of the word with αἰεί, αἰεῖ, till at last it meant ‘eternity’”.¹⁵⁹

Although highly inventive, Onians’ theory lacks convincing evidence: it rests on the interpretation of the word in a single context in the *Odyssey* and chiefly depends on the verb with which it is paired there.¹⁶⁰ Onians rightly observes, however, that, while weeping, people seem to lose their force and vitality along with tears, that their strength appears to diminish with sweating caused by extreme physical effort or heat. He also notes that sexual love can be described as “melting” and characterised as “wet”.¹⁶¹ It weakens people’s powers and it is responsible for the creation of new life through liquid semen. All this, however, does not prove that the Greeks of the archaic period considered tears, sweat and semen the same fluid, let alone that they called this hypothetical life-fluid αἰών.

Having examined and rejected all the given etymological reconstructions that rest on the presupposition that one of the two different notions reflected by the IE word-family *aiw-, temporal or non-temporal, must be original, whereas the other can only be a result of the secondary semantic development, Degani rightly questions the validity of the presupposition. Based on Beniveniste’s discussion on semantic development of Homeric αἰών, he concludes that there is semantic unity behind the apparent duality of meanings of the words based on the IE *aiw-: “La forza vitale, all’esperienza, non si rivela che nella durata: e l’una e l’altra erano la stessa cosa”.¹⁶² Moreover, Degani points to some non-linguistic traces of this original semantic unity by drawing attention

¹⁵⁹ Onians 1951, 209.

¹⁶⁰ Onians also supports his theory by the association of αἰών with the verb αἰονάω “I moisten, foment, apply liquid to flesh” (and its derivatives ἐπαιονάω “I bathe” [transitive], καταιοναίω “I pour upon”, etc.), which is a medical technical term (cf. *DELG*, s.v.) and whose etymology is uncertain (cf. *GEW*, s.v.; Bq, s.v.).

¹⁶¹ Onians 1951, 202 and *ibid.* n. 4.

¹⁶² Degani 1961, 40.

to the study of Georges Dumézil dedicated to the problems of Indo-European mythology.¹⁶³ This study, as the author himself admits, is directly inspired by Benveniste's linguistic reconstruction of the affinity between **yuwen-* and **aiw-* and is meant to illustrate this relation in the field of the ancient Italo-Celtic mythology.

According to ancient authors (D. H. 3. 69, Liv. 5. 54.7, Flor. 1. 7), in a mythological tale presented as an historical event, when Tarquinius Superbus decided to build a temple dedicated to Jupiter, Iuno and Minerva on Capitolinus, he consulted augurs about moving elsewhere the altars of other divinities found at the place. All the gods gave permission for the moving, except for Terminus and Iuventas. Their altars were therefore incorporated in the new temple. Owing to the preservation of the two gods' sanctuaries, the prophets concluded "that no circumstance would move the borders of Rome or change the town's vigour" (D. H. 3. 69. 6. 2: ὅτι τῆς Ῥωμαίων πόλεως οὔτε τοὺς ὅρους μετακινήσει καιρὸς οὔθεις οὔτε τὴν ἀκμὴν μεταβαλεῖ). It follows from this that Terminus and Iuventas were expected to maintain the inviolability of Roman borders and the vitality of the town, respectively. But, while in the first case maintaining of borders does not imply Rome's territorial expansion, in the latter case, maintaining of the town's "vigour" (ἀκμή) implies its prolonged *duration*. The two notions are, Dumézil argues, indistinguishable: "puisque le maintien de la force vitale ne peut se prouver qu'à l'expérience, par la constatation de la durée".¹⁶⁴ Dumézil's reasoning is further confirmed by Florus' description of the same 'event' (i 7): "*placuit vatibus contumacia numinum (sc. Iuventutis et Termini), siquidem firma omnia et aeterna pollicebantur*". According to the accounts quoted, Iuventas, goddess whose name signifies "youth", takes care of "vitality" (ἀκμή) and "eternity" (*aeternitas*)

¹⁶³ Dumézil 1938.

¹⁶⁴ Dumézil 1938, 292.

of Rome: three senses of **aiw-* are unified in the same mythological notion. Finally, what is very important for the present discussion is the fact that the myth of Iuventas seems to date back to pre-Roman times. As Dumézil reminds us, Iuventas is one of the ancient local divinities, whose cult, after being somewhat neglected during the Republican period, experienced a revival in the Imperial era.¹⁶⁵ There are some traces of an analogous myth in the story of the Irish hero Mac Oc¹⁶⁶, “The Young Son” (cf. Ir. *oac*, *ôc*, “young”, gall. *ieuanc*, i.e. **yuwn-ko-*), protector of the young. According to a myth cited by Dumézil, Mac Oc dethroned his father by refusing to leave his palace on the hill, where he demanded to stay “le jour et la nuit, c’est-à-dire la somme de toute existence”.¹⁶⁷ The story points to Mac Oc as a Celtic equivalent of Latin Iuventas. The Italo-Celtic rapprochement proves the antiquity of the examined myth and, at the same time, the unity behind the apparent semantic ambiguity of the IE root **a₂éi-w-/ *a₂y-éu-*.

At the end of the chapter entitled “La ‘Grundbedeutung’ di ΑΙΩΝ”, Degani settles the dispute over the basic meaning of the word by claiming that it signifies “‘vital force’ but not differentiated from its duration”.¹⁶⁸ This definition, he adds, helps us understand and explain the semantic development that led to the meaning “always” of the Homeric adverb αἰεί. The only way “vital force” can prove its existence is through duration, and if we are looking for the appropriate term to render the temporal value of αἰών then it is “lifetime”. Consequently, the Homeric adverbs αἰεί, ἀεί, αἰέν, “always”, should be explained as originating from the sense “throughout lifetime” (where life is understood as continual). But Degani takes this explanation a step further and claims that αἰών denotes not only life in its continuity, but also in its totality

¹⁶⁵ Dumézil 1938, 291.

¹⁶⁶ Sometimes also called *Mac ind Oc*, “Son of the Young”, and *Oengus* (from *oen-* ‘one, unique’ and *-gus* (cf. Gallic: *-gust*, Latin: *gustus*) ‘The Chosen-One’).

¹⁶⁷ Dumézil 1938, 294ff.

¹⁶⁸ Degani 1961, 29-43.

(όλότης), i.e., life between the limits of its own beginning and end.¹⁶⁹ He believes that the notions of totality and continuity are key features of the idea of life expressed by αἰών and that they remained characteristic of the conception in later times.¹⁷⁰ Moreover, Degani concludes that the meaning “always” for the Homeric αἰεί could not have even developed if it was not for the idea of totality of life, which is, in his view, proved by the meaning of the expression δι’ αἰῶνος which, unlike that διὰ βίου “in the lifetime”, “throughout life”, easily accepts the sense “always”, “continually”.¹⁷¹

It does not, however, seem very obvious why the notion of *life as totality* is necessary for development of the meaning “always”. Does “always” always mean “throughout life from its beginning to its end”? It does not seem to be the case when “always” is used in the Homeric phrase θεοὶ αἰὲν ἔοντες (A 290, 494; Φ 518; Ω 99; ε 7; θ 306; μ 371, 377), for – trivial as it might sound – divine life has no end. So, we might conclude, when it is used in connection with gods, αἰεί means “endlessly”. In addition, Seiler’s minute analysis of the uses of the adverbs αἰεί, ἀεί, αἰέν suggests that they often imply repetition, and Benveniste also argues that before becoming immobile and permanent “always”, the adverb implied constant repetition (he gives the following examples: A 52, Θ 342, Ψ 5, etc.).¹⁷² But, again, we cannot see why this specification is necessary (and, as shown above, it is not generally applicable). Further, it is wrong to suppose that repetition excludes duration; quite the contrary, there is no repetition without duration. Indeed, if we try to find a common semantic basis inherent in all these ideas – ‘continuity’ and ‘totality’ of life, ‘repetition’ and even ‘eternity’ – we will find

¹⁶⁹ Op. cit., 42.

¹⁷⁰ This is confirmed by some later definitions of αἰών such as ὅλος ὁ βίος, ὅλος ὁ παρὼν βίος (cf. Owen 1936, 267). See also Arist. *Cael.* 279a25.

¹⁷¹ Degani 1961, 43.

¹⁷² Benveniste 1937, 109.

out that it is the notion of ‘duration’. This brings us back to Degani’s initial conclusion that αἰών originally denotes “vital force” not differentiated from its “duration”. Without trying to determine the nature of this duration precisely, we can say that the meaning of Homeric adverbs αἰεῖ, αἰεῖ, αἰέν naturally results from the temporal aspect of the same idea.

A I Ω N IN EARLY EPIC POETRY

i) *Iliad* and *Odyssey*

In the Homeric poems αἰών appears thirteen times, always in the singular, of which nine times in the nominative, three times in the genitive, and once in the accusative. The noun is masculine in Δ 478, P 302 and ε 152, feminine in Ξ 58, whereas in the rest of the examples the gender of αἰών cannot be determined. In this section I will analyse each of the Homeric uses of αἰών, paying special attention to the interpretations found in the ancient scholia as well as to the commentaries and explanations provided by modern scholars. I will also try to underline possible formulaic uses and indicate typical contexts in which the word appears.

Some of the instances of Homeric αἰών seem to be more ambiguous in view of the established ‘duality’ of the word’s semantic application, which is particularly evident from the differences in modern interpretations. This is the case with Δ 478 (= P 302), in which αἰών appears combined with the adjective μινυνθάδιος “short-lived” (477-79):

... οὐδὲ τοκεῦσιν

θρέπτρα φίλοις ἀπέδωκε, μινυνθάδιος δέ οἱ αἰών

ἔπλεθ’ ὑπ’ Αἴαντος μεγαθύμου δουρὶ δαμέντι.

“He didn’t give his parents recompense for rearing him, for he was overpowered by the spear of the brave Ajax and his αἰών was short-lived”

The usage of the adjective μινυνθάδιος, which is attributed to Simoeisius’ (i.e.

Hippothous’) αἰών, suggests that the noun should be taken in its temporal value here.

Kirk emphasises this aspect of semantic application of αἰών: “shortness of his lifetime,

αἰών”.¹⁷³ The scholia on the passage do not explain the meaning of αἰών in this context, but they do contain an interesting remark on the related Homeric discourse: they notice that the author not only names the victim, but also tells us about the origin of his name, about his parents, and how he was of tender age, an unmarried youth, when he died.¹⁷⁴ Benveniste also emphasises the fact that Homeric αἰών is mentioned in connection with young men, who are slain in the prime of their vigour (Ω 725, Δ 478 and P 302), and never in connection with the old.¹⁷⁵ As mentioned in the above section on the etymology of αἰών, he believed that Homeric αἰών denoted exclusively “vital force, source of vitality”. Degani, however, rejects Benveniste’s view, arguing that there is not enough evidence to support the claim about the exclusive attribution of αἰών to the young. He then ascribes to αἰών in Δ 478 and P 302 “un indiscutibile valore di durata”,¹⁷⁶ but does not elaborate on this statement. Finally, Seiler argues that the temporal meaning of αἰών in this context developed from the non-temporal one, “Dauer des Lebenskraft > Lebensdauer, Lebenszeit”.¹⁷⁷

There are, however, some characteristic usages of the noun, which clearly stress its non-temporal semantic value. Such are the contexts in which αἰών is described as “leaving” the body, as in Sarpedon’s plea for help to Hector (E 684-88):

Πριαμίδη, μὴ δὴ με ἔλωρ Δαναοῖσιν ἑάσῃς
κεῖσθαι, ἀλλ’ ἐπάμυνον. ἔπειτά με καὶ λίποι αἰών
ἐν πόλει ὑμετέρῃ, ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἄρ’ ἔμελλον ἐγὼ γε
νοστήσας οἰκόνδε φίλῃν ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν

¹⁷³ Cf. Kirk 1985, 389.

¹⁷⁴ Schol. ad Δ 473-79: οὐ ψιλὸν τοῦ τετρωμένου τὸ ὄνομα τέθεικεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ (...) καὶ τὴν ἡλικίαν ἦν ἔχων ἀπέθανεν, ὅτι ἡίθεος ἦν. T

¹⁷⁵ Benveniste 1937, 108.

¹⁷⁶ Degani 1961, 24.

¹⁷⁷ *Lfgre*, s.v. αἰών.

εὐφρανέειν ἄλογόν τε φίλην καὶ νέπιον υἱόν.

“Son of Priam, don’t leave me lying here prey for the Danaans, but come to aid.

Thereafter, let my αἰών leave me in your town, since [it seems] I was not destined to return home to my dear fatherland and gladden my beloved wife and the infant son.”

In this context, αἰών is used as the subject of the verb λείπω “to leave”. The same combination is found in Π 453 (see below) and in η 224.¹⁷⁸ This circumstance, along with the fact that αἰών is readily paired or paralleled with ψυχή (in I 408 and 415, Π 453, ι 523; it also is believed that λίποι αἰών in E 685 corresponds to ἔλιπε ψυχή in E 696) strongly suggests that, at least in these contexts, αἰών has a semantic value similar to Homeric ψυχή, which is also said to leave a man (or even an animal, which is not the case with αἰών) in the moment of his (its) death.¹⁷⁹ But the two notions should not be equated, for ψυχή is said to leave a man when he faints and then regains his consciousness again (E 696f. τὸν δ’ ἔλιπε ψυχή, κατὰ δ’ ὀφθαλμῶν κέχυτ’ ἀχλὺς. / αἴτις δ’ ἀμπνύθη, cf. X 467-75, ω 348f.), whereas the departure of αἰών from a man’s body implies definite death.

Let us now take a closer look at the mentioned association of αἰών and ψυχή in Homer. In book sixteen of the *Iliad* Hera advises Zeus not to protect Sarpedon from dying in the war, “but when his ψυχή and αἰών leave him” (Π 453 αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ δὴ τὸν γε λίπηι ψυχή τε καὶ αἰών) to send Death and Dream to carry him back to his home land (454f.). In his commentary on this passage Janko correctly remarks¹⁸⁰ that “ψυχή and αἰών are functional equivalents, since 453 blends λίποι αἰών (5. 685, *Od.* 7. 224) and

¹⁷⁸ η 224f.: ἰδόντα με καὶ λίποι αἰών / κτῆσιν ἐμήν, δμῶάς τε καὶ ὑπερεφῆς μέγα δῶμα “May my αἰών leave me, if only I can first see my property, my servants, and high-roofed great palace.”

¹⁷⁹ See e.g. ξ 426 and σ 91.

¹⁸⁰ Janko 1992, 376f.

ψυχή λίποι (Od. 18. 91), cf. λίπε θυμός (2x).”¹⁸¹ He goes on to explain the particular meaning of these three (in the given context) interchangeable words in the following way: “just as ψυχή and θυμός once meant ‘breath’, so αἰών was ‘vital force’”.¹⁸²

In a number of instances αἰών appears as an object of the verbs and expressions meaning “to deprive”, and in this role it is again paired with ψυχή in ι 523f.:

αἶ γὰρ δὴ ψυχῆς τε καὶ αἰῶνός σε δυναίμην

εὖνιν ποιήσας πέμψαι δόμον Ἄϊδος εἴσω.

“I wish I could deprive you of your ψυχή and αἰών and send you into the house of Hades.”

In this passage, the combination of αἰών and ψυχή refers to Polyphemus “life”, which Odysseus wishes to take away from the Cyclops and send him to the land of the dead.¹⁸³

However, in the Homeric poems ψυχή also occurs paired with θυμός and μένος with the same semantic implication, namely indicating “life”, which is described as being taken away or lost in the context of dying (Λ 334, φ 153f. , 170f., Ε 296, Θ 123 and 315).

Finally, as the following plea that Priam addresses to his son Hector clearly shows, αἰών can be used *on its own* to indicate that which a dying man is deprived of (X 56-58):¹⁸⁴

ἀλλ’ εἰσέρχεο τείχος, ἐμὸν τέκος, ὄφρα σαώσῃς

Τρῶας καὶ Τρῳιάς, μηδὲ μέγα κῦδος ὀρέξῃς

Πηλεΐδῃ, αὐτὸς δὲ φίλης αἰῶνος ἀμερθῆς.

“Come into the town, my child, in order to save Trojan men and women,

¹⁸¹ Actually, three times in the *Iliad* (Δ 470 ὥς τὸν μὲν λίπε θυμός, Π 410 πεσόντα δέ μιν λίπε θυμός, Μ 386 λίπε δ’ ὅστέα θυμός) and two times in the *Odyssey* (γ 455 λίπε δ’ ὅστέα θυμός and μ 414 λίπε δ’ ὅστέα θυμός ἀγῆνορ).

¹⁸² Janko 1992, 377.

¹⁸³ Cf. Heubeck et al. 1988, 268f.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. the use of μένος in Γ 294 (of the lambs) ἀπὸ γὰρ μένος εἴλετο χαλκός and Ζ 27 καὶ μὲν τῶν ὑπέλυσε μένος καὶ παῖδιμα γυῖα.

don't give great glory to Peleus' son and be deprived of your precious αἰών.”

It is interesting that the scholia to this passage in the *Iliad* suggest that αἰών here should be understood as having the temporal value “lifetime” and point to its connection with the adverb αἰεί.¹⁸⁵ In his commentary on X 58, Richardson renders αἰών by the general sense “life”,¹⁸⁶ a translation which is certainly correct and it could be easily applied to all the discussed uses of αἰών. However, ‘life’ is a complex concept, covering a wide range of ideas, including ‘lifetime’, ‘vital force’, ‘way of life’, and even ‘blessings of life’, i.e. ‘wealth’, ‘property’, etc., and is expressed in archaic Greek by several words, such as βίος, ζωή, and, as we have seen, in some contexts also by ψυχή, θυμός and μένος. This detailed analysis of the Homeric uses of αἰών should therefore help us determine its semantic value as precisely as possible, in order to understand its later semantic development as well as its relation to the words mentioned that sometimes bear a sense similar to it.

Degani tries to distinguish between the uses of αἰών and ζωή / βίος in the Homeric poems relying on the remark of Lackeit that αἰών appears “nur in Beziehung auf das Lebensende, den Tod”,¹⁸⁷ which is, Degani argues, something easily proved for ψυχή too, but not for ζωή and βίος.¹⁸⁸ However, this statement is hardly true for, as demonstrated above, ψυχή is sometimes used in relation to loss and regaining of consciousness, and it seems that αἰών is not always mentioned in connection with death either (see below the analysis of ε 152, 160, and σ 204).¹⁸⁹ Unlike αἰών, which is found both in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, βίος and ζωή appear only in the latter, three times

¹⁸⁵ Schol. ad X 58: αἰών δὲ παρὰ τὸ αἰεί· ἢ τὸν ὑπόλοιπον τῆς ζωῆς χρόνον. T

¹⁸⁶ Richardson 1993, 111. Cf. schol. ad loc.: αἰῶνος· βίου ζωῆς. D

¹⁸⁷ Lackeit 1916, 11.

¹⁸⁸ Degani 1961, 18.

¹⁸⁹ Degani 1961, 18, however, insists that “Infatti anche κατεῖβεσθαι, φθινύθειν αἰῶνα contengono in sé un riferimento all’idea della morte (cf. Blanchi, DIOS AISA, 21); a torto quindi il Meltzer (BPhW 1917, 139) criticava l’affermazione del Lackeit.”

each (βίος in ο 491, σ 254 and τ 127; ζωή in ξ 96, 208 and π 429), and both words have a rather specialised sense in the Homeric poem: βίος signifies “manner of living”, “mode of life”¹⁹⁰ and ζωή “living, i.e. one’s substance, property”.¹⁹¹ There is another Homeric word based on the same root (*g^wiy(ə)- in βίος; *g^wyō- in ζωή), βίोटος, which is more frequent and has the meaning “means of living, substance” (E 544, Ξ 122, γ 301, etc.) and several times the general sense “life” as well (H 104, N 563, Π 787, α 287, β 218, ω 536, Δ 170). However, none of the Homeric uses of ζωή, βίος, βίोटος corresponds to that of Homeric αἰών and it is therefore no wonder that their post-Homeric semantic development follows different paths. As Degani remarks, αἰών remains a substantially poetic word, whereas e.g. βίος becomes characteristic of the popular language of everyday conversation, covering the whole spectrum of ideas hidden behind the common name “life”.¹⁹²

As I mentioned above, the use of αἰών in some contexts is equivalent to that of ψυχή, θυμός and μένος. Degani describes these Homeric notions as “termini epifanici, che sono appunto delle forze agenti nell’interno dell’uomo: le sue ‘seelische Regungen’ (Nilsson, *Gesch. d. griech. Rel.*, I, 179) che spesso – appunto perché manifestazioni della vita – significano ‘vita’, ossia ‘forza vitale’”.¹⁹³ It must be noted, however, that Degani’s qualification of ψυχή, θυμός and μένος as “seelische Regungen” is not precise, for only θυμός and μένος act as such in the Homeric poems,¹⁹⁴ whereas ψυχή at that

¹⁹⁰ Cf. LSJ, s.v. See ο 491 (ζώσεις δ’ ἀγαθὸν βίον), σ 254 and τ 127 (τὸν ἐμὸν βίον ἀμφιπολεύοι).

¹⁹¹ Cf. LSJ, s.v. See ξ 96 (ἦ γάρ οἱ ζωή γ’ ἦν ἄσπετος. Cf. schol. B ad loc.: ἡ πρὸς τὸ ζῆν οὐσία καὶ παρασκευὴ καὶ κτήσις), ibid. 208 (τοῖ δὲ ζῶν ἐδύσαντο / παῖδες ὑπέρθυμοι), π 429 (ἡδὲ κατὰ ζῶν φαγέειν μενοεικέα πολλήν).

¹⁹² Cf. Degani 1961, 18, n. 4.

¹⁹³ Degani 1961, 19

¹⁹⁴ See e.g. I 496 and 598, B 196 (θυμός), α 32, X 312, Ψ 468 (μένος and θυμός), B 387 (μένος), etc.

time does not yet have the value of a psychological agent.¹⁹⁵ The same holds for αἰών, which is never used as an emotional factor, although it appears in emotionally charged contexts like ε 152, 160 and σ 204.¹⁹⁶

The general equivalence between the concepts denoted by αἰών and ψυχή in the Homeric poems rests upon the fact that they both signify “vital principle”, “vital force”. This equivalence is recognised in the usage of αἰών in I 415, where it seemingly has a temporal sense, but is sometimes interpreted as referring to ψυχή in line 408, which denotes “vital force” (I 412-16):¹⁹⁷

εἰ μὲν κ' αὖθι μένων Τρώων πόλιν ἀμφιμάχωμαι,
ὄλκετο μὲν μοι νόστος, ἀτὰρ κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται.
εἰ δέ κεν οἴκαδ' ἵκωμαι φίλην ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν,
ὄλετό μοι κλέος ἐσθλόν, ἐπὶ δηρὸν δέ μοι αἰὼν
ἔσσεται, οὐδέ κέ μ' ὄκα τέλος θανάτοιο κιχεῖη.

“And if I now stay and fight around the town of the Trojans, my homecoming will be ruined but I will gain everlasting glory; but, if I go back home to my dear fatherland, my good glory will be destroyed, my αἰὼν will last long, and I won't reach death so soon.” According to Benveniste's explanation (accepted by Seiler), in the lines 406-9 Achilles is contemplating the gains and the risks of the war. He concludes that in a war one can get cattle, sheep, tripods, and horses, but once a human ψυχή is lost, it does not come back again.¹⁹⁸ The two scholars recognise the same reasoning (though implying the

¹⁹⁵ The usages of ψυχή in the context of fainting and regaining consciousness (E 696, X 467-475, ω 348f.) may perhaps be seen as revealing its potential for acquiring the role of psychological agent.

¹⁹⁶ Cf. Claus 1981, 11.

¹⁹⁷ Benveniste 1937, 108. Cf.. *LfrE*, s.v. αἰών.

¹⁹⁸ I 406-9: ληῖστοι μὲν γάρ τε βόες καὶ ἵφια μῆλα,
κτητοὶ δὲ τρίποδες τε καὶ ἵππων ξανθὰ κάρηνα,
ἄνδρὸς δὲ ψυχή πάλιν ἐλθεῖν οὔτε λεῖστίη
οὔθ' ἐλετή, ἐπεὶ ἄρ κεν ἀμείνεται ἔρκος ὁδόντων.

opposite outcome) in the cited verses: if Achilles returns home he will lose his glory, but he will have a long-lasting αἰών. So, they claim, αἰών and ψυχὴ both signify “vital force” in the examined context. Other scholars, however, suggest that the use of ἐπὶ δηρὸν here points to the temporal value of αἰών.¹⁹⁹ This adverbial expression is derived from the adjective δηρὸς “long”, “too long”, “all too long” used as an attribute of χρόνος, which signifies “time as duration”. In addition, the phrase that follows the one containing αἰών (“and I won’t reach death so soon”) indicates that its antecedent refers to duration of life,²⁰⁰ but this pertains to the phrase as a whole, and is not significant for the meaning of αἰών itself. In his analysis of the cited passage Festugière offers an elaborate explanation to prove the same (unquestionable) fact – that the αἰών-phrase contains the element of duration. He compares line 415 with the preceding line 413 and makes a parallel between the phrases κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται and ἐπὶ δηρὸν ... αἰὼν ἔσσεται, i.e. between “la vie immortelle de la gloire” and “une vie humaine qui durera un très long temps”.²⁰¹ But this comparison is imprecise and it tells us nothing about the actual semantic value of αἰών, for in the first phrase the adjective describes *the noun*, whereas in the second the adverbial expression determines the sense of *the verb*. And even if the two adjective-phrases were compared, the fact that adjectives themselves bear the sense of duration would not necessarily imply that the notions they refer to have an explicit temporal value (so, *it is said* that “glory” is “everlasting” (actually “imperishable”), and *it could be said* that “vital force” is “long-lasting”).²⁰² Now we can return to the initial examples in this discussion, where αἰών is paired with

¹⁹⁹ E.g. Degani 1961, 25.

²⁰⁰ The last cited line (416) was “athetized by Aristarchus (Arn/A) as being pleonastic and not read by Zenodotus (Did/AT)” (Hainsworth 1993, 118).

²⁰¹ Festugière 1949, 188f.

²⁰² It has to be noted that Festugière (ibid.) himself admits that “Qu’on traduise ‘une long vie m’est réservée’ ou ‘une longue *vitalité* m’est réservée’, le sens general demeure le meme.”

the adjective μινυνθάδιος “short-lived” and conclude that its attribution to αἰών does not *per se* determine its semantic value as temporal. We may suppose, however, that this kind of context that bears the sense of duration could have influenced the development of the durative sense of the term αἰών itself.

In the following sentence from Andromache’s lament over her dead husband, the peculiarity of the linguistic context in which αἰών appears seems to cause even more confusion about its precise meaning (Ω 725-26):

ἄνερ, ἀπ’ αἰῶνος νέος ὄλλεο, καὶ δέ με χήρην

λείπεις ἐν μεγάροισι·

“O husband, you have perished young of your αἰών, and you’re leaving me a widow at home;”

The expression ἀπ’ αἰῶνος νέος ὄλλεο is described as “rather strange” and translated with the ascription of the general sense “life” to αἰών by Leaf: “thou hast perished out of life”.²⁰³ This sense is also implied by the Homeric scholia on the passage: ἀπ’ αἰῶνος νέος ὄλλεο· νέος ἐξεκόπτης τῆς ζωῆς. Richardson, on the other hand, ascribes a durative sense to this αἰών: “you have been robbed of your (proper) span of life while still young”.²⁰⁴ For Benveniste, however, the mention of Hector’s youth is the reason to define the sense of αἰών used in this passage as “vital force”.²⁰⁵

We have seen so far that the different semantic values of αἰών that scholars identified in Homeric passages are suggested by the contexts in which the word appears,

²⁰³ Leaf 1902, 589 (ad. Ω 725).

²⁰⁴ Richardson 1993, 353 (ad. Ω 725-26). Similar in Festugière 1949, 188, n. 2: “Tu pérís bien jeune, arraché à la durée (normale) de vie, tu pérís avant l’âge”.

²⁰⁵ Cf. West 1966, 334 (ad. 609).

and the specific content of certain Homeric passages inspired Onians to suggest a physical identity for Homeric αἰών.²⁰⁶

ε 151-153: ... οὐδέ ποτ' ὄσσε

δακρύοφιν τέρσοντο, κατεῖβετο δὲ γλυκὺς αἰών

νόστον ὀδυρομένωι, ἐπεὶ οὐκέτι ἦνδανε νύμφη.

“The two eyes were never dry from tears to him whose sweet αἰών was flowing away from him and he wept over his return, for the nymph pleased him no longer.”

As mentioned in the previous section, Onians relied primarily on the cited instance, in which αἰών is a subject of the verb κατεῖβομαι, when he defined it as a bodily fluid, which comprises tears, sweat, semen and cerebro-spinal fluid. He also supported this bold suggestion by abundant independent evidence proving that all the mentioned fluids were, in the mind of archaic Greeks, somehow connected with the idea of life, force and youthful vigour.

The other explanations of the meaning of αἰών in ε 152 confront us once again with the ambiguity “lifetime” – “vital force”: according to the Greek scholia, the word has a temporal sense.²⁰⁷ Festugière also suggests that what “flows away” is Odysseus’ “sweet lifetime”²⁰⁸ contrary to Benveniste who, once again, insists on the meaning “vital force”.²⁰⁹ In addition to this instance, αἰών seems to have the same semantic value in two more passages that mention its “wasting away” owing to ill fortune and sorrow. In the first, Calypso addresses Odysseus, who mourns his absence from home and family (ε 160f.):

κάμμορε, μή μοι ἔτ' ἐνθάδ' ὀδύρεο, μηδέ τοι αἰών

²⁰⁶ Onians 1951, 200-212. See above p. 41ff.

²⁰⁷ Schol. ad ε 152: κατεῖβετο] ἐν δάκρυσιν ἦν αὐτῷ ὁ τοῦ βίου χρόνος καὶ κατετήκετο. V

²⁰⁸ Festugière 1949, 189, n. 1. He offers the same interpretation for αἰών in ε 160 and σ 204.

²⁰⁹ Benveniste 1937, 108.

φθινέτω· ἤδη γάρ σε μάλα πρόφρασσ' ἀποπέμψω

“Oh you ill-fated man, don’t mourn here any more and don’t let your αἰών waste away, for now I am going to willingly send you away.”

In the second, Penelope appeals to Artemis to let her die and stop her suffering (σ

202ff.): αἶθε μοι ὦς μαλακὸν θάνατον πόροι Ἄρτεμις ἀγνή

αὐτίκα νῦν, ἵνα μηκέτ' ὀδυρομένη κατὰ θυμὸν

αἰῶνα φθινύθω ...

“If pure Artemis could give me a gentle death this very moment, so that I no longer waste my αἰών away mourning in my heart ...”

It is noticeable that in the last three passages cited the use of αἰών is not related to the idea of death (in the last example death is invoked to end the wasting of αἰών). This is stressed by the choice of the verbs paired with αἰών: unlike the passages where αἰών is said to “leave” a body or to be “taken away” from someone causing their death, here it “flows away”, “wastes away”²¹⁰ without the immediate fatal outcome. In these passages αἰών appears in emotional contexts, but, as Claus rightly remarks, “not as an emotional agent itself”.²¹¹ It is obvious in σ 204 that this role is played by θυμός, whereas αἰών must be given a different value. Let me refer here to the comment on the use of αἰών in ε 152 given by Hainsworth: “Odysseus has, we may think, reason to weep: all that *life* means to a hero, activity, struggle, achievement, has been taken from him in exchange for eternal indolence and pleasure.”²¹² This seems to me a good indication of the sense in which αἰών participates in the general idea of *life*: it refers to life as activity and energy, youth and vitality, power and vigour (also in the case of

²¹⁰ Schol. ad σ 204: φθινύθω] φθείρω. V

²¹¹ Claus 1981, 7.

²¹² Heubeck et al. 1988, 268f.

Simoeisius, Hippothous, Sarpedon, Polyphemus, Hector, Achilles, Odysseus, Penelope).

We have seen that the etymology of the term, as reconstructed by Benveniste, confirms such a conclusion. The fact that in some Homeric contexts αἰών may be interpreted as having the temporal value “lifetime” does not necessarily contradict this supposition, for there is no need to look for a uniform translation of all the listed uses of αἰών in Homer. Although we are dealing with the oldest preserved literary works in Greek, they still represent highly developed artistic products composed in an advanced and well-articulated poetic language over a longer period of time, in which one can naturally expect to find different semantic nuances of the same term. New meanings appear all the time, under the influence of specific contexts, and it is sometimes difficult to define precisely the semantic value of a word in a given context. In addition, poetic manner of expression allows for metaphorical use – αἰών in ε 152 and 160 has been interpreted as having metaphorical sense²¹³ – and it sometimes provokes peculiar semantic associations. So, for example, Homeric scholia refer to the glossographic rendering of αἰών by “spinal marrow” (imagined as a seat of life) in the explanation of the word’s usage in the following passage (T 24-27):

δεῖδω, μή μοι τόφρα Μενoitίου ἄλκιμον υἱὸν
μυῖαι καδδῦσαι κατὰ χαλκοτύπους ὠτειλᾶς
εὐλᾶς ἐγγείωνται, ἀεικίσσωσι δὲ νεκρόν –
ἐκ δ’ αἰὼν πέφεται – κατὰ δὲ χροῖα πάντα σαπῆνι.

“I am afraid lest the flies in the meantime breed maggots in the wounds of Menoetius’ brave son, inflicted with arms of bronze, and disfigure the corpse – for αἰών is slain out of him – and his whole body molder.”

²¹³ Claus 1981, 7.

As we find out from different scholia, the meaning of αἰών in the cited passage used to be understood in three different ways: as an equivalent of ψυχή,²¹⁴ in the general sense “life”,²¹⁵ or even in the ‘organic’ sense “spinal marrow”, which is said to have been suggested by the ancient glossographers.²¹⁶ The glossographers in question are Erotianus and Hesychius, who do not actually ascribe this meaning to the Homeric αἰών, but explain that it is “more recent”, pointing to the examples from the medical work of ‘Hippocrates’.²¹⁷ In addition, Erotianus refers to a fragment of Pindar, in which he finds the same physical sense of αἰών.²¹⁸ This clearly indicates a specialisation of the meaning of αἰών.

There seems to be no doubt that the concrete meaning “spinal marrow” is only secondary because the etymology of αἰών lacks physical reference. But the fact that here, as well as in some later epic sources, the term is obviously “able to combine ‘life’ or ‘life-force’ in some sense with a specific bodily material or organ”²¹⁹ was used by Benveniste to support the idea that Homeric αἰών must have had the non-temporal value.²²⁰ In his commentary on the use of αἰών in T 27 Leaf argues that it should be compared with the instances where αἰών is mentioned as “leaving” the body (E 685, Π 453) and with the one where it is said to “flow away” (ε 160).²²¹ This may be said to be the typical usage of αἰών in Homer and the word usually denotes ‘something’ in the human body that keeps it alive: vitality, energy and youthful vigour. It may be

²¹⁴ Schol. ad T 27: ὅτι τῆς ψυχῆς ἀπολιπούσης τὸ σῶμα εὐχερῶς αἱ μυῖαι λυμαίνονται τοῖς νεκροῖς σώμασι. A

²¹⁵ Schol. ad T 27: ὁ βίος καὶ ἡ ζωὴ πεφόνευνται καὶ παρήρηται. T

²¹⁶ Schol. ad T 27: ἦτοι ἀνήρηται ὁ βίος, ὃ ἐστὶ ζωῆς ἐστέρηται. ἢ ὥς οἱ Γλωσσογράφοι, αἰὼν ἔφθαρται, ὃ ἐστὶν ὁ νωτιαῖος μυελός. D

²¹⁷ Hesych. s.v. αἰών· τινὲς δὲ τῶν νεωτέρων τὸν νωτιαῖον <μυελόν> ἀπέδωκαν, ὡς Ἱπποκράτης· ‘τὸν αἰῶνά τις νοσήσας ἐβδομαῖος ἀπέθανε’.

²¹⁸ Erot., s.v. αἰών· νωτιαῖος μυελός. (...) καὶ Πίνδαρος ἐν Ὑποχρήμασι λέγων· ‘... αἰὼν δὲ δι’ ὀστέων ἐραίσθη.’

²¹⁹ Claus 1981, 9.

²²⁰ Benveniste 1937, 109.

²²¹ Leaf 1902, 320.

envisaged as slowly diminishing, but once αἰών is lost (either because it “left” the body or was “taken away” from it or “slain” out of it) that means certain death. However, there are clear indications of the tendency of αἰών to assume the meaning “lifetime” in specific contexts, and the above discussion on the word’s etymology shows that this ‘durative’ semantic aspect may have been present in its semantic core.

ii) Hesiod

There are only a few instances of αἰών in the rest of early epic poetry and its use mainly corresponds to that found in the Homeric poems. In the pseudo-Hesiodic *Scutum Herculis* 331 we come across an expression already identified by the analysis of the Homeric usages of αἰών:

εὔτ’ ἂν δὴ Κύκνον γλυκερῆς αἰῶνος ἀμέρσηις

“When you have deprived Cycnus of his sweet αἰών”

The phrase γλυκερῆς αἰῶνος ἀμέρσηις is equivalent to φίλης αἰῶνος ἀμερθῆις in X 58 (including the change of the noun’s gender). The epithet “sweet” is ascribed to αἰών in ε 152. For the later use of the same formula cf. pseudo-Simonides’ epitaph: γλυκερῆς αἰῶνος ἄμερσας.²²²

The explanation of the only use of αἰών in Hesiod’s *Theogony* is, however, less straightforward, although at first sight it might seem that the phrase ἀπ’ αἰῶνος in line 609 corresponds to the one found in Ω 725.

Hes. *Th.* 607-609:

... ὧι δ’ αὖτε γάμου μετὰ μοῖρα γένηται,
κεδνὴν δ’ ἔσχεν ἄκοιτιν, ἀρηρυῖαν πραπίδεςσι,

²²² Dawe et al. 1981, 291f.

τῶι δέ τ' ἅπ' αἰῶνος κακὸν ἐσθλῶι ἀντιφερίζει
ἐμμενές·

“But, to whom marriage falls as a share,
and has a trusty wife, stable in her mind,
to him ἅπ' αἰῶνος evil competes with good.”

Leaf's remark cited above in reference to Ω 725, that the expression with ἅπ' αἰῶνος is “rather strange”, applies to the mention of ἅπ' αἰῶνος in Hesiod as well. It seems, however, that this prepositional phrase does not have the same sense in the two epic sources. In Ω 725 the preposition ἀπό seems to imply *separation* (see above), whereas in the cited line of *Theogony* it appears to imply the temporal value *starting point* (“ausgehen von einem Zeitpunkte (nach)”).²²³

The phrase ἅπ' αἰῶνος (or ἅπ' αἰώνων or ἐξ αἰῶνος) appears in later Greek (first in the *Septuagint*) and means “‘from the beginning’, with the implication of a very remote beginning, ‘von jeher’”.²²⁴ This usage, however, cannot be attributed to Hesiod, for, apart from the fact that the sense “all time” cannot be proved for αἰών at this time,²²⁵ it is also unsuitable for the cited context, which refers to individual human life. Relying primarily on what they think would be a convenient sense of the phrase, some scholars suggest that in this case αἰών should be given the meaning “lifetime”, so that the whole phrase could be understood as “throughout his lifetime”.²²⁶ However, the important weakness of this theory is that it does not suit the meaning of the preposition ἀπό, which therefore needs to be replaced by a more appropriate one. The required

²²³ KG i 456f.

²²⁴ West 1966, 334f.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Mazon 1914, 54: “il voit *toute sa vie* le mal compenser le bien” and *LfrE*, s.v. αἰών: “während seiner (ganzen) Lebenszeit”

sense could be expressed by τῶι δὲ δι' αἰῶνος, the phrase suggested by Schömann,²²⁷ whereas Heyne offered ἐπ' αἰῶνος, and Zimmermann (who compares Lycurg. 7) κατ' αἰῶνος.²²⁸ Heyne's emendation can be easily explained as a result of a simple mechanical corruption (α instead of ε), whereas the other two imply replacement of the whole preposition (unless we allow for the possibility that a scribe confused ΔΙ' ΑΙΩΝΟΣ for ΑΓ' ΑΙΩΝΟΣ).²²⁹ This kind of 'mistake' is difficult to account for and that is why other reason for emendation is needed. It seems, however, that it cannot be the obscurity of the allegedly original phrase, for, as Degani explains: "δι' αἰῶνος era locuzione tutt'altro che rara e certo comprensibile anche ai tempi dello scriba".²³⁰ As for the phrase ἐπ' αἰῶνος, it is not attested in the sense "throughout lifetime", but Degani reminds us that the preposition ἐπὶ itself is frequently used with the genitive to indicate time at or during which something happens²³¹ and he believes that in the discussed passage αἰών has a temporal sense.²³²

However, if we want to retain the manuscript text, we should consider West's suggestion that "αἰών may be equivalent to ἥβη". He renders the phrase ἀπ' αἰῶνος by "from his prime onward" and this interpretation suits the above reconstruction of the meaning of Homeric αἰών.²³³ The two early epic instances that contain the expression ἀπ' αἰῶνος may thus be taken to describe the separation of a young person from his "vigour", "life" (Ω 725) and the instability of a man's happiness starting from his "prime", i.e. from that stage in his life when he is in full strength and usually gets

²²⁷ Schömann 1857.

²²⁸ West 1966, loc.cit.

²²⁹ The conjunction τ' is absent from some manuscripts (δέ τ' ἀπ' k Stob., δ' ἀπ' a (δ' ἀπαί n)).

²³⁰ Degani 1961, 27, n. 28. Δι' αἰῶνος in this sense is first found in Simonides (PMG 541. 12).

²³¹ KG i 496f. See Hom. E 637, I 403; Ar. Ach. 211 (ἐπὶ νεότητος), Eq. 524 (ἐφ' ἥβης); Plat. Phaedr. 242a (ἐπὶ βίου).

²³² Degani 1961, 27.

²³³ West 1966, 334: "αἰών may be equivalent to ἥβη in Il. 24. 725 (...), Od. 5. 160, 18. 204; ἀπό in a temporal sense would be paralleled by 425, though abnormal in epic".

married (*Th.* 609). Both these interpretations may seem unusual, but they reflect creative uses of language (there is, of course, the possibility of a scribe's mistake in the Hesiodic example). The attempts to limit the semantic implications of αἰών within a certain period or to apply to them strict chronological distribution seem, however, less convincing to me.²³⁴

iii) Homeric hymns, fragmenta Hesiodea

The remaining examples of the epic use of αἰών are less ancient and represent further developments of the meanings discussed so far. On the one hand, we come across the examples of 'concretisation' of the meaning "vital force", for αἰών comes to signify part of the body in which vitality resides (*h. Merc.* 41f.):

ἔνθ' ἀναπηλήσας γλυφάνωι πολιοῖο σιδήρου
αἰὼν' ἐξετόρησεν ὀρεσκόοιο χελώνης.

"... [he] bored out (scooped out) αἰών of the mountain-tortoise with a drill (scoop) of grey iron."

I have left the aorist participle ἀναπηλήσας untranslated because its sense is dubious here (cf. LSJ, s.v. ἀναπηλέω) and various interpretations and emendations have been suggested in order to solve this problem.²³⁵ However, the meaning of the participle does not substantially affect the meaning of αἰών, which is determined by the verb ἐξετόρησεν. The compound verb ἐκτορέω, "bore out", "herausbohren"²³⁶ (or "scoop out", depending on which tool is believed to have been used by Hermes), indicates that

²³⁴ Relying on the usage of αἰών in *Th.* 609, as well as on the *hapax* adjective ἰσαίων ([Hes.] fr. 1.8) and pseudo-Hesiodic fr. 276 (see below), Degani 1961, 27f. argues that "Dopo Omero, αἰών tende subito a specializzarsi in un esclusivo valore temporale". This kind of strict division of the senses into that 'before' and that 'after' seems unnatural to me.

²³⁵ Cf. Allen et al. 1936, 283f. (ad 41).

²³⁶ Radermacher 1931, 69 (ad 39-42).

αἰών has a concrete sense here and represents the part of the tortoise's body in which its life ("vital force") is located.²³⁷ This usage, prefigured in T 27, is related to that found in the works of medical writers and in a fragment of Pindar, where αἰών means "spinal marrow".²³⁸ In the case of the tortoise, it is its flesh that is by analogy called by the same name.²³⁹ Further in the same hymn, we find αἰών used in the equivalent way (*h. Merc.* 119):

ἐγκλίνων δ' ἐκύλινδε δι' αἰῶνας τετορήσας

"turning them round he rolled them over and pierced their αἰῶνες".²⁴⁰

According to Radermacher, this instance of the accusative plural of the noun should be understood as denoting *vertebrae cervicales* ("Halswirbel")²⁴¹ that surround and protect the spinal cord. The physical value of αἰών is again implied by the use of the verb *τορέω*, and I accept the reading according to which "δι' ... τετορήσας is *in tmesi*, and the sense that the verb *διατορέω* gives to the phrase is more direct: "piercing the spines" rather than 'piercing them through the spine'".²⁴²

In addition to the instances of 'concrete' sense, in some later epic sources αἰών is also found to signify "lifetime", such as in the following verses of the fifth-century Hephaestus-hymn (*h. XX* 6-7):²⁴³

ῥηϊδίως αἰῶνα τελεσφόρον εἰς ἐνιαυτὸν

εὐκηλοὶ διάγουσιν ἐνὶ σφετέροισι δόμοισιν

"free from care, they easily pass αἰών in their own houses the whole year round"

²³⁷ Cf. West 2003, 117: "...[he] gouged out the life-stuff of the mountain-couching tortoise."

²³⁸ See n. 217 and 218.

²³⁹ Cf. Radermacher 1931, 69: "Das Fleisch der Schildkröte ist in der Schale eingeschlossen wie Mark im Knochen; so muß die Ideenverbindung des Dichters sein."

²⁴⁰ Allen et al. 1936, 303f.: "the cows being on their backs (v. 118) Hermes 'turned them round and rolled them over' in order to reach their 'αἰῶνες' or backbones."

²⁴¹ Radermacher 1931, 94 (ad 119).

²⁴² Allen et al. 1936, 303f. Cf. West 2003, 123: "he rolled them over after piercing their spinal cords".

²⁴³ West 1966, 335.

For the first time in this examination of the early epic αἰών the noun has a clear temporal value, for the expression αἰῶνα διάγουσιν means “they spend their lives”, “they live their lives”. In this combination αἰών takes the place that usually belongs to βίος or βίोटος (A. *Pers.* 711, S. *OC* 1619, Ar. *Nu.* 464, Pl. *R.* 579d., etc.) meaning “lifetime”.

Finally, in a pseudo-Hesiodic fragment that cites the words of Teiresias the term appears in the rather unusual expression αἰῶνα βίοιο ([Hes.] fr. 276 M-W):

Ζεῦ πάτερ, εἴθε μοι †εἴθ’ ἥσσω μ’† αἰῶνα βίοιο
ὥφελλες δοῦναι καὶ ἴσα φρεσὶ μῆδεα ἴδμεν
θνητοῖς ἀνθρώποις· νῦν δ’ οὐδέ με τυτθὸν ἔτισας,
ὅς μακρόν γέ μ’ ἔθηκας ἔχειν αἰῶνα βίοιο
ἐπτά τ’ ἐπὶ ζῶειν γενεὰς μερόπων ἀνθρώπων.

“Father Zeus, would that you had given me a shorter αἰῶνα βίοιο to be mine and wisdom of heart like that of mortal men! But now you have honoured me not even a little, though you ordained me to have a long αἰῶνα βίοιο, and to live through seven generations of mortal kind.”²⁴⁴

Teiresias laments that Zeus had not given him a shorter (span of) life, for he is destined to live seven generations. The notion “life” is expressed with the pleonastic phrase αἰῶνα βίοιο, and similar phrases are found in other authors of roughly the same time (βίου ζωή, Pl. *Tim.* 44c; βίος ζωῆς, Pl. *Epin.* 892a; ζωᾶς βιοτά, E. *HF* 664, etc.).²⁴⁵

We may notice that the phrase is defined by the attribute ἥσσω, “weaker”, “inferior”,

²⁴⁴ Trans. Evelyn-White 1982, 269.

²⁴⁵ Cf. Degani 1961, 28, n. 29.: “Nel vedico *āyur jīvāse* (dove *jīvāse* è dativo finale della parola indicante ‘vita’, mentre *āyur* è il parallelo di αἰῶνα) abbiamo un’espressione consimile, benché il legame fra i due termini vedici sia più stretto di quello fra i due greci.”

which is normally used in relation to force, strength and not to duration.²⁴⁶ The adjective does not appear as an attribute of βίος. This may be an indication that, at the time the above fragment was composed, αἰών still resonated with the sense of “vital force”, “vitality”, albeit reflected only in its combinatorial property. There is no doubt, however, that the phrase as a whole refers to duration, as clearly indicated by its attribute in line four of the same fragment, μακρόν ... αἰῶνα βίοιο.

This brings us back to the question of the antiquity of the ‘durative’ sense of αἰών, which I discussed in the overview of the noun’s etymology. The above analysis of the early epic instances of αἰών seems to indicate that the meaning “lifetime” is a secondary development, which occurred in the contexts suggesting the sense of duration. However, we have seen that the durative sense is present in the Homeric adverb αἰεί, ᾧ, αἰέν “always”, which is believed to have the same semantic root as the noun αἰών. This suggests that αἰών may have had an inherent tendency towards developing a durative sense. In a fragment of Hesiod we come across a compound adjective, whose second part, -αἰων, seems to refer to duration of life (1. 8 M-W: οὐδ’ ἄρα ἰσαίωνες οὐ[etc.]). However, the sparsely preserved context prevents us from making any definite conclusion concerning the adjective’s sense, since it is not clear whether it refers to the pair immortals–mortals, mentioned in line 7, or men–women, mentioned in line 9. If the latter is the case, it is difficult to see why would men and women be said to have different durations of life. This type of compound adjectives, with -αἰών as their second part and different adjectives indicating its quantity or quality as the first, is found later in Empedocles and in fifth-century tragedy.

²⁴⁶ See LSJ, s.v.

CHAPTER III

X P O N O Σ IN ARCHAIC LYRIC, ELEGY AND IAMBUS

In early Greek epic poetry χρόνος is always used in the adverbial accusative, commonly paired with the same group of adjectives, and it most often indicates (long or short) duration of a, usually unpleasant, situation. When we read and interpret the usages of these epic χρόνος-phrases, which mainly appear as a part of direct speech, we get a firm impression that the epic heroes who utter them are aware of the flow of time and have a sense of duration of states and actions. These ‘senses’ belong to what some authors call “elementary time experiences”, i.e. fundamental aspects of our perception of time.²⁴⁷

Apart from our ability to estimate duration, these also include our experience of simultaneity and successiveness, ability to record the sequence of events (i.e. temporal order), our sense of present and past as well as our inclination for anticipation or planning, which refers to the temporal organisation of the future. All these phenomena reflect subjective time experience and can be distinguished from the conventions of time reckoning and means of ‘objectivising’ time. Kullmann convincingly argued that the listed features of subjective time experience can be recognised in the contents and structures of early epic narratives and especially in the acts and speeches of their protagonists.²⁴⁸

The uses of χρόνος in archaic lyric poetry also reflect this subjective experience of time. Apart from indicating duration of actions and situations in the adverbial phrases of the epic type, in early lyric χρόνος is also used to refer to limited duration of human

²⁴⁷ Pöppel 1978, 713-31.

²⁴⁸ See Kullmann 1968, 15-37. See especially on p. 35: “Die Musterung der Hauptgestalten ergibt, daß die einfachen Grundformen menschlichen Zeiterlebnisses, so wie sie in der abendländischen Literatur immer neu abgewandelt worden sind, bei Homer größtenteils bereits vorhanden sind.”

life and youth, thus addressing the phenomenon of *temporality* and *transience* of human existence. Finally, in a number of examples the usage of χρόνος reveals a new semantic content, for it refers to the idea of “the passage of time”. I will classify all the extant usages of χρόνος in archaic lyric, elegy, and iambus into three respective groups, trying to follow a chronological order within them. Early lyric χρόνος occurs in all the cases of the singular (apart from the vocative) and its grammatical functions are much more varied than in early epic.²⁴⁹

i) Χρόνος in adverbial expressions of duration

In his biography of Solon (Plu. *Sol.* 26) Plutarch tells a story about the poet’s stay in Cyprus and his friendship with Philocyprus, one of the island’s kings. According to Plutarch’s account, Solon advised Philocyprus to move the town he ruled over (*Aipeia*) to a plain below it and so make it more spacious and pleasant. The poet also helped arranging the new town in the best possible way. In return for his favours, Philocyprus named the new city after Solon (*Soloi*). The poet’s wishes for the prosperity of the town and its rulers are preserved in the following fragment (Solon, fr. 19 W):

νῦν δὲ (φησί) σὺ μὲν Σολίοισι πολὺν χρόνον ἐνθάδ’ ἀνάσσων
τήνδε πόλιν ναίεις καὶ γένος ὑμέτερον·

“But now I wish you to live and rule in the town of Soloi
here for a long time, both you and your family.”

The adverbial accusative πολὺν χρόνον refers to the duration of the rule of Philocyprus and his family over Soloi. A synonymous adverbial expression is found in a fragment of the sixth-century poet Ibycus (283 *PMGF*):

²⁴⁹ In the following discussion I will use translations of West 1994b, as will be clearly marked, except in the cases where more literal rendition of χρόνος-phrases is needed.

δαρὸν †δάραιοι† χρόνον ἦστο τάφει πεπαγώς

“He sat there for a long time, struck with amazement.”

The adverbial δαρὸν χρόνον is the Doric version (common in tragedy)²⁵⁰ of the Homeric δηρὸν χρόνον (Ξ 206 and 305) and here it refers to the long duration of sitting in amazement. An instance of the accusative χρόνον is found in the incomplete second line of Alcaeus’ fr. 112 LP:]σαι χρόνον ὦ πα[

The lack of context, however, makes it impossible to determine the grammatical function and the meaning of the noun here. It could be an object (of an aorist infinitive or imperative?), but it could also have been used adverbially (“for a time, for a while”).

In a fragment of Sappho’s poetry we come across an unprecedented adverbial expression containing χρόνον (fr. 56 LP):

οὐδ’ ἴαν δοκίμωμι προσίδοισαν φάος ἀλίω
ἔσσεσθαι σοφίαν πάρθενον εἰς οὐδένα πω χρόνον
τεαύταν...

“As to musical skill, never, I think, again

shall we see such a girl born to the light of day” (trans. West)

Sappho here probably praises the musical skill of one of her (former?) pupils. It is described as *unique* by bringing together past and future.²⁵¹ Οὐδένα ... χρόνον resembles Homeric ἔνα χρόνον in O 511. The meaning of Sappho’s expression εἰς οὐδένα πω χρόνον seems to me to be “at no time” (= never), with the particle πω²⁵² providing the

²⁵⁰ Cf. S. Aj. 414; A. Supp. 516; E. IT 1339; see also E. Ba. 889.

²⁵¹ See West 2007, 104.

²⁵² According to the fragment editors, however, πω stands instead of πού (where one would expect Aeolic πού). This particle conveys “a feeling of uncertainty of the speaker” (= ‘I think’, ‘I believe’, ‘I suppose’). See Denniston 1954, 490ff. Cf. also Page 1955, 92 (ad fr. 96. 17): “πού: ... already in Homer the local sense ‘somewhere’ is less common than the developed sense ‘I suppose’. The word is very often used, as here, to qualify a statement which the speaker takes for granted as being true, but for which no absolute proof is, or is likely to be, forthcoming.”

emphasis (“at no time *whatsoever*”).²⁵³ Here we seem to have a new type of semantic application of χρόνος: it indicates “time when”, without reference to duration.

The following two fragments containing the adverbial expressions with χρόνον come from the collection of elegiac excerpts transmitted under the name of Theognis. They, however, do not meet the criterion which modern scholarship established to distinguish Theognidean originals from the works of other known or anonymous poets within the collection.²⁵⁴ This means that the fragments relevant to our research may belong to different authors, places and periods.²⁵⁵ However, as West notes, “the value of the collection as a whole is that it may be taken as a representative cross-section of the elegiac poetry written for sympotic and other social settings in the sixth and early fifth centuries.”²⁵⁶ This makes it a valid source for the present research as well.

A poem from the collection treats the subject of false friendship (Theognidea, 93f. W):

ἄν τις ἐπαινῇσιν σε τόσον χρόνον ὅσον ὁρώης,
νοσφισθεὶς δ' ἄλλῃ γλῶσσαν ἱήσι κακὴν,
τοιοῦτός τοι ἐταῖρος ἀνὴρ φίλος οὐ τι μάλ' ἐσθλός,
ὅς κ' εἴπῃ γλώσσει λεῖα, φρονεῖ δ' ἕτερα.

“If someone praises you for the time you are watching,²⁵⁷

but as soon as you turn away, utters malicious words,

such a comrade is not your true friend,

²⁵³ Cf. Hom. A 124 (οὐδέ τι πῶ ἴδμεν), Γ 306 (οὐ πῶ τλήσομ'), O 426 (μὴ δὴ πῶ χάζεσθε).

²⁵⁴ See Hudson-Williams 1910, 1-4 (“Introduction”) on the subject of the authenticity of Theognidea and the poet's ‘seal’ (σφραγίς in v. 19).

²⁵⁵ West 1974, 40: “... several are known from other sources to come from Solon, Tyrtaeus, Mimnermus, and perhaps Euenus. Internal evidence indicates that others were composed in more than one place and period.”

²⁵⁶ West 1994b, xv.

²⁵⁷ Groningen 1966, 44: “ὁρώης: le complément direct αὐτόν est sous-entendu.” Cf. West 1994b, 126: “while you're face to face.”

one who talks nicely, but thinks the other way.”

In this fragment χρόνος is a part of the adverbial accusative expression τόσσον χρόνον ὅσσον found already in the *Iliad*, Ω 670. It refers to a period of time in which the action takes place, to the duration of watching.

In an erotic fragment describing the poet’s feelings after an affair with a young man, whose reckless behaviour destroyed his senses and made his friends ashamed, the author nevertheless pays tribute to the lover in the following way (Theognidea, 1271ff. W):

ἄμμε δ’ ἀνέψυξας μικρὸν χρόνον· ἐκ δὲ θυελλῶν
ἦκά γ’ ἐνωρμίσθην νυκτὸς ἐπειγόμενος.

“But for a little while you cooled my fever; my
speeding
voyage into the night briefly found haven from
storm.” (trans. West)

There is some uncertainty about the implication of ἀναψύχω here. The verb can mean “give breath” or “refresh”/“cool down” and some scholars suggested that it could be interpreted in the spirit of marine language.²⁵⁸ It is more likely, however, that ἀνέψυξας has an erotic implication here, for such a sense is strongly supported by the context and it appears in other lyric poets as well.²⁵⁹ Whatever the signification of ἀνέψυξας here, it does not affect the meaning of χρόνος, which is used in a familiar way: the adverbial

²⁵⁸ See (tentatively) Hudson-Williams 1910, 248. Contested by Vetta 1980, 71.

²⁵⁹ See Hudson-Williams, loc. cit.: “... ‘You gave me the joys of love for but a short time, and when the storm came, I rushed to port’; (...) Alexandrian poets used it often in an erotic sense, e.g. ἀναψύξαι τὴν κόρην Heliod. Aeth. 8, 14., etc.” Cf. Vetta, loc. cit.: “termine specifico del lessico erotico in Sapph. 48, 2 L.-P. ὃν δ’ ἔψυξας ἔμην φρένα καιομένην πόθῳ (...). Se andiamo nella stessa direzione dell’impiego saffico, dove il sollievo è quello della soddisfazione della passione amorosa, il poeta vuol dire che per poco si è giovato della disponibilità dell’*eromenos*, dissociandosi poi dalla sua μαργοσύνη.”

phrase μικρὸν χρόνον resembles the Homeric ὀλίγον χρόνον (Ψ 418 and T 157) and refers to the short duration of the activity denoted by the verb.

A synonymous prepositional expression with χρόνος occurs in a fragment of Mimnermus, which tackles the recurring subject of transience of life and youth as well as of the uncertainty of the future (fr. 2 W):

ἡμεῖς δ' οἷά τε φύλλα φύει πολυάνθεμος ὥρη
ἔαρος, ὅτ' αἴψ' αὐγῆις αὔξεται ἡελίου,
τοῖς ἵκελοι πῆχυιον ἐπὶ χρόνον ἄνθεσιν ἥβης
τερπόμεθα, πρὸς θεῶν εἰδότες οὔτε κακὸν
οὔτ' ἀγαθόν·

“But we are like the leaves that flowery spring
puts forth, quick spreading in the sun’s warm light:
for a brief span of time we take our joy
in our youth’s bloom, the future, good or ill,
kept from us...” (trans. West)

The fragment is quoted in Stobaeus’ *Anthologium* (4. 34.12) within the collection “about life and how it is short, ‘shabby’ and full of worries” (περὶ τοῦ βίου, ὅτι βραχὺς καὶ εὐτελὴς καὶ φροντίδων ἀνάμεστος). Πῆχυιον ἐπὶ χρόνον resembles some early epic prepositional expressions (cf. παυρίδιον/παῦρον ἐπὶ χρόνον in Hes. *Op.* 133 and 326)²⁶⁰ and here refers to the shortness of youth.

²⁶⁰ The poetic adjective πῆχυιος reappears in Apollonius Rhodius (A. R. 1. 379, 3. 854, 3. 1207, 4. 1510) and is a variant of πηχυαῖος “a cubit long”.

ii) Nominal χρόνος denoting duration of life, death, youth, prime

The brevity of life is the subject of a fragment of Semonides, in which χρόνος appears in the nominative, paired with its regular attribute πολλός, and combined with the possessive dative of the personal pronoun (fr. 3 W):

πολλὸς γὰρ ἡμῖν ἐστὶ τεθνάναι χρόνος,
ζῶμεν δ' ἀριθμῶι παῦρα † κακῶς ἔτεα.²⁶¹

“For we have plenty of time to be dead,
but we live badly for just a few years.”

This fragment is quoted by Stobaeus (Stob. 4. 53. 2) in the collection entitled “comparison between life and death” (σύγκρισις ζωῆς καὶ θανάτου).²⁶² Discontent over the brevity of life is expressed through the contrast with the long duration of death. The fragment reflects a popular philosophy of the bleakness and unpredictability of human existence.²⁶³

Another example of the nominative χρόνος, combined with the dative of interest, is found in Alcaeus (fr. 119. 9ff. LP):

σοὶ μὲν [γ]ὰρ ἡ[δ]η παρβέβα[τ]αι χρό[νος]
καὶ κάρπος ὅσσ[ο]ς ἦς συνα[γ]άγρετ[αι]
τὸ κλᾶμμα δ' ἐλπώρα, κάλον γάρ[ρ],
ο]ὐκ ὀλ[ί]γαις σταφύλαις ἐνείκη[ν]

“For your time now is past and gone
and all your grapes are gathered in,
but it's a good plant, and there's hope

²⁶¹ καὶ κακῶς Welcker : δὴ κακῶς Ahrens : παγκακῶς Meineke : μοχθηρῶς Valckenaer : κάκλεῶς M. Schmidt, *Rh. Mus.* 26 (1871), 195.

²⁶² Cf. Stob. 4. 53. 1.

²⁶³ Cf. Semonides' fragments 1, 2, and 4 W.

it will be bearing many a cluster yet ...” (trans. West)

The full context is uncertain; the poet is warning the addressee to keep from trouble.

That person is then compared to a plant (defined as vine in line 13) whose χρόνος (“period of ripeness”, i.e. “maturity”) is past and gone, its fruit already gathered, but which will hopefully still bear many clusters.²⁶⁴

A simple yet striking account of the effects of growing old and the transience of life is found in the following fragment of Anacreon (fr. 395 *PMG*):

πολιοὶ μὲν ἡμῖν ἤδη
κρόταφοι κάρη τε λευκόν,
χαρίεσσα δ’ οὐκέτ’ ἦβη
πάρα, γηραλέοι δ’ ὀδόντες,
γλυκεροῦ δ’ οὐκέτι πολλὸς
βίотου χρόνος λέλειπται·
“My temples are grey,
my hair is white,
youth’s beauty past;
my teeth getting old,
not much time left
of my sweet life.”²⁶⁵

This fragment, again, appears in Stobaeus’ collection (Stob. 4. 51.12) under the title “on death and its inevitability” (περὶ τοῦ βίου καὶ ὡς ἄφυκτος). Χρόνος is used in the

²⁶⁴ Page 1955, 242, n. 3 suggests that “the obscure parable of the vine in F 5 refers to the period after Pittacus’ retirement from public life”, but also adds that “this is meagre guess-work”.

²⁶⁵ Partly after West 1994b, 106.

nominative, paired with the adjective *πολλός*, and combined with the possessive genitive of *βίος*: it denotes “duration” of life.

Finally, on a more practical note, a poet in the Theognidean collection considers what would be the most sensible financial planning, if people were to know the length of their life (Theognidea, 905ff. W):

εἰ μὲν γὰρ κατιδεῖν βίτου τέλος ἦν, ὅποσον τι
ἤμελλ' ἐκτελέσας εἰς Αἶδαο περᾶν,
εἰκὸς ἂν ἦν, ὅς μὲν πλείω χρόνον αἴσαν ἔμμενεν,
φείδεσθαι μᾶλλον τοῦτον, ἔν' εἶχε βίον·

“If it were possible to see the end of life, how long
is one to live before passing away,
it would make sense for one with more time left,²⁶⁶
to be sparing, so he kept enough to live.”

The noun is used as the direct object of the verb *μίμνω*: “(the one who) awaits more time as a part of life”.²⁶⁷ *Χρόνος* is paired with the comparative form of its usual attribute *πολύς* and refers to the duration of (the rest of) life.

Thus, apart from its singular usage in the above quoted Sapphic fragment, early lyric *χρόνος* has so far been found to denote or refer to “duration” of certain states, actions or stages of life, as well as of life itself and death. In the following group of examples, however, *χρόνος* appears as an entity in its own right, detached from immediate experience, and is envisaged as having an active role.

²⁶⁶ Cf. Hudson-Williams 1910, 232 (ad 907): “Who had a longer span of life before him.”

²⁶⁷ Groningen 1966, 346: “*χρόνον* est le complément direct de *ἔμμενεν* et *αἴσαν* accusatif à fonction ‘prédicative’; littéralement: ‘celui qui attend un temps plus long comme part de vie’”.

iii) Χρόνος ‘reveals’ the truth and ‘brings’ justice

ΧΡΟΝΟΣ and TRUTH

Solon, fr. 10 W:

δείξει δὴ μανίην μὴν ἐμὴν βαιὸς χρόνος ἀστοῖς,

δείξει ἀληθείης ἐς μέσον ἐρχομένης.

“A short time will show the citizens how mad I am,

when truth comes out for all to see.”

This fragment is a part of Diogenes’ description of Solon’s passionate opposition to Pisistratus (D.L. 1. 49), which included his armed foray into the Athenian assembly and a loud protest against the tyrant. As a result, the members of the council (and Pisistratus’ party) declared that Solon was mad, to which he replied with the words quoted. The nominative χρόνος is paired with the adjective βαιός, synonymous to the epic ὀλίγος, παῦρος, παυρίδιος. The phrase βαιὸς χρόνος does not denote duration of action, state or phenomenon, but a span of time at the end of which the truth will be revealed.²⁶⁸ The whole passage suggests the idea of flow of time and its forward orientation. This fragment indicates the connection between (passage of) *time* and (revealing of) *truth*, which will be (more or less explicitly) reasserted throughout archaic Greek literature. In a poem from the collection ascribed to Theognis we read about time’s (χρόνος) revealing people’s true characters (Theognidea, 963ff. W):

μήποτ’ ἐπαινήσεις, πρὶν ἂν εἰδῇς ἄνδρα σαφηνέως,

ὀργὴν καὶ ῥυθμὸν καὶ τρόπον ὅστις ἂν ᾔη.²⁶⁹

πολλοὶ τοι κίβδηλον ἐπὶ κλοπὸν ἦθος ἔχοντες

²⁶⁸ Cf. Mülke 2002, 215f.

²⁶⁹ Groningen 1966, 365: “le cumul des trois synonymes insiste sur la nécessité de connaître tous les aspects de la personnalité de celui qu’on veut louer.”

κρύπτουσ', ἐνθέμενοι θυμὸν ἐφημέριον·
τούτων δ' ἐκφαίνει πάντως χρόνος ἥθος ἐκάστου.

“Never praise a man before you know him well,
his character and style and his turn of mind.
Many who have a dishonest and shifty nature
hide it, adopting a temporary disposition;
but time brings their true natures to the light.”

The nominative singular χρόνος appears as the subject of the verb ἐκφαίνει and this usage resembles the one in Solon’s fr. 10. In both passages χρόνος has an active role, which, in a sense, points to the future (Solon says “time *will* show the truth”, whereas “Theognis” states that what one does not know *at a time* becomes apparent *later*). Again, it feels as if “time” here transcends human immediate experience and assumes the role of an everpresent guarantor of truth. Whereas Solon quantifies χρόνος with βαιός, there is no such ‘restriction’ in “Theognis”, which also suggests a more general sense for the latter usage of χρόνος (West renders it with “Time”).²⁷⁰

In an unattributed elegiac fragment quoted by Stobaeus (Stob. 1. 8. 15) χρόνος is described as that which uncovers what is hidden and unknown (Adespota Elegiaca 22 W):

οὐκ ἔστιν μείζων βάσανος χρόνου οὐδενὸς ἔργου,
ὃς καὶ ὑπὸ στέρνοις ἀνδρὸς ἔδειξε νόον.

“For any issue there’s no better test than time,
which brings even man’s inmost thoughts to light.” (trans. West)

²⁷⁰ West 1994b, 145.

For the first time in the extant fragments the noun appears in the genitive of comparison. Χρόνος is said to be the best test for everything, for it reveals (gnomic aorist ἔδειξε) people's most intimate thoughts. This context reminds us of "Theognis" χρόνος, which exposes everyone's true nature and of Solon's χρόνος that will show the truth. It is obvious that all the three passages express the same idea, namely that truth becomes evident with the *passage of time*. In the last two examples quoted χρόνος can be ascribed precisely that sense.

XPONOS and JUSTICE

Solon, fr. 4. 12ff. W:

οὔθ' ἱερῶν κτεάνων οὔτε τι δημοσίων
φειδόμενοι κλέπτουσιν ἀφαρπαγῇ ἄλλοθεν ἄλλος,
οὐδὲ φυλάσσονται σεμνὰ Δίκης θέμεθλα,
ἢ σιγῶσα σύνοιδε τὰ γινόμενα πρό τ' ἔόντα,
τῷ δὲ χρόνῳ πάντως ἦλθ' ἀποτεισομένη ...

"They don't refrain from sacred property nor from
public, but seize by plunder from here and there,
nor do they care for the holy base of Justice,²⁷¹
which, silent, knows what is and has been done,
and comes with time to claim the payment due."

These verses come from Solon's famous *Eunomia* or "State Elegy",²⁷² which was most probably composed at the time before Solon became Athenian archon in the year 594 BC. The elegy has a programmatic value: Solon addresses his fellow Athenians in order to share his views on what (or who) he considers destructive and what beneficial for

²⁷¹ For the meaning of δίκης θέμεθλα see Mülke 2002, 121f. For capitalisation of Δίκη see further down.

²⁷² Op. cit., 88f.

Athens and its citizens. As he explicitly says, he wishes to teach Athenians about the dangers of Lawlessness (Δυσνομία) and the advantages of Lawfulness (Εὐνομία).²⁷³ At the opening of this elegy Solon reveals his view that Athens will never be destroyed by the will of gods, but only by the thoughtlessness and greed of its citizens and, especially, by the unscrupulousness of their leaders (vv. 1-10). However, the text is lacunose after these verses and there are at least two hexameters missing between the opening section and the part quoted above (lines 12ff.). It is, therefore, not clear who “they” refers to in the cited passage, that is, who the subject of κλέπτουσιν and φυλάσσονται is, although it is believed to be the “popular leaders” (δήμου ἡγεμόνες) mentioned in line 7.²⁷⁴

Χρόνος appears in the adverbial dative in line 16 (τῷ χρόνῳ), whose meaning is “in time”. Justice, Solon tells us, which knows what is and has been done, comes (ἦλθ’) in time (τῷ χρόνῳ) to claim the payment due (ἀποτεισομένη). The aorist ἦλθ’ is normally described as gnomic and its role is to express a general truth (cf. fr. 13. 8 for the usage of the same vocabulary: πάντως ὕστερον ἦλθε δίκη).²⁷⁵ The meaning of the quoted gnomic statement, it appears, relates to time on different levels: first, its status as a general truth arises from the fact that it connects past experience to present knowledge and, in doing so, it reaffirms the validity of the latter;²⁷⁶ secondly, it is said that owing to its insight into the things that *are being done* (τὰ γυγνόμενα) and that *have been done* (πρό τ’ ἐόντα), Δίκη takes vengeance *eventually* (τῷ χρόνῳ). In this way the concept

²⁷³ Cf. vv. 30-33: ταῦτα διδάξαι θυμὸς Ἀθηναίους με κελεύει/ ὥς κακὰ πλεῖστα πόλει Δυσνομία παρέχει/ Εὐνομίη δ’ εὖκοσμα καὶ ἄρτια πάντ’ ἀποφαίνει, / καὶ θαμὰ τοῖς ἀδίκοις ἀμφιτίθησι πέδας.

²⁷⁴ West 1994b, 75 inserts “[When wicked men...]” before line 12. Cf. Mülke 2002, 119: “West’s ‘wicked men’ bzw. ‘homines pravi’ beruhen vornehmlich auf der Deutung von δήμου ἡγεμόνες als ‘popular leaders’, die hier in der Tat ein weiter gefaßtes Subjekt erfordern würde”.

²⁷⁵ See Jaeger 1960, 329, n. 2: “πάντως, vom Kommen der Dike gebraucht, ist ein Lieblingswort Solons.” Cf. fr. 13. 8, 28 and 31; 4. 16 and 28. Similarly Theognidea 967 W: τούτων δ’ ἐκφαίνει πάντως χρόνος ἦθος ἐκάστου.

²⁷⁶ Cf. Mülke 2002, 124.

of Δίκη unites in its realm past, present and future.²⁷⁷ Similar poetic formulae, in which different *tempora* are distinguished, appear already in early epic.²⁷⁸ They are used to express universality “as the sum of past and future, or of past, present, and future”, often in relation to divine or prophetic knowledge, and represent a part of common Indo-European poetic heritage, as West points out.²⁷⁹ In the quoted passage personified Δίκη has an active role (σύνοιδε, ἦλθ’ ἀποτεισομένη) and a godlike status, due to its omnipresence and universal knowledge. Time, on the other hand, that is the three *tempora*, provides the realm in which it is more or less actively present (either just observing or executing power). The adverbial phrase τῷ χρόνῳ in this context clearly refers to the future: West translates it with “at last”,²⁸⁰ Mülke explains it as “an irgendeinem Punkt der Zukunft”,²⁸¹ and Fränkel renders it by “später einmal, mit der Zeit”. This is undoubtedly due to forward orientation of the flow of time and the translation “in the course of time” naturally suggests itself for the dative τῷ χρόνῳ.

Mülke mentions the feature of “Zukunftbezogenheit” in connection with another famous political poem which Solon composed in iambic trimeters.²⁸² In this poem χρόνος and δίκη are again closely connected, but their roles appear to differ considerably from those they have in fr. 4 (Solon, fr. 36. 1ff. W):

ἐγὼ δὲ τῶν μὲν οὔνεκα ξυνήγαγον

δῆμον, τί τούτων πρὶν τυχεῖν ἐπασάμην;

²⁷⁷ According to Mülke 2002, 123 τὰ γινόμενα is a reference to “alle Ereignisse ... die im Werden sind” and it refers to both present and future.

²⁷⁸ Cf. Hom. A 70 (about Kalchas the prophet): ὃς ἦιδε τὰ τ’ ἐόντα τὰ τ’ ἐσσόμενα πρό τ’ ἐόντα; Hes. Th. 38 (about the Muses): εἰρῶσαι τὰ τ’ ἐόντα τὰ τ’ ἐσσόμενα πρό τ’ ἐόντα and, similarly, Th. 32. See Fehling 1969, 265.

²⁷⁹ West 2007, 103f.

²⁸⁰ West 1994b, 75.

²⁸¹ See Mülke 2002, 123: “Der Gedanke, daß Dike ‘mit der Zeit’, also an irgendeinem Punkt der Zukunft kommt, findet sich bei Solon zum ersten Mal und wird zur Erklärung der Gerechtigkeit und Moralität der Götter vor allem in der attischen Tragödie rezipiert, s. o. E. fr. 979 N.²; tr. adesp. F 493 Sn.-K.; ferner A. Cho. 935ff. (...); E. fr. 223 N.² (...); Hrcld. 941; tr. adesp. F 483 Sn.-K.; 182a Sn.-K. cum adnot.”

²⁸² Mülke 2002, 366.

συμμαρτυροίη ταῦτ' ἄν ἐν δίκῃ χρόνου²⁸³

μήτηρ μεγίστη δαιμόνων Ὀλυμπίων

ἄριστα, Γῆ μέλαινα, τῆς ἐγὼ ποτε

ὄρους ἀνεῖλον πολλαχῇ πεπηγότας,

πρόσθεν δὲ δουλεύουσα, νῦν ἐλευθέρη.

“Those aims for which I called the public meeting –

which of them, when I stopped, was still to

achieve?

I call as witness in the court of time

the mighty mother of the Olympian gods,

Dark Earth, from whom I lifted boundary-stones

that did beset her – slave before, now free.” (trans. West)

These are the opening lines of the poem which was in all probability composed after Solon’s archonship in Athens. It again represents a personal address of the poet, but this time with the aim of emphasising Solon’s achievements as legislator and politician.

Before he starts listing his own notable contributions to the wellbeing of his *polis* and its citizens, the poet calls the goddess Earth to bear witness ἐν δίκῃ χρόνου to the fact that he has accomplished the goals at which he had been aiming (this is stressed by the rhetorical question at the introduction).²⁸⁴ This opening has an oath-like character, for it contains the following three elements that, according to Sommerstein, constitute an oath:²⁸⁵

²⁸³ I have changed West’s capitalised Χρόνου here to avoid any semantic implications ahead of the interpretation. The same holds for the translation quoted below.

²⁸⁴ On the question of the nature of Solon’s address and the assembly at which it was made see e.g. Mülke 2002, 368ff.

²⁸⁵ Sommerstein and Fletcher 2007, 2.

- 1) The swearer makes a *declaration*. This may be a statement about the present or past (*assertory oath*) or it may be an undertaking for the future (*promissory oath*).
- 2) The swearer specifies, explicitly or implicitly, a *superhuman power or powers* as witnesses to the declaration and guarantors of its truth.
- 3) The swearer *calls down a conditional curse* on him/herself, to take effect if the assertion is false or if the promise is violated. This element need not be explicitly spelt out, but Solon does mention the (possibility of the) judgement of time.

Solon's oath is *assertory*, for the poet invokes Earth to bear witness to the truth of his statement that he has accomplished the set objectives. Earth appears as the guarantor of the truthfulness of oaths already in epic, but always within a group of deities (Γ 276-78; T 258f.). Scholars have offered several convincing reasons for Solon's singling out Γῆ as the sole testifier of his sincerity,²⁸⁶ having to do with the concrete agrarian problem the poet had solved,²⁸⁷ with the agrarian and life-giving quality of Attica,²⁸⁸ as well as with the important role Earth plays in the local Attic mythology, notably in the myths of Erechtheus/Erichthonius and Cecrops.²⁸⁹ In addition to this, Mülke mentions an interesting religious phenomenon characteristic of archaic Greece, namely the coexistence and interchangeability of two, from a modern point of view, different types of concepts, the abstract and the concrete one. In this case it is *Earth* as a deity and *earth* as a substance that coexist within the notion signified by γῆ.²⁹⁰ When he lifted boundary-stones from the Attic *soil* Solon did a favour to *Earth the goddess* and this (f)act inspired his choice of Γῆ as a guarantor of his achievements.

²⁸⁶ Mülke 2002, 371f.

²⁸⁷ Masaracchia 1958, 350.

²⁸⁸ Vlastos 1946, 73.

²⁸⁹ Vox 1984, 114f.

²⁹⁰ See Ziegler 1963, 649: "Das konkrete Ding ... ist zugleich göttliche Person...; die so gedachte Göttin ist zugleich mit dem Boden identisch."

This way of expression, in Mülke's view, serves the goals of the specific political discourse.²⁹¹

In the fragment previously discussed (Sol. 4. 12ff.) past, present and future apparently unite as a domain under the authority of Δίκη. Here it is the phenomenon of assertory oath that connects past with present – Solon's past achievements are the subject of his present oath – but also points towards the future, for its aim is to vindicate the oath-taker in the court of time (δίκη χρόνου). But what exactly is this “court/judgement of time” and what is the status and role of χρόνος in it? It is clear that δίκη here does not imply the divine Righteousness of fr. 4.16, as the *executor of justice*, but it rather signifies *judgment* as some sort of *trial* at which Solon's acts might be judged in the future.

Mülke interestingly notices that Solon uses a potential expression when talking about δίκη χρόνου (συμμαρτυροίη ταῦτ' ἂν ἐν δίκῃ χρόνου, etc.), where we normally find the imperative in other oaths.²⁹² The reason for this, he believes, lies in the fact that the poet invokes Earth because he envisages her as a witness at a *possible future* δίκη χρόνου. The court-scene may be an expression of Solon's belief that the passage of time searches into and finds out the truth of everything, like a perpetual court. If Earth were called to testify, she would confirm the truth of Solon's claims. This explanation is in tune with Solon's repeated idea that justice eventually prevails: the truth comes out *in time* (fr. 10), wrongdoers become exposed *with time* and sooner or later their punishment comes (fr. 4. 16; 13. 8; 13. 27-31; 36. 3).²⁹³ The notion of the passage of time clearly plays an important role in this conception: in 4. 16 (divine) Δίκη *in time*

²⁹¹ Mülke 2002, 372.

²⁹² Mülke 2002, 372. Cf. Magurano 1992, 202, n. 55.

²⁹³ See Ziegler 1963, 647 for some examples of the expressions of the same idea in literature and popular sayings.

(τῶι ... χρόνῳ) surely (πάντως) makes the payment due; in 13. 8 δίκη is said surely to (πάντως) come *sometime* (ὅσπερ); in 13. 25-28 Zeus' supervision ensures that sinners become exposed and punished *in the end* (ἐς τέλος). Finally, in 36. 3 an inquiry of time is envisaged at which the truthfulness of Solon's oath may be established.

However, some scholars have assumed that χρόνος in Solon's fr. 36. 3 has a unprecedented role, "as though time should be capitalized as a kind of metaphysical entity imposing the rule of justice upon events."²⁹⁴ Ziegler, for example, suggests that what Solon has in mind when he speaks about δίκη χρόνου is a trial over which "god Chronos" presides.²⁹⁵ He also indicates that there are reasons to believe that in the sixth century BC the divine Chronos is a recurring concept, for it is found in the works of Pherecydes of Syros and the early "Orphics". I will analyse and discuss these sources in the following segment of my research, but it is worth noting here that Ziegler himself remarks that there are several difficulties (concerning dating and interpretation) with the reliability of this evidence. However, trying to account for what in his view is the unique case of personification and deification of χρόνος in the extant poems of Solon, Ziegler nevertheless speculates that the poet could have been inspired by the (disputable) theological doctrines of the time.²⁹⁶ It is far less complicated and – due to its accordance with the previously discussed usages – apparently more natural to understand χρόνος as implying "passage of time" here. I, therefore, accept Havelock's view, according to which "the phrase is likely to mean 'during a just procedure carried

²⁹⁴ Havelock 1978, 254.

²⁹⁵ Ziegler 1963, 649ff. He argues that Solon's χρόνος could be yet another example of the notion in which two types of concepts, concrete and abstract, are unified. Ziegler recognises several concepts of this kind in Solon's poetry: δίκη, γῆ, πόλεμος, δυσνομία, εὐνομία, ἀλήθεια, etc.

²⁹⁶ Ibid.: "Warum aber hat Solon, nachdem schon in seinen früheren Betrachtungen über Schuld und Sühne die Zeit eine Rolle zu spielen hatte, ihr nun diesen anderen, soviel bedeutenderen Part gegeben? Vielleicht, könnte man wohl vermuten, weil ihm inzwischen die theologischen Spekulationen um Chronos erst bekannt geworden waren".

out in the course of time.’” Besides, Havelock adds, “to translate, as some do, ‘in the court of time’ catches the legal coloration, but it is questionable whether the narrower sense of *dike* as court of justice had yet been realized.”²⁹⁷ This in no way implies that the sense “passage of time” could not have been at the semantic core of the early cases of personification of *Xρόνος*. Since there are no known instances of αἰών in the fragments of archaic lyric at our disposal, the next topic in the discussion will be (arguably) the earliest extant examples of divine *Xρόνος*.

²⁹⁷ Havelock 1978, 254.

CHAPTER IV

PRESOCRATIC COSMOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY

TIME AS A COSMIC POWER

X P O N O Σ IN PHERECYDES OF SYROS AND ANAXIMANDER

Around the middle of the sixth century BC the concept of χρόνος as a cosmic power emerges, most notably in the teachings of Pherecydes and Anaximander, as well as in some Orphic cosmogonies which may also be dated back to roughly the same period. These cosmological accounts contain important similarities in terms of their basic outline, their protagonists, and in some crucial details within the development of their views, so that we can speak about a common ‘climate of opinion’,²⁹⁸ if not of direct influences between these doctrines and their authors.

i) Pherecydes of Syros

Pherecydes is famously credited with the authorship of the first prose book in Greek.²⁹⁹

At about the same time Anaximander produced a prose account of his own teaching.³⁰⁰

He was probably older than Pherecydes, but it is not clear whether his book appeared before or after Pherecydes’ and whether they influenced each other’s work.³⁰¹ We get an insight into the contents of these writings only through later authors’ reports on them.

²⁹⁸ See Schibli 1990, 37.

²⁹⁹ *Suda*, s.v. Φερεκύδης (DK7 A2; Schibli F2). Cf. Apul. *Flor.*15 (Schibli F 11), Isid. *Etym.*1. 38. 2 (Schibli F 12).

³⁰⁰ See West 1971, 5: “The first prose books must have been what poetry-books were at the time, records of the spoken word.”

³⁰¹ Themistius (*Or.* 26 p. 317c) informs us that Anaximander was the first of the Greeks to produce a written account “on nature”. Theopompus (apud D. L. 1. 116), on the other hand, says Pherecydes was the first to write about nature and gods (περὶ φύσεως καὶ θεῶν). It is perhaps most reasonable to conclude with West 1971, 1, n. 3 that “the question of priority is neither soluble nor important”.

Although it is difficult to distinguish early from late in doxographers' language, it is generally accepted that the mention of χρόνος in these later accounts draws on the original sources and that in the case of both Pherecydes and Anaximander the word χρόνος appears in their authentic fragments.

Diogenes Laertius has preserved the beginning of Pherecydes' book (D.L. 1. 119 = DK7 B1 = Schibli F14): σώζεται δὲ τοῦ Συρίου τό τε βιβλίον ὃ συνέγραψεν, οὗ ἡ ἀρχή· Ζᾶς μὲν καὶ Χρόνος ἦσαν ἀεὶ καὶ Χθονίη· Χθονίῃ δὲ ὄνομα ἐγένετο Γῆ, ἐπειδὴ αὐτῇι Ζᾶς γῆν γέρας διδοῖ.

"There is preserved of the man from Syros a book he wrote, the beginning of which states: 'Zas and Chronos always were and Chthonie; and Chthonie became named Ge when Zas gives her the earth as gift of honour'." ³⁰²

This book opening cited by Diogenes may safely be taken to be a verbatim quotation. A more elaborate account of Pherecydes' cosmology, provided by the Neoplatonist Damascius, most likely also derives from the sixth-century author himself, for it draws on the same context and repeats some of the vocabulary. At the very beginning of the book the word χρόνος appears and it quite remarkably signifies one of the three everlasting deities of Pherecydes' mythical cosmology. While Diogenes' quotation lists the members of the divine triad, Damascius' account provides more information about the role of Χρόνος in Pherecydes' cosmogony and the mutual relationship between the three primordial deities (*De principiis*, 124b = DK7 A8 = Schibli F60):

Φερεκύδης δὲ ὁ Σύριος Ζάντα μὲν εἶναι ἀεὶ καὶ Χρόνον καὶ Χθονίαν τὰς τρεῖς πρώτας ἀρχάς, τὴν μίαν φημὶ πρὸ τῶν δυοῖν, καὶ τὰς δύο μετὰ τὴν μίαν, τὸν δὲ Χρόνον ποιῆσαι ἐκ τοῦ γόνου ἑαυτοῦ πῦρ καὶ πνεῦμα καὶ ὕδωρ, τὴν τριπλῆν, οἶμαι, φύσιν τοῦ νοητοῦ,

³⁰² Translations of the fragments are taken from Schibli 1990.

ἐξ ὧν ἐν πέντε μυχοῖς διηρημένων πολλὴν ἄλλην γενεὰν συστήναι θεῶν, τὴν πεντέμυχον καλουμένην, ταῦτόν δὲ ἴσως εἶπεῖν, πεντέκοσμον.

“Pherecydes of Syros said that Zas always existed and Chronos and Chthonie, the three first principles, the one I say before the two, and the two after the one,³⁰³ and that Chronos made from his own seed fire and air and water, the threefold nature, I suppose, of the intelligible, from which [sc. elements] after they were distributed in five nooks arose another numerous generation of gods, called the five-nook [sc. generation], and this is probably the same as to say the five-cosmos [sc. generation].”

The members of the triad are Ζάς, Χρόνος, and Χθονίη; their arrangement and names are the same in both sources quoted and so probably original.³⁰⁴ The first deity’s name sounds odd but familiar enough: according to the glossing of later ancient authors, it is Zeus whom Pherecydes uniquely calls Ζάς.³⁰⁵ It is obvious from the ancient reports about Pherecydes’ teaching that he had a penchant for peculiar forms of divine names: apart from mentioning Ζάς, he is reported to have used Πῆ instead of Πέα, Ὠγηνός for Ὠκεανός, and we also read his elaborate explanation of the name-change of Χθονίη into Γῆ.³⁰⁶ Some scholars suggest that the appearance of Ζάς, Ζήν and Ζεύς in the relevant ancient sources may in fact reflect Pherecydes’ intentional name-varying, which coincides with the change of the divinity’s role.³⁰⁷ But this thesis is difficult to prove

³⁰³ It has been argued that this remark of Damascius implies chronological order, which has been explained as resulting from “Neoplatonic unwillingness to accept a plurality of first principles.” See Schibli 1990, 18, n. 10.

³⁰⁴ Schibli 1990, 16.

³⁰⁵ Probus (*In Vergilii Bucolica* 6. 31 = DK7 A9, Schibli F65) and Hermias (*Irrisio gentium philosophorum*, 12 = DK7 A9, Schibli F66) use the acc. Ζῆνα in connection with Pherecydes’ teaching, whereas Origen (*c. Cels.* 6. 42 = DK7 B5, Schibli F83) has Ζεύς. Cf. Hdn. Gr., Περὶ μονήρους λέξεως 2. 911. 7-9 Lentz: ὅτι δὲ ποικίλως εἴρηται ὑπὸ παλαιῶν ὁ θεὸς οὐκ ἄγνοῶ. καὶ γὰρ Δις καὶ Ζῆν καὶ Δῆν καὶ Ζάς καὶ Ζῆς παρὰ Φερεκύδει κατὰ κίνησιν ἰδίαν. See also West 1971, 10, n. 1 and, in detail, Schibli 1990, 17, n. 8.

³⁰⁶ See e.g. Hdn., op. cit. 2. 911. 23f. Lentz (DK7 B9, Schibli F62): Πῆ for Πέα; P. Grenf. ii 11 (DK7 B2, Schibli F68) and Clem. Al., *Strom.*, 6. 2. 9. 4 (DK7 B2, Schibli F69): Ὠγηνός for Ὠκεανός.

³⁰⁷ See e.g. Schibli 1990, 135.

and, in order to substantiate it, one would like to have a clear indication that this was Pherecydes' genuine aim, of the sort we find in the case of Χθονίη/Γῆ (see below). The problem of motivation for Pherecydes' choice of a particular divine name or his apparent varying of two or more of them has provided inexhaustible material for scholarly discussions (which have touched upon his usage of Χρόνος too), but they have failed to reach any unanimous conclusion.³⁰⁸

The second divinity in the triad is Χρόνος. This is the first time in Greek literature that the word χρόνος uncontroversially signifies *a personified divine being*. He is said to generate the elements of the material world out of his own seed. The novel and apparently very advanced idea of Time as a creator-god confused many modern scholars, so much so that some of them (notably Zeller and Wilamowitz) refused to read Χρόνος in the given context, for they held, in Wilamowitz's words "einen Urgott Zeit im 6. Jahrhundert für undenkbar".³⁰⁹ They chose to read Κρόνος instead, based also on the evidence of some ancient sources: Κρόνος occupies the place of Χρόνος in the reports of Probus and Hermias about Pherecydes' first principles, but it is important to note that these two authors nevertheless explain that Κρόνος there signifies "time" (note that both sources also have Ζήν for Ζάς).³¹⁰

Apart from these cases of association with the generative primordial Χρόνος, doxographers inform us about the mention of Κρόνος at a later stage in Pherecydes'

³⁰⁸ Gomperz, followed by others, suggests the name Ζάς is a wordplay on ζῆν, but West 1971, 51 rightly notices that for that purpose Pherecydes "might have used the already existing Ζήν, Ζηνός". Kirk et al. 1983, 57f. suggests that the element ζα- in Ζάς might be alluding to ζάθεος, ζαῖς. West (loc. cit.) proposes that one should look for the origin of Pherecydes' form outside Greece (Luvian *Šanta* who was equated with the Hittite weather-god). See also Schibli 1990, 17, n. 8.

³⁰⁹ Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1937, 165. Cf. Zeller 1963, 103, n. 4.

³¹⁰ See, n. 305. Cf. Schibli 1990, 136, n. 3: "When Probus and Hermias (F65-6), apparently referring to the beginning of Pherecydes' book, list Kronos as one of Pherecydes' 3 original deities, the mistake must be presumed to lie in their source, for otherwise their interpretation of Kronos as Time (e.g. Κρόνον δὲ τὸν Χρόνον in Hermias) would be redundant".

cosmology, namely in the story of his battle against the snake-god Ophioneus (Ὀφιονεύς) over the distribution of cosmic power. The defeated side was meant to be cast into the Ocean (Ὠκεανός) and the victorious leader to obtain the rule of Heaven (Οὐρανός).³¹¹ Again, it is difficult to say whether for Pherecydes this deity was identical with his cosmogonic Χρόνος.³¹² Kirk suggests that Pherecydes actually arrived at Χρόνος by looking at the etymology of Κρόνος and he believes that the name Ζάς was meant to provide the etymology for Ζεύς too, for Pherecydes' aim was to find "etymologizing variants of well-known theogonical figures".³¹³ West, however, corrects Origen's Κρόνος in the tradition of the battle with Ophioneus to Χρόνος deeming this (together with the substitution of Χρόνος with Κρόνος by Hermias and Probus) an easy confusion. The two deities were often identified and, besides, K and X are similar enough to be replaced in writing.³¹⁴ Finally, Schibli agrees with Kirk that Χρόνος was an appropriate figure to initiate the cosmogonic process, for which reason the familiar Κρόνος (by a simple substitution of a X) could have been turned into the god Time.³¹⁵ However, Schibli himself notices that the supposed change of roles of the deity throughout Pherecydes' cosmology need not have been accompanied by a change in name.³¹⁶ This is why he comes up with another motivation for the supposed name-alteration, namely Pherecydes' fondness for aetiology, but this interpretation turns out to coincide more or less with Kirk's 'etymological' explanation.³¹⁷

³¹¹ Origen, *c. Cels.* 6. 42 (DK7 B4, Schibli F78)

³¹² West 1971, 10: "For the moment it is sufficient to observe that the Kronos of Hesiodic tradition is a figure of mythology who plays no part in the world's affairs, but rules in the Isles of the Blessed Ones or else sits huddled in misty Tartarus. He could not assume any cosmic importance until he was identified with Chronos." See also *ibid.* n. 1.

³¹³ Kirk et al. 1983, 57.

³¹⁴ See Plutarch, *Moralia* 363d (*Is. Osir.* 32): "Ἕλληνες Κρόνον ἀλληγοροῦσι τὸν χρόνον. Cf. *Cic. N. D.* 2. 25.

³¹⁵ Schibli 1990, 136.

³¹⁶ Schibli 1990, 137.

³¹⁷ *Id.* 137f.

Every attempt to solve the problem of alteration of divine names in Pherecydes' tradition and explain the peculiarity of some of them has met some criticism.³¹⁸ It seems, however, that there should be no doubt that Χρόνος, the Time-god, figures in Pherecydes' cosmology as the very originator of the cosmogonic process³¹⁹ and this circumstance is the most important for the present investigation. Before examining this idea in detail, I will briefly turn to the third god in the list of Pherecydes' primary deities, whose change of name and role was accounted for by the sixth-century author himself. Namely, in the longest original fragment of Pherecydes' teaching, preserved on a Grenfell-Hunt papyrus (P. Grenf. ii. 11 = Shibli F68), the author describes the nuptials of Ζάς and Χθονίη. He tells us that Ζάς made a big and beautiful robe with Earth (Γῆ) and Ogenos and the abodes of Ogenos embroidered on it (col. i 11-18).³²⁰ Ζάς gave the robe as a gift to Χθονίη and made her his wife; consequently, the goddess' name changed to Γῆ (D.L. 1. 119 = DK7 B1 = Schibli F14). The papyrus text further explains that these were the first *anakalypteria*, which subsequently became a custom for both gods and men (col. ii 5-10). From the decoration described, one could assume that Γῆ describes the outer earth, that is the earth as people see it.³²¹ Apart from the fact that she bears a different name, Χθονίη differs from Γῆ in as much as she represents a primordial deity who existed before the material world (and the earth itself) was created.

³¹⁸ Cf. *ibid.* n. 9: "West has been faulted for playing down 'the obvious possibility that Chronos is an etymological extension of Kronos as Zas is of Zeus' (G. S. Kirk, *CR* 24 [1974], 83). I may be faulted for doing the opposite, but seeing that Pherecydes' play on names might be explained as serving an aetiological narrative, I could not resist 'the obvious possibility'."

³¹⁹ This is almost unanimously accepted nowadays. However, Fränkel does not mention Pherecydes in his examination of the early Greek conception of time.

³²⁰ Cf. Clem. Al. *Strom.* 6. 2. 9. 4 (DK7 B2 = Schibli F69).

³²¹ Cf. West 1971, 18.

At the opening of his account of the origin of gods and the world,³²² Pherecydes claims that his three principal deities “always existed” (ἦσαν ἀεὶ). This is an important qualification which conceptually places Pherecydes’ divine triad in the same category with the first principles of Presocratic philosophers, who avoided the absurdity of *ex nihilo* creation by speaking of primary causes (ἀρχαί) which had no beginning at a past point in time.³²³ Pherecydes’ three principal divinities are obviously equal as regards their eternal existence, but they have different roles, and an order of precedence seems to have been established in terms of their engagement in the cosmology. Χρόνος, it appears, has priority in that respect. From a speculative point of view, it may seem only natural to us that someone thought *time* suitable to be the initiator of cosmic creation, for nothing could have existed before it.³²⁴ Could this have been Pherecydes’ reasoning as well? The question inevitably arises how abstract and theoretically advanced the concept of time could have been in Greece around the middle of the sixth century BC. In Pherecydes’ cosmological account Time appears in the traditional shape of a personified deity, whose act of creation is seen in anthropomorphic terms. Personification of Time need not have been more intellectually ‘demanding’ than that of Dream, Night and similar phenomena, and we will see that Time and Eternity occur as divine beings in various oriental mythologies from a comparatively early date. Admittedly, semantic applications of χρόνος in archaic Greek literature up to Pherecydes’ time had been fairly

³²² Damascius informs us that the new generation of gods, created from the elements that Chronos made from his own seed, was called the five-nook generation or the five-cosmos generation. This remark may be interpreted as implying that together with the emergence of the new gods (five of them or five groups of them), five regions of the world were created (from the five nooks). So this theogony was a cosmogony at the same time (cf. West 1971, 15 and Schibli 1990, 23).

³²³ Homeric gods exist forever (θεοὶ αἰὲν ἔόντες), but they are still said to have been born, and the first principle in Hesiod’s *Theogony*, Χάος, also came to exist (l. 116). Cf. Kahn 1958, 28: “The traditional deities are free from death but not from birth; the god of the philosophers has no share in either.” See also Schibli 1990, 15: “ἦσαν ἀεὶ deserves further notice as a partial instance of the hieratic *Ewigkeitsformel*, as in Herakleitos DK22 B30 (51 Marcovich), ἦν ἀεὶ καὶ ἔστιν καὶ ἔσται, and other Greek authors.”

³²⁴ Cf. Kirk et al. 1983, 55: “‘Time’... might naturally be felt, without any deep abstract reflexion, to have been unborn.”

conceptually limited, but with Solon (as we have seen), Anaximander (as we will shortly see), and Pherecydes, as well as in some Orphic writings, a more general notion of χρόνος seems to emerge.

In the case of Pherecydes' teaching about personified cosmogonic/theogonic Χρόνος, and especially in the Orphic notion of the god "Unageing Time", some eastern parallels (and possibly influences)³²⁵ can clearly be recognised. The difficulty here arises from the fact that it is virtually impossible to establish uncontroversial dates for the eastern mythical cosmologies in question, for they can be reconstructed only through much later secondary sources. However, West's remarkable analysis and comparison of these sources convincingly shows that time-cosmologies were prominent in India around the end of the sixth century BC, and in Iran and Phoenicia by the end of the fourth century BC.³²⁶ Given the scantiness of the evidence at our disposal, these mythical cosmogonies might well be a couple of centuries older. Analogously to Pherecydes' Χρόνος (and even more so to the Orphic Χρόνος ἀγήραος), we come across the unageing time-god *Kāla* in India, who creates out of his own seed; in Iran there is *Zurvān akarana* ("Infinite Time") who unites with himself and produces Ohrmazd and Ahriman; in the Phoenician cosmology of Mochus, *Oulōmos*, the god of "Remote Time" (himself created by Αἰθήρ and Ἄήρ), generates the divine craftsman *Chousōros* through an autosexual act.³²⁷ The idea of the self-fructifying progenitor Time could hardly have developed independently in all these different traditions and West therefore tries to discover their common source. The most pertinent parallel can be

³²⁵ See, however, Kahn 1979, 297-302.

³²⁶ West 1971, 28-36.

³²⁷ Idem.

found in the Egyptian sun-god Re', who was called the "Lord of eternity" and was represented as creating other gods by an act of self-directed *fellatio*.³²⁸

Pherecydes is the first Greek author of whom we know to have taught this cosmogony of apparently non-Greek origin, in which Time played a central role. We can presume that he learnt about it from a foreign source,³²⁹ for the idea that he arrived at the concept of procreative self-fructifying Time independently of the similar eastern accounts seems less probable. However, comparisons between the relevant eastern and Greek material have shown that Pherecydes' doctrine only partially reflects the presumed oriental original; more elements in common with eastern prototypes are to be found in the earliest of the so-called Orphic cosmogonies.³³⁰ The two Greek sources have an important feature in common: they both render the deity called Kāla in India (*kāla* being a general term for "time" in Sanskrit) and Zurvān in Iran (*zruuan-*, *zrūn-* being a general term for "time" in Avestan) with Greek Χρόνος. Before I undertake to determine the exact nature of the idea expressed by Pherecydes' Χρόνος, I will turn to the single presumably authentic instance of the noun's occurrence in the doctrine of his contemporary Anaximander.

ii) Anaximander of Miletus

Anaximander uses the word χρόνος in a cosmological context as he tries to account for the chronological regularity of cosmic changes. Χρόνος appears in the only extant fragment of Anaximander's book, which – judging from the evidence we have – was meant to provide a comprehensive explanation of the world. The quotation from his

³²⁸ See West 1971, 35f. and Schibli 1990, 37f.

³²⁹ West 1971, 51 suggests the source might have been Pherecydes' father, who had an Asian name (Babys or Babis), most frequently found in Phrygia, Pisidia, and Galatia.

³³⁰ West 1971, 289.

book came down to us via Simplicius' version of Theophrastus' account of early Greek philosophers, and the authenticity of Anaximander's statement is guaranteed by

Theophrastus' remark on Anaximander's literary style (Simp. *in Ph.* 24. 17 = DK12

B1): Ἀναξίμανδρος ... ἀρχὴν τε καὶ στοιχεῖον εἶρηκε τῶν ὄντων τὸ ἄπειρον ... ἐξ ὧν δὲ ἡ γένεσις ἐστὶ τοῖς οὖσι, καὶ τὴν φθορὰν εἰς ταῦτα γίνεσθαι 'κατὰ τὸ χρεών· διδόναι γὰρ αὐτὰ δίκην καὶ τίσιν ἀλλήλοις τῆς ἀδικίας κατὰ τὴν τοῦ χρόνου τάξιν,'³³¹

ποιητικωτέροις οὕτως ὀνόμασιν αὐτὰ λέγων.

"Anaximander ... said that the principle and element of existing things was the *apeiron* ... And the source of coming-to-be for existing things is that into which destruction, too, happens 'according to necessity: for they pay penalty and retribution to each other for their injustice according to the order of time', as he describes it in these rather poetical terms." (after Kirk)

The existing things (τὰ ὄντα) come to be out of the "unlimited" first principle (τὸ ἄπειρον) and they eventually perish into it "according to necessity", for they commit some kind of "injustice" while in existence. This is where χρόνος comes into play, for according to its (his?) order (ordinance?)³³² the existing things are paying a penalty and retribution "to each other" (ἀλλήλοις) for the injustice. According to a number of doxographic sources, at the very beginning of the cosmogonic process in Anaximander's account opposing elements are separated out of the unlimited first

³³¹ See Hussey 1972, 24: "The comment at the end shows that at least some of the less prosaic expressions used were quoted by Theophrastus from Anaximander's book." Cf. Kirk et al. 1983, 117f..

³³² See Kahn 1960, 170: "The word τάξις is not attested before Anaximander, but fifth-century examples of the legal or military usage of the term are too numerous and too well known to require citation. The full sense of the word is 'an arrangement prescribed with authority; an order which is morally binding' (...) In the present case such authority is exercised by Time. The judicial color of διδόναι δίκην is maintained in the 'ordinance' or 'ordainment' by which the penalty is fixed, and Time appears as the magistrate who determines what the retribution shall be."

principle.³³³ It is, therefore, generally believed that the role Anaximander assigns to χρόνος is to maintain balance between the opposites by ensuring their sequential exchange (as in night and day, summer and winter, etc.).³³⁴ Anaximander's τάξις χρόνου is reminiscent of Solon's δίκη χρόνου, but while Solon's phrase indicates that the flow of time establishes justice and reveals truth in *human affairs*, Anaximander's χρόνος appears to be in charge of *cosmic stability*. Both authors seem to envisage χρόνος as having an active role, but in neither of the two accounts does it participate in the creation of the world, which is precisely what Pherecydes' χρόνος does.

iii) Pherecydes' Χρόνος and cosmogony

So can we draw on these two sixth-century usages of χρόνος in reconstructing the meaning of Pherecydes' Χρόνος? There is no doubt that this deity has an active role in Pherecydes' account, for he creates three cosmic elements from his own seed (πῦρ καὶ πνεῦμα καὶ ὕδωρ), out of which, distributed among five nooks (ἐν πέντε μυχοῖς διηρημένων), a new generation of gods emerges, the "so-called five-nook generation." It must have been Χρόνος who distributed the elements among the nooks (presumably in a temporal order), and this circumstance may be taken to imply that the world in creation was temporally conditioned. It is now rather tempting to ascribe the following reasoning to Pherecydes: nothing could have existed before time and for this reason the first creation was originated by the god Time; as a consequence, the generation of the elements of the world and its further development takes place according to temporal order and so apparently under the rule of time. If we accept West's emendation of

³³³ Arist. *Ph.* 187a 20; Simp. *in Ph.* 24. 21; Ps.-Plu. *Strom.* 2.

³³⁴ Kirk et al. 1983, 120 suggests that Time controls the time-limit for payment: "The idea of time-limit is appropriate: the injustice of summer has to be made good within the roughly equal period in winter, that of night during the period of day, and so on."

Χρόνος in Origen's report of his battle with Ophioneus, then we see divine Χρόνος as a crowned ruler at a later stage in Pherecydes' cosmogony.³³⁵ According to Aristotle, his rule remained stable and did not change (*Metaph.* 1091b6).³³⁶ In the same passage Aristotle characterises Pherecydes' doctrine as "not entirely mythical" and we may apply this remark to his choice of the originative deity. Gigon interprets Pherecydes' Χρόνος as the common substratum for day and night,³³⁷ and Schibli elaborates on this view by distinguishing between the sequential nature of time *after* the creation of cosmos and its eternal nature *before* the creation occurred: "Chronos has existed forever (ἀεί), but then steps out of eternity, so to speak, to create."³³⁸

However, we must be careful not to read too much into Pherecydes' Time-cosmology, for the distinction between two types of time that Schibli mentions is far from being explicit there and its contours become discernible in the mythical context only after we use some imagination.³³⁹ It is Plato who in his *Timaeus* 37d-e develops and clearly explains this idea by distinguishing between the measurable cosmic time (χρόνος) and the eternity (αἰών) of the ideal being. However, Pherecydes' cosmology is not the only mythical account which seems to imply a differentiation between eternal and cosmic time. In a version of Iranian Zurvān-cosmology, expounded in the Pahlavi *Bundahišn*,³⁴⁰ Ohrmazd and Ahriman are said to be co-eternal with time; Ohrmazd exists in the Beginningless Light and out of 'time without limit' he creates 'time for

³³⁵ Tertull. *De corona militis* 7 (= DK19 B4): Saturnum Pherecydes ante omnes refert coronatum, Iovem Diodorus post devictos Titanas. Cf. Cic. N. D. 2. 25: Saturnum autem eum esse voluerunt qui cursum et conversionem spatiorum ac temporum contineret; qui deus Graece id ipsum nomen habet: Χρόνος enim dicitur, qui est idem χρόνος, id est spatium temporis.

³³⁶ οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ τοῦτοις μὲν διὰ τὸ μεταβάλλειν τοὺς ἄρχοντας τῶν ὄντων συμβαίνει τοιαῦτα λέγειν, ἐπεὶ οἱ γε μεμιγμένοι αὐτῶν καὶ τῷ μὴ μυθικῶς πάντα λέγειν, οἷον Φερεκύδης καὶ ἕτεροί τινες, τὸ γεννῆσαν πρῶτον ἄριστον τιθέασιν (...)

³³⁷ Gigon 1945, 30.

³³⁸ Schibli 1990, 29.

³³⁹ Ibid.

³⁴⁰ West 1971, 30: "written in the late ninth century, but based at least in part on the *Dāmdāt Nask*, one of the lost portions of the Avesta, presumably dating from the Achaemenid period."

long autonomous'. The latter is a period of twelve thousand years, within which the history of the world plays itself out.³⁴¹ In addition to this, in the Indian *Maitri Upanishad* (approximately 500 BC) two forms of Brahman are distinguished – time and the timeless: “That which existed before the sun is the timeless; it cannot be divided into parts. That which begins with the sun, however, is time. And the form of this (time) which has parts is the year.”³⁴²

On the Greek side, Pherecydes' older contemporary Anaximander seems to imply the same distinction only without mythical language. Here is how he explains the origin of the world in a passage which is believed to follow Theophrastus' account of Anaximander's teaching rather closely³⁴³ (Ps-Plu. *Strom.* 2 = DK12 A10): φησὶ δὲ ἐκ τοῦ αἰδίου γόνιμον θερμοῦ τε καὶ ψυχροῦ κατὰ τὴν γένεσιν τοῦδε τοῦ κόσμου ἀποκριθῆναι...

According to Anaximander, this world originated when “that which is capable of producing” (γόνιμον) opposite elements (“hot and cold”) “was separated off from the eternal” (ἐκ τοῦ αἰδίου). Τὸ αἶδιον represents one of the manifestations of Anaximander's first principle,³⁴⁴ which does not know of temporal limits. As we have learnt from the authentic fragment preserved by Simplicius, once the world is created, χρόνος comes into play imposing its τάξις on the opposing elements and in doing so it puts temporal limits on cosmic events. On the basis of this, it may perhaps be suggested that χρόνος is the form that αἶδιον assumes in the visible world.³⁴⁵

³⁴¹ Op. cit. 30f. The limitless and autonomous Zurvān is found in *Yasna* 72. 10.

³⁴² Zaehner 1966, 231. Cf. West 1971, 33.

³⁴³ See e.g. Kirk et al. 1983, 131f.

³⁴⁴ The other two being ‘spatially unlimited’ and ‘qualitatively undifferentiated’.

³⁴⁵ See Hussey 1972, 24. According to West 1971, 83 τάξις χρόνου applies not only to the opposites within the created world: “The passing away of that which comes to be, whether it is a world or something within a world, is regulated by the decree of Time. (...) Not only moons and seasons, leaves

The above quotation reveals a further feature that Anaximander's cosmology has in common with that of Pherecydes, namely the occurrence of a γόνιμον at the initial stage of the world creation. Kirk explains that γόνιμος was a favourite Peripatetic term, "which usually retained some flavour of biological generation."³⁴⁶ Anaximander himself might as well have used γόνος, as Pherecydes did, or, as Schibli further suggests, σπέρμα, or ἀπόγονος.³⁴⁷ Both ancient authors express the same idea, that the elements of the world were generated from a seed which emerged out of the eternal originative principle. This, however, does not have to mean that one of them borrowed the idea from the other. It has been suggested that these two accounts reflect a general trend in Greek cosmogonic thought to explain the world creation in biological terms.³⁴⁸ In Pherecydes' account this germinal creation is couched in mythological discourse, whereas in Anaximander the same idea appears translated into scientific language.³⁴⁹ The same type of explanation of the origin of the world is found in the Orphic world-egg cosmogony, which will be discussed in the following section of this chapter.

and lives, but all cosmic change, even the birth and death of worlds, has its appointed time." On the topic of innumerable worlds in Anaximander, see Kirk et al. 1983, 122f.

³⁴⁶ Kirk et al. 1983, 132.

³⁴⁷ Schibli 1990, 31, n. 46.

³⁴⁸ See Kirk et al. 1983, 132 and Schibli 1990, 33ff.

³⁴⁹ West 1994a, 306. Cf. Kirk et al. 1983, 132.

X P O N O Σ IN THE ORPHIC THEOGONIES

Ancient sources clearly indicate that Pherecydes' mythical cosmology belongs to the sixth century BC, but it is the authenticity of cosmogonic Χρόνος in his doctrine that has been to the subject of scholarly dispute. It seems, however, that the majority of scholars nowadays agree that divine Time plays a central role in Pherecydes' cosmogony and in the preceding discussion I have argued the same. I have also mentioned that certain Orphic cosmological accounts (preserved in some of the so-called Orphic theogonies³⁵⁰), in which divine Χρόνος likewise represents a key cosmogonic figure, can be dated back to roughly the same period. However, although this claim, as I will shortly show, has resulted from a careful scholarly analysis of the extant evidence of the Orphic theogonies, the nature of the evidence itself has continually prevented scholars from making any definite conclusion about their date. In his 1935 book *Orpheus and Greek Religion* Guthrie declared: "Of all the problems that beset the student of Greek literature, none, surely, is more vexed than the question of the dates and contents of the various theogonies."³⁵¹ Since then, however, a major papyrological discovery has brought to light an early Orphic theogony, named *Derveni* according to the location where the papyrus was found, that can be fairly reliably dated at no later than the fifth century BC.³⁵² Long before this discovery, Otto Gruppe argued that all the known Orphic theogonies are closely related and must be treated as a class.³⁵³ Since the discovery of the Derveni papyrus, Martin West has established in his *Orphic Poems* a convincing reconstruction of the relation between various Orphic

³⁵⁰ See West 1983a, 68.

³⁵¹ Guthrie 1935, 70.

³⁵² See West 1983a, 77ff.

³⁵³ Gruppe 1887, 641.

theogonies in terms of their chronology and content and suggested – on the basis of a comparative analysis – an early date for the Orphic version of Time-cosmology.³⁵⁴ This, however, does not mean that the problematic issues Guthrie so unequivocally singled out are now settled, especially the question of the antiquity of the Orphic Time-cosmology.

In the present discussion I will outline only those points in the history of the rich scholarly debate on the dates and details of the relevant Orphic theogonies which have to do with the Time-cosmology presented in them. My goal is to compare the arguments in favour of and those against the thesis of the existence of an Orphic Time-cosmology as early as the fifth or even sixth century BC, in order to examine the implications of these two distinct views for the question of the semantic development of the word χρόνος. It will also be shown that the very semantic content of χρόνος was used by some scholars in their argumentation concerning the date of the conception of divine Time.

Let us start with the evidence for the Orphic Time-cosmology. The sixth-century Neoplatonist author Damascius gives accounts of three distinct Orphic theogonies commonly known as the Eudemian, the Hieronyman, and the Rhapsodic Theogony. On the basis of other sources, including the above mentioned papyrus find, West was able to distinguish six of them altogether,³⁵⁵ but only two of the Orphic theogonies explicitly convey the myth of the god Unageing Time. Damascius tells us that the Orphic theogony according to Hieronymus and Hellanicus (“if he is not the same person”)

³⁵⁴ This was suggested already by Gruppe, who was followed by Guthrie and others. The discovery of the Derveni papyrus only strengthened their view.

³⁵⁵ West 1983a, 69. Judging from Damascius’ accounts, it seems that the Rhapsodic theogony was still read in his own time, whereas he had only indirect knowledge of the other two theogonies he mentions.

represents Unageing Time as a three-headed snake god with wings on his shoulders (fr. 75-76 B = 54 K):³⁵⁶

ὕδωρ ἦν, φησὶν, ἐξ ἀρχῆς καὶ ὕλη³⁵⁷ ἐξ ἧς ἐπάγη ἡ γῆ, δύο ταύτας ἀρχὰς ὑποτιθέμενος
πρώτας (...) τὴν δὲ τρίτην ἀρχὴν μετὰ τὰς δύο γεννηθῆναι μὲν ἐκ τούτων, ὕδατος φημι
καὶ γῆς, δράκοντα δὲ εἶναι κεφαλὰς ἔχοντα προσπεφυκυίας ταύρου καὶ λέοντος, ἐν
μέσῳ δὲ θεοῦ πρόσωπον, ἔχειν δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ὤμων πτερὰ, ὠνομάσθαι δὲ Χρόνον
ἀγήραον καὶ Ἡρακλῆα τὸν αὐτόν.

“There was water, he (Orpheus) says, from the beginning, and mud, from which the earth solidified; he posits these two as first principles (...) the third principle after the two was engendered by these (i.e. by water and earth). It is a snake with additional heads of a bull and a lion grown upon it, and in the middle it has a face of god and wings on its shoulders. Its name was Unageing Time and also Heracles.” (after West)

In the Rhapsodies, however, which, according to Damascius contained the “customary Orphic theology” (συνήθης Ὀρφικὴ θεολογία), this picturesque description of the god “Unageing Time” is not to be found (fr. 96 B = 60 K):

ἐν μὲν τοίνυν ταῖς φερομέναις ταύταις ῥαψωδίαις Ὀρφικαῖς ἡ θεολογία <τοιὰ>δε τίς
ἐστὶν ἢ περὶ τὸ νοητόν, ἣν καὶ οἱ φιλόσοφοι διερμηνεύουσιν, ἀντὶ μὲν τῆς μιᾶς τῶν
ὄλων ἀρχῆς τὸν Χρόνον τιθέντες ...

“In the so-called Orphic Rhapsodies this is the theology concerning the intelligible, [the theology] which the philosophers also expound, putting Time in place of the one origin of all...”

³⁵⁶ Apart from Damascius’ account, the Hieronyman version of the Time-cosmology is also reflected in the work of the second-century Christian apologist Athenagoras (fr. 75-76 B, 57-59 K). Cf. West 1983a, 180: “Damascius’ account is the more detailed of the two, and names a source which Athenagoras does not name. Both writers must be drawing on the same source.”

³⁵⁷ Zoëga emends ὕλη “matter” with ἰλύς “mud” (Zoëga 1817, 211). This is confirmed by Athenagoras, *Pro Christianis* 18 p. 20, 12 Schw. (fr. 75 B = 57 K) .

In the description that follows, Damascius informs us (using difficult Neoplatonic terminology) that this theology mentions Aither and Chaos at the second stage of cosmogony (“Unageing Time” is their father, see further down), as well as an egg (also created by Time),³⁵⁸ out of which Phanes was born.

Damascius himself underlines one substantial discrepancy between the two Orphic accounts: the Hieronyman Theogony opens with a *pair* of primary substances (because the author could not express the principal *one*),³⁵⁹ water and mud (or earth), from which the third principle (Unageing Time) originated. The Rhapsodic Theogony “discards” the two first principles, as well as the one before them, and begins with the god Unageing Time, for, according to Damascius, this was the first that was expressible and acceptable to human ears (fr. 54 K). However, as West advises, we must be careful to disentangle here that which was actually recorded by Hieronymus (or the author/s of the Rhapsodies) from the Neoplatonic interpretation put upon it by Damascius (who was, for example, concerned to arrange everything in triads).³⁶⁰

In the following comparison of the two theogonical accounts their similarities are more obvious (fr. 111 (VI) + 78-80 + 86 B = 54 K):

καὶ ὑπολαμβάνω τὴν ἐν ταῖς ῥαψωιδίαις θεολογίαν ἀφεῖσαν τὰς δύο πρώτας ἀρχὰς ...
ἀπὸ τῆς τρίτης μετὰ τὰς δύο ταύτης ἐνστήσασθαι τὴν ἀρχὴν (...) οὗτος γὰρ ἦν ὁ
πολυτίμητος ἐν ἐκείνῃ (sc. τῇ ἐν ταῖς ῥαψωιδίαις θεολογίᾳ) Χρόνος ἀγήραος Αἰθέρος
καὶ Χάους πατήρ· ἀμέλει καὶ κατὰ ταύτην (sc. κατὰ τὸν Ἱερώνυμον θεολογίαν) ὁ

³⁵⁸ Fr. 114 B (= 70 K): ἔπειτα δ' ἔτευξε μέγας Χρόνος αἰθέρι δίῳι / ὠεὸν ἀργύφιον.

³⁵⁹ West 1983a, 179: “In the initial pair, water and earth, Damascius recognizes a dyad: this must come in second place in his system, so to occupy the first place he postulates a prior principle so ineffable that the author left it unspoken.”

³⁶⁰ West 1983a, 179. Attempts have been made to reconstruct a possible divine triad, on the model of the one found in Pherecydes, concealed behind Hieronyman pair of material principles and Unageing Time (see e.g. Jaeger 1947, 220, n. 57 and West 1983a, 184ff., whose reconstruction of the couple Oceanus and Thetys led him to establish some interesting eastern parallels (ibid. 187ff.)).

Χρόνος οὗτος ὁ δράκων γεννᾶται τριπλῆν γονήν· Αἰθέρα, φησί, νοτερὸν καὶ Χάος ἄπειρον, καὶ τρίτον ἐπὶ τούτοις Ἑρεβός ἐστιν ὁμιχλῶδες. ἀλλὰ μὴν ἐν τούτοις, ὡς λέγει, ὁ Χρόνος ὦϊόν ἐγέννησεν (...) καὶ ἥδ' ἡ θεολογία Πρωτόγονον ἀνυμνεῖ καὶ Δία καλεῖ πάντων διατάκτορα καὶ ὅλου τοῦ κόσμου, διὸ καὶ Πᾶνα καλεῖσθαι.

“And I assume that the theology in the Rhapsodies discarded the two first principles ... and began from this third principle after the two (...) For this is the great Unageing Time that we found in it [sc. in Rhapsodic Theogony], the father of Aither and Chaos. Indeed, in this theology too [sc. the Hieronyman], this Time, the serpent, has offspring, three in number: moist Aither, unlimited Chaos, and as the third, misty Darkness. Among these, he says, Time generated an egg (...) And the third god of this third triad this theology too celebrates as Firstborn, and it calls him Zeus the orderer of all and of [] of the whole world, therefore he is also called Pan.” (trans. West)

The basic elements of the Time-cosmology presented in the two Orphic accounts clearly coincide: both ascribe a prominent role to divine Chronos, father of Aither and Chaos, who created a cosmic egg out of which Phanes/Protogonos emerged and thereafter created various other gods.³⁶¹ As for the differences between the Hieronyman and the Rhapsodic presentations of Time-cosmology, they are readily noticeable, but they do not pertain to the essential framework of the myth that the two sources undoubtedly share.³⁶² On the other hand, in the Rhapsodic theogony, much as in

³⁶¹ See idem, 207: “Damascius’ evidence only takes us as far as the appearance of Protogonos, with the bare mention that he is ‘the orderer and < > of the whole world. We can assume, since he is furnished with organs of both sexes, that he will produce further beings by copulation with himself.” Of this we learn from other ancient sources (see West 1983a, 207ff.).

³⁶² The fact that the Orphic Rhapsodies apparently contain a simpler version of the myth (e.g. they lack the vivid description of the god Time) was used by scholars to argue for two contrary views: some believed that the simpler version is older (e.g. Kern 1888) and others that the Hieronyman Theogony is the less recent one (Gruppe 1887; cf. Guthrie 1935, 89ff.).

Pherecydes' mythical cosmology, the Time-god stands at the very beginning of the cosmogonic process.

The very presence and prominence of the divine Time in this mythical account suggests its foreign origin, for, as I have already mentioned, similar cosmologies were to be found in India, Iran and Phoenicia at a presumably early date, while the idea was never prominent in Greece. A striking exception is, however, Pherecydes' doctrine, which was probably inspired by foreign influence too and was apparently so unique in its time that some of the leading modern scholars strongly doubted the genuineness of the concept of cosmogonic Time in it. It is important to note here that it is not likely that the Orphic time-cosmogony was simply derived from Pherecydes' sixth-century doctrine,³⁶³ for, as I will shortly show, it has many details in common with the Oriental cosmologies (including the epithet of the god Time, "Unageing", found in the Iranian and Indian versions of the theology)³⁶⁴ that are absent from Pherecydes' account.

Oriental elements have also been recognised in the description of the god Unageing Time provided by the Hieronyman Theogony. However, while scholars generally agree that the multi-headed, winged-snake form of the Orphic Χρόνος ἀγήραος exhibits Oriental influences, they disagree on the question of the antiquity of this orientalising image. As Guthrie puts it: "In view of this description (...) the question of the possible date of this version has a certain general interest, since it opens the discussion of whether the Greeks were accustomed at an early date (in the classical periods of the sixth and fifth centuries B.C.) to think of their gods, and in particular of so abstract a principle as Time, in the form of monsters which suggest at first sight

³⁶³ See, however, Schibli 1990, 37: "... we may reasonably assume that the Orphic Rhapsodies, which drew so freely upon the theogony of Hesiod, also absorbed some of the cosmogonic teachings of Pherecydes, notably the function of Time in creation."

³⁶⁴ See West 1983a, 104 and 192, n. 45.

rather the extravagance of the oriental imagination than the traditional calm and sanity of the Hellenic mind.”³⁶⁵ Guthrie himself sees in the Hieronyman depiction of ageless Time particular correspondences with Persian religion and offers a tentative solution to the question of the date of this conception (based on Otto Gruppe’s³⁶⁶ exemplary argumentation on the antiquity of the oriental elements in the Orphic theogonies as well as on Jane Harrison’s remarks on the progress of Greek art).³⁶⁷ He suggests that the complex form of the Hieronyman time-god dates from the period which is marked as early archaic (orientalising) in the history of Greek art, because various Greek artistic products dating from that period contain the same type of complex monster-creatures.³⁶⁸ However, although he shares Guthrie’s view about the orientalising nature of the three-headed snake-god, whose multipartite counterparts begin to appear in Greek art around 700 BC, Kirk still opposes the early (pre-Hellenistic) date suggested for the Hieronyman time-god, mainly because of the identification of the orientalising image with an *abstraction*.³⁶⁹ Zeller uses the same presupposition – that an early cosmic divine Χρόνος would have had to signify an abstraction – to deny the possibility of it being the originative principle in Pherecydes: “Aber doch ist es kaum glaublich, daß ein so

³⁶⁵ Guthrie 1935, 85.

³⁶⁶ Gruppe 1887, 656ff.

³⁶⁷ Guthrie 1935, 88.

³⁶⁸ Idem, 89: “For example, a glance at the chapter on ‘The Early Archaic (Orientalising) Period in Miss Lamb’s *Greek and Roman Bronzes* (Methuen, 1929) gives us at once instances of winged, and of mixed animal and human, types. A small figure from Sparta (seventh century) represents a lion with a serpent’s tail; the Tyszkiewicz plate (seventh century, Lamb, pl. 18b) shows figures with human head, lion’s body and wings, and other examples include sphinxes and griffins.”

³⁶⁹ Kirk et al. 1983, 22, n. 1: “This shows an acquaintance with rather complex oriental (especially Assyrian or Babylonian) modes of thought—something very different from the mere borrowing of a pictorial motif, or even the assimilation of a fully concrete myth-form. Such extravagances of imagination evoked little sympathy in the Greek mind before the Hellenistic period.”

altertümlicher Denker den abstrakten Begriff der Zeit unter der ersten Urgründen aufgeführt hatte.”³⁷⁰

The type of objection Zeller and Kirk offer against the possibility of Time being a primeval deity in a sixth-century doctrine and its having a complex concrete form, respectively, reflect our conventional understanding of the notion of ‘time’ as abstract, but we need to bear in mind that this sort of convention did not exist for the authors of the texts we are dealing with and for their contemporaries. In the early sixth century Solon and a generation later Anaximander ascribe to χρόνος the meaning which can be qualified as “time in general”, in the contexts that have been read by many modern scholars as indicating that the notion of time is personified (Sol. 36. 3 ἐν δίκηι χρόνου, Anaximand. B1 κατὰ τὴν τοῦ χρόνου τάξιν). I explained these usages of χρόνος as referring to the idea of *passage of time*, as reflected in the changes that are taking place in human and cosmic affairs, respectively. However, while this ‘concrete’ dimension of χρόνος is to some extent recognisable in the given Solonian and Anaximandrian usages, it is more difficult to determine the conceptual content of Pherecydes’ and Orphic notions of divine Χρόνος, though it can be assumed that it is at least similar to the one recognised in the works of their contemporaries.

Classifying the gods of Hesiodic genealogies West singles out a group of deities “that we should call abstractions: Death, Sleep, Deceit, Sex, Strife, Battles, Lies, Victory, Power, etc. In Hesiod’s time”, he explains, “it was not understood what abstractions are—no more was it in Plato’s. They must be something; they are invisible,

³⁷⁰ Zeller 1963, 103, n. 4. Cf. West 1971, 28: “If he (Zeller) had taken non-Greek evidence into account here, he would have found, not only that his objection to a Pherecydean Chronos (...) was based on a misjudgement of the capabilities of pre-philosophical speculation, but that the idea of the god Time as a cosmic progenitor was widely established in the east, at any rate by the fourth century B.C., and in India, at least, by a period which may be no later than Pherecydes.”

imperishable, and have great influence over human affairs; they must be gods.”³⁷¹ By the sixth century BC, as we have seen, time (χρόνος) was felt to have influence over human lives and cosmic affairs and it is therefore not surprising that some archaic Greek authors appear to have conceived of it in divine terms. There is no doubt that there is a great difference between the instances of Χρόνος as an ‘Augenblickspersonifikation’ and the accounts that establish Time as a principal cosmogonic deity. There is strong evidence that in the latter case we are dealing with a borrowed idea. It is believed that Pherecydes’ cosmology only partially reflects the oriental myth about the god Unageing Time, presumably introduced into Greece some time before the middle of the sixth century BC.³⁷² Orphic theogonies, on the other hand, show many elements in common with their eastern counterparts, including the depiction of the principal divinity:³⁷³ as West convincingly argues, the snake was an ancient and natural symbol of eternity, and the god’s lion and bull heads are possibly to be understood as expressions of his power and strength.³⁷⁴

In addition to its establishing Unageing Time as a principal deity, the Orphic Time-cosmogony coincides with its eastern mythical counterparts in respect of the explanation of the world’s creation. According to the Orphic Rhapsodies, Χρόνος, the father of Aither and Chaos,³⁷⁵ created a shining egg (fr. 114 B = 70 K), in which

³⁷¹ West 1966, 33. About personification of abstractions in Hesiod’s *Theogony* already Gomperz and Gomperz 1922, 36.

³⁷² West 1994a, 289.

³⁷³ West 1983a, 189 explains the serpent form of Chronos as having its remote origins in the Egyptian myth of Re’, who dwells as Atum in the primeval waters of Nūn assuming the bodily form of serpents. The original form of the eastern Time-god, according to West, “in Orphic poetry took on a symbolic significance which justified its retention and elaboration.”

³⁷⁴ West 1983a, 191f. West believes that the Orphic Chronos is to certain extent conceived in the spirit of archaic Greek art, but its complex and composite nature, of which there are not many examples in Greece itself, better fits Babylonian and Assyrian art.

³⁷⁵ The Hieronyman Theogony adds misty Erebus (Darkness) to the offspring of Chronos. Fragments of the Rhapsodies, on the other hand, mention in this context the phrases ‘gloomy Night’, ‘continuous darkness’, and ‘dark fog’ (fr. 105-107 Bernabé = 65-67 Kern).

hermaphrodite Phanes (Protogonos) developed. The serpent Time squeezed the egg until it broke. Thereupon the Aither and the misty Chasm were split, and the world was filled with radiance at the appearance of Phanes (fr. 122 B = 72 K). Here again, just as in Pherecydes' doctrine and in the oriental Time-cosmologies, divine Time generates without a consort. He is said to have produced an egg, and the same motif appears in the Middle Persian *Bundahišn* (partly based on a lost book of the Avesta, presumably from the Achaemenid period)³⁷⁶ as well as in three Phoenician cosmological accounts. In the earliest of the Phoenician cosmologies, which is ascribed to a certain 'Mōch(os)', *Oulomos* ("Remote Time") is said to have produced the divine craftsman *Chousoros* and then an egg through a self-fructifying act. When the egg broke in two, heaven and earth appeared from the halves.³⁷⁷ The figure of the egg-creating *Chousoros* reminds us of the Orphic Protogonos/Phanes, whose even closer parallel is to be found in the Indian *Prajāpati* (= 'Progenipotens'),³⁷⁸ the first-born son of the time-god *Kāla* (= Time). *Prajāpati* has the same radiant quality as Phanes and, according to some accounts, was born from an egg too.³⁷⁹ These are only some of the more evident parallels between the Greek and the Oriental Time-cosmogonies.³⁸⁰

The question again emerges—how old is all this? Let us repeat the opening sentence of this discussion: ancient sources indicate that Pherecydes' doctrine belongs to the middle of the sixth century BC. The date of the Oriental Time-cosmologies and their Orphic parallel is much more difficult to establish. West's painstaking analysis resulted in establishing that Time-cosmologies were popular in India around the end of

³⁷⁶ See West 1971, 30 and West 1983a, 199.

³⁷⁷ See West 1994a, 290ff.

³⁷⁸ Cf. West 1971, 33f.

³⁷⁹ West 1994a, 304.

³⁸⁰ A detailed comparison between the Greek and the Phoenician evidence (on which Greek authors probably drew) is to be found in West 1994a.

the sixth century BC, and in Iran and Phoenicia by the end of the fourth century BC. However, this supposition still does not enable us to date back the ‘original’ Orphic Time-cosmology to roughly the same period.³⁸¹ The above-mentioned Derveni Theogony, which can be reconstructed on the basis of the fourth-century papyrus exegesis, may itself be dated back to no later than the fifth century. Its story begins at the point when Zeus is about to assume supreme power, after swallowing Protogonos. It does not contain the myth of the god Unageing Time,³⁸² but its content does coincide with the latter part of the Rhapsodies.³⁸³ Having suggested that all the extant Orphic theogonies must be viewed as belonging to the same class, Gruppe argued that the Rhapsodic Theogony – the most complete of them all – represents an attempt to put together all the earlier strata of Orphic tradition.³⁸⁴ On this widely accepted assumption, the main features of the Rhapsodic Theogony – including the Time-cosmology – derive from as early as the fifth century or earlier. There are, however, scholars who oppose this view and clearly differentiate between earlier and later versions of the Orphic theogony, ascribing the Time-cosmology to the latter category (since it is absent from the Derveni papyrus). Brisson, for example, defers the creation of the Orphic theogony presented in the Rhapsodies to the first centuries of the Christian era, arguing that there are no earlier examples of Time-cosmology in Greece and that Pherecydes’ primordial Χρόνος is actually an allegorical interpretation of (Hesiodic) Κρόνος.³⁸⁵ Although I

³⁸¹ Cf. Guthrie 1935, 91.

³⁸² Brisson 1997 convincingly argues that χρόνος in column xii of the Derveni papyrus is not the primordial Χρόνος of the Rhapsodies. Betegh 2004, 249ff. offers a tentative interpretation of this inconclusive usage of χρόνος suggesting (rather unconvincingly) that it might be connecting celestial bodies with time.

³⁸³ Many of the 26 reconstructed columns of the Derveni papyrus contain verses which “correspond more or less exactly to fragments transmitted largely within the tradition of the Orphic *Rhapsodies*” (Funghi 1997, 27).

³⁸⁴ Guthrie 1935, 77.

³⁸⁵ Cf. Brisson 1997, 150, n. 4: “Here is what I consider to be the result of my research: a first version of the Orphic theogony, which was familiar to Aristophanes, Plato, and Eudemos was composed during the

disagree with this view, it clearly represents the complexity of the issue under discussion.³⁸⁶

The analogy between Pherecydes' doctrine, Near Eastern mythical cosmogonies and Orphic theological accounts, insofar as they establish Time as a principal primordial deity and explain the generation of the world through seminal conception and embryology, seems to suggest that they all originated "in the same mythopoeic and speculative milieu"³⁸⁷ near the middle of the sixth century BC. Some elements of this particular world view are to be found in Anaximander (creation of the world out of the "generative" (γόνιμον)),³⁸⁸ as well as in the theogony ascribed to Epimenides (in which two 'Titans' produced an egg, and more gods came from it), and especially in the parodic cosmogony of Aristophanes' *Birds* (693–702).³⁸⁹ More importantly for the present investigation, certain elements of Orphic Χρόνος have wider significance, as will become evident in the discussion to follow. Its role as a *creator god* appears to have been echoed in similar concepts found in fifth-century lyric poetry (most famously in Pindar's image of Χρόνος, ὁ πάντων πατήρ); its description as "*unageing*" resembles early Presocratic conception of eternal originative principle, and its *linking with Necessity* (Ἀνάγκη)³⁹⁰ has several parallels in Presocratic doctrines, as I will shortly

6th cent. in reaction to the traditional theogony alluded to in the Homeric and Hesiodic poems: this version had Night as primordial principle. At the beginning of the Christian era (...) a new version of the Orphic theogony was composed, known under the title *Ἱεροὶ λόγοι ἐν ῥαψωιδίαις κδ'*, in which the influence of Stoic allegoresis can be strongly felt; this explains the appearance of Chronos (Time) as the primordial divinity, etc."

³⁸⁶ Cf. Betegh 2004, 157f. Although he agrees with Brisson that "the presence of Chronos is the main indication of the difference between the earlier and the later versions" of the Orphic theogony, Betegh still criticises Brisson's reasons for placing the Orphic Time-cosmogony into the first century AD as well as his denying Χρόνος to Pherecydes' sixth-century doctrine (loc. cit., n. 117).

³⁸⁷ Schibli 1990, 35.

³⁸⁸ Cf. idem, 37: "the world-egg, produced by Time without intercourse, is the Orphic equivalent of the γόνιμος in Pherecydes and the γόνιμον in Anaximander."

³⁸⁹ West 1994a, 290.

³⁹⁰ Fr. 77 B = 54 K.

show. This may be taken as independent evidence in favour of the early dating of (the main features) of the Orphic Time-cosmology.

ii) Orphic αἰών

There are several instances of αἰών in the extant Orphic fragments. One of them is believed to be late Hellenistic (245.4 ~ 247.5 K = 377.4 ~ 378.5 B),³⁹¹ whereas the dates of the remaining three examples are more difficult to establish (although they also seem to be later than the period encompassed by this study). In fr. 95 K (= 242 B) we come across the phrase ἀπείριτος αἰών, which is a poetic variation of ἄπειρος αἰών first found in Aristotle and then also in later prose.³⁹² The expression ἀθάνατος αἰών in fr. 142 K (= 231 B), according to West, possibly refers to silver race, to whom *very long existence* was ascribed. This is comparable to Empedocles' description of "long-lived gods", θεοὶ δολιχαίωνες, in B21. 12 and 23. 8 (see below). West suggests that the story of three races must have come "from the line of tradition in which there was a demiurge Phanes-Protogonos before Kronos and Zeus."³⁹³ Finally, in the eschatological context of fr. 223 K (= 339 B) we read λίπηι δέ μιν ἱερὸς αἰών ("his holy αἰών would leave him"). While this is reminiscent of the early epic descriptions of death, the attribute ascribed to αἰών here shows that the fragment is much later.³⁹⁴ Although we do not come across this type of attribute of αἰών in early Greek literature, this usage resembles Pindar's mention of "the image of life" (αἰῶνος εἶδωλον), which is said to be "from the gods" (i.e. holy) and to survive the death of the body (Pi. fr. 131b).³⁹⁵

³⁹¹ The expression φύλης αἰῶνος ἀμέρσῃ echoes Hom. X 58 and Hes. Sc. 331.

³⁹² Cf. West 1983a, 219f. (especially n. 139).

³⁹³ See West 1983a, 98 (and n. 53).

³⁹⁴ West 1983a, 99 compares the eschatology of the Rhapsodies with that of Empedocles and suggests it comes from the fifth century.

³⁹⁵ See below, p. 224.

A I Ω N IN HERACLITUS

“Gott würfelt nicht”

Albert Einstein

i) Ancient testimonia

The third-century Christian writer Hippolytus preserves an instance of αἰών used by Heraclitus in a striking fragment composed in the typical riddling style of the Presocratic philosopher, which presents the word in an entirely new light (Hipp. *Ref.* 9. 9 = DK22 B52):

(ὅτι δέ ἐστι παῖς τὸ πᾶν καὶ δι’ αἰῶνος βασιλεὺς τῶν ὅλων, οὕτως λέγει [sc.

Ἡράκλειτος]) ‘αἰὼν παῖς ἐστι παίζων, πεσσεύων· παιδὸς ἢ βασιληΐη.’

(“That the whole [or the universe] is a child and the eternal king of all, he [sc.

Heraclitus] says in the following way):

‘αἰὼν is a child at play, playing a game with stones;³⁹⁶ to a child the kingdom belongs.’”

Hippolytus quotes this sentence in a discussion aimed at exposing the heresy of Noetus of Smyrna,³⁹⁷ who taught that the Father and the Son were the same: this equation,

Hippolytus explains, originated from Heraclitus’ theory of the unity of the opposites and

was implied in fragment B52 (*Ref.* 9. 7). In the sentence introducing Heraclitus’ saying

Hippolytus indicates that αἰὼν in the fragment implies *eternity* of the divine power (παῖς

... δι’ αἰῶνος βασιλεύς).³⁹⁸ This interpretation is clearly designed to suit his intention to

discredit the doctrine of Noetus and is, therefore, not very helpful for clarification of

³⁹⁶ See LSJ, s.v. πεσσός: “oval-shaped stone for playing draughts or backgammon, usu. in pl.” For the nature of the game played by αἰὼν see further down.

³⁹⁷ Legge 1921, 118.

³⁹⁸ According to Rossi 1982, 2, this interpretation accords with the Aristotelean etymology of αἰὼν (*Cael.* 279a-b: αἰὲν ὄν).

Heraclitus' original idea. In addition, it completely neglects the central part of the fragment, namely the couplet παίζων πεσσεύων.

A further testimony to the authenticity of Heraclitus' saying is found in the second-century author Lucian of Samosata, in a comic context, which parodies the philosopher's discourse by using some of the original terminology and by combining two Heraclitean τόποι, unity of opposites and permanence of change (*Vit. Auct.* 14):³⁹⁹ ταῦτα ὁδύρομαι ὅτι καὶ ἔμπεδον οὐδέν, ἀλλὰ κως ἐς κυκεῶνα πάντα συνειλέονται καὶ ἔστι τωὐτὸ τέρψις ἀτερψίη, γνῶσις ἀγνωσίη, μέγα μικρόν, ἄνω κάτω, περιχωρέοντα καὶ ἀμειβόμενα ἐν τῇ τοῦ αἰῶνος παιδιῇ.

“This I lament, that nothing is stable, but everything is as it were crushed together into a *kykeon*, and the same thing are pleasure and unpleasantness, knowledge and ignorance, big and small, up and down, circling and changing in turn in the play of αἰών.”

When asked what is this αἰών, Lucian's 'Heraclitus' replies:

παῖς παίζων, πεσσεύων, συμφερόμενος διαφερόμενος

“a child at play, playing with stones, being brought together and brought apart”

This paraphrase preserves most of the fragment's wording. The added pair of participles, found in some other Heraclitean contexts (B10 and 51), illustrates the idea of the unity of opposites, which αἰών here seems to embody. On the other hand, the first (authentic) part of the paraphrase represents αἰών as an active factor apparently causing perpetual changes. We should, however, be careful not to rely too much on this parodic mixture of Heraclitean motifs in our interpretation of αἰών in the original fragment.

An allusion to fragment B52 is made by the second-century theologian Clement of Alexandria, who argues that all those who follow the (Christian) truth are children in

³⁹⁹ Cf. Rossi 1982, 6.

the eyes of God. Having illustrated the idea with the story of the play of Isaac and Rebecca under the supramundane supervision of the divine wisdom, Clement refers to Heraclitus' fragment in the following way (*Paed.* 1. 5. 22. 1):

τοιαύτην τινὰ παίζειν παιδιὰν τὸν ἑαυτοῦ Δία Ἡράκλειτος λέγει.

"Heraclitus says that his Zeus plays a game of this sort".

We can again ignore the Christian context in which this reference occurs. However, Clement's remark seems to contain an interesting piece of information, especially in view of the fact that he is known to have read (and quoted from) early Greek literature, including philosophy. He refers to αἰὼν in the fragment he draws on as "Heraclitus' Zeus", presumably to distinguish it from the Zeus of popular belief (cf. fr. B32).⁴⁰⁰

Finally, the motif of game-playing in the context of Heraclitus' philosophy is mentioned by Proclus, the fifth-century Neoplatonist philosopher, who in his commentary on Plato's *Timaeus* (1. 334. 1f.) explains that the Ephesian philosopher is one of those who claim that "the Demiurge plays in creating the world" (ἄλλοι δὲ καὶ τὸν δημιουργὸν ἐν τῷ κοσμοῦργεῖν παίζειν εἰρήκασιν, καθάπερ Ἡράκλειτος). There is, however, no mention of a Demiurge and indeed no place for a Creator figure in Heraclitus' doctrine (cf. B30 κόσμον τόνδε ... οὔτε τις θεῶν οὔτε ἀνθρώπων ἐποίησεν).⁴⁰¹

Heraclitus' unprecedented personification of αἰὼν,⁴⁰² which is represented as a child at play and then ascribed a kingdom, led to its being interpreted as the *governing power* (Lucian), as the *supreme divinity* (Clement), the *creator* (Proclus), and the defining attribute of the *supreme being* (Hippolytus). Marcovich, however, rejects all

⁴⁰⁰ Also quoted by Clement (*Strom.* 5. 115. 1).

⁴⁰¹ See also Beikos 1971, 159: "Besides, the sequence of the text makes it clear that Proclus gives a Christian meaning to the god-creator's παιδιά."

⁴⁰² Cf. Lackey 1916, 82 and West 1971, 159.

these explanations, arguing that the testimonies of Clement, Lucian and Proclus about Heraclitus' fragment 52 (in his numeration 93) "contain the Stoic misinterpretation of αἰών as God (Zeus; Aeon) or the Demiurge which fashions the world and destroys it again".⁴⁰³ He adds that the testimony of Hippolytus "probably also ... comes from a Stoic source".⁴⁰⁴ This criticism aside, these ancient testimonies may still contain some important information about the meaning of the fragment. It is evident, however, that the meaning of the difficult Heraclitean αἰών should be explained from the wording of the fragment itself. But this is where things start to get complicated, for the fact that the meaning of αἰών in DK22 B52 is unclear complicates the understanding of the saying as a whole, while, on the other hand, the context in which αἰών appears does not uncontroversially clarify the sense of the noun. However, the indisputable obscurity of the fragment continues to inspire scholars to try to find a 'solution' to the riddle and offer their own interpretations.

ii) Fragment analysis and modern interpretations

Modern interpretations of the controversial fragment – and here I focus mainly on twentieth-century scholarship – are typically based on the understanding of its four constitutive elements: the notions signified by αἰών, παῖς (παίζειν), πессεύειν, and βασιληίη. Some scholars discuss each one of them separately, others focus on just one or two of these elements, but it turns out that each of the key notions has been interpreted in two alternative ways.

⁴⁰³ Marcovich 1967, 493. In the section devoted to the discussion of fr. 52 (ibid. 490ff.) he also cites Plu. *de E* 393, Philo, *de vita Mos.* 1. 31 and Gr. Naz. *carm.* ii, sect. i, nr. 85,11, which in a way resemble Heraclitus' fragment, but cannot beyond doubt be defined as references to it.

⁴⁰⁴ Marcovich 1967, 493.

a) Αἰών

In his 1954 book *Heraclitus. The Cosmic Fragments*, Kirk proposed a general division of Heraclitus' sayings into two classes, the "cosmic" and the "anthropocentric", according to whether their subject matter is the world as a whole or men. Because of the fact that αἰών "in early contexts and used by itself (i.e. not in prepositional phrases) ... most likely refers to *human lifetime*", Kirk decided to place B52 into the second class, admitting, however, that βασιληή "may be over all things absolutely".⁴⁰⁵ This classification can serve as an illustration of modern tendencies in the interpretation of Heraclitus' αἰών and the whole of fragment B52. The "anthropocentric" interpretation, which explains αἰών as operative in the sphere of human existence, has been preferred by Fränkel, Classen, Marcovich⁴⁰⁶ and others. The "cosmic" interpretation, however, understands αἰών as a cosmic agent, influencing the world as a whole. It is usually rendered by "Time" (Burnet), "Zeit" (Nestle), "Weltlauf, der unserem Philosophen mit der Gottheit zusammenfällt" (Zeller),⁴⁰⁷ etc.

At first sight, it may seem that the first type of interpretation has the stronger claim to authenticity, for αἰών, as Kirk noted, in early contexts refers to *human life*. I shall therefore begin with a brief overview of the meanings of the word in early Greek literature before and around Heraclitus' time and then try to apply them to Heraclitus' personified agent. This means that I will mention some usages that will be discussed in detail later, but I hope the translations and explanations provided here will help to clarify their semantic implications.

⁴⁰⁵ Kirk 1954, xiii ("Preface").

⁴⁰⁶ Fränkel 1938, 320; Classen 1962, 369; Marcovich 1967, 493. Their specific interpretations of αἰών are, however, different.

⁴⁰⁷ Burnet 1945, 139; Nestle 1948, 139ff.; Zeller 1963, 808, n. 2. Zeller follows Proclus' reference to the fragment (op. cit. 807: "Heraklit vergleicht ... die weltbildende Kraft einem Kinde, das im Spiele mit den Steinen hin- und herzieht").

There is, first, the early epic sense of “vitality”, which is difficult to adapt to the Heraclitean context (its only activity being “leaving” the body at death or “being wasted away” in sorrow). The other meaning of αἰών that emerges already in early epic is “lifetime”, and αἰών can hardly be envisaged as having an active role (let alone as being personified), if we take it to imply merely “duration of individual life.” However, the usual semantic application of αἰών in fifth-century literature, as I will show below, is “life” in a general sense, which encompasses both the duration and content of an individual existence. When denoting the “course of life”, during which (the content of) individual existence unfolds, αἰών may be imagined as influencing the individual (e.g., *Pi. N. 2. 6ff.* πατρίαν / εἴπερ καθ’ ὁδόν νιν εὐθυπομπός / αἰών “if the life that guides him straight on the road of his fathers, etc.”). “Circumstances of one’s life” may thus be said to affect one (e.g. *S. Tr. 34f.* τοιοῦτος αἰών 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”).⁴⁰⁸ However, in Heraclitus’ fragment αἰών seems to have a more general sense, transcending individual existence.⁴⁰⁹ In some poetic passages αἰών approaches the sense of “time”, whose passage brings about changes to mortal beings (e.g. *Pi. I. 3. 18* αἰὼν δὲ κυλινδομέναις ἀμέραις ἄλλ’ ἄλλοτ’ ἐξ / ἄλλαξεν. ἄτρωτοὶ γὰρ μὲν παῖδες θεῶν “(life)time with its rolling days changes now this now that. Invulnerable are only the children of gods”). The contrast with the invulnerability of the gods emphasises the effects that αἰών has on mortals.⁴¹⁰ Could it be that αἰών in Heraclitus’ fr. 52 applies to an even broader realm, encompassing the entire universe?

⁴⁰⁸ When viewed as that which befalls us in the course of our lives αἰών approaches the idea of individual destiny (cf. αἰὼν μόρσιμος in *Pi. O. 2. 10f.*).

⁴⁰⁹ See, however, Classen 1962, 369.

⁴¹⁰ Cf. *Pi. I. 8. 14f.*: ... δόλιος γὰρ αἰὼν ἐπ’ ἀνδράσι κρέμαται, / ἐλίσσων βίου πόρον.

Some modern scholars believe it does.⁴¹¹ Αἰών has a ‘cosmological’ sense in Empedocles B16, where it apparently refers to the “ceaseless life” (ἄσπετος αἰών) of the universe (see below). We should now see if there is any support for this interpretation of αἰών in the rest of the fragment.

b) Παῖς παίζων πεσσεύων

Relying on the fact that in several fragments of Heraclitus’ teaching children are represented as foolish and immature (fr. 70, 79, 117),⁴¹² some modern scholars have suggested that the image of “child’s play” (παῖς παίζων) in B52 indicates foolishness, capriciousness, and unpredictability of the rule of αἰών.⁴¹³ This kind of interpretation, however, neglects the role of the participle πεσσεύων and is, therefore, incomplete. In order to meet this problem, scholars have tried to relate the second participle to the same idea of unpredictability of a childish game by claiming that πεσσεύειν refers to a game of chance, the outcome of which depends on the unpredictable fall of dice (κύβος).⁴¹⁴ Some support for this explanation is found in the definitions of πεσσοί and the act of πεσσεύειν found in ancient sources.⁴¹⁵

However, the majority of ancient testimonies indicate that πεσσεία was actually a game of skill, based on definite rules and normally played by adults.⁴¹⁶ Πεσσεύειν involved skillful and thoughtful playing and probably resembled the modern game of

⁴¹¹ See e.g. Kahn 1979, 228.

⁴¹² See Fränkel 1938, 315.

⁴¹³ Id., 320 and Degani 1961, 73.

⁴¹⁴ See e.g. Marcovich 1967, 494: “Now, my point is that the implication of the verb: ‘a fortuitous or meaningless action’ (as supposed by Wilamowitz, *Euripides Herakles*,² II, 155: ‘um das regellose Spiel ... zu schildern’, and by Th. Gomperz, *Gr. Denker*³, I, 53: ‘eine zwecklose Tätigkeit’) is much more likely than: ‘a thoughtful and skillful one’; because it is played by a παῖς, and because the issue of the game most probably depended on the fortuity or chance of dice...”. Cf. Bröcker 1958, 433.

⁴¹⁵ Io. Chrys. xi 97c, Hesych. π 2072, 2074-5, Suda π 1391, *EM* 666.17, Schol. Pl. *Lg.* vii 820C. For further arguments in support of this interpretation of πεσσεύειν see H. Lamer, *RE* XIII, 1938f. (s.v. *Lusoria tabula* d).

⁴¹⁶ Cf. e.g. Hom. α 107; Pi. fr. 129. 6; E. fr. 369. 9, id. *Supp.* 409; Ar. *Ec.* 98; Pl. *Lg.* vii 820C, etc.

draughts.⁴¹⁷ Even if it included the use of dice, in which case the game would be similar to modern backgammon, it would have involved tactics and planning on the side of the players and it would be difficult to imagine a child playing the game properly. Besides, as some scholars have noted, to view the game Heraclitus' αἰών plays as some sort of capricious and unpredictable activity would be out of keeping with his repeated insistence on the universal rule of law, measure and regularity (on the cosmic and human levels alike).⁴¹⁸ The additional advantage of the interpretation of πεσσεύειν as referring to a game of skill and rules is that it justifies the usage of the participle πεσσεύων,⁴¹⁹ which specifies the nature of the game the child αἰών plays. Had Heraclitus wanted to represent the rule of αἰών simply as a childish play, he need not have added this specification.

This interpretation reveals a paradoxical image at the core of B52: a *foolish* child playing a *thoughtful* game.⁴²⁰ Some scholars interpret the paradox differently by suggesting a different connotation for παῖς: the word does not necessarily have to have a negative connotation, for it can be taken to imply effortlessness and the ease with which children play. According to West, “this suits the emphasis added by the word παίζων, and the way in which child’s-play comparisons are used in Homer, Alcman and Anacreon.”⁴²¹ The fragment as a whole would then indicate that “what appears at the receiving end as the exercise of compelling power in fact requires little effort or

⁴¹⁷ Cf. LSJ, s.v. πεσσοί. See also Poll. ix 98: κινεῖν πεπτόν, Eustath. *Od.* 1396, 15: πεπτεύειν· ταυλίζειν, μετατιθέναι. Cf. Campbell and Jowett (1894), 19: “πεπτοί are ‘draughts’, which were played in various ways. According to one mode of playing the game, you blocked up your antagonist so that he was unable to move. This process of ‘shutting up’ is used as an illustration of Socrates’ method of arguing in vi. 287B, C ...” More illustrations of the nature of ancient πεσσεῖα can be found in Rossi 1982, 16-19.

⁴¹⁸ See e.g. Kirk 1954, xiii; West 1971, 159; Kahn 1979, 228f.

⁴¹⁹ Cf. Beikos 1971, 156.

⁴²⁰ Cf. Rossi 1982, 22.

⁴²¹ West 1971, 159. See also *ibid.* n. 2.

attentiveness on the part of the divine agent.”⁴²² The divine agent would, of course, be αἰών, which in a simple and spontaneous manner provides the rule of order. Although attractive, this interpretation is at odds with Heraclitus’ typical portrayal of children: in three out of eight fragments where he mentions them, Heraclitus represents them as being foolish and immature (fr. 79, 70, 117); fragments 20 and 74 are neutral in that respect, whereas fr. 56 and 121 first presuppose the negative outlook on children, only to prove, paradoxically, that they can be more worthy than those who are normally perceived as such.⁴²³

According to Licia Rossi, the antithesis παῖς : πεσσεύων was used by Heraclitus as a *rhetorical device*: the expression παῖς παίζων πεσσεύων is an example of the “metaphor by privation” (ἐκ τῶν στερήσεων).⁴²⁴ The verb πεσσεύειν belongs to the semantic field of παίζειν, but it is opposite to that of παῖς, for it implies the game of skill and planning, which is not suitable for children.⁴²⁵ Thus, it turns out that αἰών is a child, who is not a child, for it plays the adult game. Rossi believes that Heraclitus’ linking of the notions that cannot go together is the key enigma of the fragment. Its purpose was to surprise and attract attention: at first sight it seems that αἰών is compared to a παῖς, but the introduction of the participle πεσσεύων reveals that it is the player of πεσσεία that

⁴²² West, loc. cit. Similarly Deichgräber 1963, 37: “Wir schließen hiermit den Abschnitt über die Sätze von der Sinneinheit des Entgegengesetzten. Wir könnten auch B 52 als beispielhaft ansehen. ‘Das Ew’ge regt sich fort in allen’, aber als **Ordnung in unbegreiflicher Spontanität**.” [bold type added]

⁴²³ Cf. Wohlfahrt’s analysis of these fragments and his conclusion: “Es ist unbestreitbar, daß vom Kind in der überwiegenden Zahl der Fragmente in einem abschätzigen Sinne die Rede ist” (Wohlfahrt 1991, 86ff.)

⁴²⁴ Cf. Arist. *Rh.* 1408a5ff. See Cope and Sandys 1877, 70f.: “Hence (from the *absence* of a certain quality or attribute) the poets also derive their epithets (...) such as *a stringless* or *lyreless* music – music, but without the ordinary accompaniment or instrument, the strings of the lyre, or the lyre itself: applied to the sound of the *wind*-instrument, the trumpet – for they apply privative epithets; this being popular when expressed in the metaphors of proportion, as when the (sound or music of the) trumpet is called a lyreless music.”

⁴²⁵ Rossi 1982, 22.

it is actually meant to be compared to.⁴²⁶ By the same line of reasoning, it eventually turns out that the child is the ruler. Although this explanation of the central paradox of the fragment is convincing, it does not tell us why αἰών was compared to a παῖς in the first place, unless for the sake of obtaining a paradoxical expression in the end, παιδὸς ἢ βασιληΐῃ (which Rossi explains in a unique way: ““nell’antichità era infatti impossibile il regno di un fanciullo”).⁴²⁷

It seems to me, however, that the initial comparison of αἰών with a playing child was meant to bring to mind a certain idea – probably that (the course of) *life* resembles the capriciousness of a child at play – only for it to turn out, by the specification of the game, that there is order and reason to that which befalls us. The question remains, however: why is the child αἰών ascribed a kingdom (βασιληΐῃ) in the end?

c) Βασιληΐῃ / βασιλεύς

Although there are interpretations of fr. B52 suggesting that βασιληΐῃ refers to the political institution of human society,⁴²⁸ there seems to be little doubt that the possession of kingdom should be taken to imply that αἰών has divine power (as the above-quoted ancient paraphrases indicate),⁴²⁹ for the appellative βασιλεύς was used as a designation of divinity throughout early Greek literature, including Presocratic philosophy.⁴³⁰ Heraclitus himself uses it in his description of “War” (Πόλεμος),

⁴²⁶ See Rossi 1982, 23ff.

⁴²⁷ Ead., 26. According to her interpretation of the fragment, the approximation of αἰών and παῖς is paradoxical as well (which suggests that Αἰών is perceived as an intelligent ruler from the outset) and the purpose of the paradox is to attract attention.

⁴²⁸ See Marcovich 1967, 495.

⁴²⁹ See also Arist. *Cael.* 279a22: τὸ γὰρ τοῦτο τοῦνομα (sc. αἰών) θεῖως ἔφθεγκται παρὰ τῶν ἀρχαίων. This indicates that, as far as Aristotle knew, the usage of αἰών in a cosmic sense, with the implication that it was a divine being, was very old. He offers a philosophical interpretation for the word’s acquiring this ‘cosmic’ sense, linking it to the idea of time in general (ὁ πᾶς χρόνος, as compared to the duration of individual life, ὁ τῆς ἐκάστου ζωῆς χρόνος).

⁴³⁰ Cf. LSJ, s.v. βασιλεύς i b.

alternatively called “Strife” (Ἔρις), which in his doctrine denotes a general cosmic principle of change (most strikingly expressed in the exchange of opposites), according to which the universe as a whole and everything in it functions (DK22 B53):⁴³¹

Πόλεμος πάντων μὲν πατήρ ἐστι, πάντων δὲ βασιλεύς, καὶ τοὺς μὲν θεοὺς ἔδειξε τοὺς δὲ ἀνθρώπους, τοὺς μὲν δούλους ἐποίησε τοὺς δὲ ἐλευθέρους.

“War is the father of all and the king of all, and he shows some as gods and others as men, he makes some slaves and others free”.

There is no doubt that Heraclitus’ Πόλεμος is not a deity in the traditional sense, but its uncontested power and universality earn it divine status.⁴³² Could the same be true of αἰών in fr. B52?

Here I would like to recall an interesting remark that Kirk made in his detailed discussion of fr. 53. Analysing its structure and meaning Kirk noticed that the first part of the fragment introduces a personified, universal *War*, endowed with powers normally ascribed to Zeus, whereas its second part (especially the final clause) strongly suggests the idea of concrete *war*, in which some are made gods some men,⁴³³ and of the latter, some are made slaves, some free. “We are not entitled”, Kirk explains, “to demand that Heraclitus should adhere to one kind of application of a concept, even within the limits of a single sentence.”⁴³⁴ I would like to use this observation to argue that the first part of B52, αἰὼν παῖς παίζων, should be understood in a straightforward way: “the course of

⁴³¹ DK22 B80: εἰδέναι χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἔοντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ’ ἔριν καὶ χρεών.

⁴³² Cf. how Heraclitus talks about the (divine) ‘Wise’ in fr. 32: ἐν τὸ σοφὸν μόνον λέγεσθαι οὐκ ἐθέλει καὶ ἐθέλει Ζηνὸς ὄνομα. About this concept and Heraclitus’ refusal to identify it with the Zeus of traditional religion, see Kirk 1954, 246 and West 1971, 140.

⁴³³ Kirk 1954, 249 explains that “the distinction between men and gods may apply particularly to death in battle, if fr. 24 is rightly interpreted” (fr. 24 implies that those slain in battle “gain a better fate”). He adds that the same clause may also have a more general meaning, “in view of general statements like fr. 62 and 88.”

⁴³⁴ Kirk 1954, 248.

life (or course of time as experienced in human life) is like a child at play”, unpredictable, capricious, and indifferent. Paradoxically, however, with the introduction of *πεσσεύων*, it turns out that the child plays a game of skill, which implies rules and planning. Thus the child may eventually be said to possess universal power (*βασιληή*), for order is everywhere, not just in our lives, but also in the life of the universe as a whole (cf. Empedocles B16).

As for the question of the *realm* encompassed by *αἰών* in Heraclitus’ fragment B52, it may be said that it(s rule) extends over the sphere of human existence and then implicitly shifts to the world in general. The idea that the fragment communicates is that, contrary to appearances, the sequence of events both in human life and in the world as a whole follows a certain order. It may perhaps be recognised in the succession of different stages of life and in the succession of generations⁴³⁵ and, on a cosmic level, in the sequence of cosmic phenomena (such as the Great Year⁴³⁶). As for the *meaning* of *αἰών* in B52, we may conclude that Heraclitus exploited its semantic complexity. He relied on its signifying (human) “life” in general, with its characteristic changeability and transience that lyric poetry of the time so often complains about and on its conceptual kinship with the notion of “time”, as experienced in the passage of cosmic events.⁴³⁷ These semantic features of *αἰών* are, as we will see, recognisable in the way the word is used by other Greek authors of roughly the same time.

⁴³⁵ See DK22 B19 and West’s interpretation of the fragment (West 1971, 154). Cf. DK22 A19, Kahn (1979), 231.

⁴³⁶ It was ascribed to Heraclitus by Aetius and Censorinus (DK22 A13), who understand it as a cycle in the movement of the sun, moon, and planets. For its connection with the human generative cycle see West (1971), 157f.

⁴³⁷ Since the cosmic life does not end, this application of *αἰών*, as some suggest, led to its acquiring the meaning of “unlimited life”, “eternity” (see *OCD* and *Lexicon der Alten Welt*, s.v. *Aiōn*; cf. Degani 1961, 74).

COSMIC TIME

X P O N O Σ AND A I Ω N IN EMPEDOCLES

Details of Empedocles' philosophical system, dated at around the middle of the fifth century BC, are preserved in numerous fragments quoted and commented on by various later authors. Despite the abundance of the primary evidence, reconstructions of Empedocles' philosophical system have produced different results, sometimes even in respect of the key features of his philosophical doctrine.⁴³⁸ Uncertainty of interpretation of Empedocles' teaching often results from the vagueness of his verbal expression, and this feature of his language will become apparent in the present discussion too.⁴³⁹

Besides this imprecision of language, Empedocles is often blamed for the lack of argumentation for the ideas he vividly and poetically exposes.⁴⁴⁰ Here I will look at the fragments that contain αἰών and/or χρόνος and I will deal with controversial questions of Empedocles' philosophy only insofar as they turn out to be relevant to understanding of the semantic applications of the two words.

In over 150 authentic fragments of Empedocles' philosophical doctrine collected in Diels–Kranz's *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (DK31) αἰών occurs eight times, of which three times as a constitutive part of compound adjectives, and χρόνος appears in four fragments. Two additional instances of αἰών (one of them is again a constitutive part of a compound adjective) are to be found in the newly edited Strasbourg papyrus that contains further evidence of Empedocles' doctrine.⁴⁴¹

⁴³⁸ Cf. e.g. Inwood 2001, 42.

⁴³⁹ See e.g. Inwood's explanation of the various senses of "becoming" (γίγνεσθαι) in Empedocles (Inwood 2001, 34ff.).

⁴⁴⁰ Cf. Barnes 1982, 311.

⁴⁴¹ See Martin and Primavesi 1998.

Compound adjectives with -αιων-: θεοὶ δολιχαίωνες (B21. 12 and *P. Strasb.* a(ii) 2),

θεοὺς δολιχαίωνα (B23. 8), μακραίωνος ... βίοιο (B115. 5);

Αἰών in the singular: ἄσπετος αἰών (B16. 2), ἔμπεδος αἰών (B17. 11 and B26. 10), δι’

αἰῶνος (B110. 3);

Αἰών in the plural: δέκ’ ἀνθρώπων καὶ τ’ εἴκοσιν αἰώνεσσιν (B129. 6), [πολλ]οὶ δ’

αἰῶνες πρότερ[οι] (*P. Strasb.* a(ii) 6);

Χρόνος (always in the singular): περιπλομένοιο χρόνοιο (B17. 29 and B110. 8),

τελειομένοιο χρόνοιο (B30. 2), διὰ χρόνου (B115. 7).

i) Compound adjectives with -αιων-

In fragments B21 and 23, as well as in *P. Strasb.* a(ii) 2, we come across a compound adjective, δολιχαίων, with which certain θεοί are described. The gods in question do not seem to be equivalent to those of the Homeric mythical tradition, for the ones

Empedocles describes have the same origin as trees, men and women, animals, birds and fish, and are said to be “long-lived” rather than, as one would expect, “eternal” (αἰεὶ ἐόντες or ἀθάνατοι). B21. 9-14:

ἐκ τούτων γὰρ πάνθ’ ὅσα τ’ ἦν ὅσα τ’ ἔστι καὶ ἔσται,⁴⁴²

δένδρεά τ’ ἐβλάστησε καὶ ἀνέρες ἠδὲ γυναῖκες,

θῆρες τ’ οἰωνοὶ τε καὶ ὕδατοθρέμμονες ἰχθυῖς,

καὶ τε θεοὶ δολιχαίωνες τιμῇσι φέριστοι.⁴⁴³

αὐτὰ γὰρ ἔστιν ταῦτα, δι’ ἀλλήλων δὲ θέοντα

γίγνεται ἀλλοιωπά· τόσον διὰ κρήσις ἀμείβει.

⁴⁴² According to Simplicius (*in Ph.* 159. 13). Relying on Arist. *Metaph.* 1000a20 Wright proposes ἐκ τῶν πάνθ’ ὅσα τ’ ἦν ὅσα τ’ ἔστι καὶ ἔσται ὁπίσσω (Wright 1981, 179).

⁴⁴³ The first four verses quoted correspond to what has been reconstructed as lines a(i) 8-9 to a(ii) 1-2 in *P. Strasb.*

“From them comes all that was and is and will be – trees have sprung up and men and women, beasts and birds and water-bred fish, and long-lived gods, too, highest in honour. For there are just these, but running through each other they assume different appearances: so much does mixture change them” (trans. Schofield).

This fragment is quoted in full by Simplicius (*in Ph.* 159. 13) after another fragment of Empedocles’ teaching which Diels numbers as 17. The long fragment B17 contains an elaborate account of Empedocles’ distinctive metaphysical thesis: on its elementary level, the universe consists of *four primary elements* (he calls them “roots”)⁴⁴⁴ – water, air, earth, and fire – which, under the influence of the powers of Love and Strife that pervade them, “run through each other”, that is, they mix with each other,⁴⁴⁵ connect and disconnect, and in doing so they become and cease to be different forms in the visible world (cf. B17. 35: γίγνεται ἄλλοτε ἄλλα καὶ ἡνεκὲς αἰὲν ὁμοῖα).⁴⁴⁶ In the opening lines of B21 Empedocles points to the instances of apparently pure elements perceptible in the world around us.⁴⁴⁷ It is to these elementary substances that τούτων in the first line quoted refers; as they blend and combine everything “that was and is and will be”⁴⁴⁸ is born, including Empedocles’ “long-lived gods”. One wonders what it is that these θεοί owe their divine status to, for it seems that at the ontological level “the roots” have a better claim to divinity: the roots alone (always) *are*, whereas

⁴⁴⁴ Schofield in Kirk et al. 1983, 286: “The idea of a quartet of elements seems to be original with Empedocles.” Cf. Arist. *Metaph.* 985a31-33: ἔτι δὲ τὰ ὡς ἐν ὕλης εἶδει λεγόμενα στοιχεῖα τέτταρα πρῶτος εἶπεν.

⁴⁴⁵ Cf. Inwood 2001, 36.

⁴⁴⁶ Cf. *P. Strasb.* a(i)5.

⁴⁴⁷ B21. 3-8.

⁴⁴⁸ This is an instance of the poetic formula in which different tenses are distinguished (cf. above on Sol. 4. 15). Here it points to omnipresence and eternity of the four roots. Cf. Wright 1981, 179.

the beings *become* (B21. 13-14).⁴⁴⁹ We will shortly see that Empedocles introduces further divinities in addition to these two groups.

Empedocles illustrates his theory about the structure of the universe by the simile of painters, who mix *in harmony* different quantities of pigments in order to produce various colours with which they represent objects of the visible world (B23. 1-8):

ὥς δ' ὅποταν γραφῆες ἀναθήματα ποικίλλωσιν
ἀνέρες ἀμφὶ τέχνης ὑπὸ μήτιος εὖ δεδαῶτε,
οἷτ' ἐπεὶ οὖν μάρψωσι πολύχροα φάρμακα χερσίν,
ἀρμονίῃ μείζαντε τὰ μὲν πλέω, ἄλλα δ' ἐλάσσω,
ἐκ τῶν εἶδεα πᾶσιν ἀλίγκια πορσύνουσι,
δένδρεά τε κτίζοντε καὶ ἀνέρας ἠδὲ γυναῖκας
θῆρας τ' οἰωνούς τε καὶ ὕδατοθρέμμονας ἰχθῦς
καὶ τε θεοὺς δολιχαίωνας τιμῇσι φερίστους·

“As when painters are decorating offerings, men through cunning well skilled in their craft – when they actually seize pigments of many colours in their hands, mixing in harmony more of some and less of others, they produce from them forms resembling all things, creating trees and men and women, beasts and birds and water-bred fish, and long lived gods, too, highest in honour” (trans. Schofield).

At the end of this fragment Empedocles gives a divine sanction to the cosmological thesis he has just expounded by claiming that it comes from a god (B23. 11: ἀλλὰ τορῶς ταῦτ' ἴσθι, θεοῦ πάρα μῦθον ἀκούσας). The meaning of θεός in this line has been diversely interpreted by modern scholars. Some believe it refers to Empedocles

⁴⁴⁹ This divine quality of Empedocles' four material principles is highlighted in B6, where he ascribes to them traditional divine names, Zeus, Hera, Aidoneus, and Nestis.

himself,⁴⁵⁰ whereas others argue that it implies Aphrodite or, according to the majority, the Muse.⁴⁵¹ Although we cannot be certain about this instance, Empedocles undoubtedly declares himself a god in B 112. 4, where he addresses the people of Acragas (ἐγὼ δ' ὑμῖν θεὸς ἄμβροτος οὐκέτι θνητός).⁴⁵² In the fragment B115, however, Empedocles claims to be a *daimon* and there seems to be a connection between the two statements. In this fragment the compound adjective μακραίων is used to account for the longevity of certain “daimons”. In this adjective -αιων- clearly signifies “life”, with the emphasis on its duration.⁴⁵³ The fragment as a whole describes the destiny of “daimons” in the following way:

ἔστιν Ἀνάγκης χρῆμα, θεῶν ψήφισμα παλαιόν,
αἰδίων, πλατέεσσι κατεσφρηγισμένον ὄρκοις·
εὖτε τις ἀμπλακίησι φόνωι φίλα γυῖα μίηνη,
[νείκει θ'] ὅς κ(ε) ἐπίορκον ἀμαρτήσας ἐπομόσση,
δαίμονες οἷτε μακραίωνος λελάχασι βίοιο,
τρίς μιν μυρίας ὥρας ἀπὸ μακάρων ἀλάλησθαι,
φυομένους παντοῖα διὰ χρόνου εἶδεα θνητῶν
ἀργαλέας βίοιο μεταλλάσσοντα κελεύθους.
αἰθέριον μὲν γάρ σφε μένος πόντονδε διώκει,
πόντος δ' ἐς χθονὸς οὗδας ἀπέπτυσσε, γαῖα δ' ἐς αὐγὰς

⁴⁵⁰ Nestle 1906, 549, n. 14.

⁴⁵¹ It is Aphrodite according to Bollack 1965, 265, n. 2, and 310, and Muse according to Kirsten, Diels, and others (cf. Wright 1981, 181).

⁴⁵² According to Plotinus and Sextus, this declaration originates from Empedocles' own 'emulation' and comprehension of the (cosmic) divine. See Plot. 4. 7. 10. 38ff. (πρὸς τὸ θεῖον ἀναβὰς καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸ ὁμοιότητα ἀτενίσας) and S. E. M. 1. 303. 10 (ἐπεὶ μόνος καθαρὸν ἀπὸ κακίας τηρήσας τὸν νοῦν καὶ ἀνεπιθόλωτον τῷ ἐν ἑαυτῷ θεῷ τὸν ἐκτὸς θεὸν κατεῖληφεν).

⁴⁵³ Cf., of divine beings, S. Ant. 987 Μοῖραι μακραίωνες and OT 1099 τίς σ' ἔτικτε τῶν μακραίωνων, of humans, Timoth. 15. 207f. μακραίων Σπάρτας μέγας ἀγεμών, of long duration in general, S. Aj. 193 μακραίωνι ... ἀγωνίῳ σχολᾷ.

ἡελίου φαέθοντος, ὁ δ' αἰθέρος ἔμβαλε δίναις·
ἄλλος δ' ἐξ ἄλλου δέχεται, στυγέουσι δὲ πάντες.
τῶν καὶ ἐγὼ νῦν εἰμι, φυγὰς θεόθεν καὶ ἀλήτης,
νεῖκει μαινομένωι πίσυνος.

“There is a decree of necessity, ratified long ago by gods,⁴⁵⁴ eternal and sealed by broad oaths, that whenever one in error, from fear, (defiles) his own limbs, having by his error made false the oath he swore—*daimons* to whom life long-lasting is apportioned—he wanders from the blessed ones for three times ten thousand years, being born throughout time as all kinds of mortal forms, exchanging one hard way of life for another. For the force of air pursues him into sea, and sea spits him out onto earth's surface, earth casts him into the rays of blazing sun, and sun into the eddies of air; one takes him from another, and all abhor him, I too am now one of these, an exile from the gods and a wanderer, having put my trust in raving strife” (after Wright)

The question of the origin and nature of Empedoclean *daimons* is one of the most controversial amongst scholars, for the extant fragments offer only sparse information about them. According to some, “long lived” *daimons* can be identified with the “long lived” gods (θεοί) mentioned in the previous two fragments quoted (B21 and 23).⁴⁵⁵ Empedocles, who calls himself a god (B112. 4)⁴⁵⁶ and a *daimon* (B115. 13), was believed to have done so due to his identification with *the* (cosmic) *divine* (τὸ

⁴⁵⁴ Wright 1981, 272 (ad 107 (115), 1): “ἀνάγκης χρῆμα: compare to the θεσμός Ἀδραστείας of Plato's *Phdr.* 248c, the *logos* of the daughter of *Anankē*, *Rep.* 617d, and the Vergilian ‘fata deum’. χρῆμα from χράω is unique here; the sense is ‘proclamation’, ‘decree’, the content of which is given. ψήφισμα: a ratification long ago by gods who are represented as voting to accept and swearing to abide by what must inevitably happen.”

⁴⁵⁵ See e.g. Barnes 1982, 499: “The *daimones* and the long-lived gods of 195 (= B23) have much in common; parsimony suggests their identification.” Cf. Wright 1981, 273.

⁴⁵⁶ When he calls himself θεὸς ἄμβροτος “Empedocles is speaking loosely: his thought is consistent, and it consistently yields gods and *daimones* who are long-lived but not immortal” (Barnes 1982, 502).

θεῖον, ὁ ἐκτὸς θεός).⁴⁵⁷ This is now the third type of deity we have encountered in Empedocles: in fragment B31 ὁ θεός is applied to the most harmonious state of the cosmos, from which Strife is absent, having withdrawn to its margins.⁴⁵⁸ In this cosmic phase the four roots are united under the sole rule of Love into a perfect Sphere, and this Sphere Empedocles calls *god*.⁴⁵⁹ Since *daimons* are, like the cosmos, composed of the elements, “their excellence”, in Wright’s words, “is in the harmony of the combination”⁴⁶⁰ (and hence, presumably, also their longevity, whereas the brevity of human life could be accounted for by the lack of the same type of harmony).

From fragment B115 we find out that, if *daimons* commit sin (explicitly associated with the “trust in raving Strife”, which disturbs the harmony of the elements),⁴⁶¹ it is necessary for them to suffer punishment. It consists in wandering apart from the blessed ones for thirty thousand years, being born in all sorts of forms of mortal beings “in the course of time” (διὰ χρόνου). What is interesting, however, is the description of the wanderings of a fallen *daimon*: he travels from the air to the sea, and from the sea to the earth, from the earth to the fire of the sun, and from there to the air again. During the time of his ‘ordeal’, the fallen *daimon* is shown to be in the power of each of the four elements in turn, and we will later see that this successive domination of different elements is explicitly said to occur against the background of *time* (signified by χρόνος). Also, the transition from one element to another happens under the law of necessity, and I have mentioned that a similar association of time with necessity occurs in the Orphic Time-cosmology, where it is expressed in mythical terms.

⁴⁵⁷ See above, n. 452.

⁴⁵⁸ Cf. B35. 10f.

⁴⁵⁹ Cf. Simpl. in *Ph.* 1124. 1: τὴν Φιλίαν διὰ τῆς ἐνώσεως τὸν Σφαῖρον ποιοῦσαν, ὃν καὶ θεὸν ὀνομάζει [B31], καὶ οὐδετέρως ποτὲ καλεῖ ‘σφαῖρον ἔην’ [B29] ‘οὐ γὰρ ἀπὸ νώτοιου δύο κλάδοι αἰσσοῦνται, οὐ πόδες οὐ θοὰ γούνα, οὐ μήδεα γεννήεντα, ἀλλὰ σφαῖρος ἔην καὶ <πάντοθεν> ἴσον ἑαυτῷ.’

⁴⁶⁰ Wright 1981, 59.

⁴⁶¹ As pointed by Schofield (Kirk et al. 1983, 315).

ii) Αἰών in the plural

Empedocles' 'daimonic' status apparently grants him exceptional abilities, which secure him admiration among men and women (B112. 7-12). In B117 he even claims to be able to recall his previous incarnations.⁴⁶² This may be the appropriate place to mention B129, which talks about the ability of a wise man to see events that cover a long span of time, encompassing "ten and even twenty human generations". Some scholars have seen in this account a story about transmigration of soul,⁴⁶³ whereas others, like Wright, believe it refers to a wise man, whose wisdom enables him to understand "a comprehensive range of topics, covering a considerable extent of time."⁴⁶⁴

ἦν δέ τις ἐν κείνοισιν ἀνὴρ περιώσια εἰδώς,
ὅς δὴ μήκιστον πραπίδων ἐκτήσατο πλοῦτον,
παντοίων τε μάλιστα σοφῶν τ' ἐπιήρανος ἔργων·
ὁπότε γὰρ πάσησιν ὀρέζαιτο πραπίδεςσιν,
ῥεῖ' ὃ γε τῶν ὄντων πάντων λεύσσεσκεν ἕκαστον
καί τε δέκ' ἀνθρώπων καὶ τ' εἴκοσιν αἰώνεσσιν.

"And there was among them a man knowing an immense amount, who had acquired a great treasure of thoughts, master especially of all kinds of wise works; for whenever he reached out with all his thoughts, easily he saw each of the things that there are, in ten and even twenty generations of men" (trans. Wright)

I agree with the view expressed by Martin and Primavesi that the fragment seems to allude to Empedoclean 'demonology'.⁴⁶⁵ These authors also suggest that the only other instance of the plural form of αἰών in Empedocles' preserved work could be taken

⁴⁶² ἦδη γάρ ποτ' ἐγὼ γενόμην κοῦρός τε κόρη τε /θάμνος τ' οἰωνός τε καὶ ἔξαλος ἔλλοπος ἰχθύς. See Martin and Primavesi 1998, 62. Differently Wright 1981, 276.

⁴⁶³ See e.g. Guthrie 1965, 251; O'Brien 1969, 335, n. 1.

⁴⁶⁴ Cf. Wright 1981, 256ff.

⁴⁶⁵ Martin and Primavesi 1998, 193.

to refer to the succession of “lives” that a *daimon* traverses in the course of his punishment: α(ιι) 6 [πολλ]οὶ δ’ αἰῶνες πρότερ[οι].

iii) Αἰών in the singular

It is generally believed that there is a parallelism between Empedocles’ description of the global cosmic dynamic and his account of the destiny of the *daimons*. It has been argued that Empedoclean *daimons* are similar to the Sphere, for they are composed of a harmonious combination of the four roots. When Strife enters its homogeneous composition, the Sphere breaks up into individual elements. On the other hand, when a *daimon* puts his trust in Strife, he is cut off from his peers and is consequently born as different mortal beings in the domain of each of the elements in succession.⁴⁶⁶

The following phases can be distinguished in Empedoclean cosmology:

1) A state of complete unity and rest, called Σφαῖρος, in which the power of Love is the sole ruler (B27, 27a, 28, 29).

2) Strife destroys Σφαῖρος (B30):

αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ μέγα Νεῖκος ἐνὶ μελέεσσιν ἐθρέφθη,
ἐς τιμὰς τ’ ἀνόρουσε τελειομένοιο χρόνοιο,
ὅς σφιν ἀμοιβαῖος πλατέος παρ’ ἐλήλαται ὄρκου...

“But when great Strife had grown strong in the limbs and sprang to its honours as the time was being completed, a time of exchange for them, which has been defined by a broad oath...” (trans. Wright)

It seems that χρόνος here refers to a *period of time* filled with the predominance of Love over the elements. At the end of this period, the limbs of the Sphere begin to tremble

⁴⁶⁶ See Wright 1981, 274f. for a possible reconstruction of different incarnations in each of the elements.

under the influence of Strife (B31) and this power begins to take over the rule over the roots.⁴⁶⁷ Strife breaks up the Sphere and four elements separate out one by one while the world rotates (Arist. *Cael.* 295a17, *Simpl. in Cael.* 528. 20, *Aet.* 2. 6. 3).

3) They gradually arrange themselves into great homogeneous masses (Arist. *Metaph.* 985a25ff.).⁴⁶⁸ Aristotle talks about Empedocles' Strife, as well as Love, as both generative and destructive forces (*Metaph.* 1001b9-12).

4) There is then a phase (described mainly in B35) when Love is said to be returning to the centre of the vortex⁴⁶⁹ and is spreading its influence gradually attracting elements to itself. On their way to Love the elements are being mixed into countless types of mortal things. They also come across the resistance of Strife, which is being gradually expelled by Love to the periphery.

On the basis of the description of cosmic events found in the surviving fragments as well as on the basis of Plato's and Aristotle's interpretations of Empedoclean cosmology, scholars have reconstructed a doctrine about the periodical exchange of the One (= Sphere) and the Many (= Elements) which represents the foundation of Empedocles' philosophical system. This process is sometimes called Empedocles' Cosmic Cycle and its recurring termini are homogeneous mixture of the divine Sphere and total separation of the four differentiated elements.⁴⁷⁰ In between these two poles, while the roots separate more and more under the increasing power of

⁴⁶⁷ See Wright 1981, 191 (ad 23 (30), 3): "That the predominance of Love must be recompensed by the predominance of its opposite is an application of the idea of cosmic justice and retribution worked out in time found in Anaximander's fragment, and of *metra* governed by *logos* in Heraclitus."

⁴⁶⁸ "Όταν μὲν γὰρ εἰς τὰ στοιχεῖα διίστηται τὸ πᾶν ὑπὸ τοῦ νείκους, τό τε πῦρ εἰς ἓν συγκρίνεται καὶ τῶν ἄλλων στοιχείων ἕκαστον· ὅταν δὲ πάλιν ὑπὸ τῆς φιλίας συνίωσιν εἰς τὸ ἓν, ἀναγκαῖον ἐξ ἑκάστου τὰ μύρια διακρίνεσθαι πάλιν."

⁴⁶⁹ See Wright 1981, 206f. (ad 47 (35), 3-4).

⁴⁷⁰ Some scholars disagree with this interpretation of Empedocles' cosmology and believe that it originated with Aristotle or later commentators. See e.g. Hölscher 1965, who agrees with Arnim 1902, and Ben 1975, 29ff. For a detailed discussion of this question see Wright 1981, 40ff.

Strife and while they blend more and more during the increasing power of Love, cosmic and biological creations take place;⁴⁷¹ both Love and Strife are active in any creative stage (B17. 3ff.):⁴⁷²

Δοιὴ δὲ θνητῶν γένεσις, δοιὴ δ' ἀπόλειψις·
τὴν μὲν γὰρ πάντων ζύνοδος τίκτει τ' ὀλέκει τε,
ἡ δὲ πάλιν διαφυομένων θρεφθεῖσα διέπτει.
Καὶ ταῦτ' ἀλλάσσοντα διαμπερὲς οὐδαμὰ λήγει,
ἄλλοτε μὲν Φιλότητι συνερχόμεν' εἰς ἓν ἅπαντα,
ἄλλοτε δ' αὖ δίχ' ἕκαστα φορεύμενα Νείκεος ἔχθει.
<οὕτως ἦι μὲν ἓν ἐκ πλεόνων μεμάθηκε φύεσθαι>⁴⁷³
ἡδὲ πάλιν διαφύντος ἐνὸς πλέον' ἐκτελέθουσι,
τῇ μὲν γίνονται τε καὶ οὐ σφισιν ἔμπεδος αἰών·
ἦι δὲ διαλλάσσοντα διαμπερὲς οὐδαμὰ λήγει,
ταύτηι δ' αἰὲν ἔασιν ἀκίνητοι κατὰ κύκλον.

“Double is the birth of mortal things and double their failing; for the one is brought to birth and destroyed by coming together of all things, the other is nurtured and flies apart as they grow apart again. And these things never cease their continual interchange, now through Love all coming together into one, now again each carried apart by the hatred of Strife. So insofar as they have learned to grow one from many, and again as the one grows apart grow many, thus far do they come into being and have no stable life; but insofar as they never cease their continual interchange, thus far they exist always changeless in the cycle.” (trans. Schofield)

⁴⁷¹ See Schofield (Kirk et al. 1983, 297). There are some indications in the fragments of what is created in which stage (see *ibid.* 296ff.).

⁴⁷² Inwood 2001, 45.

⁴⁷³ B17. 9-13 = B26. 8-12.

From what has been said so far, it seems that two levels of cosmic dynamic can be distinguished within Empedocles' universe. On the one hand, there is gradual coming together into the unity of the Sphere and the consequent gradual separation of the elements. On the other hand, there is mixing and unmixing of the elements in the production of the perishable things. It is not easy (and perhaps unnecessary) to distinguish which of the two processes Empedocles has in mind when he talks about coming together into one and dividing into many.⁴⁷⁴ It is, I believe, reasonable to conclude with Schofield that B17 expounds "an entirely general metaphysical thesis. Its clearest and most important application is undoubtedly in his theory of the birth and death of the universe, but he applied it also to the life-cycle of animals (as in fr. 26)."⁴⁷⁵

In line 11 of B17 we come across the phrase οὗ σοφισιν ἔμπεδος αἰών. Its subject is ταῦτ' mentioned in line 6 and the pronoun, like πάντα in line 4, refers to the four elements out of which all mortal beings are created and into which they eventually resolve (they are explicitly identified as earth, air, fire, and water in line 18). Their ceaseless interaction under the influence of Love and Strife prevents the roots from having a "stable life". Αἰών here obviously implies *quality of existence* and it applies to the metaphysical dynamics of the universe. Although it may seem surprising that the roots are said to come into being, what γίνονται here means is that the four elements in combination *become* different things of the visible world (see above, n. 439).

I have so far mentioned three categories of Empedoclean divinities: the Sphere, the *daimons*, and the roots, but only the last group can be said to be truly everlasting.

⁴⁷⁴ Hölscher argues that line 3 refers to an individual organism, whereas Wright 1981, 41, n. 110 believes that B17 "gives in outline the cosmic pattern of the roots uniting and separating, in each case causing a genesis and destruction of *thnēta*; the application of the universal activity to individual organisms comes later, in frs. 25(22) and 26(20)."

⁴⁷⁵ Schofield (Kirk et al. 1983, 288). See *ibid.* n. 1: "It is therefore wrong in principle to attempt to interpret lines 3-5 as specifically concerned with the creation and dissolution of the universe or of formations within the universe, as many scholars do."

This feature the roots share with the powers of Love and Strife, of which, according to Empedocles, the universe “will never be empty” (B16):

ἦ γὰρ⁴⁷⁶ καὶ πάρος ἔσκε, καὶ ἔσσεται,⁴⁷⁷ οὐδέ ποτ', οἶω,
τούτων ἀμφοτέρων κενεώσεται ἄσπετος αἰών.

“They are as they were before and will be and never, I think, will ceaseless life be empty of these two.”

In this fragment αἰών appears combined with the epic adjective ἄσπετος “unspeakable, unutterable”.⁴⁷⁸ It is used mostly in the sense of “unspeakably great” to describe ether, ocean, water, stream, and less frequently of quantity, with the plural nouns, meaning “countless”. Its usage in Empedocles, in my view, corresponds to that found in the Homeric hymn to Aphrodite (*h. Ven.* 237): φωνὴ ῥεῖ ἄσπετος “voice flows on unceasing(ly)”.⁴⁷⁹ Modern scholars mostly render this αἰών with “time” (cf. e.g. LSJ, Wright, Inwood, ad loc.) and those who choose to translate it with “life” explain that it refers to the endless life of the Sphere (cf. e.g. Festugière, Degani).⁴⁸⁰ According to them, the Sphere is actually eternal, for, although it periodically resolves into the four roots, it always reestablishes itself again and can therefore be said to have eternal life.⁴⁸¹ It seems to me, however, that this αἰών and the one previously discussed concern the same thing, constant interaction of the four roots. This usage of αἰών resembles the one

⁴⁷⁶ εἰ γὰρ καὶ πάρος ἦν codd., ἔστι γὰρ ὡς πάρος ἦν Lloyd-Jones.

⁴⁷⁷ Another instance of the poetic formula differentiating tenses and implying eternity, this time, to the two cosmic powers (cf. fr. B21. 9 and n. 448 above).

⁴⁷⁸ See *DELG*, s.v.

⁴⁷⁹ The reading ἄσπετος was proposed by Miller (1851) instead of the unmetrical ἄσβεστος of the MSS. Degani 1967 corrects the MS reading to ἄσβετος “inextinguishable”. He finds evidence for this in the proper name Ἄσβετος occurring in [Hom.] epigr. 14. 9 = [Herodot.] vit. Hom. 32. This was recently supported by Lapini 2005. The meaning “inextinguishable life” is, however, not essentially different from “unceasing life”.

⁴⁸⁰ Cf. Degani 1961, 72. But there can be no Strife in the Sphere.

⁴⁸¹ Degani 1961, 73 explains that ἄσπετος αἰών refers to eternity, “un eternità però che non riposa nell’ ‘è’, ma che è ciclica e si esplica in un divenire incessante.” He, however, notes that the concept of cyclical eternity is not in accordance with Plato’s understanding of the idea of eternity signified with αἰών.

found in Heraclitus' B52. In both instances αἰών refers to the dynamic of the universe, as reflected in its ceaseless (apparently chaotic yet essentially regular) changes.

Although the addition of the attribute “ceaseless (inextinguishable?)” to αἰών in Empedocles' B16 indicates that the noun itself does not imply the notion of eternity, there seems to be no doubt that both philosophers envisage the *activity of the universe* as unending.⁴⁸²

iv) Χρόνος (always in the singular)

The lines 12-13 of the above quoted section of fragment B17 inform us that, despite their continual interchange, the roots remain changeless “in the cycle” of coming into one and separating into many. For this cosmic dynamic to be tenable, it is necessary that balance between the elements be maintained (17. 27ff.):

ταῦτα γὰρ ἴσα τε πάντα καὶ ἥλικα γένναν ἔασι,
τιμῆς δ' ἄλλης ἄλλο μέδει, πάρα δ' ἥθος ἐκάστωι
ἐν δὲ μέρει κρατέουσι περιπλομένοιο χρόνοιο.
καὶ πρὸς τοῖς οὗτ' ἄρ τι ἐπιγίγνεται οὐδ' ἀπολήγει
(...)

ἀλλ' αὐτ' ἔστιν ταῦτα, δι' ἀλλήλων δὲ θέοντα
γίγνεται ἄλλοτε ἄλλα καὶ ἡνεκὲς αἰὲν ὁμοῖα.

“All these are equal and coeval, but each has a different prerogative and each its own character, and they prevail in turn as time comes round. And besides them nothing further comes into being nor does anything pass away. (...) No, there are just these, but

⁴⁸² Aristotle (*Ph.* 250b26-9) and his commentators (Simp. *in Ph.* 1125. 17-24), however, represent the two extremes of the cycle, the Sphere and the total separation under Strife, as the stages of rest. See Wright 1981, 45: “Last, it is not known for how long Strife, and Love, would have complete control. Fragments 19(27) and 22(29) suggest a certain period in a settled state, but, as in the *Politicus* myth, there may have been only a moment of equilibrium before the motion of the cosmos swung into reverse.”

running through one another they become different things at different times and yet ever and always the same.” (trans. Schofield)

Although undoubtedly qualitatively different, the elements are still equal, explicitly in age and probably in power, honour, and total sum.⁴⁸³ The idea that there needs to be balance between them reminds us of Anaximander’s account, in which it is said that the opposites pay retribution to each other for encroachment on each other “according to the order of time”. Something similar seems to be envisaged in Empedocles’ cosmology, for the elements are said to “prevail in turn as time comes round.”⁴⁸⁴ This image calls to mind the wanderings of the fallen *daimon* (B115), who is forced from one element to another, having been separated from the blessed by Strife. Similarly, doxographers inform us that Empedocles envisaged the elements separating off from the homogeneous unity of the divine Sphere one after another,⁴⁸⁵ “presumably by the action of the vortex initiated by Strife”.⁴⁸⁶

It seems to me that the same concept of each of the four elements prevailing in turn can be recognised in another Empedoclean fragment mentioning “time going round”; this fragment also seems to imply a ‘demonological context’ (B110):

εἰ γὰρ καὶ σφ’ ἀδινῆσιν ὑπὸ πραπίδεσσιν ἐρείσας
εὐμενέως καθαρῆσιν ἐποπτεύσεις μελέτησιν,
ταῦτά τέ σοι μάλα πάντα δι’ αἰῶνος παρέσσοντα,
ἄλλα τε πόλλ’ ἀπὸ τῶνδε κτήσεται·

(...)

εἰ δὲ σύ γ’ ἀλλοίων ἐπορέξῃαι, οἷα κατ’ ἄνδρας

⁴⁸³ Cf. Wright 1981, 171 (ad 8 (17), 27).

⁴⁸⁴ See Wright (1981), 182 (ad 16 (26), 1): “In 8 (17) the line is obscure and could perhaps refer to the Milesian world picture of warring opposites with regional and seasonal aggressions and compensations.”

⁴⁸⁵ Aetius 2. 6. 3 (= DK31 A49) and Ps.-Plu. *Strom.* ap. Eusebium *P. E.* 1. 8. 10 (= DK31 A30).

⁴⁸⁶ Schofield (Kirk et al. 1983, 300).

μυρία δειλὰ πέλονται ἅ τ' ἀμβλύνουσι μερίμνας,
ἧ σ' ἄφαρ ἐκλείψουσι περιπλομένοιο χρόνοιο
σφῶν αὐτῶν ποθέοντα φίλην ἐπὶ γένναν ἰκέσθαι·
πάντα γὰρ ἴσθι φρόνησιν ἔχειν καὶ νόματος αἴσαν.

“If you plant them in your stout understanding and contemplate them with good will in pure exercises, these will assuredly all be with you throughout life: and you will gain many other things from them; (...) But if you reach for things of a different kind, such as come in their thousands among men, evils that blunt their thoughts, then at once they will abandon you as time comes round, longing to find their own dear kind; for know that they all have intelligence and a share of thought.” (trans. Schofield)

With these words Empedocles probably addresses Pausanias, who is explicitly mentioned in B1, but of whom nothing certain is known.⁴⁸⁷ Empedocles encourages him to accept and contemplate *some things* (σφε) from which he will gain further benefits.

Scholars have differently interpreted the reference of this σφ'. Diels (DK) suggests that the pronoun stands for “die Lehren des Meisters” and Gomperz that it refers to the elements (“Grundstoffe”). According to Schwabl the roots are indeed referred to here, but they comprise both “das Noetische und Substanzielle”.⁴⁸⁸ Similarly, Long explains that σφ' refers to “true statements about the world conceived in physical terms.”⁴⁸⁹

Wright elaborates on his view pointing to some epic examples of physical representation of words and thoughts.⁴⁹⁰ Empedocles' teachings, which Pausanias is meant to receive, expound the truth about the world, which is, as indeed everything else,

⁴⁸⁷ See Wright 1981, 160; Schofield (Kirk et al. 1983, 284).

⁴⁸⁸ Schwabl 1956, 49f.

⁴⁸⁹ Long 1966, 169.

⁴⁹⁰ Wright 1981, 259: “In Homer words are winged (*Il.* 1. 201, 2. 7, 4. 69, etc.), go past the barrier of the teeth (*Il.* 4. 350, 14. 83, etc.), and are put by the listener into his or her θυμός-μῦθον πεπνυμένον ἐνθετο θυμῷ (*Od.* 1. 363, 21. 355); cf. Hesiod *Erga* 274.”

composed of the four elements. If Pausanias plants the teachings (= elements they are composed of) firmly in his mind and reflects upon them in good spirit, they will stay with him “throughout his life” (ὅτ’ αἰῶνος) and he will gain many other things from them.⁴⁹¹

Empedocles explores the alternative scenario as well: if Pausanias “reaches for things of different kind”, the truth he learned from his teacher, which is composed of a harmonious mixture of the four elements, will leave him “as time goes round” (περιπλομένοιο χρόνιο). Adoption of “different things”, presumably composed of different ratios of the elements, will lead to disruption of the harmony established between the pupil and the teaching he received.⁴⁹² He will lose the benefits he gained through the knowledge as elements composing the truth begin to leave him *in the course of time*. I believe that this implies that each of the elements will join its own kind when this prevails on cosmic level.⁴⁹³

From the anything but straightforward evidence of Empedocles’ cosmology examined in this discussion, it emerges that this Presocratic philosopher used χρόνος to refer to the *succession in the prevalence of elements* in the creative stages of his cosmology, in which the elements are envisaged as interacting under the influence of Love and Strife. In addition to this, the noun is also found to signify the *limited period of time* given to Love and Strife for their alternating increasing dominance over the universe. Αἰών, on the other hand, refers to the *dynamics of the universe in general*, encompassing creation and destruction of the Sphere and the mixing and unmixing of

⁴⁹¹ For a reconstruction of the means of interaction between the teaching and its recipient see Long 1966, 270.

⁴⁹² Cf. Long 1966, 271: “Truth about the world can only be communicated to a constitution composed of elements equably arranged and attracted to it on the principle of like to like.”

⁴⁹³ Cf. Long 1966, 271, n. 1: “At any given moment one element may possess more power than another, but in the long run the power is shared equally, so that the true account of the universe would have to conform to a pattern of ἰσονομία.”

the elements which happens in the meantime. It also appears as a designation of (*duration of*) *life* of a human or of a (long-lived) *daimon*.

TIME, JUSTICE, NECESSITY

(Some observations on the meaning of ‘time’ in Presocratic philosophers)

In the discussion on the usages of χρόνος and αἰών in the Presocratics we have seen occasional contextual association of the time-terms (mostly χρόνος) with notions which can tentatively be designated as ‘necessity’ and ‘justice’. This association will now be examined more closely in order to approach the logical context in which time is mentioned by the Presocratics.

Orderliness of Cosmic Processes

i) Anaximander

The first recorded instance of the relation between ‘time’ and ‘necessity’ in the Presocratics is to be found in Anaximander’s fragment DK12 B1, quoted in the above discussion of cosmic time in Pherecydes and Anaximander. As already mentioned,⁴⁹⁴ this fragment is widely regarded as authentic, mainly because of Theophrastus’ closing remark on the style of the preceding words: ποιητικωτέροις οὕτως ὀνόμασιν αὐτὰ λέγων. These “poetic expressions” may be taken to include the words immediately before the remark, κατὰ τὴν τοῦ χρόνου τάξιν, and the quotation is generally believed to open with the expression κατὰ τὸ χρεών, for χρεών, according to Kirk, “retained a marked poetical colouring” until the Hellenistic period⁴⁹⁵ and was also convincingly reconstructed for Heraclitus’ fr. B80 (see below):

ἐξ ὧν δὲ ἡ γένεσις ἐστὶ τοῖς οὖσι, καὶ τὴν φθορὰν εἰς ταῦτα γίνεσθαι κατὰ τὸ χρεών·
διδόναι γὰρ αὐτὰ δίκην καὶ τίσιν ἀλλήλοις τῆς ἀδικίας κατὰ τὴν τοῦ χρόνου τάξιν,
ποιητικωτέροις οὕτως ὀνόμασιν αὐτὰ λέγων.

⁴⁹⁴ See above p. 96.

⁴⁹⁵ Kirk et al. 1983, 118.

Anaximander taught, this fragment tells us, that the existing things originate from and perish into *the boundless*, “according to necessity, for they pay penalty and retribution to each other for the injustice according to the order of time”.

It has been argued that τὸ χρεών as used by Anaximander does not correspond to the meaning that ἀνάγκη had at the time.⁴⁹⁶ Having denied to it the sense of ‘necessity’, Fränkel explains the meaning of the κατὰ τὸ χρεών-phrase in the following way: “Durch den Zusatz κατὰ τὸ χρεών wird also diese Regel des Geschehens nicht als finstere Macht auf dem Thron des Despoten erhoben, sondern als berechtigt und einsichtig legitimiert. ‘Wie es in Ordnung ist’ meinen die Worte.”⁴⁹⁷ There is no doubt that τὸ χρεών does not represent a personified power in this context, as we will see is the case with Ἀνάγκη in some cosmological considerations of the fifth century BC, but I believe it should not be completely deprived of the sense of ‘necessity’ either.⁴⁹⁸ The phrase κατὰ τὸ χρεών indicates that the mentioned cosmological processes must take place in the way described.⁴⁹⁹ For the cosmic stability to be maintained, things come to exist from an infinite, eternal, indefinite, and inexhaustible material principle (τὸ ἄπειρον) and they eventually perish into it as well. This happens in a defined *temporal order* (τάξις χρόνου), so that none of the opposite qualities permanently prevails. It has been argued by some scholars that χρόνος here exercises an active role of ‘assessing’ (as in

⁴⁹⁶ Schrekenberg 1964, 110.

⁴⁹⁷ Fränkel 1968b, 188.

⁴⁹⁸ Cf. Vlastos 1947, 161, n. 47: “The latter (sc. χρεών) means generally ‘fateful necessity’, such as attaches to the prediction of an oracle, but (like *aisa* and *moira*) could also mean ‘right’ (...) Fränkel goes too far in excluding ‘necessity’ from the full meaning of *chreon*: ‘Die Wörter des Stammes *χρη-* bezeichnen ein *Sollen* und *Schuldig Sein*, ein *Gebrauchen* und *Brauchbar Sein*, nicht ein *Müssen* und *Unvermeidbar Sein*’ (*op. cit.*, p. 183). What else but ‘*Müssen* und *Unvermeidbar Sein*’ is the *chreon* of an oracle?”

⁴⁹⁹ See *GEW*, s.v. *χρή*: “Von *χρᾶμαι*, auch von *χρή* abgeleitete nomina (...) 1. *χρεώ*, auch *χρειώ* = *χρηώ*, -οῦς f. (...) ‘Bedürfnis, Not, Notwendigkeit, Verlangen’ (vorw. ep. seit Il.); dazu *χρεών* und *χρεόν* n. ‘ds’ (Pi., ion. att.)”.

the assessment of tribute in the Athenian tribute lists)⁵⁰⁰ or ‘ordering’,⁵⁰¹ analogously to Solon’s δίκη χρόνου (36. 3W), in which time is supposed to be acting as a judge.⁵⁰² The metaphorical image is commonly explained as referring to the alternation of the seasons, but it might as well comprise other alternations observable in the world around us (such as day/night, life/death, sea/land [A 27], etc.). These are, according to Havelock, “illustrated from legal procedure between human beings, that procedure being based on the rule of reciprocity, as in the *Iliad*.”⁵⁰³

ii) Heraclitus

While Anaximander labels reciprocal seasonal prevalence of one group of opposing qualities as “injustice”, Heraclitus sees “strife” as “justice”, for “everything happens by strife and necessity”. Heraclitus uses “strife” and “war” as metaphors for permanent change in the world. He applies both δίκη and χρεών to emphasise the importance of this cosmic discord (B80):

εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἑόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ’ ἔριν καὶ χρεών.

“One needs to know that war is common and justice strife and that everything happens by strife and necessity.”

Here again we come across the expression κατὰ (τὸ) χρεών (as Diels emended the MS χρεώμενα),⁵⁰⁴ which I believe should be interpreted in the same way as in Anaximander.

Havelock interprets δίκη (which is identified with ἔρις in an appositional phrase) in

⁵⁰⁰ Kirk et al. 1983, 120.

⁵⁰¹ Vlastos 1947, 161, n. 48.

⁵⁰² See p. 82ff. above.

⁵⁰³ Havelock 1978, 264.

⁵⁰⁴ Cf. Kirk et al. 1983, 193: “The emendation is not certain, but is hard to improve; the three extra letters may be connected with the omission of three letters just before, where the unique Vatican MS has εἰ δέ for the obvious original εἰδέναι.

accordance with a Homeric usage as referring to “the process of argument and arbitration between contending parties” and so “appropriate to explain the behaviour of the cosmos”.⁵⁰⁵ I will not discuss the meaning of δίκη in Heraclitus in detail here, but it seems that in B80 it implies ‘order’ and ‘regularity’ and qualifies “strife” as due and proper process.⁵⁰⁶ In the preserved fragments of Heraclitus’ teachings time does not occur to account for temporal regularity of the necessary and orderly contest of opposites; doxographers, however, who confirm that necessity played a crucial role in the maintenance of Heraclitean world-order,⁵⁰⁷ inform us that Heraclitus taught that cosmic change occurs in orderly fashion within defined temporal spans and according to allotted necessity:

Simpl. in Ph. 23. 33 (from Theophr. *Phys. Opin.* fr. 1 = D 475): (...) πυρὸς γὰρ ἀμοιβὴν εἶναι φησιν Ἡράκλειτος πάντα. ποιεῖ δὲ καὶ τάξιν τινὰ καὶ χρόνον ὠρισμένον τῆς τοῦ κόσμου μεταβολῆς κατὰ τινὰ εἰμαρμένην ἀνάγκην.

“Heraclitus says that all things are an exchange for fire. He also introduces an order and a definite time of the change of the world according to an apportioned compulsion.”⁵⁰⁸

We cannot tell with certainty which of the mentioned necessity-expressions Heraclitus actually used.⁵⁰⁹ Apart from being compulsory, the dynamic of the world is in many instances described by Heraclitus as being well balanced and proportioned. The ever-living fire of the world, as Heraclitus’ tells us, kindles *in measures* (μέτρα) and is

⁵⁰⁵ Havelock 1978, 265 and 358, n. 6. He interprets the fragment as a reminiscence of two lines from the *Iliad* (Σ 107 and 309; cf. p. 265: “Heraclitus offers the comment that what Hector says is correct and what Achilles had said was wrong”).

⁵⁰⁶ Δίκη is “the rule of regularity” according to Havelock 1978, 267.

⁵⁰⁷ Aet. 1. 27. 1 (D. 322): Ἡράκλειτος πάντα καθ’ εἰμαρμένην, τὴν δὲ αὐτὴν ὑπάρχειν καὶ ἀνάγκην.

⁵⁰⁸ See West 1971, 137, n. 1: “εἰμαρμένη ἀνάγκη, ‘apportioned compulsion’, is an unlikely concept; Usener proposed to delete ἀνάγκην.”

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid.: “Heraclitus cannot have used the noun εἰμαρμένη; he seems, however, to have used somewhere the participial εἰμαρμένα and there is no reason why he should not somewhere else have spoken of ἀνάγκη. (...) Apportionment, compulsion, necessity: we can find logical distinctions between the concepts, but they were evidently not important to Heraclitus.” See also Schrekenberg 1964, 110.

extinguished in measures (B30). There is an exchange of the three world masses – fire, sea, and earth – taking place ceaselessly and simultaneously, so that *the balance* between the elements is always preserved (B31). The sun will not overstep his *measures*, for otherwise Erinyes, the helpers of Justice, will find him out (B94).⁵¹⁰ All this indicates that change (= strife) is permanent, but it is measured and orderly, as it needs to be for the world to remain stable.

Although the role of time in this world-order is not explicitly mentioned (at least in the fragments that have come down to us), we can presume that the measure of (ex)change implies temporal limits too. Theophrastus' mention of a *definite time* in connection with the transformation of the world may be taken to refer to the conception of the Great Year that is ascribed to Heraclitus by some doxographers (Aet. 2. 32. 3; Censorin. 18. 10 = DK 22 A13) and is taken by them to imply the time that the sun, moon, and planets take to return to their original positions.⁵¹¹

iii) 'Pythagoras'

Doxographers also report about the compatible roles of time and necessity in Pythagoras' teaching. Since he left no writings, the doctrines in question must come from later Pythagorean writers. According to Aetius, 'Pythagoras' described *ἀνάγκη* as surrounding the world and he also defined time (*χρόνος*) as the "sphere of the surrounding":

Aet. 1. 25. 2: Πυθαγόρας ἀνάγκην ἔφη περικεῖσθαι τῷ κόσμῳ.

Aet. 1. 21. 1: Πυθαγόρας τὴν σφαῖραν τοῦ περιέχοντος (sc. χρόνον).

⁵¹⁰ Δίκη is clearly personified here, as it is in Hesiod and Solon. Cf. Havelock 1978, 266.

⁵¹¹ See West 1971, 155ff. Starting from the duration of 10,800 solar years given by Censorinus (also by schol. Pl. *Rep.* 546b in POxy. 1808) for the duration of Heraclitus' great year, West reconstructs the great year as consisting of 360 days, each of which encompasses an average human generation of 30 years.

By surrounding the world, we may presume, necessity and time exhibit a sort of control over it. The verb περικεῖσθαι has a more or less straightforward meaning “to lie round about”, whereas περιέχειν has a more complex application implying both “to surround, embrace” and “(to encompass so as) to comprise, contain”.⁵¹² It appears in connection with infinite material principles of the early philosophers which are described by Aristotle (*Ph.* 203b7) as “all-enfolding and all-controlling” (περιέχειν ἅπαντα καὶ πάντα κυβερνᾶν).⁵¹³ It also occurs in a couple of fragments believed to be genuinely Presocratic (Anaximenes B2 and Anaxagoras B2). The mentioned ‘embrace’ of necessity and time is a metaphorical one. We will shortly see that Necessity is represented in an Orphic cosmology as extending her hands throughout the universe and reaching out to its boundaries.⁵¹⁴ Schrekenberg understands ‘Pythagoras’ ἀνάγκη as bounding and binding the world.⁵¹⁵ He then concludes that this image represents a mythical expression of the *mathematical regularity* in which, according to Pythagoras, the world is bound.⁵¹⁶ As for χρόνος, its “sphere of the surrounding” may perhaps be taken to refer to the periods of cyclical recurrence, mentioned in Porphyrius’ *Life of Pythagoras* 19 (DK 14. 8a) as well as by Eudemus (ap. Simp. in *Ph.* 732. 30 = DK58 B34).

iv) Orphic theogonies

Χρόνος and Ἀνάγκη appear together as personified picturesque divine creatures in the so-called Hieronyman Orphic Theogony. After describing the winged snake-god Time

⁵¹² Cf. LSJ, svv.

⁵¹³ See Kirk et al. 1983, 116.

⁵¹⁴ Aetius (2. 1. 1) also informs us that Pythagoras was the one who introduced the term κόσμος to name the sum of all (ἡ τῶν ὅλων περιοχή), for there is order (τάξις) in it: Πυθαγόρας ὃς καὶ πρῶτος ὠνόμασε τὴν τῶν ὅλων περιοχὴν κόσμον ἐκ τῆς ἐν αὐτῷ τάξεως.

⁵¹⁵ Schrekenberg 1964, 104f. See also West 1983a, 197 and ibid. n. 67.

⁵¹⁶ Schrekenberg 1964, 105.

(envisaged as the third cosmogonic principle, born from water and mud; fr. 75-76 B = 54 K), our source for the Hieronyman theogony reads as follows (Damasc. *De Princ.* 123 = Orph. fr. 77 B):

συνεῖναι δὲ αὐτῷ τὴν Ἀνάγκην, φύσιν οὕσαν τὴν αὐτὴν καὶ Ἀδράστειαν⁵¹⁷ ἄσώματον
διωργυιωμένην ἐν παντὶ τῷ κόσμῳ, τῶν περάτων αὐτοῦ ἐφαπτομένην.

“United with it was Necessity, being of the same nature, andAdrasteia, incorporeal,
having her arms stretched throughout the world and touching its boundaries.” (trans.
West)

In the above section on χρόνος in the Orphic theogonies, I addressed the question of the origin of the Orphic conception of primordial Time, arguing in favour of its early date.

What is important for the current discussion, however, is the union⁵¹⁸ of the Orphic god Χρόνος with the divine Necessity, which is described as “incorporeal” and then also said to have her arms stretched throughout the universe and touching its boundaries.⁵¹⁹

This image symbolises the extent of the power of Necessity⁵²⁰ and it is similar to the above-mentioned Pythagorean view that necessity and time ‘embrace’ the world and so presumably control it. We may perhaps assume that, as in the case of Anaximander and Heraclitus, time and necessity impose boundaries on cosmic events so as to preserve regularity and order. In the Hieronyman theogony, Unageing Time is one of the

⁵¹⁷ See West 1983a, 195: “The identification of Ananke with Adrastea, like that of Chronos with Heracles, is a Hellenistic embellishment.”

⁵¹⁸ Id. 194f.: “The word ‘united’ (συνεῖναι) is imprecise, but one thinks most readily of the ancient motif of two entwined serpents, which can be traced back to the earliest Sumerian times. (...) It is therefore likely that the Orphic poet, if he thought visually at all – and he seems to have done – conceived his Chronos and Ananke in this way.”

⁵¹⁹ West 1983a, 196: “The qualification ‘incorporeal’ (ἄσώματος) that Damascius adds need not detain us long. It may seem odd that a goddess described as being of a very definite and peculiar physique should at the same time be labelled incorporeal. But the god who is presently born from the egg is labelled in the same way, and similarly Eros in the great Paris magical papyrus is addressed as ‘incorporeal’ and in the same breath as ‘archer, torch-bearer’.” See also id. 197, and n. 68.

⁵²⁰ See West 1983a, 196: “Even in Homer we have the description of the personified Strife who grows until she reaches from earth to heaven (Il. 4.443).”

principal deities (the addition of water and earth is probably secondary)⁵²¹ and a creator god, and his union with the omnipresent goddess Necessity probably serves to stress his own omnipotence and omnipresence as well as inevitability of his orderly rule.⁵²²

Beyond the Observable

v) Parmenides

Unlike his Ionian predecessors, Parmenides of Elea chose to leave behind the world of ordinary experience in which night and day and hot and cold seasons alternately dominate under the rule of “avenging Justice” (Δίκη πολύποινος) “who holds the alternate bolts” (DK28 B1. 11-14) and to seek the truth beyond the observable world of multitude and change. He begins his search for truth (Ἀληθείη) with the question *what it means to say that “(it) is”*, for this is the only conceivable way of enquiry that is possible to follow, whereas the alternative path, according to which “*(it) is not*”, is utterly indiscernible.⁵²³ The question of the subject of the verb *is* (ἔστι) in this context, which is left out in Greek, has been widely discussed by scholars and various candidates have been proposed for this role. Without going into details of this discussion, I choose to follow the assumption of Verdenius⁵²⁴ and others that what Parmenides’ enquiry is concerned with is *reality*, i.e. *whatever it is that is real*.⁵²⁵ Having exposed his subject of investigation to a careful logical scrutiny, Parmenides proclaims that there are many indications (σήματα) that *what is real* is uncreated and imperishable, whole and all

⁵²¹ See above, p. 104.

⁵²² West 1983a, 198: “It is logical enough that Time should be at the centre of the heavens whose revolutions measure it out in days, months, and years. It is equally logical that Ananke should be there (as in Plato and perhaps Parmenides) to maintain the strict regularity that those heavens display.”

⁵²³ See fr. B2. Cf. B8. 4-5 (οὐ γὰρ φατὸν οὐδὲ νοητὸν/ ἔστιν ὅπως οὐκ ἔστι) and 34-36 (ταῦτόν δ’ ἔστι νοεῖν τε καὶ οὐνεκεν ἔστι νόημα./ οὐ γὰρ ἄνευ τοῦ ἐόντος, ἐν ᾧ πεφασισμένον ἔστιν./ εὐρήσεις τὸ νοεῖν). For the reasoning behind Parmenides’ “(it) is not”-way of enquiry see, e.g., Kirk et al. 1983, 245f.

⁵²⁴ Verdenius 1962.

⁵²⁵ For the arguments in favour of this view, see, e.g., Hussey 1997, 133f.

alike, unshaken and perfect (B8. 1-4), for (8. 5f.): οὐδέ ποτ' ἦν οὐδ' ἔσται, ἐπεὶ νῦν ἔστιν ὁμοῦ πάν, / ἔν, συνεχές, etc.

“It is not a case of ‘it once was’ or ‘it will be’, since it is now, all together, one, continuous.”

Contradicting the Milesian world-view, according to which everything that *is* originates from a single material principle into which it eventually perishes, Parmenides denies the possibility of creation and destruction,⁵²⁶ for it would imply that what [now] *is* also *is not* [in the past] and what *is not* [now] also *is* [in the future].⁵²⁷ Temporality thus turns out to be contradictory and Parmenides’ refutation of becoming and perishing at the same time clearly represents a rejection of tenses.⁵²⁸ *What is real* can therefore exist only in “now” (νῦν). It is, as Hussey explains, “a metaphorical ‘now’, indicating a single timeless state, in which there is no longer any distinction of before and after, and therefore no meaning in tensed statements.”⁵²⁹

Parmenides denies multiplicity, diversity, motion, and change to reality⁵³⁰ on the same grounds, namely because they involve the contradictory claim that (it) *is* and (it) *is not* at the same time.⁵³¹ This “two-headed” way of thinking is typical of mortals and Parmenides rejects it as being “backward-turning”.⁵³² Necessity (Ἀνάγκη), Justice

⁵²⁶ Schofield (Kirk et al. 1983, 241): “Parmenides’ metaphysics and epistemology leave no room for cosmologies such as his Ionian predecessors had constructed nor indeed for any belief at all in the world our senses disclose to us.”

⁵²⁷ Cf. fr. 8. 20-21: πῶς δ' ἂν ἔπειτα πέλοι τὸ ἐόν; πῶς δ' ἂν κε γένοιτο; / εἰ γὰρ ἔγεντ', οὐκ ἔστ', οὐδ' εἴ ποτε μέλλει ἔσεσθαι. / τὼς γένεσις μὲν ἀπέσβεσται καὶ ἄπυστος ὄλεθρος.

⁵²⁸ For a detailed discussion on the topic see Hoy 1994. See, e.g., 581: “The minimal interpretation suggests that what is wrong with believing reality to be temporal is that in so doing one must suppose *what is* also has the status of *what is not*. People who believe becoming is real must believe there *are* things (past and future things) that are not, making it look as if not to be is the same as to be. Yet, these people also want the being of such things not to be the same as things that are (cf. KRS 247-48). All this is two-headed, double backward turning.”

⁵²⁹ Hussey 1997, 144.

⁵³⁰ See fr. 8. 22-49.

⁵³¹ Cf. Hussey 1972, 87f.

⁵³² Cf. fr. B6.

(Δίκη), and Fate (Μοῖρα) are all said to keep the single real Being (τὸ ἓόν) within its limits preventing it from coming to be and passing away, as well as from any kind of motion and change.⁵³³ While for his predecessors, as we have shown, time, along with justice and necessity, makes sure that the world-processes take place in an orderly fashion, Parmenides' Necessity and Justice 'expel' time from reality by keeping the Being in permanently unaltered state.⁵³⁴ Both Justice and Necessity in Parmenides have a metaphorical application and they appear to be personified. However, they cannot be believed to exist outside the one and only logical reality of Parmenides' single Being (although Δίκη is represented as a jailer, her prisoner being the Being itself) and should therefore rather be taken as descriptions of that reality.⁵³⁵ So, Havelock suggests that Parmenides' Justice is to be understood in the mode employed in fr. 80 of Heraclitus: it refers to "regularity, custom, and accepted order" applied no longer to cosmic movements but to its immobility.⁵³⁶ Necessity, who similarly to the description in 'Pythagoras', "holds being within the bonds of a limit", can be taken to imply the inevitability of the fixed state of reality.⁵³⁷ Vlastos argues that these have by now become completely rational concepts: "*ananke* merges with *dike*, and *dike* with logicophysical necessity: the order of nature is deducible from the intelligible properties of nature itself."⁵³⁸ Havelock, on the other hand, concludes that justice in the Presocratics "does not exceed the logical limits of that propriety and regularity which

⁵³³ Ἀνάγκη in 8. 30-31 (cf. the role of Necessity in the world of appearance described in fr. 10), Δίκη in 8. 13-15, and Fate (Μοῖρα) in 8. 37-38.

⁵³⁴ See Havelock 1978, 269.

⁵³⁵ See Havelock 1978, 268: "Parmenides is committed to the proposition that his 'being' is the sole reality. How could he imagine it as the prisoner of something else? Such a metaphor would be philosophically acceptable to him only if *dikē* represented this same reality by another name, so that it could be imagined as its own prisoner."

⁵³⁶ Ibid.

⁵³⁷ See 8. 29-30. Cf. Schrekenberg 1964, 108 (on Parmenides 8. 26-31): "Hier hat Ananke die gleiche bindende Funktion wie 8. 14 Dike und 8. 37 Moira, doch sind die Akzente verschieden gesetzt. (...) Hier wie auch 8. 37f. ist die Fesselung mythologisierendes Symbol der Unveränderlichkeit des Seins."

⁵³⁸ Vlastos 1947, 174.

was the fundamental norm of Homeric society. The novelty lies in its application, now extended operationally to cover the behaviour of the external world.”⁵³⁹

vi) Empedocles

Responding to Parmenides’ logical obstacle Empedocles comes up with a cosmology in which there is no generation and destruction, but there is still constant motion of the four elementary substances (“the roots”)⁵⁴⁰ under the influence of Love and Strife.

Empedocles’ ‘chronology’ appears to be more complex than in the cosmologies of his Ionian predecessors. He explicitly mentions temporal order in the motion of the four roots as well as in the alternating domination of Love and Strife. Necessity and ‘justice’ (although not in the form of *δίκη*) also appear to safeguard the regularity of the cosmic processes. So, in B115, which explains the punishment of a fallen *daimon*, we read:

ἔστιν Ἀνάγκης χρῆμα, θεῶν ψήφισμα παλαιόν,

αἰδίων, πλατέεσσι κατεσφρηγισμένον ὅρκοις·

(...)

τρίς μιν μυρίας ὥρας ἀπὸ μακάρων ἀλάλησθαι,

φυομένους παντοῖα διὰ χρόνου εἶδεα θνητῶν (etc.)

“There is a decree of Necessity, ratified long ago by gods,

eternal, and sealed with broad oaths

(...)

He wanders from the blessed ones for three times ten thousand years,

being born throughout time as all kinds of mortal forms”

⁵³⁹ Havelock 1978, 271.

⁵⁴⁰ Relying on doxographical evidence (MXG 976b 22-29; see also DK31 A35), Barnes 1982, 397ff. concludes that the type of motion Empedocles envisaged for the roots is counter-circulation or *antiperistasis*. He believes that the doxographers here ultimately rely on Empedocles’ repeated statement that “the elements run through one another” (B 17. 34; 21. 13; 26. 3).

The occurrence of the described proceedings is guaranteed by a decree of necessity (or, rather, Necessity), which is said to be eternal and sealed with “broad oaths” (implying a contract between Love and Strife? See below fr. B30). Vlastos argues that “‘mighty oath’ in Empedocles (...) alludes to the orderliness of existence conceived under the aspect of justice.”⁵⁴¹ There is regularity in the chronological aspect of the described events as well: a fallen *daimon* is sentenced to traversing from the realm of one of the elements into that of another “in time” (B115.12):

ἄλλος δ’ ἐξ ἄλλου δέχεται, στυγέουσι δὲ πάντες

“one takes him from another, and all abhor him”

This circumstance, as I argued above, implies that there is a regular chronological sequence in the prevalence of each of the elements in the Empedoclean cosmos (although the nature of this predominance is not clear). This is confirmed by what we read above in fr. 17. 27-30, which mentions the four roots as *prevailing in turn* “as time comes round” (ἐν δὲ μέρει κρατέουσι περιπλομένοιο χρόνοι). Although there has been disagreement on the subject of this sentence, Wright has convincingly argued that it refers to the four elements.⁵⁴² It is not surprising that the sequence of events (and therefore also time) is envisaged as cyclical in Empedocles’ system, for the nature of cosmic processes is conditioned by the lack of an absolute beginning (and end).

As mentioned in the previous section of this chapter, the extant evidence of Empedocles’ cosmology seems to suggest the idea of a repetitive cosmic cycle, in which the following phases can be recognised: 1) the Sphere, i.e. the state of the complete unity of the roots under the sole rule of Love (B27, 27a, 28, 29), 2) breaking

⁵⁴¹ Vlastos 1947, 161.

⁵⁴² Wright 1981, 170f.: “ταῦτα ... ἔασι: whether or not there is a lacuna after line 26, the subject of line 27 is the roots. This is clear (1) in the continuation in lines 34-5 (for it is the roots which in running through each other become the various phenomena), (2) in the near repetition of lines 29 and 34 in 16(26), where the reference is to the elements, and (3) in the ancient commentaries on line 27.”

up of the Sphere under the increasing influence of Strife, which results in elements separating out one by one (B30 and 31) and 3) gradually arranging themselves into great homogeneous masses (Arist. *Metaph.* 985b25ff.),⁵⁴³ 4) the power of Love slowly gains prevalence and gathers the elements into the Sphere again (B 35).

During these macrocosmic phases, dominance over the elements is regularly exchanged between two cosmic powers, Love and Strife, and this happens in a defined span of time. The period allotted to each of the opposing powers for their alternating dominance over the elements is “defined by a broad oath” (B30. 3 [χρόνος] ὅς σφιν ἀμοιβαῖος πλατέος παρ’ ἐλήλαται ὄρκου), which grants it regularity and orderliness. Thanks to the scholia on a number of Aristotle’s works contained in *Codex Laurentianus Graecus* 87. 7, we seem to have an indication of how long these periods of alternating predominance were believed to last. According to the interpretation of the scholia offered by Primavesi,⁵⁴⁴ each of the two forces was understood to come to power after 10000 years.⁵⁴⁵ However, some of the scholia on the four relevant passages in Aristotle name χρόνος as the unit of measurement of these periods of predominance of Love and Strife (e.g., scholia *g*) on *GC* 315a7-8 state that decomposition of the Sphere under the influence of Strife starts “after 100 χρόνοι”.⁵⁴⁶ Primavesi convincingly argues that χρόνος in these instances signifies “fixed duration” or “period of time” and is used by the scholiast as a substitute for a particular Empedoclean unit of

⁵⁴³ See Wright 1981, 41: “Despite assertions to the contrary, the sum of the evidence available does incline to the conclusion that Empedocles envisaged a domination of the whole by Strife”.

⁵⁴⁴ Primavesi 2006.

⁵⁴⁵ See id., 33-36, where Primavesi proposes a new reading of the scholia on Arist. *Ph.* Θ 1, 252a27-32. In lines 31-32 Aristotle remarks that an explanation is needed for Empedocles’ claim that the alternate predominance of Love and Strife lasts for an equal period of time (δι’ ἴσων χρόνων). That period of time (χρόνος) is defined by the scholia, but the reading of the given number varies. Primavesi suggests reading 10000, whereas Rashed reads 10.

⁵⁴⁶ Scholia *b*) (on *Ph.* 250b23-29) and *c*) (on *Ph.* 252a3-10) inform us that the period of the actual dominance of Love lasts 60 χρόνοι and that with the formation of the Sphere a period of rest begins. It might be taken to last 40 χρόνοι. Cf. Primavesi 2006, 27f.

time. This original time unit, Primavesi believes, could have only been αἰών, for the other temporal units mentioned by Empedocles are too short, and it corresponds to the “maximum duration of human life”, i.e., 100 years (cf. fr. 129. 6; 110. 3 DK; *P. Strasb.* a(ii), 6). The suggestion that the macrocosmic period of exchange of power between Love and Strife in Empedocles’ system may be based on a multiple of the (maximum) duration of human life reveals an important parallelism with the supposed reasoning behind Heraclitus’ Great Year as corresponding to 360 human generations.⁵⁴⁷ Finally, Primavesi convincingly explains the reason for the substitution of the original (and precise) αἰών with the (more general) χρόνος: at the time the scholia were composed a different meaning of αἰών was prevailing, namely that of “long space of time”, “eternity”.⁵⁴⁸

Before quoting fragment B30, Aristotle complains that Empedocles does not mention the cause of the described change (*Metaph.* 1000b14-16), but only says that things are so by nature (οὕτως πέφυκεν), and Simplicius explains that for Empedocles the exchange of powers between Love and Strife happens “out of necessity” (ἐξ ἀνάγκης).⁵⁴⁹ He also tells us that Empedocles offers the same reasons (πέφυκεν οὕτως ... ἐξ ἀνάγκης) to account for the sequential exchange of dominance between the four roots in B17. 29.⁵⁵⁰ Much like his predecessors, Empedocles also makes use of necessity (alongside Love and Strife) as an explanatory power by describing the constitution and functioning of the universe.⁵⁵¹

⁵⁴⁷ See above n. 511.

⁵⁴⁸ Primavesi 2006, 28.

⁵⁴⁹ See *Simpl. in Ph.* 1183. 24: τοῦτο δὲ ἔοικεν Ἐμπεδοκλῆς ἂν εἰπεῖν, ὅτε λέγει ὅτι τὸ κρατεῖν καὶ κινεῖν ἐν μέρει τὴν Φιλίαν καὶ τὸ Νεῖκος ἐξ ἀνάγκης ὑπάρχει τοῖς πράγμασιν (...)

⁵⁵⁰ *Id.* 1184. 5: τί δὲ διαφέρει τοῦ ὅτι πέφυκεν οὕτως τὸ ἐξ ἀνάγκης λέγειν αἰτίαν μὴ προστιθέντα; ταῦτα δὲ Ἐμπεδοκλῆς ἔοικε λέγειν ἐν τῶι· ἐν δὲ μέρει κρατέουσι περιπλομένοιο χρόνοι.

⁵⁵¹ For the multiplicity of explanatory powers in Empedocles and their mutual relations see Barnes 1982, 329ff.

Finally, in the above discussion on αἰών and χρόνος in Empedocles, I argued that that the second occurrence of the phrase περιπλομένοιο χρόνοιο, in fr. B110, should be interpreted in the same way as the one in B17. 29, namely as referring to the succession in prevalence of each of the elements in turn. In B110 we read how Pausanias (?) is offered the possibility of benefitting from receiving Empedocles' teachings (conceived in physical terms as a harmonious mixture of the four roots), if he contemplates them with good will in pure exercises. If he fails to do so, he is warned, the harmoniously composed teachings will leave him "as time goes round, longing to find their own dear kind" (B110. 8-9):

ἦ σ' ἄφαρ ἐκλείψουσι περιπλομένοιο χρόνοιο
σφῶν αὐτῶν ποθέοντα φίλην ἐπὶ γένναν ἰκέσθαι·

I argued above that these verses imply that, after the decomposition of the harmonious structure, the four elements will leave the man *one by one* aiming to merge with their own kind in the surroundings. Similarly, according to Simplicius, once Strife enters the harmonious composition of the Sphere, aiming to reclaim its supremacy, within the Sphere movement resumes *in a sequence* (B31):

πάντα γὰρ ἐξείης πελεμίζετο γυῖα θεοῖο

"For *one by one* all the limbs of god begin to quiver"

Besides, Aetius informs us that the roots separate out of the Sphere *one by one*⁵⁵² and we may conclude that there is a temporal order in the succession of the elements, starting from the moment of their separation within the Sphere, which then determines the sequence of their cosmic domination.

⁵⁵² Aet. 2. 6. 3 (= DK31 A49): Ἐ. τὸν μὲν αἰθέρα πρῶτον διακριθῆναι, δεύτερον δὲ τὸ πῦρ, ἐφ' ᾧ τὴν γῆν, ἐξ ἧς ἄγαν περισφιγγομένης τῇ ρύμῃ τῆς περιφορᾶς ἀναβλύσαι τὸ ὕδωρ· ἐξ οὗ θυμιαθῆναι τὸν ἄερα, καὶ γενέσθαι τὸν μὲν οὐρανὸν ἐκ τοῦ αἰθέρος, τὸν δὲ ἥλιον ἐκ τοῦ πυρός, πληθῆναι δὲ ἐκ τῶν ἄλλων τὰ περίγεια.

With Empedocles time, so to speak, returns to Presocratic philosophy after being banned from Parmenides' universe as a consequence of his metaphysical speculation. Following in the tradition of his Ionian predecessors, Empedocles ascribes to χρόνος the role of providing a fixed (chronological) framework for cosmic changes which proves to be crucial for proper functioning of the mechanism of the universe. As for the meaning of χρόνος in his fragments, it on the one hand refers to *chronological order* characteristic of the passage of events and on the other to the *fixed periods of time* given to Love and Strife for their dominance over the elements. Both, the passage of events and the duration of the given time-spans, are sanctioned by Necessity and sealed with oaths, which implies their necessary and proper character.

Infinity

vii) Melissus

The name and doctrine of Melissus of Samos, who was Empedocles' contemporary, were associated with Parmenides' already by Plato (*Tht.* 180D) and Aristotle (*Ph.* 186a7 and *Cael.* 298b17), and he is regularly grouped with the Eleatics. Fragments of his work are preserved by Simplicius, who also provides paraphrases of Melissus' arguments.⁵⁵³ Like Parmenides, Melissus argues against coming to be on the grounds that no *thing* can originate from *nothing* (DK30 B1). The denial of *ex nihilo* creation implies that *whatever is* must have always been and, Melissus adds, always will be,⁵⁵⁴ thus apparently allowing for the distinction between the tenses (which will turn out to be irrelevant) and establishing the temporal infinity of the universe (B2):

⁵⁵³ Paraphrases are preserved also in the pseudo-Aristotelian treatise *On Melissus, Xenophanes and Gorgias*. See Schofield (Kirk et al. 1983, 392).

⁵⁵⁴ Melissus argues only against coming to be, but an "isomorphic proof" can be constructed against passing away too (cf. Schofield in Kirk et al. 1983, 393).

ὅτε τοίνυν οὐκ ἐγένετο, ἔστι τε καὶ αἰεὶ ἦν καὶ αἰεὶ ἔσται καὶ ἀρχὴν οὐκ ἔχει οὐδὲ
τελευτήν, ἀλλ' ἄπειρόν ἐστιν. εἰ μὲν γὰρ ἐγένετο, ἀρχὴν ἂν εἶχεν (ἤρξατο γὰρ ἂν ποτε
γενόμενον) καὶ τελευτήν (ἐτελεύτησε γὰρ ἂν ποτε γενόμενον). ὅτε δὲ μήτε ἤρξατο μήτε
ἐτελεύτησεν, αἰεὶ τε ἦν καὶ αἰεὶ ἔσται καὶ οὐκ ἔχει ἀρχὴν οὐδὲ τελευτήν· οὐ γὰρ αἰεὶ εἶναι
ἀνυστόν, ὅ τι μὴ πᾶν ἔστι.

“Since, then, it did not come to be, but is, it always was and always will be, and it has
no beginning nor end but is unlimited. For if it had come to be, it would have a
beginning (for it would have begun coming into being at some time) and an end (for it
would have ended coming into being at some time). But since it neither began nor
ended, it always was and always will be and it has no beginning nor end; for what is not
entire cannot be always.” (trans. Schofield)

This fragment clearly presents the difference between Parmenides’ and Melissus’
understanding of the properties of the universe. While Parmenides’ Being is said to be
held unchanged and immovable within the bonds and limits (B8. 26 and 31), Melissus’
universe knows of no limits, but is temporally and spatially unlimited (ἄπειρον).⁵⁵⁵ This
shows that Melissus recognised the difficulty of imagining reality as being bounded,
unless bounded by something else,⁵⁵⁶ but it also indicates that the two philosophers’
reasonings about time were essentially different: Parmenides was concerned with the
contradiction resulting from the assumption of tensed reality, whereas Melissus argued
for infinite time from the denial of *ex nihilo* creation.

⁵⁵⁵ It has been maintained that the above fragment accounts for both spatial and temporal infinity, although it appears at first sight to discuss the latter only. See e.g. Guthrie 1965, 108 and Schofield (Kirk et al. 1983, 394.

⁵⁵⁶ See Guthrie 1965, 106: “So far as his own words go, we meet this only at a later stage, when he is arguing, not for the infinity of what is, but from its infinity, as an established premise, to its unity.” See the following note.

From the assumption that the universe is infinite in extension, Melissus argues that it needs to be *one* as well (B6)⁵⁵⁷ and this monism further serves as a basis for the inference that the universe has to be *homogeneous* too (MXG 974a12-4). Like Parmenides, Melissus does not allow for any kind of change within the unique and homogeneous universe (B7. 2), for alteration of any sort would imply that what was before perishes and what is not comes to be. He then concludes:

εἰ τοίνυν τριχὶ μιῇ μυρίοις ἔτεσιν ἑτεροῖον γίνοιτο, ὀλεῖται πᾶν ἐν τῷ παντὶ χρόνῳ
“Accordingly, if it were to become different by a single hair in ten thousand years, it will perish completely in the whole of time.”

Χρόνος here refers to infinite cosmic time, a purely speculative notion arisen from Melissus’ philosophical reasoning. In Melissus’ changeless world time, in the sense applied to it by Empedocles and the Ionian physicists, could not participate. The conception of infinite time is also associated with the Atomists, who are apparently indebted to Melissus for their introduction of empty space into cosmology.⁵⁵⁸

vii) Leucippus and Democritus

Apart from Parmenides and Empedocles, of whose works substantial fragments have been preserved, including those containing χρόνος, ἀνάγκη and δίκη (ὄρκος), in the case of other Presocratics we need to draw conclusions about their possible usage of the given words and about their understanding of the concepts the terms signified from the evidence of Aristotle and the doxographers. This circumstance invites caution and attentiveness in the analysis and interpretation of the secondary sources. There are some

⁵⁵⁷ εἰ γὰρ <ἄπειρον> εἴη, ἐν εἴῃ ἄν· εἰ γὰρ δύο εἴη, οὐκ ἂν δύναιτο ἄπειρα εἶναι, ἀλλ’ ἔχοι ἂν πείρατα πρὸς ἄλληλα.

⁵⁵⁸ See Melissus’ B7. 7-10. Cf. Schofield in Kirk et al. 1983, 398.

general indications of the degree of reliability of different doxographic testimonies concerning the doctrines of individual Presocratics (thus, for example, Simplicius' paraphrase of Theophrastus' account of the first principles of the Presocratics is generally taken to be trustworthy).⁵⁵⁹ However, one needs to examine carefully every piece of doxographic evidence in order to establish whether it is in accordance with what is otherwise known about the doctrine of the author to which it is ascribed as well as with other contemporary ideas. It is sometimes possible to find the remnants of the original Presocratic terminology in these sources, as we have seen with the example of Anaximander's fragment B1.

Most of the preserved fragments of Democritus' teachings are concerned with his ethical views and our knowledge of his cosmology therefore rests mainly on secondary evidence. It is from this kind of source that we learn that Democritus held cosmic time to be *infinite* (ἄπειρος) and *uncreated* (ἀγένητος). Moreover, Aristotle and Simplicius tell us that Democritus used this *as a self-evident fact* (ἐναργεῖ) to prove that not everything requires a beginning (Arist. *Ph.* 251b16):⁵⁶⁰ διὰ τούτου Δημόκριτός γε δείκνυσιν ὡς ἀδύνατον ἅπαντα γεγονέναι. τὸν γὰρ χρόνον ἀγένητον εἶναι.

"It is just this that enables Democritus to show that it is impossible for all things to have come into being; for time, he says, is uncreated."⁵⁶¹ (trans. Barnes)⁵⁶²

Although, as Ross notes,⁵⁶³ we find no trace of this view in Democritus' extant fragments, he is very likely to have expressed the idea, for it is in accordance with one

⁵⁵⁹ For a useful analysis of doxographical sources see Kahn 1960, 11-24 ("Introduction to the Doxography").

⁵⁶⁰ See Guthrie 1965, 430, n. 3. Cf. Blackwell et al. 1963, 481.

⁵⁶¹ Simplicius reiterates Aristotle's account (*in Ph.* 1153.22): ὁ μέντοι Δημόκριτος οὕτως αἰδίων ἐπέπειστο εἶναι τὸν χρόνον, ὅτι βουλόμενος δεῖξαι μὴ πάντα γενητὰ ὡς ἐναργεῖ τῷ τὸν χρόνον μὴ γεγονέναι προσεχρήσατο.

⁵⁶² Barnes 1984.

⁵⁶³ Ross 1936, 688 (ad 251b15-17).

of the fundamental conceptions of the Atomist cosmology – that the basic constituents of the universe, innumerable *atoms*, are not created and that they move forever in a limitless *void*. The Atomists' cosmology, like that of Empedocles, appears to be motivated by their effort to respond to Eleatic arguments and reconcile them (so long as they are considered valid) with the evidence of our senses.⁵⁶⁴ So the Atomists adopted Eleatic reasoning about the universe as being uncreated and imperishable, but they still allowed for creation and destruction within it, as well as for plurality and change, by introducing *empty space* (literally “no-thing”: μηδέν), which divides *atoms* (each being an indivisible “thing”: δέν) from one another and so makes locomotion possible.⁵⁶⁵

Relevant sources give no evidence of time regulating cosmic processes. All coming to be and passing away is accounted for by the movements of innumerable *atoms* of different sizes and shapes, which are said to collide (ἐμπίπτειν, ἀλληλοτυπεῖν, κρούεσθαι) and then intertwine (συμπλέκεσθαι) or wind around (περιπλέκεσθαι).⁵⁶⁶ The cause of their motion is not given nor is it explicitly said that the source of motion is inherent in atoms.⁵⁶⁷ However, various sources (including Leucippus' original fragment) report that in the atomists' universe everything happens *by necessity* (DK67 B2): οὐδὲν χρεῖμα μάτην γίνεται, ἀλλὰ πάντα ἐκ λόγου τε καὶ ὑπ' ἀνάγκης.

“Nothing happens at random, but everything from reason⁵⁶⁸ and by necessity.”

⁵⁶⁴ Hussey 1972, 142.

⁵⁶⁵ See Hussey 1972, 143: “The point that Democritus seems to be indicating is that ‘nothingness’ is just as real as any ‘thing’, but differs in not being a ‘thing’, or, as one might say, not being an individual or a primary object of reference, though to say this is to import a higher level of sophistication than was available at the time.” For other names used for *atoms* and *void* see Simpl. in Cael. 295.3.

⁵⁶⁶ See e.g. Simpl. in Cael. 295. 8ff. (= DK68 A37) and id. 242. 21.

⁵⁶⁷ Cf. Schofield (Kirk et al. 1983, 424): “Indeed, since atoms and the void have always existed, there is every reason to suppose that there must always have been motion, and consequent collisions.” See Arist. Ph. 252a32-b2 and GA 742b18-34.

⁵⁶⁸ See Taylor 1997, 224: “The first part of the fragment (‘Nothing happens at random, but everything from reason’) thus asserts, not universal purposiveness in nature, but a principle which we have already seen to be pervasive in atomism, the Principle of Sufficient Reason.”

According to Aristotle, who is followed by the majority of other sources, Democritus denied purpose to the way things happen and explained all natural processes by means of necessity (GA 789b2).⁵⁶⁹ This necessity, we are told, operates *from infinite time* (ἐξ ἀπείρου χρόνου), i.e. since forever, and motivates the occurrence of things that *were, are and will be*; these are distinguished by the usage of a familiar formula⁵⁷⁰ which implies universal application of the concept of necessity (Ps.-Plu. *Strom.* 7):

Δημόκριτος ὁ Ἀβδηρίτης ὑπεστήσατο τὸ πᾶν ἄπειρον διὰ τὸ μηδαμῶς ὑπὸ τινος αὐτὸ δεδημιουργῆσθαι. (...) μηδεμίαν ἀρχὴν ἔχειν τὰς αἰτίας τῶν νῦν γιγνομένων, ἄνωθεν δ' ὅλως ἐξ ἀπείρου χρόνου προκατέχεσθαι τῇ ἀνάγκῃ πάνθ' ἀπλῶς τὰ γεγονότα καὶ ἔόντα καὶ ἐσόμενα.

“Democritus of Abdera posited that the universe is infinite, for it was not created by anything.(...) The causes of the things that now come to be have no beginning, but absolutely everything that has come to be and is and will be is predetermined beforehand, from infinite time by necessity.”

In the purposeless and deterministic universe of Democritus everything is “predetermined from forever and by necessity”. In a testimony coming from Aetius, Democritus’ (and Parmenides’!) necessity is apparently identified with fate, justice, providence, and the creator (Aet. 1. 25. 3), as if to say that “necessity is what (so-called) fate, justice and cosmic providence really are”.⁵⁷¹ Aetius also informs us that the means through which this necessity is expressed in the universe are impact and the motion of atoms (1. 26. 2), and Diogenes Laertius similarly reports that the whirl or vortex is

⁵⁶⁹ Δημόκριτος δὲ τὸ οὗ ἕνεκα ἀφείς λέγειν, πάντα ἀνάγει εἰς ἀνάγκην οἷς χρῆται ἡ φύσις.

⁵⁷⁰ This type of formula appears in Greek literature from Homer onwards. Diels records more than a dozen instances occurring in the fragments of the Presocratics or in doxographic accounts of their teachings (DK vol. 3, s.v. εἶναι: “Sein im Zeitenwechsel”).

⁵⁷¹ Παρμενίδης καὶ Δημόκριτος πάντα κατ' ἀνάγκην· τὴν αὐτὴν δὲ εἶναι εἰμαρμένην καὶ δίκην καὶ πρόνοιαν καὶ κοσμοποιόν. For interpretation see Taylor 1997, 240, n. 3.

called necessity by Democritus (9. 45).⁵⁷² These instances suggest that what Democritus had in mind was a ‘mechanistic’ necessity. Since it is possible to recognise different dynamic forces operating within the Atomists’ universe, necessity might have been thought to comprise them all.⁵⁷³

Thus, the notions of *time*, *justice* and *necessity* played an important role in the cosmological speculations of the early Greek philosophers. Their mutual relation establishes an important link between early philosophical accounts on the origin of the world and the Orphic Time-cosmology as represented in the Hieronyman Theogony. My primary aim, however, was to get closer to the meanings of χρόνος and αἰών in the Presocratics and to indicate possible semantic innovations that could have originated from their introduction into cosmology. The earliest mentions of cosmic time in the Presocratics associate it with observable cosmic changes. Anaximander’s usage of χρόνος indicates that the philosopher conceived of time as imposing *due order* on the exchange of opposite elements in the world around us. The idea of temporal order in cosmic changes also seems to be indicated by Heraclitus’ B52, in which αἰών appears.⁵⁷⁴ With the Eleatic school, however, philosophical speculations moved to the sphere of logical considerations beyond the observable world, which resulted in the denial of change and exclusion of time from the logical ‘reality’. The concepts of a

⁵⁷² See Raven in Kirk et al. 1983, 419, n. 1: “The whirl or vortex is called necessity because it produces the necessary (mechanical and *theoretically* determinable) collisions and unions of atoms.” Some ancient sources ascribe the creation of the cosmic whirl to chance, thus apparently contradicting the general claim that in the Atomists’ universe everything comes about by necessity. It has been argued, however, that the way in which these secondary sources understood the concept of chance, as well as the way in which the Atomists could have conceived of it, need not have been contradictory to their idea of necessity (see loc. cit.; cf. Barnes 1982, 418-26 and Taylor 1999, 188-95).

⁵⁷³ See Taylor 1997, 194f: “We have, then, some evidence that Democritus’ dynamics postulated three fundamental forces, a repulsive force (...) and two kinds of attractive force (...) It is plausible that Democritus applied the term ‘necessity’ to all these forces, regarding them alike as irresistible.” Schreckenberg 1964, 116 defines the Atomists’ necessity as “die weltbildende Verkettung (oder weltzerstörende Auflösung) der Atome.”

⁵⁷⁴ See section 3 of this chapter (pp. 114-125).

‘tenseless now’ and ‘temporal infinity’ that originated from these speculations were both deemed (logically) inevitable. The Eleatics set the task to their fellow philosophers to try and account for the physical world under the given logical constraints.

Empedocles did so by allowing Necessity to operate from infinity (B115. 1-2) and by establishing a complex cosmology of ceaseless cyclical changes. The Atomists also proclaimed everything to be necessitated from infinite time by means of the impact and motion of the atomic constituents of the universe.

In the concluding section of this discussion I will reflect upon the distinction that some of the Presocratics seem to have envisaged between *infinity* (as the ‘time’ that precedes the creation of the world) and *cosmic time* (as observable in regular cosmic changes), which proves to have influenced future philosophical discussions on the nature of time.

Time and Eternity

viii) Philolaus

The following interpretation of Philolaus’ doctrine is only a tentative one, for the sources I will be drawing from are mostly secondary and their meaning is controversial. The passage I will be primarily discussing here comes from Aristotle’s lost treatise on Pythagorean philosophy (via Stob. *Anth.* 1. 18. 1c = Arist. fr. 201 R) and it mentions time (χρόνος), along with breath and void, as being “drawn in” from the unlimited:

ἐν δὲ τῷ περὶ τῆς Πυθαγόρου φιλοσοφίας πρώτῳ γράφει τὸν μὲν οὐρανὸν εἶναι ἓνα, ἐπεισάγεσθαι δὲ ἐκ τοῦ ἀπείρου χρόνον τε καὶ πνοὴν καὶ τὸ κενόν, ὃ διορίζει ἐκάστων τὰς χώρας αἰεί.⁵⁷⁵

“In the first book about Pythagoras’ philosophy he [Aristotle] writes that the universe is one and that it draws in from the unlimited time, breath, and void, which always distinguishes the place of each thing.”

Taken on its own, this testimony on Pythagorean cosmology seems to suggest that χρόνος was understood to signify *cosmic time* that ‘came’ from *the unlimited* (which, according to Aristotle, lay outside the heavens),⁵⁷⁶ τὸ ἄπειρον, the concept already familiar from early Ionian philosophers, who used it to signify both spatial and temporal infinity.⁵⁷⁷ Although the ascription of a philosophical view by later authors to ‘Pythagoras’ or ‘Pythagoreans’ implies a wide range of (mostly anonymous) authors active at different times, there are strong indications that the above quotation can be associated with the name and teachings of a particular Pythagorean who was writing in the second half of the fifth century BC, namely with Philolaus of Croton.⁵⁷⁸ This enables us to speculate in more detail on the nature of his conception of time. In doing this I will rely on the discussion of Philolaus’ teachings – as reconstructed from the preserved fragments as well as from numerous testimonia – presented in Carl Huffman’s invaluable study devoted to this philosopher.⁵⁷⁹

⁵⁷⁵ Cf. Arist. *Ph.* 213b22: εἶναι δ’ ἔφασαν καὶ οἱ Πυθαγόρειοι κενόν, καὶ ἐπεισιέναι αὐτῷ τῷ οὐρανῷ ἐκ τοῦ ἀπείρου πνεῦμά τε ὡς ἀναπνέοντι καὶ τὸ κενόν ὃ διορίζει τὰς φύσεις, ὡς ὄντος τοῦ κενοῦ χωρισμοῦ τινος τῶν ἐφεζήσ καὶ [τῆς] διορίσεως· καὶ τοῦτ’ εἶναι πρῶτον ἐν τοῖς ἀριθμοῖς· τὸ γὰρ κενὸν διορίζειν τὴν φύσιν αὐτῶν.

⁵⁷⁶ *Ph.* 203a8 (τὸ ἔξω τοῦ οὐρανοῦ τὸ ἄπειρον).

⁵⁷⁷ See Kahn 2001, 24.

⁵⁷⁸ See Huffman 1993, 43: “It appears to be based on Philolaus’ cosmogony because, after describing the cosmos as one (cf. Philolaus F17), the fragment describes the cosmos as drawing things in from outside, a clear reference to Philolaus’ notion of the cosmos breathing in like the new-born child.”

⁵⁷⁹ Huffman’s careful analysis of the sources confirms and expands the conclusions made by Burkert in his seminal book on Pythagoreanism (Burkert 1962).

One of the most prominent ideas in Philolaus' cosmology is that the world, and everything in it, was "fitted together" (ἀρμόχθη) from two distinct categories of things, "unlimiteds" (ἄπειρα) and "limiters" (περαίνοντα),⁵⁸⁰ but although these are repeatedly mentioned in Philolaus' fragments (frr. DK44 B1-3 and 6), it is nowhere explained what they were meant to refer to. As a consequence, modern scholars have offered widely differing interpretations of these notions.⁵⁸¹ Huffman reasonably suggested that one should look for "examples of things that are explicitly said by Philolaus to have been 'fitted together' or 'harmonized'" in order to try to identify limiting and unlimited elements in these compounds.⁵⁸² Fragment B7 (Stob. *Ecl.* 1. 21. 8) turned out to be suitable for this purpose:

τὸ πρᾶτον ἀρμολθέν, τὸ ἕν, ἐν τῷ μέσῳ τᾷ σφαίρας ἐστία καλεῖται.

"The first thing fitted together, the one, in the centre of the sphere is called the hearth."

In "the first thing fitted together, the one in the centre" (cf. πῦρ ἐν μέσῳ in DK44 A16 and τὸ πῦρ μέσον in DK44 A17) Huffman recognises a combination of unlimited and limiting elements: *fire*, which in itself is "a stuff undetermined by quantitative or spatial notions", and *centre*, the limiting notion that "determines the fire's position spatially".⁵⁸³ He goes on to interpret the above quotation from Aristotle's treatise on the Pythagoreans according to the same key: by their introduction into the cosmos, time, breath and void become susceptible to quantitative or spatial determination. "Each in

⁵⁸⁰ See D.L. 8. 85 (= DK44 B1). It most probably represents the opening of Philolaus' book (for its authenticity see Huffman 1993, 93).

⁵⁸¹ So e.g. Barnes 1982, 387ff. suggests that limiters are shapes and unlimited stuffs, with the argument that it gives Philolaus an interesting thesis without any obvious conflict with what is stated in fragments. Schofield (Kirk et al. 1983, 326) assumes that Philolaus' readers must have been acquainted with Pythagorean number doctrine and that limiters signified odd and unlimiteds even numbers. He supports this view with fragments 4 and 5 which are explicitly concerned with number. Kahn 2001, 28f. reiterates this view.

⁵⁸² Huffman 1993, 41.

⁵⁸³ See id. 42.

itself defines a continuum, but none of them is defined by any set quantity or boundaries within that continuum.”⁵⁸⁴ Scholars who, unlike Huffman, interpret Philolaus’ cosmogony in accordance with Pythagorean number-doctrine also agree that time’s drawing-in from the unlimited implies its subjection to countability.⁵⁸⁵ Both interpretations suggest that Philolaus envisaged a distinction between *measurable cosmic time* and *eternity* which precedes cosmic creation.

There is one more remark I would like to make in connection with Philolaus’ time. Fragments tell us that his single world has spherical shape (see above, B7). Its creation started from the hearth in the centre (“the first thing fitted together”) equally in all directions (B17).⁵⁸⁶ This circumstance, according to Huffman, represents another limiting principle “that is combined with a variety of unlimiteds in order to generate the actual cosmic order.”⁵⁸⁷ This suggests that time could be seen as being somehow determined by the spherical shape of the world: it was probably envisaged as permeating the cosmic sphere, which seems to be confirmed by Aetius’ report about ‘Pythagoras’’ conception of time quoted above (Aet. 1. 21. 1).⁵⁸⁸ Finally, Philolaus tells us that by the creation of the world limiters and unlimiteds were “harmonised” (B1 and B2), for being opposed to each other, they could only be unified by means of *harmony*

⁵⁸⁴ Huffman 1993, 43: “They could perhaps be called quantifiabiles in that, although an account of their own essence would make no mention of any specific quantity, each of them does admit of the imposition of boundaries or quantities from without. Sections of void can be bounded by the insertion of bodies into it, and time can be divided into segments just as fire can be enclosed in a certain shape and given a specific position.”

⁵⁸⁵ See e.g. Schofield in Kirk et al. 1983, 342.

⁵⁸⁶ Stob. *Ecl.* 1. 15. 7 (Φιλολάου Βάκχαι): ὁ κόσμος εἷς ἐστίν, ἥρξατο δὲ γίγνεσθαι ἀπὸ τοῦ μέσου καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ μέσου εἰς τὸ ἄνω διὰ τῶν αὐτῶν τοῖς κάτω.

⁵⁸⁷ Huffman 1993, 43.

⁵⁸⁸ Cf. Arist. *Ph.* 218a33-b1: Τί δ’ ἐστὶν ὁ χρόνος καὶ τίς αὐτοῦ ἡ φύσις (...) οἱ μὲν γὰρ τὴν τοῦ ὅλου κίνησιν εἶναι φασιν, οἱ δὲ τὴν σφαῖραν αὐτήν. The first view is believed to belong to Plato and the latter to the Pythagoreans (see Ross 1936, 596). Aristotle further explains that the sphere of the universe was thought to be time because all things are in both and then discards the view as too naive to even need refutation (*Ph.* 218b6-9).

(B6).⁵⁸⁹ Since “nothing can be known or understood without number” (B4), this harmony should be interpreted as numerical too.⁵⁹⁰ It has further been supposed that Philolaus envisaged a mathematical ratio behind the temporality reflected in the circular motion of the heavenly bodies around the central fire.⁵⁹¹

* * *

The majority of the passages discussed in this section come from secondary sources, for the extant evidence of actual uses of χρόνος and αἰών in the Presocratics is rather sparse. Where the original fragments containing χρόνος and αἰών are preserved, I was in a position to analyse their semantic applications. Otherwise, I relied on the available doxographic evidence and on the relevant Presocratic fragments not containing the two words for the reconstruction of the attitudes to time of individual thinkers or of general philosophical tendencies in Presocratic discussions involving time.

From what we know about their doctrines, the Presocratics did not devote particular attention and special study to the question of time, except for the Eleatic Zeno whose third argument against motion, the *Arrow*, seems to be based on the problem of the composition of time.⁵⁹² The above discussion, however, shows that time was one of the key notions in their reasoning about the history and functioning of the universe. The Presocratics used χρόνος and αἰών in connection with the *dynamics* of the universe,

⁵⁸⁹ Cf. Kahn 2001, 25: “*Harmonia* thus serves here the same function as for Empedocles and also for Heraclitus: to produce unity out of multiplicity by bringing diverse and discordant elements into an agreement with one another.”

⁵⁹⁰ Arist. *Metaph.* 986a3: ὅλον οὐρανὸν ἁρμονίαν εἶναι καὶ ἀριθμὸν.

⁵⁹¹ According to Aristotle (*Cael.* 293a20-23), Pythagoreans believed that the earth orbits around the central fire and that this causes the alternation of day and night. Aetius (2. 7. 7) informs us that Philolaus envisaged ten heavenly bodies as “dancing” (χορεύειν) around the centre. As for the ‘harmony of the spheres’, it is uncertain whether this idea can be uncontroversially connected to Philolaus’ doctrine (see Schofield (Kirk et al. 1983, 344f.), Huffman 1993, 279ff., and Kahn 2001, 28).

⁵⁹² For a detailed discussion of the *Arrow* argument see Arsenijević 2008.

which they often envisaged as cyclical, and, more importantly, as orderly and regular, for the *regularity* and *measure* of cosmic changes were deemed crucial for the maintenance of cosmic stability. This is stressed by explicit association of *time* with *necessity*, which also shows that χρόνος was perceived as essentially determined, although apparently also determining (i.e. regulatory) notion. This seems to be the idea behind Philolaus' imposition of limit on time by its introduction into the world from the infinite, which implies the application of structure and number to it.⁵⁹³ What remains unclear, however, is whether the Presocratics conceived of time as a measure of change or as being measured by change (or both?),⁵⁹⁴ and we have no evidence that any of them explicitly discussed the ontological status of time. These questions that naturally arise from the discussion of the Presocratic conceptions of time are, however, analysed by their successors, most notably by Aristotle, who explicitly says that his predecessors left it unclear what time and its nature were (*Ph.* 218a31-33).

⁵⁹³ Cf. Guthrie 1962, 337.

⁵⁹⁴ Aristotle seems to hold that it is both. See Coope 2005, 99: "Aristotle does not *define* time either as a measure or as something measurable, but he holds nevertheless that it is both: it measures change and it is measured by change."

OTHER USES OF ΧΡΟΝΟΣ IN THE PRESOCRATICS

There are further usages of χρόνος in the Presocratics, listed in the *Wortindex* to Diels-Kranz's *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, which have not been mentioned so far.

These usages come from various different contexts, mostly ethical but also epistemological, rhetorical and political, and from a number of different authors, from Xenophanes and Epicharmus to Gorgias and Thrasymachus. Most of these authors were writing in the fifth or early fourth centuries B.C. A common feature of the remaining instances of χρόνος in the Presocratics is that the word has no philosophical significance in them. Moreover, most of these Presocratic usages of χρόνος turn out to be already familiar to us from the earlier (or contemporary) nonphilosophical literature. They can be classified into several groups, some of which, as will be shown, introduce certain semantic novelties.

i) Adverbial phrases expressing duration and passage of time

πολὸν χρόνον / πλείω χρόνον / ὀλίγον χρόνον / ὁκόσον ἂν χρόνον/ χρόνῳ

Most of the adverbial phrases containing χρόνος in the Presocratics are identical to those found in early epic and lyric poetry, such as πολὸν χρόνον “(for) a long time”, which occurs fourteen times in the Homeric poems. In fragment DK68 B160 Democritus⁵⁹⁵ describes what he considers “living badly”, that is “living without prudence, reason, and piety”, as actually “dying for a long time” (πολὸν χρόνον ἀποθνήϊσκειν) and Epicharmus in DK23 B24 alternates this adverbial expression with

⁵⁹⁵ Taylor 1999, 238 groups this fragment together with those ascribed to Democrates.

its opposite, also found already in Homer (T 157, Ψ 418), meaning “(for) a short time” (ὥς πολλὸν ζήσων χρόνον ὥς ὀλίγον, οὕτως διανοοῦ “that you can live a long as well as a short time, that is how you should think”).⁵⁹⁶ Critias uses the comparative adverbial πλείω χρόνον (cf. Theognidea 907 W) in his explanation of the meaning of the adjective δυσάνιος (DK88 B42 ὅστις ἐπὶ τοῖς μικροῖς ἀνιάται καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς μεγάλοις μᾶλλον ἢ οἱ ἄλλοι ἄνθρωποι ἢ πλείω χρόνον “whoever gets upset more or for a longer time than other people about more or less important issues”). Finally, the adverbial πολλὸν χρόνον appears in the work of the so-called *Anonymus Iamblichi* in his prescription of proper behaviour for a person who aspires to excel in virtue (DK89 1.2 ἐπιθυμετὴν γενέσθαι τῶν καλῶν καὶ ἀγαθῶν φιλόπονόν τε καὶ πρωιαίτατα μανθάνοντα καὶ πολλὸν χρόνον αὐτοῖς συνδιατελοῦντα “to be a lover of things honourable and good and to be industrious both learning [them] as early as possible and continuing to pursue these things for a long time”).

Further, Democritus uses the adverbial phrase ὁκόσον ἂν χρόνον when warning “those who take pleasure from their belly” about the temporariness of bodily pleasures (DK68 B235 αἱ μὲν ἡδοναὶ βραχεῖαι τε καὶ δι’ ὀλίγου γίνονται ὁκόσον ἂν χρόνον ἐσθίωσιν ἢ πίνωσιν, αἱ δὲ λῦπαι πολλαί “the enjoyments are meagre and brief, lasting for as long as they eat or drink, and their sorrows are many”). This usage of χρόνος is similar to that found in Homer and, later, in Theognis in the adverbial expression τόσσον χρόνον (ὅσσον) (Ω 670, τ 169 and 221; Thgn. 93).

Apart from these adverbial accusatives, which refer to the *duration* of actions, states, and events, we also come across the adverbial dative of χρόνος meaning “in time” in the epistemological context of Xenophanes’ fragment DK21 B18 (οὔτοι ἀπ’

⁵⁹⁶ For a similar context cf. B. 3. 78-82.

ἀρχῆς πάντα θεοὶ θνητοῖς ὑπέδειξαν / ἀλλὰ χρόνῳ ζητοῦντες ἐφευρίσκουσιν ἄμεινον
“yet the gods have not revealed all things to men from the beginning, but by seeking
men find out better in time” (trans. Kirk)). This usage rests on χρόνος meaning “passage
of time” and is comparable to Solon’s mention of τῷ χρόνῳ in fr. 4. 16 W.

ii) Nominal χρόνος meaning “duration”, “period of time”

In the second section of the treatise of the anonymous author quoted by Iamblichus (the
so-called *Anonymus Iamblichi*), writing in the late fifth or early fourth century, the
author discusses the importance of timely training for anyone who wishes to receive
good reputation among men: he must start early (while he is still young) and practise
persistently (see id. 1.2 above), for (2.6) “when time is present in every activity and
public business in abundance and for long, it strengthens that which is being practised”
(ὁ χρόνος συνὼν μὲν ἐκάστῳ ἔργῳ καὶ πράγματι πολὺς⁵⁹⁷ καὶ διὰ μακροῦ κρατύνει τὸ
ἀσκούμενον), “whereas short time cannot accomplish this” (ὁ δὲ ὀλίγος χρόνος οὐ
δύναται τοῦτο ἀπεργάζεσθαι). Πολὺς and ὀλίγος χρόνος have the sense “long” and
“short period of time” in Gorgias’ fragment DK82 B11a 34 (*The Defence of Palamedes*)
where he advises against passing a quick judgement (μηδὲ τὸν ὀλίγον χρόνον τοῦ
πολλοῦ σοφώτερον ἡγεῖσθαι κριτὴν “do not consider a short time a wiser judge than a
long”). These usages of χρόνος indicating an ‘active’ period of time resemble the use of
βασιὺς χρόνος in Solon’s fragment 10. 1 W.⁵⁹⁸ Further, ὁ χρόνος is used in the
nominative without quantification in the sense of the ‘active’ “period of time” by the

⁵⁹⁷ Cf. Semon. 3. 1 W: πολλὸς γὰρ ἤμιν ἐστὶ τεθνάναι χρόνος.

⁵⁹⁸ See above p. 77.

fifth-century sophist Antiphon⁵⁹⁹ in the context of his ethical fragment DK87 B58. He discusses the case of a man who intends to harm another,⁶⁰⁰ but is afraid and therefore hesitates, which, according to Antiphon, may have a fortunate outcome in his giving up *in the meantime* the harmful intention altogether (ἐν ᾧ δὲ μέλλει, πολλάκις ὁ διὰ μέσου χρόνος ἀπέστρεψε τὸν νοῦν τῶν θελημάτων “and while he hesitates, often the intervening time diverts his mind from these intentions”). Finally, in Democritus’ fragment DK68 B297 χρόνος signifies “duration” of life (τὸν τῆς βιότης χρόνον),⁶⁰¹ which reminds us of Anacreon’s βιότου ... πολλὸς χρόνος in 395. 5-6 *PMG*.

iii) Prepositional expressions ἐν ὀλίγῳ χρόνῳ, σὺν πολλῷ χρόνῳ, ἐξ ὀλίγου χρόνου, εἰς τὸν ᾧπαντα χρόνον

In the above-mentioned context of the advantages of timely training for a man who wishes to excel in virtue discussed by *Anonymus Iamblichi* we find prepositional expressions with the dative and genitive of the noun χρόνος which point to the meaning “duration”. In these expressions the noun is again paired with the adjectives πολὺς and ὀλίγος. In 2.7 the author argues that the one who wishes to learn the art of words (τὴν τέχνην τὴν κατὰ λόγους) can become in no way inferior to his teacher “in a short time” (ἐν ὀλίγῳ χρόνῳ), but that it is not possible for a man who had a late start to bring to perfection “in a brief time” (ὀλιγοχρονίως) a virtue which is a combination of many activities. It is necessary that he brings to fruition the things he practises “taking a long time and great care” (σὺν πολλῷ χρόνῳ καὶ ἐπιμελείαι). At the same time, the author

⁵⁹⁹ For the question of the identity of Antiphon the Sophist and the relationship to his namesake Antiphon of Rhamnus see Pendrick 2002, 1-26.

⁶⁰⁰ The actual term is ὁ πλησίον “one’s neighbour” (LSJ, s.v. ii 2). Pendrick 2002, 404 interprets it as “‘another’ as opposed to oneself; τοὺς πέλας (Il. 7, 10) has the same sense”. See also Untersteiner and Battagazzore 1962, 142.

⁶⁰¹ For the semantic application of the other usage of χρόνος in the same fragment see section ν) below.

warns (2.8), there is another damage (βλάβη) attached to the good reputation acquired in a short time (τῇ ἐξ ὀλίγου χρόνου εὐδοξία): “men do not receive gladly those who have become wealthy, wise, good, or manly suddenly or in a short period of time (ἐξαπιναίως καὶ ἐξ ὀλίγου χρόνου).”⁶⁰²

Again, the usage of prepositional phrases with χρόνος is not exclusive to the Presocratics and we recall similar formations in Homer (πολλὸν ἐπὶ χρόνον in μ 407 and ο 494), Hesiod (παῦρον / παυρίδιον ἐπὶ χρόνον in *Op.* 133 and 326), and Mimnermus (πήχυιον ἐπὶ χρόνον in fr. 2. 3 W). Even such a non-typical prepositional expression as Sapphic εἰς οὐδένα πω χρόνον (56. 2 W) seems to find its parallel in the Presocratics, namely in the phrase εἰς τὸν ἅπαντα χρόνον in Critias’ fragment DK88 B6 = fr. 6. 21-27 W (*Πολιτεία Λακεδαιμονίων*). Spartan youths, Critias tells us, enjoy moderate drinking, which keeps them in good spirit and also boosts their bodies, minds, and their possessions.⁶⁰³ Excessive drinking (of toasts to somebody), on the other hand, provides only momentary pleasure, but causes pain for the rest of time (αἱ γὰρ ὑπὲρ τὸ μέτρον κυλίκων προπόσεις παρὰ χρῆμα / τέρψασαι λυποῦσ’ εἰς τὸν ἅπαντα χρόνον). Both prepositional expressions containing εἰς ... χρόνον point to the future.⁶⁰⁴ Critias’ prepositional phrase is semantically equivalent to the adverbial accusative τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον found in *Anonymus Iamblichi* 5.1 (εἰ μὲν ὑπῆρχε τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ ... ἀγήρῳ τε εἶναι καὶ ἀθανάτῳ τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον “if it befell a man ... to be unageing and immortal for the rest of time”).

⁶⁰² Trans. Sprague 2001, 273.

⁶⁰³ Cf. Untersteiner and Battagazzore 1962, 262: “La temperanza spartana nel bere viene contrapposta ai costumi degli Ateniesi, soliti distribuire il calice, cominciando da destra, a tutti i convitati (cfr., per lo stesso argomento, DK 88 B 33).”

⁶⁰⁴ Cf. Untersteiner and Battagazzore 1962, 267.

iv) Nominal χρόνος signifying “passage of time”

We have already come across instances of χρόνος signifying “passage of time” in early lyric poetry, mostly in the context of time’s revealing the truth (e.g. Thgn. 967; Adesp. eleg. 22). The same semantic application of the word is found in the Presocratics, albeit in somewhat different contexts. Having noted that (B183) “there is sagacity in the young and lack of understanding in the old”, Democritus concludes that “it is not passage of time that teaches one to be wise, but proper upbringing and one’s own nature” (χρόνος γὰρ οὐ διδάσκει φρονεῖν, ἀλλ’ ὠραίη τροφή καὶ φύσις). *Anonymus Iamblichi* qualifies passage of time as “fruitless” and “productive” when describing (in 7.3) how “with the observance of laws, time passes idly with respect to public business, but it becomes productive with respect to activities of life” (τόν τε αὖ χρόνον τοῖς ἀνθρώποις διὰ τὴν εὐνομίαν εἰς μὲν τὰ πράγματα ἀργὸν γίνεσθαι, εἰς δὲ τὰ ἔργα τῆς ζωῆς ἐργάσιμον). Similarly, Antiphon the Sophist qualifies time as “neglected”⁶⁰⁵ in his fragment DK87 B53a in which he describes the people who “do not live the present life, but prepare with great eagerness as if they have some other life to live,⁶⁰⁶ not the present one; and in the preparation their time passes by neglected” (καὶ ἐν τούτῳ παραλειπόμενος ὁ χρόνος οἴχεται).

⁶⁰⁵ The term is παραλειπόμενος (see LSJ, s.v. παραλείπω iii 2). Diels translates the sentence “und unterdessen geht die ihnen verbleibende Zeit dahin”; Untersteiner and Battezzatore 1962, 135 has “intanto il tempo trascurato è perduto”. Cf. Pendrick 2002, 395: “ἐν τούτῳ: this phrase may have a temporal sense (‘meanwhile’). Or τούτῳ could refer to the behavior described: ‘in doing this’ (cf. F44(b)ii.7 with commentary; LSJ, s.v. ἐν ii.3). παραλειπόμενος: this probably means ‘neglected’ (like an opportunity). Cf. LSJ, s.v. παραλείπω iii.2.”

⁶⁰⁶ According to Untersteiner and Battezzatore 1962, 133 (ad Antipho Soph. 53a), “il frammento prova che Antifonte conosceva le dottrine orfico-pitagoriche della trasmigrazione delle anime (Nestle, *Bem. Soph.*, pp. 571sgg.).” Pendrick 2002, 394, on the other hand, argues that “it is clear that commentators who refer ἕτερόν τινα βίον to life after death and infer that Antiphon denied the existence of an afterlife, completely mistake the meaning of the fragment.” For details of these different interpretations see the works quoted.

v) Nominal χρόνος meaning “age”, “era” and the differentiation of tenses in the expressions containing χρόνος

The meaning “age” represents a novelty in the semantic application of the word χρόνος. It is to be found in the speech *On the Constitution* composed by the fifth-century sophist and rhetor Thrasymachus of Chalcedon (DK85 B1). The context is clearly political, but it is still controversial who the speech was addressed to and to which goal.⁶⁰⁷ The author begins the address by expressing regret that he was not able to participate in the political life of old (μετασχεῖν ἐκείνου τοῦ χρόνου τοῦ παλαιοῦ καὶ τῶν πραγμάτων) when young men could remain silent, for the circumstances did not compel them to speak and the elders governed the city properly. “But”, he adds, “since the destiny has reserved us for a time like this” (ἐπειδὴ δ’ εἰς τοιοῦτον⁶⁰⁸ ἡμᾶς ἀνέθετο χρόνον ὁ δαίμων), he feels compelled to express his opinion. Χρόνος meaning “age” also occurs in the so-called *Sisyphus fragment*, which has from antiquity been alternatively ascribed either to Critias or to Euripides (DK88 B25 = TrGF43 F19).⁶⁰⁹ This rationalistic account of the origin of religion opens with the following line: ἦν χρόνος, ὅτ’ ἦν ἄτακτος ἀνθρώπων βίος “there was a time when human life was without order.”⁶¹⁰

When meaning “age” χρόνος can be explicitly or implicitly defined as past, present, or future time, as is clear from the examples already cited: Critias’ χρόνος in B25. 1 refers to *a past time*, and in Thrasymachus the phrase “that old time” occurs (ὁ παλαιὸς χρόνος). The same author mentions “past time” (ἄλλης γὰρ ἡμῖν ὁ παρελθὼν χρόνος) in DK85 B1. 13f. Gorgias also refers to the past when in *The Defence of Helen*

⁶⁰⁷ Sylburg reconstructed ὧ Ἀθηναῖοι in the opening line from the mere ὦθ in the manuscripts. On the question of content and purpose of the speech see White 1995 and Yunis 1997.

⁶⁰⁸ τοιοῦτον codd. B P. Adopted by Diels.

⁶⁰⁹ See Kahn 1997, 247.

⁶¹⁰ Cf. *Cypria*, fr. 1.1: ἦν ὅτε... The Sisyphus fragment will be discussed in more detail in the chapter dealing with the usages of χρόνος in tragedy.

(DK82 B11. 5) he expresses the decision to pass over “that former time”, concerning Helen’s marriage to Menelaus, and turn to his present subject, the defence of Helen, by propounding the likely⁶¹¹ reasons for her departure to Troy (τὸν χρόνον δὲ τῷ λόγῳ τὸν τότε νῦν ὑπερβὰς ἐπὶ τὴν ἀρχὴν τοῦ μέλλοντος λόγου προβήσομαι).⁶¹² There are further examples which show that, with the addition of the appropriate determinator, χρόνος in general – independently of whether it signifies period of time, age, or moment in time (not in a technical sense of the word) – may be characterised as past, present or future. In the example from Gorgias just quoted time is qualified as past by the addition of the adverb τότε; in Thrasyarchus B1. 15 we find qualification of time as present by the use of the pronoun ὅδε (εἰς τόνδε τὸν χρόνον “up to now”). Similarly in Gorgias’ fragment B11. 17 χρόνος is combined with the participle παρών in order to describe the present time, which, as the context shows, refers to “the present moment” (ἤδη δὲ τινες ἰδόντες φοβερὰ καὶ τοῦ παρόντος ἐν τῷ παρόντι χρόνῳ φρονήματος ἐξέστησαν “and some people before now, on seeing frightful things, have also lost their presence of mind at the present moment”).⁶¹³ Finally, in the story about a stingy man, told in Antiphon’s fragment B54, ‘later time’ occurs in the expression ὑστέρῳ δὲ χρόνῳ ἐλθόν (“having come at a later time”). Democritus uses χρόνος to refer to a later time too, more precisely to time after death in his fragment B297, which talks about some people’s ignorance about the dissolution of mortal nature and their making up of false stories about afterlife (ψεύδεα περὶ τοῦ μετὰ τὴν τελευτὴν μυθοπλαστέοντες χρόνου).

⁶¹¹ The term is εἰκός. For its meaning in the given context see Untersteiner 1949, 92-93 and MacDowell 1982, 35.

⁶¹² See MacDowell 1982, loc. cit.: “ὑπερβὰς: ‘skipping’ (not ‘going over’). Notice the interlacing τὸν τότε goes with τὸν χρόνον while τῷ λόγῳ goes with νῦν ὑπερβὰς.”

⁶¹³ Trans. MacDowell 1982, 29. Cf. Buchheim 1989, 15: “Schon manche aber, die Schreckliches sahen, traten im Augenblick aus ihrer augenblicklichen Gemütsverfassung heraus”.

In his discussion of the conception of time in early Greek literature Fränkel describes this differentiation of tenses recognisable in the uses of χρόνος as an innovation of the classical literature: “Für die archaische Auffassung war die Zeit in den begegnenden Dingen wirksam (...) Deshalb war sie immer, wie Pindar sie gern nennt, kommend, war sie spätere Zeit und Zukunft.”⁶¹⁴ For Fränkel Pindar remains an archaic author throughout and his conception of time therefore characteristically archaic too, although his life stretched into the classical period as well. Pindar’s usage of χρόνος will be discussed in the following chapter and I will then return to Fränkel’s distinction between archaic and classical time conceptions, but I believe this is an appropriate place to mention some of the Pindaric instances of χρόνος which are similar to the Presocratic tense-differentiating usages of the word mentioned in v) above. In *O.* 10. 102 the phrase κεῖνον κατὰ χρόνον occurs and it clearly refers to the past (τὸν εἶδον ... κεῖνον κατὰ χρόνον “whom I saw ... at that time”), although Fränkel tries to avoid such an interpretation.⁶¹⁵ Moreover, he describes as ‘redundant’ Pindar’s descriptions of χρόνος as “later” in *O.* 1. 43 (δευτέρῳ χρόνῳ ἦλθε) and *P.* 4. 55 (καταβάντα χρόνῳ ὑστέρῳ), for, according to him, archaic χρόνος itself refers to the succeeding or later time.⁶¹⁶ However, these examples clearly show that χρόνος itself does not refer to any of the tenses in particular. Moreover, the Pindaric examples, along with the Presocratic usages of χρόνος analysed above, indicate a *polysemantic nature* of the word in its early usages. It is important, however, to differentiate between typical usages of the word and

⁶¹⁴ Fränkel 1968a, 13.

⁶¹⁵ Id. 20: “Einmal steht bei Pindar κεῖνον κατὰ χρόνον (*Ol.* 10. 102), was man als ‘seinerzeit’ erklärt und seit den Scholien mit dem langen Zeitraum in Verbindung bringt den Pindar hatte verstreichen lassen. Aber diese Deutung widerlegt sich schon durch ihre Taktlosigkeit (...) Nein: mit χρόνος ist der ἀλικίας χρόνος (*Ol.* 4. 27; vgl. auch *Bakch.* 8. 23) gemeint, und κεῖνον deutet auf den Relativsatz vor: ‘du siegest in solchem Alter, solcher Schönheit und solcher Jugendblüte, wie sie einst Zeus an Ganymed zur Liebe entflamnte.’”

⁶¹⁶ Fränkel 1968a, 20.

the meanings which they convey, and my analysis so far has shown that various uses of χρόνος come down to a smaller group of meanings, which will be briefly discussed here.

In early epic poetry χρόνος is used exclusively in adverbial expressions in which the word has the meaning of a (long or, rarely, short) *temporal period* through which a state or an action continues.⁶¹⁷ The only exception seems to be O 511 in which the phrase ἓνα χρόνον (ἀποθνήσκειν) appears, but it is contrasted with the adverb δηθὰ (στρεύγεσθαι) and therefore probably implies a short duration itself (with the emphasis on the definiteness of a quick death). It is important to notice that the epic adverbial phrases with χρόνος do not *per se* imply distinction of tenses, but they do appear attached to verbs (signifying states and actions) in past, present and future tenses.

In early lyric poetry we come across a wider range of applications of χρόνος. In addition to the familiar adverbial usages, χρόνος also occurs as a substantive to denote *period of duration* of human life or of a stage of human life (i.e. youth). This ‘new’ usage does not introduce a completely new meaning of the word. In these senses χρόνος is explicitly said to have been past and gone (Alc. 119. 9: σοὶ μὲν [γ]ὰρ ἤ[δ]η περβέβα[τ]αι χρό[νος]) or to be approaching its end (Anacr. 395. 5-6: γλυκεροῦ δ’ οὐκέτι πολλὸς βίτου χρόνος λέλειπται). In the Presocratics χρόνος is found to have the same meaning (Democr. B297) and, in the sense duration, it is ascribed to human activities as well (Anon. Iambl. B2. 6). In Empedocles’ cosmology χρόνος signifies a fixed period of duration of alternating cosmic phases (Emp. B30. 2). However, in early lyric poetry a new meaning of χρόνος is found as well, for some poets use it to denote *passage of time*, which can be adequately defined as “indefinite continuous duration

⁶¹⁷ In this survey of the meanings of χρόνος in early Greek literature I rely on convenient definitions of the word ‘time’ in the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

regarded as that in which the sequence of events takes place”.⁶¹⁸ Solon and Theognis apply χρόνος in this sense to the sphere of human life and see it as the bearer of truth and justice (Sol. 4. 16; 36. 3; Thgn. 967). Thus used χρόνος appears to be oriented towards the future, which indicates the sense of a *linear* progression of time. In Empedocles’ cosmology, however, χρόνος is found to signify the passage of cosmic time and the philosopher clearly conceives of it as *cyclical* (Emp. B17. 29 and 110. 8). A sense of cyclical regularity is also found in Anaximander’s conception of temporal order applied to cosmic phenomena in his fragment B1.

The Presocratic philosophers are the first to ascribe the sense of “a *period* in the existence of the history of the world; an age, an era”⁶¹⁹ to χρόνος. In this sense χρόνος appears qualified as “old” and “past” (Thrasym. 1. 2f. and 14) and we also find it considered with reference to its prevailing conditions (εἰς τοιοῦτον ... χρόνον in Thrasym. B1. 6). This sense can be viewed as a type of development of the meaning *period of duration*, which is now applied to a longer, less clearly defined temporal extension.

Finally, on the question of qualifying χρόνος as past, present or future: the examples analysed so far clearly show that χρόνος commonly signified *finite duration* of a situation, state, event, action, or period in life or in human history, but it also denoted *indefinite continuous duration* conceived as a background against which these situations, states, events, actions and periods succeeded each other. From a natural association of these two conceptions the new meaning of χρόνος emerged, that of *time when*, implying temporal determination of a situation, state, event, action or period without any reference to their duration. In this sense, χρόνος can be applied to apparent

⁶¹⁸ OED, ‘time’ iii.

⁶¹⁹ OED ‘time’ i 2.

points in time as well, but the question of their length is not considered, only the question *when* they occur. This semantic explanation fits the usages of χρόνος in Thrasym. B1. 15, Gorg. B11. 5 and 17, Antiph. Soph. B54, and, as we will shortly see, also in Pi. O. 1. 43 and 10. 102 and P. 4. 55.

CHAPTER V
FIFTH-CENTURY LYRIC
ΧΡΟΝΟΣ IN PINDAR

“Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future
And time future contained in time past.
If all time is eternally present
All time is unredeemable”

T. S. Eliot, *Burnt Norton*

Linguistic description of Pindar’s uses of χρόνος

In the whole of the extant Pindar’s poetry (including fragments) χρόνος appears altogether 48 times, always in the singular, in all its cases apart from the vocative. When used in the nominative, χρόνος almost always denotes an *agent* (the only exception is πολλὸς χρόνος in fr. 168b where the noun signifies a period of time, duration),⁶²⁰ sometimes also a *personified power* (χρόνος πατήρ, σωτήρ, ἄναξ). When denoting an active agent χρόνος is often combined with verbs which mean “to go, come” (ἔρπω), “to come on, approach” (ἐφέρπω) or “to come to light, appear” (ἐπαντέλλω)⁶²¹ and I will later discuss how these combinations influence the meaning of the noun.

There is only one instance of the genitive χρόνου and the context in which it is used implies divisibility of time (O. 7. 94f.): ἐν δὲ μιᾷ μοίρᾳ χρόνου / ἄλλοτ’ ἄλλοιαι διαιθύσσοισιν αὔραι “in a single portion of time different winds blow now here now there”. Scholars have much argued about the quantity of a μοῖρα: many commentators

⁶²⁰ Fr. 168b. 6: ἦν διακρίναι ἰδόντα πολλὸς ἐν καιρῷ χρόνος. Cf. Anacr. 394. 5-6 *PMG*; Semon. 3. 1 W.

⁶²¹ A similar verb is paired with χρόνος in the adverbial accusative (P. 1. 56f.): οὕτω δ’ ἱέρονι θεὸς ὀρθωτὴρ πέλοι / τὸν προσέρποντα χρόνον.

have taken it to mean “a moment”, suggesting that the whole statement refers to changes that occur *suddenly*,⁶²² whereas others have rightly pointed out that the statement emphasises the fact that *changes occur* (or may occur) in a(ny) portion of time, whether large or small.⁶²³ This sentence is one of the numerous expressions of the variability of fortune, which is a recurring motif in Pindar’s poetry.⁶²⁴

The dative form of χρόνος is the one most frequently found in Pindar’s verses. It is always used adverbially, either on its own or with the preposition ἐν. In view of the semantic definitions of early Greek usages of χρόνος given in the previous chapter, it is possible to differentiate between the instances in which these adverbial expressions imply: *temporal period* through which a state or an action continues, *passage of time* denoting indefinite continuous duration in which a sequence of events takes place, *time when*, that is temporal determination of a situation, state, event, action or period without any reference to their duration. Accordingly, all instances of Pindar’s adverbial datives with χρόνος can be arranged into the following three groups:

1. Dative adverbials implying *duration* ([for] how long?)

a) O. 6. 36: οὐδ’ ἔλαθ’ Αἵπυτον ἐν παντὶ χρόνῳ⁶²⁵ κλέπτουσα θεοῖο γόνον

“She did not escape Aeputyus’ notice through all the time [while] secretly bearing the god’s child”;

b) O. 6. 56f.: τὸ καὶ κατεφάμιξεν καλεῖσθαι νιν χρόνῳ σύμπαντι μάτηρ / τοῦτ’ ὄνυμ’ ἀθάνατον

“Therefore his mother announced that immortal name for him to be called for all time”;

⁶²² See Young 1968, 98, n. 1.

⁶²³ See Fennell 1879, 65 (ad v. 95): “Probably the poet attached no definite limits such as those of ‘year’, ‘generation’, ‘lifetime’, to μοῖρα χρόνου. It cannot mean ‘point of time’, as ἄλλοτ’ subdivides it.”

⁶²⁴ See a very similar expression of the idea in I. 4. 5: ἄλλοτε δ’ ἄλλοις οὔρος / πάντα ἀνθρώπους ἐπαΐσσω ἐλαύνει.

⁶²⁵ Cf. (formally) Meliss. B 7. 2.

c) O. 12. 11-12a: οἱ δ' ἀνιαραῖς / ἀντικύρσαντες ζάλαις / ἐσλὸν βαθὺ πῆματος ἐν μικρῷ
πεδάμειψαν χρόνῳ

“And others, having encountered grievous storms, exchange their pain for great good in a short period of time”.

2. Dative adverbials implying *passage of time*

a) O. 10. 85: τὰ παρ' εὐκλεί Δίρκαί χρόνῳ μὲν φάνεν

“They appeared in time by famous Dirce”;

b) P. 3. 96f.: ἐν δ' αὖτε χρόνῳ / τὸν μὲν ... θύγατρες ἐρήμωσαν ... εὐφροσύνας

“But then in time / one of them ... was deprived of his happiness by his daughters ...”;

c) P. 4. 78f.: ὁ δ' ἦρα χρόνῳ / ἵκετ'

“And so in time he came”;

d) P. 4. 258f.: ... ἐν ποτε Καλλίσταν ἀπόκησαν χρόνῳ / νᾶσον

“In time they settled the island Kalliste”;

e) P. 4. 291ff.: ἐν δὲ χρόνῳ / μεταβολαὶ λήξαντος οὐρου / ιστίων

“In time sails are changed when the wind ceases”;

f) P. 8. 15: βία δὲ καὶ μέγαλαυχον ἔσφαλεν ἐν χρόνῳ

“Force overthrows even the boastful man in time (i.e., in the end)”;

g) P. 11. 31f.: θάνεν μὲν αὐτὸς ἦρως Ἀτρεΐδης / ἵκων χρόνῳ κλυταῖς ἐν Ἀμύκλαις

“Atreus’ heroic son himself died having come in time (i.e., in the end) to famous Amyclae”;

h) Fr. 33b: ἐν χρόνῳ ἔγεντ' Ἀπόλλων

“In (the course of) time Apollo was born”;

i) Fr. 227. 2: λάμπει δὲ χρόνῳ ἔργα

“And in time deeds shine forth”.

3. Dative adverbials expressing *time when*

a) O. 1. 43f.: ἔνθα δευτέρῳ χρόνῳ ἦλθε καὶ Γανυμήδης

“then at a later (lit. next) time came also Ganymedes”;

b) O. 2. 35-37: οὕτω δὲ Μοῖρ’ ... θεόρτῳ σὺν ὄλβῳ / ἐπὶ τι καὶ πῆμ’ ἄγει, /

παλιντράπελον ἄλλῳ χρόνῳ

“So Fate adds to their god-sent happiness some misery as well, that turns back again at another time”;⁶²⁶

c) P. 4. 55f.: Πύθιον ναὸν καταβάντα χρόνῳ / ὑστέρῳ⁶²⁷

“[and when] at a later time he enters the Pythian temple”;

d) Fr. 52f. 5: ἐν ζαθέῳ με δέξαι χρόνῳ⁶²⁸

“Welcome me in this holy time”;

e) Fr. 70dd, 1: [...]αὶ ἐκείνῳ χρόνῳ

“... at that time”.

These examples show that the adverbial dative χρόνῳ,⁶²⁹ as well as the prepositional expression ἐν χρόνῳ, both mean “in time”, “eventually”, which suggests the sense *passage of time* for χρόνος. When combined with the attribute πᾶς or σύμπας adverbial χρόνῳ denotes *duration* which lasts “the whole time”, but the ‘time’ referred to by χρόνος in such combinations may vary depending on the broader context, as I will shortly show. The dative adverbial χρόνῳ occurs also quantified with μικρῷ implying a *short period of time*.⁶³⁰ Certain attributes, however, qualify χρόνος in the adverbial dative as “later” or “previous” (literally “that [sc. past] time”), as well as “another” and “holy”. In these instances, the adverbials denote *time when*. The “holy time” of fr. 52f. 5

⁶²⁶ See Willcock 1995, 148 (at. O. 2. 34-37): “... good fortune turns to bad, and bad again to good.”

⁶²⁷ Cf. Antipho. Soph. DK87 B54.

⁶²⁸ Cf. Gorg. DK82 B11. 17.

⁶²⁹ Cf. Xenoph. DK21 B18. 2; Sol. 4. 16 W.

⁶³⁰ Cf. Anon. Iambl. DK89 B2. 7: ἐν ὀλίγῳ χρόνῳ.

is the festival called θεοξένια, for which occasion the paean was composed.⁶³¹ In the first Olympian we find the adverbial δευτέρῳ χρόνῳ. There Pindar discusses ancestors of the poem's addressee, Hieron of Syracuse, who claimed descent from Tantalus. The poet presents a version of Pelops' destiny according to which he was not killed and served up by his father to the gods, but was actually taken to Olympus by Zeus who fell in love with him. The same destiny, Pindar adds, befell Ganymedes δευτέρῳ χρόνῳ (O. 1. 43), which may be rendered by "on a later occasion."

In the accusative χρόνος is almost always used adverbially. There is only one instance of χρόνον used as a direct object (P. 5. 121) and a χρόνον in an inconclusive fragmentary example (fr. 52d. 11). Adverbial χρόνον is in all cases paired with attributes and in some instances preceded by prepositions ἀμφί, παρά, κατά, ποτί, or ἐς. Again, we can differentiate between adverbial accusatives of χρόνος implying *duration* (a *period of time during which*) and those referring to *time when*:

1. Accusative adverbials implying *duration*

a) O. 1. 115: εἴη σέ τε τοῦτον ὕψοῦ χρόνον πατεῖν

"May you walk on high during this time";

b) O. 2. 29f.: ... βίοντον ἄφθιτον / Ἴνοϊ τετάχθαι τὸν ὅλον ἀμφὶ χρόνον⁶³²

"... immortal life has been appointed to Ino for all time";

c) O. 13. 25f.: ... ἀφθόνητος ἔπεσσιν γένοιο χρόνον ἅπαντα, Ζεῦ πάτερ

"Be ungrudging to my words (of praise) for all time, Father Zeus";

d) P. 1. 56f.: οὕτω δ' Ἱέρωνι θεὸς ὀρθωτήρ πέλοι / τὸν προσέρποντα χρόνον

"May thus god preserve Hieron in time to come";

⁶³¹ Race 1997b, 259.

⁶³² Cf. λοιπὸν ἀμφὶ βίοντον in O. 1. 97.

e) *N.* 1. 69f.: αὐτὸν μὲν ἐν εἰρήνῃ τὸν ἅπαντα χρόνον <ἐν>σχερῶι / ἡσυχίαν καμάτων
μεγάλων ποινὰν λάχοντ’

“He himself in continual peace for all time would be allotted rest as a recompense for
his great labours”;

f) *N.* 3. 49: ἐξέτης τὸ πρῶτον, ὅλον δ’ ἔπειτ’ ἂν χρόνον

“First at the age of six and for the whole time thereafter”;

g) *N.* 7. 38f.: Μολοσσία δ’ ἐμβασίλευεν ὀλίγον χρόνον

“He was the king of Molossia for a short while”;

h) *I.* 3. 5-6: ὄλβος ... πλαγίαις δὲ φρένεσσιν / οὐχ ὁμῶς πάντα χρόνον θάλλων ὁμιλεῖ

“Happiness ... does not equally flourish for all time in the company of treacherous
minds”;

i) *I.* 5. 27f.: κλέονται ... μυρίον χρόνον

“Are celebrated ... for immeasurable time”;

j) *Fr.* 94a, 11ff.: ἂν εὐχοίμαν Κρονίδαις ... εὐτυχίαν τετάσθαι / ὁμαλὸν χρόνον

“I would pray to the children of Kronos ... for good fortune to be extended for an even
course of time”;

k) *Fr.* 133. 5: ἐς δὲ τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον ἦρωες ἄγνοὶ πρὸς ἀνθρώπων καλέονται

“And for the rest of time they are called pure heroes by men”.

2. Accusative adverbials expressing *time when*

a) *O.* 4. 25ff.: φύονται δὲ καὶ νέοις / ἐν ἀνδράσιν πολιαί / θαμάκι παρὰ τὸν ἀλικίας
ἐοικότα χρόνον

“Even on young men grey hair often grow out of proper time of their prime”;

b) *O.* 10. 100ff.: τὸν εἶδον κρατέοντα χερὸς ἀλκῆι / βωμὸν παρ’ Ὀλύμπιον / κεῖνον κατὰ
χρόνον

“Whom I saw winning with the strength of his hand by the Olympic altar at that time”;

c) Fr. 52c. 14: ὥραιον ποτὶ χρόνον⁶³³

“Towards (at) seasonable time”.

A comment is due on the usage of attributes in the adverbial accusatives as well. Some of them occurred in the examples discussed in previous chapters, but many appear for the first time here. The adverbial accusative ὀλίγον χρόνον in *N.* 7. 38f. is the only one of the epic type (cf. Hom. *T* 157, *Ψ* 418). Another quantitative determination of the adverbial accusative χρόνον is found in the expression μυρίον χρόνον in *I.* 5. 28 which refers to *immeasurably long duration* of praise that awaits brave warriors who become the subjects for wise poets. As for the epithets used to qualify χρόνος in these adverbials, λοιπός denotes “remaining” and προσέρπων “coming” time. The adverbial τοῦτον χρόνον in *O.* 1. 115 means “during this time”, though it is not clear which period exactly the poet had in mind (see further down). We also come across the unusual ὁμαλόν χρόνον in fr. 94a, 14 where Pindar asks for success for Aeoladas and his family “for an even course of time”.⁶³⁴ There are three adverbial accusatives determining *time when*: in *O.* 4. 25ff. Pindar points to the maturity of some of the young by using a rather surprising simile of untimely⁶³⁵ appearance of grey hair. Ἐοικὼς χρόνος ἀλικίας signifies that (presumably mature) portion of manhood,⁶³⁶ in which grey hair is supposed to grow (similarly, in *P.* 4. 157 γηραιὸν μέρος ἀλικίας denotes the late, “aged” portion of manhood). Ὠριος χρόνος of fr. 52c may be taken to signify “due

⁶³³ Cf. *O.* 1. 67: πρὸς δ’ εὐάνθεμον δ’ ὅτε φῦαν ...

⁶³⁴ See LSJ s.v. ὁμαλός (esp. 3. of sound: Pl. *Ti.* 67b φωνὴ ὁ καὶ λεία, cf. Arist. *HA* 581a19). See also Kirkwood 1982, 335 (ad fr. 94a. 14): “ὁμαλόν: ‘level’, or ‘consistent’, hence ‘unbroken’.”

⁶³⁵ See LSJ, s.v. παρά iii 4 “metaph., in transgression or violation of, π. μοῖραν *Od.* 14. 509 (...) παρ’ αἴσαν, παρὰ δίκαν, Pi. *P.* 8. 13, *O.* 2. 16, etc. (...) π. καιρόν *out of season*, Pi. *O.* 8. 24, etc. (...) παρ μέλος *out of tune*, Pi. *N.* 7. 69 (...)“

⁶³⁶ One recalls here Alcaeus’ (119. 9 LP) σοὶ μὲν [γ]ὰρ ἤ[δ]η παρβέβα[τ]αι χρό[νος] (χρόνος = period of maturity, prime).

(seasonable) time”. Finally, in *O.* 10. 102 the adverbial *κεῖνον κατὰ χρόνον* refers to “that (past) time” when Pindar saw Hagesidamus winning at Olympia.⁶³⁷ It is noticeable, however, that one type of attribute occurs particularly often in both dative and accusative adverbials with *χρόνος*: *πᾶς*, *σύμπας*, *ἅπας*, *ὅλος* denoting “all, entire time”. I will now analyse the instances in which they appear and point to the variety of semantic implications these expressions may have in different contexts.

Some characteristic combinatorial properties of *χρόνος* in Pindar

1) “All time”, “entire time”

Depending on the contexts in which they occur, the adverbial expressions *ἐν παντί χρόνῳ*, *χρόνῳ σύμπαντι*, *τὸν ὅλον ἀμφὶ χρόνον*, *χρόνον ἅπαντα* / *(ἅ)παντα χρόνον*, and *ὅλον χρόνον*, which appear rather uniform in their meanings, may be shown to reflect several different ideas of time. So, for example, in some of the instances this type of adverbial clearly refers to *infinite time*, for it has to do with properties and situations that concern immortals: it applies to the “immortal life” awarded to Ino in *O.* 2. 30;⁶³⁸ to the “immortal name” declared for Iamus in *O.* 6. 56; to the “continual peace” allotted to Heracles as a recompense for his labours in *N.* 1. 69. In such contexts, these adverbials can be rendered by “for all time”, “forever”. In *O.* 6. 36, however, *ἐν παντί χρόνῳ* is clearly limited to the duration of Euadne’s pregnancy.⁶³⁹ A limited period of time seems to be referred to by *ὅλον δ’ ἔπειτ’ ἄν χρόνον* in *N.* 3. 49 as well. In lines 43-9 Pindar celebrates Achilles’ hunting prowess, which he exhibited from as early as the age of six

⁶³⁷ Cf. schol. ad loc.: [τὸν υἱὸν δὲ τοῦ Ἀρχεστράτου] ὃν εἶδον ... κατ’ ἐκεῖνον τὸν χρόνον, ὅτε ἡγωνίζετο δηλονότι. See above 180.

⁶³⁸ See Kirkwood 1982, 68: “ἀμφί: the preposition converts the expression from merely extent of time (acc. alone), to the suggestion that all time to come is embraced.”

⁶³⁹ Cf. Kirkwood 1982, 88 (ad *O.* 6. 36). See also Farnell 1930, 27: “through all her period.”

and “ever after.” I agree with Pfeijffer’s remark that “Achilles did not literally continue to kill animals and bring the sports to Chiron, but he did continue to do the same approximately, namely to display the same qualities.”⁶⁴⁰ This *permanence* of the (early exhibited) inborn abilities is, I believe, what this sentence is meant to stress.⁶⁴¹ Achilles’ fighting excellence persisted until the end of his life, and the expression “for the whole time thereafter” is therefore usually (and rightly) interpreted by the commentators as referring to “the rest of his life”.⁶⁴² In the gnomic statement of *I.* 3. 5-6 the adverbial πάντα χρόνον concerns the human situation in general: ζώει δὲ μάσσων ὄλβος ὀπιζομένων, πλαγίαις δὲ φρένεσσιν/ οὐχ ὁμῶς πάντα χρόνον θάλλων ὁμιλεῖ “happiness of the reverent has a longer life, but it does not equally flourish *for all time* in the company of treacherous minds”. No human enjoys *permanent* happiness,⁶⁴³ as Pindar reminds us many times throughout his odes,⁶⁴⁴ but it lasts longer in the lives of the reverent. It is difficult to say what πάντα χρόνον in the second part of the statement refers to, but it certainly cannot be the entire duration of human life.⁶⁴⁵ As in the previous example (*N.* 3. 49), the adverbial expression πάντα χρόνον may be understood as implying continuity – or in this instance, preceded by οὐχ ὁμῶς, rather *denying continuity* – to the happiness of the crooked, as if to say that in their company happiness does not flourish long, but is unstable and *inconstant*. This interpretation calls to mind

⁶⁴⁰ Pfeijffer 1999, 346: “Thus τὰ μὲν helps to present the miraculous exploits of the boy Achilles as prefiguring his more known accomplishments at Troy.”

⁶⁴¹ Cf. vv. 40-2 about the contribution of inborn abilities to achieving glory, contrary to the instability of learned skills.

⁶⁴² See Pfeijffer, loc. cit. and *ibid.* n. 199: “Τουτέστι τὸν ἅπαντα βίον τοῦτο ἐνήργει, Σ. 85, III 55 Dr.; cf. also Bowra’s translation: ‘in his sixth year first, then through all his days’ and Sandys’ ‘but afterwards for all his time’.”

⁶⁴³ Cf. Bacchylides’ fr. 54: ὄλβιος δ’ οὐδεὶς βροτῶν πάντα χρόνον.

⁶⁴⁴ See e.g. *O.* 7. 94; *I.* 4. 5; *O.* 2. 35-7; *P.* 3. 104f. and especially *P.* 3. 106f.: ὄλβος οὐκ ἐς μακρὸν ἀνδρῶν ἔρχεται / σάος, πολὺς εὖτ’ ἂν ἐπιβρίσαις ἔπηται. Cf. *P.* 12. 28.

⁶⁴⁵ Bury 1892, 59 suggested that “οὐχ ὁμῶς is to be connected closely with πάντα χρόνον (...) in the sense ‘only for a brief time’”, but it is difficult to see how he reached the proposed reading. He then adds “We may render: *But not like these for all time do crooked souls walk with happiness in her blooming ways.*”

Pindar's prayer in fr. 94a where he wishes for Aeoladas happiness "for unbroken time" (ὁμαλὸν χρόνον). Finally, in *O.* 13. 24-28 Pindar addresses the lord of Olympia, father Zeus, with the following prayer: ἀφθόνητος ἔπεσιν γένοιο χρόνον ἅπαντα, and then asks him to preserve Xenophon's people (the Corinthians) from harm and grant him prosperity.⁶⁴⁶ Scholars have mostly argued about the meaning of the adjective ἀφθόνητος, disagreeing on whether it should be taken to mean "[be] ungrudging *in* words [of praise]", i.e., "grant me an abundant flow of poetic speech"⁶⁴⁷, or "[be] ungrudging *to* words [of praise]", i.e., "be free of envy" towards Pindar's praise of Xenophon of Corinth.⁶⁴⁸ Scholia seem to support the latter view⁶⁴⁹ and Kirkwood has convincingly argued in favour of the same interpretation.⁶⁵⁰ Zeus' benevolence is supposed to last χρόνον ἅπαντα, and the adverbial has been interpreted in different ways: Farnell translates it with "all my life"⁶⁵¹, which should rather be modified to imply "[for] the rest of my life" (cf. *N.* 3. 49), and Race understands it as "for all time to come".⁶⁵² I believe that the time-phrase should be read in accordance with the context in which it appears: it may be taken to refer either to the whole time of Pindar's praise or, more generally and more likely to Race's "all time to come", in respect of the future of Xenophon, his family, and his fellow Corinthians.

Apart from the adverbials discussed, there is in Pindar an instance of the nominative phrase ὁ παῖς χρόνος in which the noun denotes an active agent. Although

⁶⁴⁶ *O.* 13. 27f.: καὶ τόνδε λαὸν ἀβλαβῇ νέμων / Ξενοφῶντος εὖθυνε δαίμονος οὖρον.

⁶⁴⁷ So Farnell 1932, 93.

⁶⁴⁸ So Gildersleeve 1890, 231 (ad *O.* 13. 25-26): "ἀφθόνητος γένοιο = μὴ νεμεσῆσις".

⁶⁴⁹ Schol. ad loc.: ἤγουν μὴ νεμεσῆσις τοῖς αὐτῶν ἐπαίνοις, ἀλλὰ νίκης αἴτιος γενοῦ, ἵνα καὶ τούτων τυγχάνοιεν ἀεὶ.

⁶⁵⁰ Kirkwood 1984, 176f. His argument is based on the conception of 'divine envy', which may be caused by a man's victory and enhanced by poetic praise of the victor, for it brings him close to the divine condition.

⁶⁵¹ Farnell 1930, 67.

⁶⁵² Race 1997a, 191.

the phrase has a different linguistic usage, its semantical context strongly reminds us of some of those just discussed.

1a) “All time” as the bearer of fortune

In *P.* 1. 46 Pindar prays for Hieron’s happiness in the following way: εἰ γὰρ ὁ πᾶς χρόνος ὄλβον μὲν οὕτω καὶ κτεάνων δόσιν εὐθύνοι “May *all time* keep on course *in this way* [i.e. as now]⁶⁵³ his happiness and the gift of riches”. Again, we find different translations of the χρόνος-phrase: on the one hand Farnell’s “the whole of his life-days”⁶⁵⁴ and on the other Race’s “all time to come”.⁶⁵⁵ The lexical context reminds us to some extent of the prayer in *O.* 13. 24-30: there Zeus is asked for benevolence “for all time to come” with regard to Pindar’s words of praise for Xenophon, whose winds of fortune the god is expected to direct (*O.* 13. 28 Ξενοφῶντος εὐθύνε δαίμονος οὔρον) and here the poet prays that “all time to come” directs (εὐθύνοι) Hieron’s happiness and wealth. Clearly, both passages reflect the role of time in the vicissitudes of human existence, and while in the first example χρόνος denotes the background against which the winds of fortune blow,⁶⁵⁶ in *P.* 1. 46 time itself is envisaged as the bearer of fortune. Both ideas occur several times throughout Pindar’s poetry and in the following section I will discuss the examples of the latter. Before doing so, let me try to sum up the remarks concerning semantic implications that pairing with the adjectives πᾶς, σύμπας, ἅπας, and ὅλος has on the meaning of χρόνος: in this type of combination the

⁶⁵³ Cf. Seymour 1889, 134 (ad 46): “οὕτω: ‘thus’ as now”. See also Kirkwood 1982, 135 (ad *P.* 1. 46): “οὕτω: ‘as now’” and Race 1997a, 219: “as heretofore”.

⁶⁵⁴ Farnell 1930, 79: “Would that the whole of his life-days may (...) waft his bark to (the shores of) wealth and the gift of all abundance”.

⁶⁵⁵ Cf. Gentili and Bernardini 1995, 33: “il tempo a venire”.

⁶⁵⁶ For the metaphor of “changing winds” used to denote changeability of human destiny *in a portion of time/ in the course of time/ at different times* see *O.* 7. 94f. (ἐν δὲ μιᾷ μοίραι χρόνου / ἄλλοτ’ ἄλλοιαι διαιθύσσοισιν αὔραι), *P.* 4. 291f. (ἐν δὲ χρόνῳ / μεταβολαὶ λήξαντος οὔρου / ιστίων), and *I.* 4. 5f. (ἄλλοτε δ’ ἄλλοις οὔρος / πάντας ἀνθρώπους ἐπαΐσσω ἐλαύνει).

noun may be said to refer to a *period of time, duration*, which the broader contexts further specify as *unlimited* or *limited*; in the latter case, the adjective *πᾶς, σύμπας, ὅπας*, or *ὅλος* characterises or, rather, semantically shades the period denoted by *χρόνος* into implying *entire* (O. 6. 36) or, sometimes, *continual* (I. 3. 6) and *continued* (O. 13. 26, N. 3. 49) *time*. Thus, *ὁ πᾶς χρόνος* in P. 1. 46 refers to the rest of Hieron's life, while its usage emphasises the poet's wish for the *continuation* of Hieron's current prosperity.

2) "Coming time"

As mentioned above, in a number of instances the nominative *χρόνος* appears combined with verbs which mean "to come, go" (*ἔρχω*), "to come on, approach" (*ἐφέρπω*) or "to rise into view, appear" (*ἐπαντέλλω*). In the majority of these examples the poet wishes for "coming time" to *act in favour* or *not act against* his own wellbeing or that of his poetic heroes. And what is it exactly that time can do? In the same way as it can bring happiness (P. 1. 46) it can also destroy it, as Pindar's prayer in O. 6. 97 clearly shows: *μὴ θράσσοι*⁶⁵⁷ *χρόνος ὄλβον ἐφέρπων* "may time coming on not disturb [Hieron's] happiness". In the parenthetic prayer of O. 8. 28f. inserted into the story of the hospitality of Aegina, Pindar wishes that "time to come"⁶⁵⁸ may not tire of doing that" (*ὁ δ' ἐπαντέλλων χρόνος / τοῦτο πράσσων μὴ κάμοι*). Some divine ordinance (*τεθμὸς δέ τις ἀθανάτων*) had offered the island as a divine pillar to the foreigners and the poet prays that it continues to be so *in the future*. Similarly, in the second paean devoted to the Abderites, the city of Abdera asks "mighty time not to tire hereafter of its steadfast

⁶⁵⁷ See Farnell 1932, 49 (ad O. 6. 97): "θράσσοι: the best emendation for the MS. θραύσοι (the future optative is impossible). Pindar favours the word θράσσω (contracted from ταρασσω), e.g. I. vi (vii) 39 μὴ θρασσέτω φθόνος."

⁶⁵⁸ See LSJ, s.v. ἐπανατέλλω, poet. ἐπαντέλλω ii: "ὁ ἐπαντέλλων χρόνος the time *coming to light, the future*, Pi. O. 8. 28."

march” in its favour (fr. 52b. 27: μή μοι μέγας ἔρπων / κάμοι ἐξοπίσω χρόνος ἔμπεδος).

The attribute μέγας ascribed to χρόνος here implies that the poet envisaged time as a kind of divine power.⁶⁵⁹ The prayer again aims at the *future time*, as is additionally stressed by the adverb ἐξοπίσω.

On the basis of the passages discussed so far – especially those in which we classified χρόνος as implying *temporal period through which a state or an action continues* as well as those in which it implies *passage of time* – one may get the impression that Pindaric χρόνος-phrases most often refer to future time. However, the examples of χρόνος used to denote past as well as tense-neutral instances of *time at which* (e.g. *O.* 4. 27) or *time through which* (e.g. *O.* 12. 12a, *N.* 7. 39) confute Fränkel’s claim that “von ‘Zeit’ wird immer nur im Sinne der Zukunft gesprochen, oder der sich weiter vorwärts erstreckenden Dauer, oder der späteren Zeit – also der relativen Zukunft”.⁶⁶⁰ He is, however, right in speaking of the “Richtungbestimmtheit” as a recognisable feature in Pindar’s conception of time: the poet clearly envisaged time as moving forward (ἰὼν πόρῳ in *O.* 10. 55), advancing (without ever coming back, as stressed in *O.* 2. 15-17; see below). It is due to this forward orientation of time as well as due to the nature of the contexts in which the poet mentions it (mostly prayers for the continuation of a victor’s success and happiness) that the most common temporal notion in Pindar seems to be that of future time, but I hope to have shown that in many cases a connection with present or past circumstances is implied. This indicates that the poet conceived of χρόνος, in the sense of “passage of time”, as a notion which encompasses and therefore connects different tenses, as is particularly evident from *P.* 1. 46-50 (see

⁶⁵⁹ See LSJ, s.v. μέγας ii. See also Bissinger 1966, 116: “... bei Pindar (fr. 52b, 26f.) ... geht es eher auf die wirkende Macht des personifiziert gedachten Χρόνος ... als auf die zeitliche Ausdehnung (...). Ebenso ist es bei Sophokles (Ai 714): πάνθ’ ὁ μέγας χρόνος μαραίνει sagt er.”

⁶⁶⁰ Fränkel 1968a, 10f.

also the discussion on *O.* 2 below), where “all time to come” (ὁ πᾶς χρόνος) is first asked to guide (εὐθύνοι) Hieron’s happiness and wealth “as heretofore” (οὕτω) and to provide “forgetfulness” (ἐπίλασιν) of hardships. Then the poet expresses his expectation that time could “remind” (ἧ κεν ἀμνάσειεν) Hieron of his and his family members’ military accomplishments.

When viewed from the present, particularly with feelings of hope and expectation, future time appears as that which is yet to come, for which reason it is represented by the well-wishing poet as ἔρπων, ἐφέρπων, ἐπαντέλλων, etc. In *N.* 7. 68 the future to which the wish refers is the “remaining time”, which is also envisaged as approaching (ὁ δὲ λοιπὸς εὖφρων / ποτὶ χρόνος ἔρποι “may the remaining time approach favourably”). A somewhat curious case represents ὁ μέλλων χρόνος in *O.* 10. 7f. The context informs us that Pindar is late with the delivery of the ode promised to Hagesidamus (v. 3) and that, having approached from afar ὁ μέλλων χρόνος shamed the poet for his debt (ἔκαθεν γὰρ ἐπελθὼν ὁ μέλλων χρόνος / ἐμὸν καταίσχυνε βαθὺ χρέος). Scholars have argued much about the meaning of the χρόνος-phrase, most commonly taking it to mean either a) “the delaying time” = “the time of my delay”⁶⁶¹ or b) “the coming time”, i.e. “the due time”, “the time agreed upon”.⁶⁶² I incline to the latter interpretation and relate ὁ μέλλων χρόνος to the instance of χρόνος οὗτος in *P.* 12. 30f., which refers to *certain time* in the future that is yet to come (see below).⁶⁶³ However, since “it seems questionable whether ὁ μέλλων χρόνος can ‘refer to the time fixed for

⁶⁶¹ Farnell 1932, 79 (ad *O.* 11(10). 7-10): “in Greek poetry it is possible to speak of the time itself doing that which one does in the time, e.g. Aesch, *Ag.* 894 ὁρῶσα πλείω τοῦ συνεύδοντος χρόνου.”

⁶⁶² Cf. *ibid.* See also Fennell 1879, 92 (ad *O.* 10. 7), Verdenius 1988, 57f. (ad *O.* 10. 7-8).

⁶⁶³ Cf. schol. ad *O.* 10. 9d: (i) ὁ δὲ νοῦς· οὐ γὰρ ὠρισμένως οὐδὲ καθὼς ὑπεσχόμην, ἀλλὰ πόρρω τῆς προθεσμίας ὁ τότε ὠρισμένος καὶ τότε μέλλων [προσδοκώμενος] χρόνος αἰσχύνῃς ἄξιαν μηνύει μου τὴν ὑπόσχεσιν καὶ ὀφειλὴν βραδύνας.

the performance of the promised task (Don.), or any other fixed time”,⁶⁶⁴ we should perhaps take it together with Verdenius to mean “‘coming’ [time] in the literal sense of the word.”⁶⁶⁵ Thus we would obtain for the given passage the common Pindaric image of time approaching from the future and not, as the other interpretation seems to suggest, from the past.⁶⁶⁶

So far in my investigation I have come across a few cases of χρόνος having an active role, most notably in the instances where it is described as revealing truth or bringing justice (Solon, Theognidea). In Pindar too there is an example of χρόνος claimed to be “the sole verifier of genuine truth” (O. 10. 53ff. ὃ τ’ ἐξελέγχων μόνος / ἀλάθειαν ἐτήτυμον / χρόνος). As a matter of fact, in the given context χρόνος is represented as a personified power, a divine being who together with the Fates witnessed the founding ceremony of the Olympic games. The same χρόνος is further said to have clearly revealed “in its onward march” (ἰὼν πόρσω κατέφρασεν) how Heracles founded the quadrennial festival (vv. 55-59). Here we have another example of χρόνος conceived as the *forward-aiming course of time* in which the chain of events unravels and, as such, taken to be the supreme witness of truth.⁶⁶⁷ It is on the basis of the same concept of *passage of time* that χρόνος could have been imagined as a bearer of fortune or misfortune, for it is *in time* (i.e. *at or during* different times *in the course*

⁶⁶⁴ Fennell, loc.cit.

⁶⁶⁵ See N. 7. 17f.: σοφοὶ δὲ μέλλοντα τριταῖον ἄνεμον / ἔμαθον; O. 7. 39-41: τότε ... Ὑπεριονίδας/ μέλλον ἐντειλεν φυλάσασθαι χρέος / παισὶν φίλοισι; O. 2. 56 τὸ μέλλον. Cf. Verdenius 1988, 58: “it should be added that μέλλων does not have the abstract sense of ‘future’, but means ‘which may be expected to come’: cf. C. J. Ruijgh, *Lingua* 65 (1985), 327 and 330.” See also *ibid.*, n. 14.

⁶⁶⁶ See Farnell 1932, 79: “(a) ‘My spell of dilatoriness, falling upon me from afar’ = ‘attacking me from long ago’”.

⁶⁶⁷ Cf. O. 1. 33f.: ἀμέραι δ’ ἐπίλοιποι / μάρτυρες σοφώτατοι.

of time) that the vicissitudes of human destiny take place, as the following verses in the second Olympian nicely exemplify (O. 2. 33-37):⁶⁶⁸

ῥοαὶ δ' ἄλλοτ' ἄλλαι
εὐθυμῖαν τε μέτα καὶ πόνων ἐς ἄνδρας ἔβαν.
οὕτω δὲ Μοῖρ', ἃ τε πατρώϊον
τῶνδ' ἔχει τὸν εὐφρονα πότμον, θεόρτωι σὺν ὀλβωι
ἐπὶ τι καὶ πῆμ' ἄγει,
παλιντράπελον ἄλλωι χρόνωι·

“For various streams bearing
Pleasures and pains come at various times upon men.
Thus it is that Fate, who controls the kindly destiny
That is the patrimony of this family, adds to their
Heaven-sent happiness some misery as well
To be reversed at another time;” (trans. Race)

Interchanging roles of God, Time, and Destiny

In the passage just quoted Fate (Μοῖρα) is denoted as the divinity who controls human lot (πότμον), which changes every now and then. According to N. 4. 43 Destiny itself (Πότμος) is the “lord” who provides poetic excellence to Pindar, whereas χρόνος ἔρπων appears as the executor of the divine will: ἐμοὶ δ' ὅποιαν ἀρετάν / ἔδωκε Πότμος ἄναξ / εἴ οἱδ' ὅτι χρόνος ἔρπων πεπρωμέναν τελέσει “but whatever kind of excellence lord Destiny has given me, well I know that coming time will accomplish that which is

⁶⁶⁸ See also O. 7. 94f., O. 12. 11-12a, P. 3. 96, P. 4. 291f., and P. 8. 15 discussed above.

fated.”⁶⁶⁹ However, in yet another instance dealing with the recurring topic of the unpredictability and changeability of human destiny, Pindar apparently alternates the roles of divinity and time, identifying the first as the executor and the second as the giver (*P.* 12. 30): [εἰ δέ τις ὄλβος ἐν ἀνθρώποισιν, ἄνευ καμάτου οὐ φαίνεται·] ἐκ δὲ τελευτάσει νιν ἥτοι σήμερον / δαίμων - τὸ δὲ μόρσιμον οὐ παρφυκτόν - ἀλλ’ ἔσται χρόνος / οὔτος, ὃ καί τιν’ ἀελπίται βαλὼν / ἔμπαλιν γνώμας τὸ μὲν δώσει, τὸ δ’ οὔπω [“If there is any happiness among men, it does not appear without toil.] A god will bring it to fulfilment either today – what is fated cannot be avoided – but there will come that time which, striking a person with surprise will unexpectedly give one thing, but defer another.” (trans. Race) As for the meaning of the combination χρόνος οὔτος in this instance, it denotes *certain time in the future* (whose duration is immaterial), *which* will bring about a change in human life (οὔτος is correlative to ὃ). In this type of context we occasionally come across the apparent interchange of roles between time, divinity, and destiny, and Petersen rightly argues that it is through its association with destiny that χρόνος acquires the agent capacity it exhibits in the characteristic examples discussed above.⁶⁷⁰ As it is not given to humans to know divine plans for them, they can only pray to gods – or indeed to time which, as a sort of intermediary between gods and men, brings their decisions to fulfilment – to be helpful and protecting towards them in the future.⁶⁷¹ So, in *P.* 1. 56f. a god is asked to preserve Hieron “in the time that comes”: οὔτω δ’ Ἱέρωνι θεὸς ὀρθωτὴρ πέλοι / τὸν προσέρποντα χρόνον. Finally, in *P.* 5. 117-21

⁶⁶⁹ See Köhnken 1971, 205: “Pindar ... die Schicksalsbestimmung doppelt ausdrückt und dadurch besonders hervorhebt (42f. ἔδωκε Πότμος; πεπωμένα)”.

⁶⁷⁰ Petersen 1939, 27: “Diese umfassende Bedeutung als Schicksalsmacht aber erhält Chronos als Vollender des Potmos und als eine Gewalt, die dem menschlichen Geschehen Dauer und Wirklichkeit verleiht und Erfüllung bringt”. Cf. Vivante 1972, 112.

⁶⁷¹ One recalls *O.* 13. 24-28 where Pindar addresses lord Zeus asking him to be benevolent towards the object of his praise, Xenophon, and his family “for all time to come”. Cf. also *O.* 8. 25ff. where an “ordinance of the immortal gods” is mentioned as the originator of hospitality of Aegina, which the coming time is asked to preserve.

Pindar first states how “a god graciously brings Arcesilas’ power to fulfilment *now* (τὸ νῦν ... τελεῖ)” and then asks the blessed children of Kronos to give him success *in the future* as well (τὸ λοιπόν) and prevent stormy winds from disrupting [his] “time” (χρόνον). Here χρόνος is neither the bearer of fortune nor the intermediary between gods and men (though τὸ νῦν and τὸ λοιπόν verify time’s role in the delivery of what is destined), but it is placed at the receiving end of the strokes of fate. On the basis of similar contexts already discussed, we can conjecture for χρόνος here the meaning “time to come”,⁶⁷² “rest of his lifetime”.⁶⁷³

This may be the appropriate place to mention the adverbial accusative τοῦτον χρόνον in O. 1. 115, where Pindar wishes for Hieron thus: εἴη σέ τε τοῦτον ὕψοῦ χρόνον πατεῖν “may you walk on high during this time.” I believe that τοῦτον χρόνον should be understood as in the case of the object χρόνον just discussed,⁶⁷⁴ so that Pindar’s wish, as it normally does, refers to the rest of the hero’s life. Some scholars have insisted on interpreting τοῦτον as determining the sense of χρόνος here and suggested either that it should indicate “your (i.e. Hieron’s) life”⁶⁷⁵ or “this life” as contrasted to life after death,⁶⁷⁶ but these suggestions seem less plausible to me.

⁶⁷² See e.g. Lefkowitz 1991, 189: “At the end of the ode once again misfortune is characterized as bad weather, ‘may no autumn blast of stormy wind level the time to come’ (121).”

⁶⁷³ See schol. ad loc.: ... ἀειθαλῆς αὐτοῦ μένοι ὁ βίος μηδέποτε φθίνων μηδὲ φυλλορροῶν.

⁶⁷⁴ See Fränkel 1968a, 20: “τοῦτον χρόνον in Ol. 1, 115 heißt ‘(von jetzt an) weiterhin’” and Köhnken 1971, 148: “Auch der zuerst zitierte Wunsch 115f. bezieht sich also auf die Zukunft und ‘diese Zeit’ (115) bedeutet ‘die zukünftige Lebenszeit’ (97).” Cf. Fisker 1990, 85.

⁶⁷⁵ E.g. Gerber 1982, 176 (ad 115).

⁶⁷⁶ E.g. Farnell 1932, 11 (ad O. 1. 114-115); Verdenius 1988, 52; Kirkwood 1982, 59 (ad O. 1. 115).

Personified χρόνος

There are in Pindar's verses examples of χρόνος represented as a clear-cut personified divine being endowed with attributes characteristic of gods. In *O.* 2. 17 Pindar describes time as "the father of all" and the phrase is evocative of Heraclitus' designation of war as "the father of all and the king of all" (DK22 B53).⁶⁷⁷ Leiva Petersen rightly argues that the ascription of these attributes, commonly attached to Zeus, to cosmic powers, represents an expression of their influence in the observable world (*O.* 2. 15ff.):⁶⁷⁸

... τῶν δὲ πεπραγμένων

ἐν δίκαι τε καὶ παρὰ δίκαν ἀποίητον οὐδ' ἄν

Χρόνος ὁ πάντων πατήρ

δύναιτο θέμεν ἔργων τέλος·

"Once deeds are done, whether in justice or contrary to it,

Not even Time, the father of all,

Could undo their outcome." (trans. Race)

It is interesting how χρόνος – which is represented as presiding over a court of *justice* in Solon's fr. 36. 3 – is said here to be unable to undo the outcome of things already done, whether *in justice* or contrary to it. That is because time moves forward and cannot come back. This indicates that the personification of χρόνος in *O.* 2. 17 rests on the idea of *passage of time*, but there may be more to its meaning here than the immediate context of the phrase πατήρ πάντων suggests.

⁶⁷⁷ See above p. 124.

⁶⁷⁸ Petersen 1939, 29.

Χρόνος and afterlife

The usage of χρόνος in *O.* 2. 17 has been linked to the poet's remarkable depiction of afterlife in lines 56-80 of the same poem.⁶⁷⁹ Although the interpretation of these lines is controversial in detail,⁶⁸⁰ they clearly involve the idea of μετεμψύχωσης, for which reason the whole description has been associated with Pythagorean or Orphic doctrines.⁶⁸¹ Besides, some sections of the eschatological passage resemble Empedocles' account on the destiny of a fallen *daimon* in B115, not least owing to the role that time plays in the processes of purification the two sources recount. It is probably not without significance that the second Olympian was composed for Theron (whose beliefs the eschatological lines most probably reflect),⁶⁸² the ruler of Acragas and an older contemporary and fellow-citizen of the Presocratic philosopher. Southern Italy at the time was known as the home of the Pythagorean sect and mystical beliefs were widespread in the area, including Sicily. Moreover, Pindar declares that his words speak "to those who understand (*O.* 2. 85), which has been interpreted by some scholars as alluding to followers of a mystic cult."⁶⁸³ For all these reasons we may feel justified in asking together with West "is it coincidence that in the same poem (17) Pindar refers to 'Chronos, the father of all'?"⁶⁸⁴

⁶⁷⁹ See e.g. Kirkwood 1982, 67 (ad *O.* 2. 17).

⁶⁸⁰ Id. 71f.

⁶⁸¹ See e.g. Burkert 1962, 110ff. Cf. scepticism in Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1922, 251f. See also Demand 1975 for the idea of an independent, non-Pythagorean origin of the Acragantine cult.

⁶⁸² The question of whether the eschatological account in Pindar's second Olympian reflects the poet's or his patron's beliefs has been extensively discussed with differing conclusions (cf. Lloyd-Jones 1990, 81, n. 1).

⁶⁸³ See West 1983a, 83-84 and 110. Cf. Race 1997a, 72f., n. 2: "I interpret verses 83-88 to express Pindar's intention of dispensing with further details about the afterlife (as much as 'those who understand' might appreciate them)". See also Race 1979, 262f. and Willcock 1995, 161 (ad 85-86). Differently Most 1986.

⁶⁸⁴ West 1983a, 110, n. 2.

Let us now explore the two contexts more closely in order to investigate possible connections between them. The mention of Χρόνος ὁ πάντων πατήρ in line 17 is preceded by a story of Theron's ancestors, whose efforts secured them their sacred habitation on the river Acragas and whose "destined lifetime (αἰών ... μórσιμος) came upon them adding wealth and joy to their inborn virtues" (v. 10f.). Pindar then addresses Zeus with a prayer for continuing prosperity of the family and adds "what has been done, in justice and injustice, not even Time, the father of all, can undo" (vv. 12-17). According to Race, this sentence expresses Pindar's essentially tragic view of life due to human complete dependence upon gods,⁶⁸⁵ but it seems to me that this passage may be taken to have a more optimistic undertone, especially when read in connection with the eschatological account in lines 56ff. Time may not be coming back, but on its forward path it may bring godsent joy and make men forget their pain (v. 18 λάθα δὲ πότμῳ σὺν εὐδαίμονι γένοιτ' ἄν).⁶⁸⁶ Noble deeds may end misery, when godgiven fortune lifts one to high prosperity (v. 21f. ὅταν θεοῦ Μοῖρα πέμπῃ ἀνεκὰς ὄλβον ὑψηλόν).⁶⁸⁷ These claims are further illustrated with the stories of mythical characters to whom Theron linked his ancestry: Cadmus' daughters Semele and Ino after many sufferings achieved *eternal life* (v. 30 τὸν ὄλον ἀμφὶ χρόνον) and their mention may perhaps be interpreted as an announcement of the eschatological account that is to follow. Laius' family suffered horrible misfortunes, but Oedipus' grandson Thersandros eventually achieved athletic and military glory and so benefited the family. Theron and his brother, descendants of the same family, are worthy of celebration for their athletic

⁶⁸⁵ Race 1986, 69.

⁶⁸⁶ One recalls here *P.* 1. 46: εἰ γὰρ ὁ πᾶς χρόνος ὄλβον μὲν οὕτω καὶ κτεάνων δόσιν εὐθύνοι, καμάτων δ' ἐπίλασιν παράσχοι.

⁶⁸⁷ *O.* 2. 18-22: λάθα δὲ πότμῳ σὺν εὐδαίμονι γένοιτ' ἄν. / ἐσλῶν γὰρ ὑπὸ χαρμάτων πῆμα θνῄσκει / παλίγκοτον δαμασθέν, ὅταν θεοῦ Μοῖρα πέμπῃ / ἀνεκὰς ὄλβον ὑψηλόν. Note the importance of a "fortunate destiny" and the role of "the divine Fate", who is said to be responsible for human happiness.

triumphs and will be awarded for their noble efforts, for “success in an attempt at the games brings one relief from sorrows” (vv. 48-52).

Although in this ode Pindar repeatedly reminds us of the vicissitudes of human life and the changeability of mortals’ fortunes, the first three triads of the ode, with their gnomic statements and mythological examples, clearly insist on the motifs of consolation and compensation that may be achieved *in time*. Pindar’s extraordinary story of award, punishment and atonement in the afterlife seems to me to be in keeping with this reasoning. In his eschatological account the poet mentions three different posthumous situations (vv. 56-77): 1) “tearless existence *beside the honoured gods*” for “those who joyfully kept their *oaths*”; 2) terrible punishment for the others, presumably those who did not keep oaths (vv. 65-67); and finally 3) for “those with the courage to have lived *three times* on each side” and have kept their souls free from unjust actions *throughout that time*, a chance to “travel the road of Zeus to the tower of Cronus” (vv. 68-70).⁶⁸⁸ Passage of time obviously plays a crucial role in this conception of purification through reincarnation.⁶⁸⁹ We can compare here Pindar’s description of (personified) χρόνος as “the best saviour of just men” in fr. 159: ἀνδρῶν δικαίων χρόνος σωτήρ ἄριστος. It is probably not without significance here that the eschatological account of the second Olympian gives no detail of the punishment of the wicked, whereas the bright future of the good men (ἐσλοί) as well as of the purified (ὅσοι δ’ ἐτόλμασαν ἐστρίς / ἐκατέρωθι μείναντες ἀπὸ πάμπαν ἀδίκων ἔχειν ψυχάν) is recounted

⁶⁸⁸ These lines are reminiscent of Empedocles’ account of the destiny of the fallen *daimons* who, according to a decree of Necessity ratified by the gods and sealed with broad *oaths* (B115. 1-2), are sentenced to wandering away *from the blessed ones* for “*three times* ten thousand years” (B115. 6f.). Cf. West 1983a, 110, n. 2. See also Demand 1975, 355, n. 38: “The most significant similarities are the theory of transmigration based upon number three and the important role given to oaths and perjury”.

⁶⁸⁹ Cf. fr. 133: οἷσι δὲ Φερσεφόνα ποινὴν παλαιοῦ πένθεος / δέξεται, ἐς τὸν ὑπερθεὶν ἄλιον κείνων ἐνάτωι ἔτει / ἀνδιδοῖ ψυχὰς πάλιν, ἐκ τῶν βασιλῆες ἀγανοῖ / καὶ σθένει κραίτηνοι σοφαί τε μέγιστοι / ἄνδρες αὖξοντ’, etc.

in vivid detail. Pindar, therefore, might be said to focus in the second Olympian on the positive aspect of the passage of time, provided that it is filled with noble effort and heroic achievements as well as with righteous behaviour. Theron, to whom the ode is devoted, is an illustrious example of athletic prowess and noble character and he possibly also possessed the knowledge which may have granted him hope for a blessed afterlife.⁶⁹⁰

In its immediate context, χρόνος ὁ πάντων πατήρ in line 17 of the second Olympian refers to the notion of *passage of time* conceived as that which brings everything to birth and fulfilment. However, the expression may also be taken to indicate some sort of priority of time over all other cosmic phenomena. This reminds us of Pherecydes' doctrine, in which Χρόνος is a primordial deity who initiated the creation of the world, as well as of the creator-god Χρόνος mentioned in some Orphic theogonies.⁶⁹¹ In Pindar's fr. 33 Χρόνος is called the "ruler" who surpasses all other gods (ἄνακτα τὸν πάντων ὑπερβάλλοντα Χρόνον μακάρων).⁶⁹²

* * *

Of all the early literary sources discussed so far, Pindar's poetry offers the richest variety of usages of χρόνος, which reflect a number of different semantic applications of the word. Generally (and strictly) speaking, it may be found to denote *period of time*, *time when*, and *course of time*. However, I hope to have shown that the contexts in

⁶⁹⁰ The eschatological passage opens with a protasis of a conditional, which may be seen as referring to Theron: εἰ δέ μιν (sc. πλοῦτον ἀρεταῖς δεδαιδαλμένον) ἔχων τις οἶδεν τὸ μέλλον. See Willcock 1995, 154 (ad O. 2. 56): "The implication here is surely that if the man who combines wealth and virtue also knows about future rewards and punishments, then all will be well for him."

⁶⁹¹ For possible Orphic influences on Pindar's idea of time see e.g. Leeuwen 1964, 72-75 and 79f.

⁶⁹² See Komornicka 1975, 123f.: "Tout d'abord, le poète l'élève au rang d'une personnification plus que divine (Fr. 33: 'Ce souverain qui domine tous les Bienheureux, le Temps' – Ἄνακτα τὸν πάντων ὑπερβάλλοντα Χρόνον Μακάρων! Ou bien O. II 17: Χρόνος, ὁ πάντων πατήρ)."

which χρόνος appears in Pindar significantly enrich this semantic outlook and reveal that time occupies an important place in the poet's epinician imagery. One of the most striking poetic motifs in which χρόνος regularly occurs is that of changeability and unpredictability of human fortunes. It denotes the temporal background against which vicissitudes of life occur, and it is sometimes also addressed as the bearer of woes and blessings. This innovative usage of χρόνος, which makes time appear as an active power,⁶⁹³ seems to place it entirely in the future, from where it is expected to bring that which is destined. There is no doubt that it is through its association with destiny that time assumes the prerogatives of power, and I would also like to suggest that the complex semantic content of χρόνος enables Pindar's creative and innovative usages of the word. A special importance in Pindar's imagery belongs to the notion of *passage of time*, which is conceived as irreversibly moving forward with the stream of events and thus apparently "directing" (εὐθύνειν) human fortunes. Vivante argues that "any word which expresses change or continuity may suggest the same value",⁶⁹⁴ but I would rather propose that it is the words which imply "flow, stream of time", in which events unfold.⁶⁹⁵ We will see in the next section of this chapter that Pindar ascribes an equivalent role to αἰών taken in the sense of "lifetime". A unique expression of active force contained in the notion of *passage of time* is found in *N.* 1. 46f., where χρόνος apparently assists in Heracles' killing of serpents: ἀγχομένοις δὲ χρόνος / ψυχὰς ἀπέπνευσεν μελέων ἀφάτων "as they were being strangled, the passage of time exhaled the life from their monstrous bodies" (trans. Race).⁶⁹⁶

⁶⁹³ Vivante 1972, 116.

⁶⁹⁴ Op. cit., 114.

⁶⁹⁵ Vivante 1972, 114 finds the same semantic implication in ῥοαί of *O.* 2. 33-34: ῥοαί δ' ἄλλοτ' ἄλλαι / εὐθυμῖαν τε μέτα καὶ πόνων ἐς ἄνδρας ἔβαν.

⁶⁹⁶ Cf. Gerber 1962, 32: "Thus when Pindar says that 'time killed the serpents', he is in effect saying nothing more than that 'the serpents' died in time).

A I Ω N IN PINDAR

After a well-documented and semantically complex usage of αἰών in early epic poetry, we find no example of the word in the extant evidence of early lyric and only one instance in the preserved fragments of the Ionian physicists (Heraclitus' B52). In fifth-century lyric poetry, however, we again come across numerous mentions of αἰών, and the word there exhibits some new semantic nuances and innovative combinatorial properties, mainly in Pindar, while Simonides and Bacchylides, as I will later show, remain more conservative in their applications of the word.

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. I have already mentioned that, on the one hand, the early epic meaning “vital force” 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):⁶⁹⁷ αἰών δὲ δι' ὀστέων ἐρραίσθη “and his marrow was shattered through his bones” (trans. Race). On the other hand, in fifth-century lyric poetry αἰών most commonly assumes the general meaning “life”, which encompasses both its quantitative and qualitative aspects (i.e. duration and content of existence), with

⁶⁹⁷ Cf. B. 1. 153.

one of the two senses usually emphasised by the linguistic context (so, e.g., the phrase δι' αἰῶνος refers to the *duration of life*, whereas the ascription of the epithets ζηλωτός or ἀσφαλής to αἰών brings out the sense of *quality of existence*). Pindar, however, often adds to these senses new semantic nuances, imaginatively expressed in his vivid poetic descriptions, which reveal rich conceptual content behind the designation αἰών.

Although the noun in most cases remains semantically classifiable as referring to “life” (in its various senses), 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 Pindaric uses of αἰών. My aim is, therefore, to get as close as possible to identifying particular semantic nuances which motivated Pindar’s creative usages of αἰών.

i) Αἰών signifying *stream of life* or *course of time*

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 / εἵπερ καθ’ ὁδὸν νιν εὐθυπομπός

αἰὼν 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.”

Analogously to the usage of χρόνος denoting “passage of time” that is expected to “guide” (εὐθύνοι) Hieron’s wealth and happiness (P. 1. 46), 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* (the passage of life is inseparable from its content). In this kind of context χρόνος and αἰών assume the role of godlike powers, while their influence is actually only mediatory. Human fortunes lie in the hands of the gods (see *O.* 13. 26ff. for Pindar’s praying to Zeus to “direct” (εὖθυνε) the winds of Xenophon’s fortune) and in Pindar the deity responsible for one’s lot is often said to be Destiny him/herself (*P.* 3. 86 ὁ μέγας Πότμος, *N.* 4. 42 Πότμος ἄναξ, *O.* 2. 35f. Μοῖρα; see also *P.* 5. 3, *N.* 6. 6f. and 7. 6, *I.* 1. 39). The wording of the above passage, however, closely associates αἰών with the divine Destiny,⁶⁹⁸ since it is this deity that is normally said to “give”⁶⁹⁹ (*P.* 5. 3 ὁ πλοῦτος εὐρυσθενής ... πότμου παραδόντος, *N.* 4. 41f. ἀρετὰν / ἔδωκε Πότμος ἄναξ)⁷⁰⁰ and “guide” (*N.* 6. 6f. ἄμμε πότμος / ἄντιν’ ἔγραψε δραμεῖν ποτὶ στάθμαν, *O.* 2. 35ff. Μοῖρ’ ... θεόρτωι σὺν ὀλβωι / ἐπὶ τι καὶ πῆμ’ ἄγει). One should not, however, exaggerate the role of Destiny in this particular context and so undermine the glory of Timodemus’ achievement. Timodemus has 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.

Apart from holding gods responsible for their lot, people may also feel they are under the influence of their own lives, *in the course of which* they experience varying and unpredictable fortunes. This seems to be the sense behind the gnomic statement at the end of Pindar’s third Isthmian. The ode opens with the poet’s observation that

⁶⁹⁸ This is reflected in the modern renderings of εὖθυμπονός αἰών: 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.”

⁶⁹⁹ 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.

⁷⁰⁰ But Destiny’s yoke is also said to “constrain” (*N.* 7. 6 εἴργει δὲ πότμωι ζυγέσθ’ ἕτερον ἕτερα).

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, gives a good example of what a noble man ought to do in the face of the vicissitudes which mortals cannot avoid, 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 (and so is χρόνος in S. *OC* 619f. and E. *Supp.* 787), which semantically accentuates the temporal aspect of "life". Modern commentators render αἰὼν in this context either by "life(time)"⁷⁰¹ or by "time"⁷⁰² and both senses fit the sentence well. The recurring idea that human fortunes change as time (of their lives) progresses⁷⁰³ is illustrated by the metaphor of days rolling as waves (cf. Hom. *Λ* 307 τρόφι κῦμα κυλίνδεται, ι 147 κύματα μακρὰ κυλινδόμενα)⁷⁰⁴ 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 the eighth Isthmian ode devoted to Cleander of Aegina, which opens with an indirect reference to the danger of Persian occupation which recently threatened Greece. The Persian invasion of 480 is metaphorically

⁷⁰¹ See e.g. Thummer 1968, 171; Privitera 1982, 51.

⁷⁰² See e.g. Dornseiff 1921, 60; Farnell 1930, 253.

⁷⁰³ Cf. E. *HF* 671f.: ἄλλ' εἰλίσσόμενός τις αἰὼν πλοῦτον μόνον αὔξει. See Bond 1981, 236 (ad 671): "εἰλίσσόμενος ... αἰὼν 'the course of life', 'time like an ever-rolling stream'—but limited to the life-time of the individual concerned."

⁷⁰⁴ Cf. S. *Aj.* 131f.: ὥς ἡμέρα κλίνει τε κἀνάγει πάλιν / ἅπαντα τὰνθρώπεια.

described as the rock of Tantalus, which a god had removed from above the heads of the Greeks (9-11).⁷⁰⁵ Now that the danger is over, Pindar advises, one should “always look at what is before one’s foot” (id. 12-14 τὸ δὲ πρὸ ποδὸς / ἄρειον αἰεὶ βλέπειν / χρῆμα πᾶν), for (14f.):

... δόλιος γὰρ αἰ-

ὦν ἐπ’ ἀνδράσι κρέμαται,

ἐλίσσων βίου πόρον·

“Treacherous αἰὼν hangs over people

unrolling the course of life.”

The figure of “treacherous” αἰὼν “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,⁷⁰⁶ which αἰὼν is now said to “roll along” (cf. schol. ad loc. c: κυλίων καὶ προίων). This combination of poetic images⁷⁰⁷ 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.⁷⁰⁸ Similar imagery, albeit communicating a different message, is found in *N.* 6. 55ff. There 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 πᾶρ ποδὶ ναὸς ἐλίσσόμενον 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*

⁷⁰⁵ See Bowra 1969, 55 for the explanation of Pindar’s personal experience of these events.

⁷⁰⁶ For πόρος signifying the stream of rivers, see LSJ, s.v. i 3 (including *P. 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.

⁷⁰⁷ For more examples of the “Vermischung der Bilder” in Pindar’s odes, see Thummer 1969, 131.

⁷⁰⁸ See Carey 1981, 191: “We must look to the present because life is uncertain (too uncertain to nurse yesterday’s grief).”

exploits of the Aeacidae (vv. 45ff.). Both this passage and the above *I.* 8. 12ff., as well as *I.* 3. 18 quoted before it, suggest a picture of time as a series of successive waves, with the one “before the foot” (πρὸ ποδός, πὰρ ποδί) corresponding to the present. The rolling course of life in *I.* 8. 15 should therefore be taken as a depiction of its temporal progression, and that which makes it unroll must be the *passage of time* in general, represented here as a godlike power.⁷⁰⁹ Pindar imaginatively exploits the kinship between the notion of “stream of life”, usually denoted by αἰών (but in the given context by βίου πόρος), and the more general idea of “passage of time”, usually denoted by χρόνος.⁷¹⁰ In the above discussion on Heraclitus’ B52 I suggested that the philosopher also made creative use of this semantic feature of αἰών.⁷¹¹

In his commentary on the passage Carey notes that the interpretation offered by the ancient scholia, according to which ἐλίσσων implies “rolling along” of the stream of life, “adds nothing. As we need an indication of the mutability of fortune, ‘whirling, causing to eddy’ would be better.”⁷¹² 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 “(life)time” in the course of which unpredictable blows of fate befall us. The

⁷⁰⁹ I believe that the image of “time unrolling the course of life” suggests an ordered sequence of waves, rather than chaotic waters in which waves toss human life around (cf. Thummer 1968, 193: “... denn tückisch hängt die Lebenszeit über den Menschen und wirft die Lebensbahn dahin und dorthin.” See also Thummer 1969, 131 for his comment on the lines).

⁷¹⁰ See schol. ad *I.* 8. 27b-c: δόλιος γὰρ αἰὼν ἐπ’ ἀνδράσι κρέμαται. b. ὁ δὲ νοῦς· ὁ γὰρ δὴ τῆς ζωῆς χρόνος ἐνήρτηται τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τὸν τοῦ βίου πόρον κυλίων καὶ προϊών. c. ἢ οὗτος· ὁ γὰρ χρόνος πολλάς εὕρισκεν μεταβολὰς ἐλίσσων τὸν τοῦ βίου πόρον, τουτέστι τὴν ὁδὸν τοῦ βίου.

⁷¹¹ See above, p. 125.

⁷¹² Carey 1981, 192. In support of this sense, Carey refers to Hom. *Φ* 11, Hes. *Th.* 791, E. *IT* 7 and 1103. He notes, however, that the explanation that schol. 27c gives for πόρον = ὁδόν does not accord with ἐλίσσων 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”).

reference to “wavelike rolling” may perhaps be an indication of the *impact* that the passage of time has upon humans or indeed of the *disturbances* in the stream of life. Something similar was said about the meaning of χρόνος in Pindar’s prayers for future prosperity of his poetic heroes. But in the case of αἰών the connection with Destiny is even stronger, for, as Wilamowitz noted, it essentially denotes “time relatively”, i.e. the lifetime of an individual, and as such in its length and content determined by Destiny.⁷¹³

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 celebration in the second Olympian by remembering Theron’s ancestors. “They were the eye of Sicily,⁷¹⁴ and their destined life came upon them adding wealth and joy to their inborn virtues” (10f. αἰὼν δ’ ἔφεπε μόρσιμος, πλοῦτόν τε καὶ χάριν ἄγων / γηνσίαις ἐπ’ ἀρεταῖς).

Linguistically, the expression αἰὼν ἔφεπε μόρσιμος is an imaginative inversion of the common epic phrase πότμον/ θάνατον/ ὀλέθριον ἦμαρ/ αἴσιμον ἦμαρ ἐρέπειν “to meet one’s death”.⁷¹⁵ The ascription of the epithet μόρσιμος to αἰὼν reveals Destiny’s influence on the life of Theron’s ancestors⁷¹⁶ and at the same time indicates life’s apparent mediatory role⁷¹⁷ in adding wealth and joy to the inborn virtues of Theron’s ancestors.⁷¹⁸ 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

⁷¹³ Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1914, 170, n. 3.

⁷¹⁴ 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 φαεινότερον).”

⁷¹⁵ Hom. Z 412, ω 31, H 52, δ 562, T 294, Φ 100, etc.

⁷¹⁶ There might be an allusion to an oracle supposed to have been given to the founders of Acragas before they set out.

⁷¹⁷ See Leeuwen 1964, 58.

⁷¹⁸ 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 γνησίαις αὐτῶν ἀρεταῖς.

both semantic nuances are recognisable),⁷¹⁹ but rather on its content.⁷²⁰ 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".⁷²¹

Content of life is clearly what αἰών in *N.* 10. 59 refers to. It 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' ἐναλλάξ
ἀμέραν τὰν μὲν παρὰ πατρὶ φίλῳι
Δὶ νέμονται, τὰν δ' ὑπὸ κεύθεσι γαίας
ἐν γυάλοις Θεράπνας,
πότμον ἀμπιπλάντες ὁμοῖον· ἐπεὶ
τοῦτον, ἢ πάμπαν θεὸς ἔμμεναι οἰκεῖν τ' οὐρανῶι,
εἴλετ' αἰῶνα φθιμένου Πολυδεύκης
Κάστορος ἐν πολέμῳι.

"Changing in succession"⁷²²

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.

⁷¹⁹ 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 28 and Gildersleeve 1890, 144f.).

⁷²⁰ Schol. 19d: ἢ οὕτως· εὖμοιρος βίος ἐπηκολούθησεν αὐτοῖς ἐκ πεπρωμένης τινός.

⁷²¹ Dornseiff 1921, 77f.

⁷²² 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.

For Polydeuces chose this kind of life,
Instead of being wholly divine and living in heaven,
When Castor was killed in war.”

Αἰών here signifies “the way of life” Polydeuces chose for him 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.⁷²³ 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 the third Pythian, 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’ Αἰακίδαι παρὰ Πηλεΐ / οὔτε παρ’ ἀντιθέωι Κάδμωι).⁷²⁴ Αἰών clearly refers to a quality of human existence, described as “free from slips, upsets”. The similarity between the usages of μοῖρα in this context and μόρσιμος αἰών in the above-quoted *O.* 2. 10 (note especially the verbs, ἔφεπε and ἔπεται, to which the two destiny-expressions are subjects) prove that both refer to that which people enjoy and Destiny or gods provide.

⁷²³ Cf. schol. ad *N.* 10. 107: ... εἴλετο Πολυδεύκης ... αὐτὸς ἀθάνατος ὢν μᾶλλον παρ’ ἡμέραν ἄνθρωπος εἶναι ἅμα τῷ ἀδελφῷ, καὶ πάλιν θεὸς ἅμα τῷ ἀδελφῷ ἀπολουμένου αὐτοῦ· **καὶ οὕτως ἐποίησαν οἱ θεοί.**

⁷²⁴ Cf. *Emp.* B17. 11: οὐ σφισιν ἔμπεδος αἰών.

However, 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 αἰὼν πότμον ἐφάψαις⁷²⁵ / ὀρφανὸν γενεᾷς). It may seem, at first sight, that there has been an exchange of roles between "life" and "destiny" here, but that is not quite the case. 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, should be understood in the same way as εὐθυπομπὸς αἰών in *N.* 2. 7f., i.e., as "progression of life",⁷²⁶ along with all the consequences which that entails (in this case especially growing old).⁷²⁷

One final instance of explicit connection of αἰών with the notion of destiny is found in the seventh Isthmian. The theme of the passage in question is again the changeability⁷²⁸ and transience of human existence. In the beginning of the third antistrophe the poet, giving himself as an example, recommends enjoying each day as it comes (40ff.):

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)

⁷²⁵ See Gerber 2002, 51 (ad 60): "ἐφάψαις: for the sense of 'fastening' in connection with πότμος cf. εἴργει δὲ πότμῳ ζυγέσθ' ἕτερον ἕτερα, etc."

⁷²⁶ Cf. Pfeijffer 1999, 646f. and Gerber 2002, 51, who points to Gildersleeve's translation "time".

⁷²⁷ Farnell 1930, 49; Bowra 1969, 154.

⁷²⁸ The vicissitudes of life are expressed through the metaphor of storm (*I.* 7. 39).

The message of the passage is the same as the one expressed in *I.* 8. 12-14 (“take each day as it comes”),⁷²⁹ but the meaning of αἰών is quite different. Here it denotes “lifespan”,⁷³⁰ defined as “allotted” by the attribute μόρσιμος.⁷³¹ 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.”⁷³²

The motto of living mindfully each day as it comes seems to be recognisable in another Pindaric context involving αἰών, for in a passage of the third Nemean we read (74f.):

... ἐλᾶι δὲ καὶ τέσσαρας ἀρετάς

<ὁ> θνατὸς αἰών, φρονεῖν δ' ἐνέπει τὸ παρκεῖμενον.

“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, originating from Aristarchus’ explanation, takes them to be three virtues characteristic of each stage of life, youth, maturity, and old age, plus φρονεῖν τὸ παρκεῖμενον, as the fourth virtue.⁷³³ 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 παρκεῖμενον is just “a prudent maxim dear to the poet”.⁷³⁴ Without going into details of this discussion, I believe it is safe to suggest that in this context αἰών

⁷²⁹ See also v. 43f.: τὰ μακρὰ δ' εἴ τις / παπταίνει, βραχὺς ἐξικέσθαι χαλκόπεδον θεῶν / ἔδραν.

⁷³⁰ Cf. Pi. fr. 165 (ισοδένδρου τέκμαρ αἰῶνος λαχοῖσα) about the lifespan of the Hamadryades.

⁷³¹ 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”.

⁷³² 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.”

⁷³³ See schol. ad *N.* 3. 129a. Cf. Bury 1890, 59 and, especially, Pfeijffer 1999, 388f.

⁷³⁴ Farnell 1932, 261. Cf. Bowra 1969, 105 (ad 70-75).

again refers to “course of life”, which accords well with the first interpretation of the four virtues,⁷³⁵ but also with the second one, for the proverb that teaches us to attend to what is near, as I have shown, appears in several contexts in which “passage of life” is represented as revealing vicissitudes of human existence.

iii) Αἰών as *quality of existence*

In a number of instances Pindaric αἰών denotes quality of existence, which is referred to without any explicit connection with destiny.⁷³⁶ This usage, which may be qualified as a refinement of the general sense “life”, is verified in other sources from roughly the same period: Empedocles applies it to describe the mobility of the universe (B17. 11 and 26. 10) and Simonides to indicate the quality of divine existence (584 *PMG*).

In the ninth Nemean ode 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 immortal glory (*N.* 9. 44): ἐκ πόνων δ’ , οἷ σὺν νεότατι γένωνται σὺν τε δίκαι, 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 commonly described by Pindar as extremely unpleasant.⁷³⁷ The accomplishments that result in acquiring wealth and glory should therefore be the main considerations of youth, for

⁷³⁵ 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.”

⁷³⁶ 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.

⁷³⁷ See *O.* 1. 82-84, *P.* 10. 41, *N.* 10. 83, *Pae.* 1. 1.

they bring consolation in old age and secure glory that survives individual death.⁷³⁸ 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 (stressing now the one, now the other of the two factors). It is therefore only natural that at the end of the eighth Pythian Pindar addresses the same question of what makes transient human existence meaningful and pleasant by pointing to the divine contribution (95-97):

ἐπάμεροι· τί δέ τις; τί δ' οὔ τις; σκιᾶς ὄναρ
ἄνθρωπος. ἀλλ' ὅταν αἴγλα διόσδοτος ἔλθῃ,
λαμπρὸν φέγγος ἔπεστιν ἀνδρῶν καὶ μείλιχος αἰὼν.

“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 αἰὼν refers to the quality of life determined by the radiance from the gods. Taken more precisely to indicate the life of a victor, this μείλιχος αἰὼν can be understood as alluding to “the external circumstances which make a winner's life sweet, such as celebrations and awards”.⁷³⁹

Pindar's praise of life characterised by effort and achievement comes to mind when, in a mythical context in the fourth Pythian, 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

⁷³⁸ 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.

⁷³⁹ Gentili and Bernardini 1995, 586.

that no one should be left behind to remain with mother and coddle⁷⁴⁰ a life free from peril” (184ff. μή τινα λειπόμενον / τὰν ἀκίνδυνον παρὰ ματρὶ μένειν αἰ/ῶνα πέσσοντ’). This representation of a ventureless life is utterly unmanly: staying at home with mother, leading a harmless life,⁷⁴¹ and even the cooking metaphor may be seen as pointing in that direction.⁷⁴² 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 *P.* 5. 7, although its pairing with the adjective κλυτός points to a 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 (ἀρετή), 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 ἀκρᾶν βαθμίδων ἄπο

σὺν εὐδοξίαι μετανίσσει

ἕκατι χρυσαρμάτου Κάστορος·

“O Arcesilas, blessed by the gods,

You have been pursuing it,

Along with honour

⁷⁴⁰ Race’s “coddling” for πέσσοντ’ is an appropriate rendering of the cooking metaphor (Race 1997a, 291).

⁷⁴¹ Cf. *E. Med.* 248f.

⁷⁴² Braswell 1988, 270.

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”.⁷⁴³ 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. 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.⁷⁴⁴ In doing this, he is favoured by Castor, the patron of chariot races.⁷⁴⁵ Αἰών here, we may conclude, refers to the circumstances of Arcesilas’ life.

iv) Αἰών and afterlife

There are, finally, two instances of αἰών mentioned in eschatological contexts. One of them belongs to the famous passage from the second Olympian already mentioned in the above section on Pindaric χρόνος. It describes the posthumous destiny of “those who joyfully kept their oaths” (65-67):

... παρὰ μὲν τιμίους

θεῶν οἵτινες ἔχαιρον εὐορκίαις

ἄδακρυν νέμονται

αἰῶνα...”

⁷⁴³ 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.

⁷⁴⁴ Cf. Fennell, loc. cit. 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 κλυτὰς redundant.

⁷⁴⁵ See Gildersleeve, loc. cit.: “Kastor plays the part of Πότμος, and the king goes after the wealth that he is to bring home as a πολύφιλον ἐπέταν.”

“... besides the honoured gods⁷⁴⁶

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.⁷⁴⁷ They are rewarded with a “life free from toil” (ἀπονέστερος βίωτος), in which there are no extremes of hot and cold to be suffered, for they enjoy permanent equinoxes (61f. ἴσαις δὲ νύκτεσσιν αἰεῖ,/ ἴσαις δ’ ἀμέραις ἄλιον ἔχοντες),⁷⁴⁸ and no physical pain caused by excessive labour, for they do not have to do bodily work for their living (63f. οὐ χθόνα ταρασσοντες ἐν χερὸς ἀκμῇ / 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 γάρ ἐστι μόνον

ἐκ θεῶν·

“The body of every man follows overpowering death,

But there still survives the living image of life,

For it alone is from the gods;”

⁷⁴⁶ See Kirkwood 1982, 74 (ad 65-66): “παρὰ τιμίους θεῶν: ‘beside the honored gods’, partitive gen., rather than ‘those honored of the gods.’”

⁷⁴⁷ See Willcock 1995, 156: “Honesty, keeping one’s word, is the quality identified with the righteous.”

⁷⁴⁸ 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, *op. cit.*, 73 and Woodbury 1966 in favour of the first interpretation.

The expression αἰῶνος εἶδωλον corresponds to the Homeric ψυχή that denotes the shadow of the dead which survives the death of the body.⁷⁴⁹ The Homeric ψυχή, used in this sense, is described as the “image of the dead” (ψυχὰι 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.⁷⁵⁰ 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)⁷⁵¹ and describes it as being active in dreams. Since this view does not reflect any known traditional belief, it may be taken to express some contemporary esoteric speculation.⁷⁵²

Shifting between the meaning “vital force” and indications of the sense “lifetime”, Homeric uses of αἰών do not quite foreshadow the semantic complexity found in Pindaric applications of the word. While the ‘concretisation’ of the noun’s sense did not really take root after early epic, its generalised meaning “life” gradually takes over, accounting for both quality and duration of individual existence. Literary contexts usually accentuate one or the other of the two semantic aspects of αἰών. Degani argues that the idea of ‘totality’, which he believes to be contained in the semantic root of the word, helped this process of generalisation and enabled the word to assume a role equivalent to that of μοῖρα.⁷⁵³ It is evident, however, that in these ‘fatalistic contexts’ αἰών retains its original signification “life” and the contexts characterise it as “destined”

⁷⁴⁹ Ps.-Plu. *Consol. ad Apoll.* 35. 120c: λέγεται δ’ ὑπὸ μὲν τοῦ μελικοῦ Πινδάρου ταυτὶ περὶ τῶν εὐσεβῶν ἐν Ἄϊδου.

⁷⁵⁰ See Kirkwood 1982, 344.

⁷⁵¹ See West 1985.

⁷⁵² See West, *op. cit.*, 56 and West 1971, 148f.

⁷⁵³ Degani 1961, 47: “né ζωή né βίος poterono infatti assumere queste sfumature fatalistiche, appunto perché solo αἰών aveva il pregnante valore di ὅλος ὁ βίος.”

(*O.* 2. 10f., *I.* 7. 41f., etc.). Degani goes a step further and suggests that Pindaric αἰών, “che assume tutti i significati di μοῖρα”, may have also come to signify “una forza trascendente ed esterna all’ uomo che agisce su tutto il genere umano, determinandone le gioie ed i dolori.”⁷⁵⁴ I hope to have demonstrated that it is its kinship with the idea of *passage of time* (χρόνος) that gives αἰών the role of an active power, as well as its connection with destiny.⁷⁵⁵ It is *in time* (as days go by) that people encounter their destiny, and the sense of *progression of life* is more important in that respect than the assumed notion of ‘totality’.

⁷⁵⁴ Degani 1961, 49.

⁷⁵⁵ See especially the striking *E. Heracl.* 900: πολλὰ γὰρ τίκται Μοῖρα τελεσσιδότερ’ Αἰών τε Χρόνου παῖς. Μοῖρα and Αἰών are different forces and Αἰών and Χρόνος are related.

X P O N O Σ AND A I Ω N IN SIMONIDES AND BACCHYLIDES

The uses of χρόνος in the rest of fifth-century lyric poetry, although fewer in number and perhaps less imaginative in formulation, are similar to those found in Pindar in as much as we can apply to them the same type of classification of the basic meanings of the word: they imply *duration*, *passage of time* or *time when*. This polysemy of χρόνος proves to be well-established in the fifth century BC.

Bacchylides and Simonides mention χρόνος in the same or similar poetic contexts as their lyric contemporaries and predecessors, which have to do with the themes of brevity of life and youth, changeability and unpredictability of human fortune, as well as with the subjects of suddenness of the changes of fate on the one hand and stability of excellence and durability of glory on the other. As for their usages of αἰών, Simonides and Bacchylides most commonly apply the word to denote “lifetime”, but it is also found to imply quality of existence and its usage once even evokes early epic conception of αἰών as an entity leaving a body at death. We do not, however, find in these authors the innovativeness of the Pindaric application of αἰών. Since χρόνος and αἰών appear in passages that communicate similar poetic subjects and the expressions in which they occur sometimes refer to the same ideas, I will analyse them together, in order to acquire a truthful representation of their meanings in the imagery of these poets.

i) Transience of life and youth

In a number of the extant fragments of Simonides' poetry, which are tentatively labelled as θρῆνοι in *PMG*,⁷⁵⁶ the poet reflects on the brevity of human life and transience of youth and shares his advice on how human life should be lived in such circumstances. In these contexts αἰών denotes "lifetime" and χρόνος refers to "duration" of life and youth.

Simon. 520 *PMG* (= Poltera F21):

ἀνθρώπων ὀλίγον μὲν
κάρτος, ἄπρακτοι δὲ μεληδόνες,
αἰῶνι δ' ἐν παύρῳ πόνος ἀμφὶ πόνῳ.⁷⁵⁷

"Men's strength is but little, and futile his concerns,

his lifespan short, filled with trouble on trouble;" (trans. West)

Inescapable death, Simonides adds, awaits the good and the bad alike.⁷⁵⁸ The poet therefore warns against the tendency of the young to waste their precious time on vain ambitions, for youth can create the illusion of power and invulnerability⁷⁵⁹ and so apparently conceal the looming truth about the transience of life (Simon. eleg. 20. 10ff.

W):

νήπιοι, οἷς ταύτη κεῖται νόος, οὐδὲ ἴσασιν
ὥς χρόνος ἔσθ' ἥβης καὶ βίότου ὀλίγος
θνητοῖς.⁷⁶⁰

"They're fools who have that attitude, and do not

⁷⁵⁶ West 1994b, 162f. groups these fragments under "Dirges".

⁷⁵⁷ Cf. reconstructions of the verse B. 3. 74: . . .]α σκοπεῖς βραχ[ύς ἄμμιν αἰών] (Jebb), or βραχ[ύς ἐστιν αἰών] (Maehler).

⁷⁵⁸ *PMG* 520. 4-6. Cf. Semon. fr. 3 W: πολλὸς γὰρ ἡμῖν ἐστὶ τεθνάναι χρόνος, / ζῶμεν δ' ἀριθμῶι παῦρα ἑκακῶς ἔτεα.†

⁷⁵⁹ See Simon. eleg. 19. 4f. W.

⁷⁶⁰ Cf. Mimn. fr. 2. 3f. W ... πῆχυιον ἐπὶ χρόνον ἄνθεσιν ἥβης τερόμεθα.

know

the time allowed to us for youth and life

is short.” (trans. West)

ii) Unpredictability of the future

Apart from representing humans as behaving as if they are (*subjectively*) unaware of the shortness of life and youth, early lyric poets also tell us that mortals are (*objectively*) incapable of knowing their future, for it is entirely in the hands of the gods. Among earlier lyric poets, Mimnermus and Semonides most strikingly address these manifestations of the frailty of the human condition⁷⁶¹ and Simonides’ dirges convey the same lamenting sentiment (Simon. 521 *PMG* = F 244 Poltera):

ἄνθρωπος ἐὼν μὴ ποτε εἴπηις ὅ τι γίνεται [αὔριον],

μηδ’ ἄνδρα ἰδὼν ὄλβιον ὅσσον χρόνον ἔσσεται·

ὠκεῖα γὰρ οὐδὲ τανυπτέρυγος μυίας

οὕτως ἅ μετὰστασις.

“As you are mortal, don’t ever affirm what

tomorrow will bring,

or how long the man that you see in good fortune

will keep it:⁷⁶²

not even the wing-spreading house-fly

changes perch so fast.” (trans. West)

⁷⁶¹ See e.g. Semon. fr. 1. 3ff. W: νοῦς δ’ οὐκ ἐπ’ ἀνθρώποισιν, ἀλλ’ ἐπήμεροι / ἅ δὲ βοτὰ ζόουσιν, οὐδὲν εἰδότες / ὅκως ἕκαστον ἐκτελευτήσει θεός. See also later E. *Alc.* 782-86.

⁷⁶² See Poltera 2008, 408 (ad F 244. 2): “Podlecki (*Athenaeum* 58, 1980, 385) beurteilt die Hypotaxe als zweideutig: ‘wie lange er glücklich sein wird’ und ‘wie lange er leben wird’. Der Kontext scheint aber nur Ersteres zuzulassen.”

In this quotation χρόνος refers to the uncertain *duration* of human happiness. The closing lines warn of the unpredictability and swiftness of the changes of fate, through a peculiar comparison with the movements of a housefly. The same theme appears in another fragment of Simonides' poetry, in which God is named as the cause of the swift and sudden reversals of fortune (Simon. 527 *PMG* = F 349 Poltera (Spuria)):

οὐκ ἔστιν κακὸν

ἀνεπιδόκητον ἀνθρώποις· ὀλίγῳ δὲ χρόνῳ

πάντα μεταρρίπτει θεός.⁷⁶³

"There is no ill that men should not expect;

in a short space of time God

reshuffles everything." (trans. West)

The adverbial dative ὀλίγῳ χρόνῳ suggests the sense "period of time, duration" for χρόνος.⁷⁶⁴ The fragment recalls Pindar's verses *O.* 12. 11-12a, which stress the possibility of a change for the better for those who have suffered great misfortunes (ἐσλὸν βαθὺ πῆματος ἐν μικρῷ πεδάμειψαν χρόνῳ). Although Pindar's epinicians repeatedly remind us of the vicissitudes of human existence, as I have pointed out in the previous section, they generally seem to offer an optimistic outlook on life. This may be shown to result from the epinician focus on the concept of *excellence* (ἀρετή), which can provide a mortal with godlike status during his life and with lasting glory extending even after his death. The same belief in the power of individual achievement motivates Bacchylides' epinicians.

⁷⁶³ See Poltera 2008, 586 (ad loc.): "θεός: Eine unbestimmte Gottheit, vgl. E. *HF* 884 (lyr.) τὰχὺ τὸν εὐτυχῇ μετέβαλεν δαίμων."

⁷⁶⁴ We could perhaps mention here the expression πολλῷ χρόνῳ πολεμεῖν 'battle against the immensity of time', ascribed to Simonides by Plutarch (*Thes.* 10, 8f.; *Is et Osir.* 359F = *PMG* 643 = F316 Poltera). See, however, Poltera 2008, 565 (ad loc.): "Der genaue Wortlaut der Simonidesstelle, auf die sich Plutarch bezieht, bleibt uns verborgen."

iii) Lasting glory

The surviving part of Bacchylides' Ode 13 begins at the end of the second strophe, with the chorus recounting Heracles' victory over the Nemean lion and then announcing in a prophetic voice the founding of the Nemean games (vv. 54-57). The prophetic figure represented by the chorus promises *lifelong glory* for those who win crowns in the athletic events (B. 13. 58ff.):

... παρ]ὰ βωμὸν ἀριστάρχου Διός
Νίκας] φ[ε]ρ[ε]κυδέος ἀν-
θρώποισιν· ἄ[ν]θεα
χρυσέ]αν δόξαν πολύφαντον ἐν αἰ-
ῶνι] τρέφει παύροις βροτῶν
α]ἰεῖ, καὶ ὅταν θανάτοιο
κυάνεον νέφος καλύψῃ, λείπεται
ἀθάνατον κλέος εὖ ἐρ-
χθέντος ἀσφαλεῖ σὺν αἴσαι.

“For such cause, near to the altar of Ruler Zeus,
flowers of fame-bearing Nike
nurse for the few who win crowns
a murmuring golden repute
ever, during their lives;
further, when death's purple mist
covers them over, their deeds'
immortal fame stays on

with permanence as its fate.” (trans. Burnett)⁷⁶⁵

That the prepositional phrase ἐν αἰ[ῶνι] means “in (their) lifetime” is stressed by the contrast with the expression “when death covers them” (ὅταν θανάτοιο... νέφος καλύψει), which introduces an even higher level of award for the Nemean winners (vv. 63-66), namely the epic ideal of “immortal fame” (ἀθάνατον κλέος). Similarly, in his Ode 1 Bacchylides claims that “toilsome virtue” (ἀρετὰ δ’ ἐπίμοχθος), when rightly wrought to the end (τελευταθεῖσα δ’ ὀρθῶς), secures enviable renown, which even outlasts death.⁷⁶⁶ Vain pursuits, however, which young people are so prone to nourish (cf. κοῦφον ἔχων θυμόν in Simon. eleg. 20. 6 W), can only bring temporary honour, lasting for as long as they live (vv. 178ff.):

ὄντινα κουφότατοι

θυμὸν δονέουσι μέριμναι,

ὅσσον ἂν ζώῃι ἔχρονον, τόνδ’ ἔλαχαν ἑ-
μάν.

“He whose mind is blown about

by ambitions light as air,

wins honour only for as long as he lives.” (trans. Jebb)⁷⁶⁷

All the instances of αἰών and χρόνος mentioned so far may be defined as referring to *duration*, with αἰών semantically limited to the sense “lifetime” and χρόνος applying to the concept of temporal extension in general, but often used in such a way as to imply duration of life as well. However, in Simonides’ and Bacchylides’ verses χρόνος also

⁷⁶⁵ Burnett 1985.

⁷⁶⁶ See v. 183f.: ἀνδρὶ κ]αὶ εὖτε θάνῃ λει/π[ει πολυ]ζήλωτον εὐκλείας ἄ[γαλ]μα.

⁷⁶⁷ Jebb 1905.

appears in the sense “passage of time”, which is occasionally conceived as an unstoppable, all-subduing force.

iv) Time conquers all

In the seventh strophe of his Ode 13 Bacchylides encourages praise of every “master of his art” (201 σοφὸν ἄνδρα)⁷⁶⁸ as a due recompense. Although “reproach hangs over all the deeds of men” (202f. βροτῶν δὲ μῶμος / πάντεσσι μὲν ἐστι ἐπ’ ἔργοι[ς]), Bacchylides reminds us that “Truth likes to win” (204 ἀ δ’ ἀλαθεία φιλεῖ νικᾶν)⁷⁶⁹ and, as we have already learnt from his predecessors, her victory is achieved *in time* (see, e.g., Sol. 10. 1 and 36. 3, Thgn. 967). In expressing this idea, Bacchylides ascribes power to time (B. 13. 205ff.):

... ὃ τε πανδ[α]μάτω[ρ]
χρόνος τὸ καλῶς
ἐ]ργμὲνον αἰὲν ἀ[έξει].⁷⁷⁰

“All-conquering time
always augments the deed
that is fairly done.”

However, the image of “all-conquering” time seems rather unsuited here, for the verses are clearly intended to stress the positive effect of the passage of time on the

⁷⁶⁸ See Maehler 1982, 287 (ad B. 13. 201): “σοφὸν ἄνδρα: der Trainer Menandros, aber auch allgemein jeder ‘Kundige’. Das Adjektiv findet sich schon bei Alkman auf sportliche Gewandtheit bezogen (PMG 2), ähnlich bei Anakreon (PMG 417.2, mit anzüglichem Nebensinn), vgl. Pind. Py. 5.115 und Is. 9.7-8.”

⁷⁶⁹ Cf. Simon. 541. 5 PMG: ἀλάθεια παγκρατῆς and B. fr. 14. 4-5: παγκρατῆς ... ἀλάθεια.

⁷⁷⁰ Kenyon 1897 supplemented ἀ[έξει] in 207. In order to avoid the ‘awkwardness’ of the sense thus obtained, Maehler 1982, 288 suggested ἀ[νίσχει] instead: “B. kann aber kaum gemeint haben, daß die Zeit den Sieg ‘fördert’ oder gar ‘vergrößert’, sondern nur, daß sie ihn ‘bewahrt’ (...), was ἀέξειν bei B. vielleicht auch heißen könnte, vgl. 3.78; trotzdem bleibt zu überlegen, ob nicht eine Form von ἀνέχειν (ἀ[νίσχει?]) der geforderten Bedeutung besser entsprechen würde, vgl. Od. τ 111 (βασιλεὺς) εὐδικίας ἀνέχησι.”

preservation of good deeds.⁷⁷¹ Another mention of the same phrase is found in Simonides' *encomium* of the fallen of Thermopylae (531 *PMG* = F 261 Poltera):

ἐντάφιον δὲ τοιοῦτον οὗτ' εὐρὼς
οὔθ' ὁ πανδαμάτωρ ἀμαυρώσει χρόνος.

"This winding-sheet is such
as neither mould nor Time that conquers all
can fade." (trans. West)

Scholars have long noticed that the mention of "all-conquering time" fits Simonides' verses better (it probably occurs also in his fr. eleg. 20. 15 W)⁷⁷² and it has therefore been suggested that the expression could have been borrowed (along with some other coinciding phrases)⁷⁷³ by his nephew, although arguments for the contrary scenario have been offered as well.⁷⁷⁴ Poltera argues that Simonides was the first to have represented Time as a destructive force in fr. eleg. 88 W:⁷⁷⁵

ὁ τοι χρόνος ὀξύς ὀδόντας,
καὶ πάντα ψήχει καὶ τὰ βιαιότατα.

"Time has sharp teeth, and gnaws
all things away, even the mightiest." (trans. West)

Bacchylides, however, (possibly) mentions time as a subject of the verb δαμάζω in fr. 20A, 18f.:

⁷⁷¹ See previous note and cf. Cairns 2010, 327f. (ad 13. 204-9).

⁷⁷² About Homer: κοῦ μιν] πανδαμά[τωρ αἰρεῖ χρόνος.

⁷⁷³ To the examples provided by Hutchinson 2001, 323 we can add Simon. eleg. 20. 6 W ~ B. 1. 178ff.

⁷⁷⁴ See e.g. Schroeter 1906, 31: "imitatus autem Simonideum π. χρόνος haud inepte dictum videtur esse Bacchylides XII, 205, recurrit eadem locutio in epigrammate quarti fere p. Chr. saeculi 1050, 4 (Kaibel): πανδαμάτωρ δὲ χρόνος εἶξεν ἀρηγοσύνη." Differently Cairns 2010, 327f.: "it is intriguing that Sim. may twice have turned to his younger Cean compatriot for striking phrases in his poems commemorating Greek victory in 480/79. (Hutchinson (2001 : 323) assumes that the influence was in the other direction, but this will not work if the present ode is earlier than 480.)"

⁷⁷⁵ Poltera 1997, 41, n. 24. Poltera 2008, 475 also argues that πανδαμάτωρ appears combined with χρόνος for the first time in Simonides' F 261 (*encomium* of the fallen of Thermopylae).

... ἀλλά ν[ιν] χρόνος

ἐδά]μασσε κρατερὰ τ' ἐκ-

δόμην ο]ὐ θέλοντ' ἀνάγκη

“... but Time overpowered him

as well as mighty Necessity,

for he was against the marriage.”

The expression “time overpowered him” in the above quotation may be taken to imply that Euenus found death in the river only after having resisted *for a while*,⁷⁷⁶ but there, as well as in other passages in which it is represented as (all-)subduing, the usage of χρόνος implies a personified power. The question of the authorship of the phrase ὁ πανδαμάτωρ χρόνος aside, both Cean poets may justifiably be credited with the expression of a new poetic conception of time envisaged as an active power: in addition to *Time, the bearer of fortunes* and *Time, the verifier of truth*, these poets introduce *Time, the all-conqueror*, which is seen as an active force due to its capacity to outlive everything and so apparently bring everything to its end or take it into oblivion. The same idea, slightly differently expressed, is found in Sophocles (OC 607ff.), who compares invulnerability of the gods with “everything else destroyed by all-overpowering Time” (τὰ δ' ἄλλα συγγεῖ πάνθ' ὁ παγκρατὴς χρόνος).⁷⁷⁷

Finally, this is the appropriate place to mention an instance of divine Χρόνος found in Bacchylides' Ode 7. 1. The deity is named as the father of an unidentified goddess (most probably Ἥμερα): ὦ λιπαρὰ θύγατερ Χρόνου τε κ[αί] / Νυκτός “O, resplendent

⁷⁷⁶ Cf. Maehler 1997, 325 (ad fr. 20A, 18-20): “Die Zeit bezwang Euenos, denn er fand sein Ende erst, nachdem er lange gewütet hatte (Snell, Ges.Schr. 108), und die Notwendigkeit, denn so hatte es wohl das Schicksal bestimmt.”

⁷⁷⁷ Cf. also S. fr. 954 R and Aj. 646–47.

daughter of Time and Night.”⁷⁷⁸ This concept of divine Time is most likely based on the general idea of time as common basis for day and night.

The sense “passage of time” is also found in the following examples of the adverbial dative (ἐν) χρόνῳ: B. 11. 120 of the Achaeans “eventually” (χρόνῳ) destroying Priam’s city and B. fr. 4. 48 ἐν δὲ χρόν[ῳ] “mit der Zeit aber”,⁷⁷⁹ without the immediate context.⁷⁸⁰ In Bacchylides’ dithyramb on Theseus (Dith. 4 = 18 Maehler), the chorus responds to Aegeus’ fear of how the series of Theseus’ exploits (who is at the time still unidentified) is going to end (30 ταῦτα δέδοιχ’ ὅπαι τελεῖται)⁷⁸¹ with the following words (45) πάντ’ ἐν τῷ δολιχῷ χρόνῳ τελεῖται “in the long course of time all things find their end” (trans. Jebb).⁷⁸²

At the end of Ode 11, a couple of lines after mentioning the eventual capture of Ilium by the Achaeans, Bacchylides continues to praise their achievements in the following way (123ff.):

... δικαίας
ὅστις ἔχει φρένας εὐ-
ρήσει σὺν ᾧπαντι χρόνῳ
μυρίας ἀλκὰς Ἀχαιῶν.
“Whoso has a just spirit
will find, through all the course of time,
countless deeds of valour
wrought by the Achaeans.” (trans. Jebb)

⁷⁷⁸ See Marcovich 1970, 181-84. Cf. Maehler 1982, 132.

⁷⁷⁹ See Maehler 1997, 63.

⁷⁸⁰ There are two instances of the nominative χρόνος preserved without context: Simon. SLG S323 = F39. 14 Poltera and B. fr. 20E, 19 Maehler

⁷⁸¹ See Jebb 1905, 396 and Maehler 1997, 232.

⁷⁸² Maehler’s translation (Maehler 1997, 23) seems to me to be most truthful to the sense of the original: “Alles kommt ja **in der Länge der Zeit** zu seinem Ziel.” [bold type added]

Jebb compares the expression σὺν ᾧπαντι χρόνῳι with κείνῳι γε σὺν ᾧματι in v. 23 of the same ode (Maehler) and renders it by “‘through all the years’ (‘in the whole course of history’).”⁷⁸³ This interpretation takes σύν to indicate *concurrent duration*. A similar phrase is found in Ode 8, dedicated to the exceptional athlete Liparion of Ceos,⁷⁸⁴ who stands out among his peers due to the fact that (v. 22ff.):

οὔτις ἀνθρώπων κ[αθ’ Ἑλλα-
νας σὺν ᾧλικι χρόνῳι
παῖς ἐὼν ἀνὴρ τε π[λεῦ-
νας ἐδέξατο νίκας.

“No one among the Greeks
has won more victories
within his age group
first as boy then as man.”

The sense of the phrase σὺν ᾧλικι χρόνῳι is “in his age”⁷⁸⁵ and it is commonly taken to refer to the age group(s) in which Liparion was the most successful athlete.⁷⁸⁶

However, σὺν ᾧλικι χρόνῳι may perhaps be understood as an expression of the concept of “innate time”, which refers to the idea that one’s (life)time begins at their birth and grows (old) with them (cf. A. Ag. 105f. σύμφυτος αἰὼν and S. OC 7 χρόνος ξυνών).

The above verses could then be taken to indicate that no one among the Greeks was

⁷⁸³ Jebb 1905, 335 and 323.

⁷⁸⁴ See Maehler 1982, 138.

⁷⁸⁵ Although the papyrus has EN, σύν (Headlam ap. Blass) is metrically required and justified by the instances quoted in B. 11. 23 and 125.

⁷⁸⁶ Maehler 1982, 140: “Der Satz kann natürlich nicht bedeuten, daß der Sieger an den Pythien, Isthmien und Nemeen (Vers 17-18) mehr Erfolge errungen hatte als je ein anderer vor ihm, denn dann hätte er noch mehr Siege aufzuweisen gehabt als so berühmte Periodoniken wie Milon aus Kroton, Glaukos aus Karystos, Thegenes aus Thasos oder Dandis aus Argos (...) Vielmehr wird der Superlativ eingeschränkt durch σὺν ᾧλικι χρόνῳι ‘in seiner Altersklasse’, was dann mit παῖς ἐὼν ἀνὴρ τε differenziert wird: also unter den gleichaltrigen Knaben und später unter den Männern seines Alters war niemand erfolgreicher als er.”

more successful than Liparion, advancing “together with his coeval time”, first as a boy and then also as a man.

v) Time and the possibility of excellence

We have so far found Simonides and Bacchylides reminding their audience of the transience of mortal existence and unpredictability of human destiny and then also reassuring them that athletic excellence and “toilsome virtue” may earn them praise and bring glory that outlasts death. These conflicting ‘facts of life’ are not easily reconciled, for it is difficult for susceptible and fallible mortals to accomplish and maintain excellence and so resist the destructive power of time. Simonides claims that God grants lasting virtue to few men (ὀλίγοις ἀρετὰν ἔδωκεν ... [ἐς τ]έλος), for “it is not easy to be good” (οὐ γὰρ ἐλαφρὸν ἐσθλ[ὸν] ἔμμεν·), as people are often unwittingly overpowered by various desires (541 *PMG* = F 256 Poltera).⁷⁸⁷ In the fragmentary lines that follow he mentions a “holy path” (ὁσίαν ... κέλευθον) “throughout one’s life” (δι’ αἰῶνος),⁷⁸⁸ but, we may presume, only as an unlikely possibility.⁷⁸⁹ The poet repeats the same thought (ἄνδρ’ ἀγαθὸν ... γενέσθαι χαλεπὸν) in the famous poem preserved in Plato’s *Protagoras* (542 *PMG* = F 260 Poltera). By attaching the adverb “truly” (ἀλαθέως) to the idea of a good man and by representing him as perfect in all respects (χερσὶν τε καὶ ποσὶ καὶ νόωι/ τετράγωνον ἄνευ ψόγου τετυγμένον), Simonides actually creates an unattainable ideal.⁷⁹⁰ That is why the poet declares he will not waste “his allotted span of life” (μοῖραν αἰῶνος) looking for what cannot be – “a blameless human being”

⁷⁸⁷ See vv. 6ff. Cf. West 1994b, 163 and Poltera 2008, 199 for reconstructions of these lines.

⁷⁸⁸ Cf. Emp. B 110. 3.

⁷⁸⁹ Cf. Poltera 2008, 444, ad 12-13.

⁷⁹⁰ See Poltera 2008, 455: “Damit bezeichnet χαλεπὸν (2) etwas Unmögliches. Fehlt aber dieser (ironische) Zusatz und bleibt der Spruch auf χαλεπὸν ἐσθλὸν ἔμμεναι beschränkt, drückt er etwas Mögliches aus.”

(πανάμωμον ἄνθρωπον).⁷⁹¹ The destiny of mortals lies in the hands of gods, they can neither predict it nor fight it. “Any man is good if his affairs go well”, Simonides argues in the same poem (v. 17), “so they are blest for longest, whom immortals bless” (19f.; trans. West). But this, again, does not happen to many, as we find out from Bacchylides’ fragment 25 (Maehler):

παύροισι δὲ θνατῶν τὸν ἅπαντα χρόνον δαίμων ἔδωκεν

πράσσοντας ἐν καιρῷ⁷⁹² πολιοκρόταφον

γῆρας ἰκνεῖσθαι, πρὶν ἐγκύρσαι δύαι.

“To few mortals god grants that they should have happy fortunes through all their time, or come to the first grey hairs of age before encountering woe.” (trans. Jebb)

The meaning of the χρόνος-phrase corresponds to that of δι’ αἰῶνος in Simonides’ fragment 541 *PMG*. The attribute ἅπας, we may presume, adds the sense of *continuity* to the phrase. Πάντα χρόνον has the same meaning in Bacchylides’ (dubious) fragment 54 (Maehler): ὀλβιος δ’ οὐδεις βροτῶν πάντα χρόνον “none of the mortals is happy throughout his life”.⁷⁹³

These reflections on the feasibility of lasting human excellence belong to the shared preoccupation of the fifth-century poets with the question of what kind of man is worthy of their poetic praise.⁷⁹⁴ Besides, as we have seen, Simonides and Bacchylides discuss the same existential issues as their lyric predecessors. In addressing the question

⁷⁹¹ Cf. B. 13. 202f.: βροτῶν δὲ μῶμος / πάντεσσι μὲν ἐστὶν ἐπ’ ἔργοι[ς].

⁷⁹² See Jebb 1905, 421 (ad loc.): “πράσσοντας ἐν καιρῷ, lit. ‘faring *opportunistically*’, i.e. as they would wish at each successive step in life. For ἐν καιρῷ cp. Aesch. *P.* V. 379, Plat. *Crito* 44 A (with *τινι* added), etc.” Differently Maehler 1997, 343 (ad loc.): “ἐν καιρῷ: wohl zum Folgenden zu ziehen, = ‘zur angemessenen Zeit’ (das Alter zu erreichen), d.h. die volle Lebenszeit zu durchlaufen.”

⁷⁹³ See Maehler 1997, 356f. (ad loc). Cf. also B. fr. 20B, 23-25 (Maehler): ... ὀλβ[] / οὐτις] ἄνθρωπον δαισ[] / αἰῶ]νος “(vollen) Segen (hat ja) (doch kein) Mensch für die (ganze) Dauer seines Lebens” (Maehler, op. cit. 85).

⁷⁹⁴ See Poltera 2008, 455.

of pleasure and its importance in (otherwise not very cheerful) human life Simonides may also be found to follow an early poetic tradition (584 *PMG* = F 298 Poltera):⁷⁹⁵

τίς γὰρ ἀδονᾶς ἄτερ θνα-

τῶν βίος ποθεινὸς ἢ ποί-

α τυραννίς;

τᾶσδ' ἄτερ οὐδὲ θεῶν ζηλωτὸς αἰών.

“For, void of pleasure, what human life’s

desirable, what monarchy?

Without that, even the gods’ life

were nothing enviable”. (after West)

Translators render αἰών in this context by “eternity”,⁷⁹⁶ but I believe that its semantic value is rather that of *quality of life*, as divine existence represents the highest ideal in that respect as well.⁷⁹⁷ Pindar uses αἰών in this sense several times, combining it with attributes that describe the quality of human existence (ἀσφαλής, τερπνός, ἄμερος, ἀκίνδυνος, κλυτός, μόρσιμος, μείλιχος). He also uses αἰών to refer to the ‘double life’ of Dioscuri after Polydeuces’ death. Empedocles ascribes αἰών, in the sense “duration of life”, to his long-lived *daimons* (θεοὶ δολιχαίωνες in B 21. 12 and 23. 8; *P. Strasb.* a(ii) 2), who do not enjoy the eternity of the Olympic gods. He also mentions “unstable life” (οὐ ... ἔμπεδος αἰών) of the divine and eternal four roots (B17. 11).

⁷⁹⁵ Poltera 2008, 539: “Überlegungen zur Lust finden sich früh schon in didaktischen Texten (Hes. *Op.* 287-92, Theog. 983-5) und gehören auch zum Stoff der Liebeselegie (Mimn. 1 W²).”

⁷⁹⁶ Cf. Poltera 2008 and West 1994b, 167.

⁷⁹⁷ See A. *Pers.* 710-11: ὥς ἔως τ' ἔλευσσεσ ἀνγὰς ἡλίου ζηλωτὸς ὦν / βίοντον εὐαίωνα Πέρσαις ὥς θεὸς διήγαγεσ.

In Bacchylides' Ode 1 we come across an expression which does not occur in the earlier sources, but it is well documented in subsequent literature (153f.):⁷⁹⁸

αἰῶν' ἔλυσεν [π]έντε παῖ-
δας μεγαινή[το]υς λιπών.

"He passed from life leaving
five illustrious sons behind."

Though reminiscent of early epic usages of αἰών, in which it is imagined as leaving a body (or being slain out of it) at death, the expression αἰῶν' ἔλυσεν does not imply any physical action, but simply represents a poetic way of saying that the celebrated and honoured healer Pantheides *died* leaving five sons behind. The noun may be said to have the general sense "life" in this context.

⁷⁹⁸ See Maehler 1982, 19 (ad 1. 153): "αἰῶν' ἔλυσεν: *aevum solvit*, vg. S. OC 1720 ἔλυσεν τὸ τέλος βίου, E. Fr. 994.2 καταλυσάμενος βίον, auch Supp. 1004f. und X. Apol. 7, und noch IG XIV 140 βίου λύσιν ἔσχε (zu E. IT 692 s. Zuntz, Inquiry 94)."

CHAPTER VI

D R A M A

X P O N O Σ IN TRAGEDY

“The world is old, it was always old”

Charles Simic, *Emily's Theme*

Hermann Fränkel's study of conceptions of time in early Greek literature, which is based on a semantic analysis of χρόνος in literary works of the archaic period, concludes with Aeschylus, among whose preserved plays Fränkel recognises a shift in terms of form and structure, dividing them into 'archaic' and 'classical' pieces.⁷⁹⁹ Moreover, he identifies the same shift in the semantic applications of χρόνος, its "classical" meaning being allegedly first established in the *Oresteia*. I have already argued against Fränkel's claim that the archaic conception of time (this generalisation is itself contentious) – as expressed in the usages of χρόνος – is exclusively concerned with the future, whereas it is only in the classical literature that χρόνος may be found to refer to the past as well.⁸⁰⁰ Fränkel's method and results found several followers, who developed his suggestions further, focusing on the idea of a progressive development of the conception of time in early Greek literature.⁸⁰¹ Jacqueline de Romilly's discussion on *Time in Greek Tragedy* continues where Fränkel's analysis ends.⁸⁰² It adopts Fränkel's conclusion that "the idea of time does not appear to have been an important one before the fifth century"⁸⁰³ and continues from it, aiming to see "whether Greek

⁷⁹⁹ Fränkel 1968a, 12.

⁸⁰⁰ Ibid.: "In der älteren Stücken des Aischylos ist χρόνος noch die Zukunft oder die Wartezeit: in der Orestie umspannt das Wort auch die Vergangenheit mit. Es erscheint in Wendungen wie 'seit welcher Zeit (Ag. 278) und 'die Zeit vorher' (Eum. 462)."

⁸⁰¹ See criticism in Momigliano 1966, 10f.

⁸⁰² Romilly 1968.

⁸⁰³ Romilly 1968, 4.

tragedy as a whole does not exhibit some features that are in harmony both with this new importance of time and with the idea of an unfinished development.”⁸⁰⁴ Since this study is based on the investigation of time-terminology and literary expressions of time in general (and offers some valuable insights in that regard), I will – in as much as the established methodology allows it – review its conclusions, although the question of the conception of time is not my primary concern. The sheer number of usages of χρόνος in fifth-century tragedy (there are nearly 400 occurrences of the word) suggests that time plays an important role in the imagery of the tragic poets.⁸⁰⁵ I will apply the above established classification of meanings and usages of χρόνος to the dramatic passages that contain the noun. I will also try to single out all that is unprecedented in terms of its combinatorial properties as well as its semantic applications in fifth-century tragedy. My discussion here will follow a diachronic pattern, commencing from Aeschylus and via Sophocles closing with Euripides, considering, at the same time, the undeniable agreement between their respective treatments of χρόνος.

i) Aeschylus

In the preserved plays and fragments of Aeschylus χρόνος appears only in the singular, in all its cases apart from the vocative. Semantically, its usages cover all the basic meanings I have identified for the word so far, “period of time” (i.e. “limited duration”), “passage of time”, and “time when”.

⁸⁰⁴ Romilly 1968, 5. She moreover, suggests that “the history of tragedy implies an inner dialectic, in which the idea of time undergoes a steady evolution, according to the atmosphere in which it is considered” (Romilly 1968, 85). See criticism in Lloyd-Jones 1970.

⁸⁰⁵ The below discussion encompasses the vast majority of these instances. The examples that are not included in the discussion agree with the established definitions and classifications of the meanings of χρόνος in fifth-century tragedy.

1. Χρόνος signifying “period of time, duration”

Aeschylus uses χρόνος in various ways to express *quantified duration*. There is an instance of the nominative χρόνος indicating the long duration of the celibacy of Danaë on board ship (fr. 47a. 828 R πολὺς ἦν αὐτῇ χρόνος, ὃν χήρα ... τείρετο).⁸⁰⁶ We also come across several examples of the *adverbial accusatives* of the epic type indicating long or short duration of various states and actions (*Supp.* 516: “being deprived” δαρὸν χρόνον, *Ch.* 963: “lying on the ground” πολὺν ἄγαν χρόνον, *Ag.* 1299: “finding escape” χρόνον πλέω, *PV* 939: “holding power” τόνδε τὸν βραχὺν χρόνον). In *Prometheus Bound* 95 τὸν μυριετῆ χρόνον refers to the “immeasurable duration” of the Titan’s punishment (cf. μυρίον χρόνον in *Pi. I* 5. 27). Particularly interesting for the present study is the adverbial accusative found in *Agamemnon* 554, where the two words with whose semantic development this investigation is concerned appear combined: τίς δὲ πλὴν θεῶν ἅπαντ’ ἀπήμων τὸν δι’ αἰῶνος χρόνον; “who, except the gods, is free from pain for the whole duration of his life?” Their meaning in this instance is indisputable: αἰὼν signifies “life(time)” and χρόνος “duration” in general.⁸⁰⁷ The whole statement reproduces the sentiment we have already identified in several instances of fifth-century lyric: no mortal is continually happy. Apart from these accusative adverbials,⁸⁰⁸ χρόνος refers to quantified duration in various *prepositional expressions*, some of which appear for the first time in Aeschylus and then recur in later tragic poets as well: ἐν βραχεῖ χρόνῳ “in a short time” (*Pers.* 713),⁸⁰⁹ ἐν πολλῷ χρόνῳ “over a long period of time”

⁸⁰⁶ Cf. Semon. 3. 1: πολλὸς γὰρ ἦμιν ἐστὶ τεθνάναι χρόνος.

⁸⁰⁷ See Fraenkel 1950a, 278 (ad 554). Cf. S. fr. 572. 1R: βιοτῆς μὲν γὰρ χρόνος ἐστὶ βραχύς.

⁸⁰⁸ Cf. also *Th.* 22: χρόνον ... τόνδε πυργηρουμένοις “we have long been under siege”.

⁸⁰⁹ Cf. *Pi. O.* 12. 11-12a: ἐν μικρῷ ... χρόνῳ. See also S. fr. 646. 4f.

(*Ag.* 551), ἐς τὸν πολλὸν ... χρόνον “for a long time” (*Ag.* 621), and, previously not recorded, διὰ μακροῦ χρόνου “after a long time” (*Pers.* 741).⁸¹⁰

In Aeschylus’ fr. 352. 1 R χρόνος stands for “duration, temporal extension”, *without quantification*: πόνου γὰρ ἄκρον οὐκ ἔχει χρόνον “the peak of suffering does not last long”. Time’s “stretching out” is mentioned in *Pers.* 64: τοκέες τ’ ἄλλοχοί θ’ ... τείνοντα χρόνον τρομέονται “parents and wives ...tremble at the time as it stretches out”.⁸¹¹ In *Agamemnon* 610 it simply denotes “period of time”: σημαντήριον οὐδὲν διαφθείρουσαν ἐν μήκει χρόνου “having broken no seal during the time” (i.e., during Agamemnon’s ten-year absence; cf. *S. Tr.* 69 where ἐν μήκει χρόνου also refers to a defined period of time).⁸¹² In *Persians* 692 χρόνος signifies “delay” (ἄμεμπτος ὃ χρόνου “so that I am not blamed for the time I have taken”, cf. *E. Hec.* 238 τοῦ χρόνου γὰρ οὐ φθονῶ and *Bacch.* 820 τοῦ χρόνου δέ σοι φθονῶ “I do (not) grudge you that delay”).

In a number of related instances in the *Eumenides* χρόνος appears in expressions indicating “all time”. They belong to the same context in which justification of Orestes’ crime is discussed. Having committed matricide (encouraged by Apollo)⁸¹³ and having been afterwards purified in different places (*Eu.* 451f.), Orestes finally asks Athene to judge his act and decide whether he did it *with justice or not* (id. 468 σὺ δ’ εἰ δικαίως εἴτε μή, κρῖνον δίκην). The goddess declines to judge the case, but nevertheless vows to

⁸¹⁰ See *S. Ph.* 285: ὁ μὲν χρόνος νυν διὰ χρόνου προὔβαινέ μοι. Cf. id. 758, *E. El.* 504 and *IA* 636.

⁸¹¹ See Garvie 2009, 71 (ad loc): “probably the object of τρομέονται (‘tremble at the time as it stretches out’), rather than accusative of duration of time.” Cf. *S. Aj.* 1403: ἤδη γὰρ πολὺς ἐκτέταται χρόνος. See also *A. PV* 537: τὸν μακρὸν τείνειν βίον, *E. Med.* 670: τείνεις βίον, and, especially, *E. Ion*, 625: αἰῶνα τείνει.

⁸¹² Cf. μῆκος χρόνου for the “extension of temporal interval” in *A. Supp.* 735, *PV* 1020, *E. Orest.* 72 and 1215. See also *A. Ag.* 196: παλιμμήκη χρόνον (“double the extension of time”), *E. HF* 87: χρόνον δὲ μηκύνωμεν (“but let us prolongue time”) and id. 143: τίς ἐς χρόνον ζητεῖτε μηκύναι βίον; (“how long do you seek to prolongue your life?”).

⁸¹³ Orestes was in exile (*Eu.* 462) τὸν πρὸ τοῦ φεύγων χρόνον “in the time before that”. Cf. πρὸ τοῦ “before then” in *Hdt.* 5. 83. 1; *Pl. Smp.* 173a.

set up a court consisting of the most faultless judges (ἀμόρφους ... δικαστάς), who will have to respect the “ordinance of an oath” (ὀρκίων ... θεσμόν) that the goddess will establish “for all time” (484 εἰς ἅπαντ’ ... χρόνον).⁸¹⁴ Athena then chooses the judges and asks them and the whole of Athens to be attentive to her ordinances “for all time to come” (*Eu.* 572 εἰς τὸν αἰανῆ⁸¹⁵ χρόνον).⁸¹⁶ Later in the trial, Apollo explains to Athena that he sent Orestes to her, so that the young hero might become her faithful friend “for all time” (*Eu.* 670 εἰς τὸ πᾶν χρόνον). The time in question extends beyond Orestes’ life and includes generations of his descendants yet to come. Orestes is eventually acquitted of the charge of bloodshed and expresses his gratitude by swearing an oath himself to Athens and its people “for the fullness of time to come” (*Eu.* 763 τὸ λοιπὸν εἰς ἅπαντα πλειστήρη χρόνον ὀρκωμοτήσας). He promises that no leader of his people will ever bring war against the Athenians and pledges he will make sure that this oath is maintained even after his death (vv. 767-774). Everlasting validity of the oath sworn by the judges before the trial is in keeping with its divine origin, and its main purpose is to secure fulfilment and maintenance of right and justice. By swearing his oath and pledging its permanence, Orestes reinforces the verdict of the court. In this context (everlasting) time and divine sanction serve as proofs of rightfulness. The imagery is reminiscent of the oath-like opening of Solon’s fr. 36. 3 W, where the poet invokes the

⁸¹⁴ The oath is perhaps also meant to keep the “faultless judges” from succumbing to human weaknesses, of which fifth-century lyric poets often warn (e.g. Simon. 541 *PMG*, B. 13. 20f.). Cf. also the importance of oath in eschatological accounts in Emp. DK31 B115 and Pi. O. 2. 56-77.

⁸¹⁵ See Sommerstein 1989, 155 (ad 416): “The meaning of αἰανής (if it can be said to have a definable ‘meaning’ at all rather than a fluctuating set of semantic associations ...) varies between ‘eternal’ as if from αἰεῖ or αἰών (...) and ‘sorrowful, grievous’ as if from αἰαῖ or αἰάζειν (...).”

⁸¹⁶ Cf. *Eu.* 898, where the chorus asks Athene if she will keep her promise “for all future time” (καί μοι πρόπαντος ἐγγύην θήσῃ χρόνου).

goddess Earth and appeals to the “court of Time”, aiming to achieve uncontested justice.⁸¹⁷

2. Χρόνος signifying “passage of time”

Several instances of the *adverbial dative* χρόνῳ or the *prepositional expressions* ἐν χρόνῳ and σὺν χρόνῳ⁸¹⁸ refer to things that happen, are witnessed or experienced “in the course of time”: so in fr. 124. 1R we read about drinking from the scalps after they had dried “in time” (ἰσχυαίνων χρόνῳ). In Ag. 126 Calchas is quoted announcing that Priam’s city will be captured “in time” (χρόνῳ). Pelasgus refuses to tell his name to the herald, for he (and his fellow-travellers) will learn it “in time” (Supp. 938 ἐν χρόνῳ μαθὼν/ εἴσῃ).⁸¹⁹ Fear, Clytemnestra says, dies away in human minds *with the passage of time* (Ag. 857 ἐν χρόνῳ δ’ ἀποφθίνει / τὸ τάρβος ἀνθρώποισιν). When in the *Eumenides* 908 Athena concludes her advice to the processional chorus concerning the blessings it should invoke upon Athenian land with μὴ κάμνειν χρόνῳ “may they not fail with the passage of time”, the sentence reminds us, both in its sense and wording, of Pindar’s wish for the continuation of Aegina’s hospitality (O. 8. 28f. ὁ δ’ ἐπαντέλλων χρόνος / τοῦτο πράσσων μὴ κάμοι). In the latter example, time is represented as doing that which in the first is said to happen in the course of time. This attribution of active power to time, I have argued, results from the influence time was felt to have over human lives and in the observable world in general. Fifth-century tragedy presents us with various manifestations of the power of time.

⁸¹⁷ Cf. A. fr. 47a 772 R.:]... ὄρκος ἐν χρόνῳ μένει (reconstructed).

⁸¹⁸ A. Ag. 1378: ἦλθε, σὺν χρόνῳ (“came, at last”), Ch. 1012: ξὺν χρόνῳ συμβάλλεται (“contributes with the lapse of time” (Garvie 1986, 332)). See above (p. 235f.) B. 8. 23 and 11. 125.

⁸¹⁹ Cf. Cho. 1040: τάδ’ ἐν χρόνῳ μοι πάντας Ἀργεῖους λέγω / <μνήμη φυλάσσειν ὥς> ἐπορσύνθη κακά ... “I call on all Argives <to preserve in memory> for me, **as time goes by**, how these evils were brought to pass...” (trans. Sommerstein). <μνήμη φυλάσσειν> suppl. Wilamowitz, ὥς Franz.

2a) The effects of (passage of) time

Revealing and testifying truth

Some of the poetic ideas and images concerning the notion of time were current in Greek literature before or at around the time when Aeschylus composed his tragedies. Such is the motif of *time revealing and verifying truth*. The advice that Danaus in the *Suppliants* asks to be inscribed – “an unknown group is tested and proved by time” (993 ἀγνώθ’ ὄμιλον ἐξελέγχεσθαι χρόνῳ) – evokes Pindar’s calling time “the sole testifier of genuine truth” (*O.* 10. 53ff. ὅ τ’ ἐξελέγγχων μόνος / ἀλάθειαν ἐτήτυμον / χρόνος). It also reminds us of the statement of a poet in the *Theognidea* that “time reveals everyone’s true nature” (*Thgn.* 967). Similarly, Solon claims that “short time” will show the truth about his alleged madness (*fr.* 10) and mentions the “court of time”, which will reveal the truth about his deeds (*fr.* 36. 3). Various expressions of the same idea appear in later tragedians as well, often combined with other related images of time. Euripides (*fr.* 441 K) sums up the idea thus: χρόνος διέρπων πάντ’ ἀληθεύειν φιλεῖ: “time as it passes likes to tell the truth about everything”.

Revealing the just

This revealing effect of passage of time is the feature that associates it with the concept of justice: in Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon* the chorus reassures the hero that he will find out “in time” which of the citizens who stayed in the city acted “rightfully” (δικαίως) and which did not (*Ag.* 807).⁸²⁰ In the *Oedipus Tyrannus* Sophocles explicitly ascribes to time the ability to show the just man (613f.): ἀλλ’ ἐν χρόνῳ γνώσῃ τάδ’ ἀσφαλῶς, ἐπεὶ / χρόνος δίκαιον ἄνδρα δείκνυσιν μόνος “You will surely learn about these things in

⁸²⁰ Cf. *E.* *fr.* 303, 4ff. K.

time, since time alone reveals a just man” (cf. *OT* 1213f.). Euripides expresses the same idea with this striking personification (fr. 222. 1 K): τήν τοι Δίκην λέγουσι παῖδ’ εἶναι Χρόνου, / δείκνυσι δ’ ἡμῶν ὅστις ἐστὶ μὴ κακός “They say indeed that Justice is the child of Time and shows which of us is not bad.”⁸²¹ This imagery may also be said to go back to Solon’s reference to the “court of time”, in which he believed his deeds would find their justification.

Having the unjust pay the penalty

Another expression of the association of time with justice is found in the idea of *justice being served in time*,⁸²² most commonly by the way of wrongdoer paying penalty for his unjust deed (A. *Cho.* 935 ἔμολε μὲν δίκαι Πριαμίδαις χρόνῳ, / βαρύδικος ποινά “justice came eventually to the family of Priam, the justice of grievous punishment”). Again, the idea appears already in Solon, in the image of “Justice coming *in time* to claim the payment due” (fr. 4. 16 W). Fifth-century tragedians reach for the same image many times (see also Ar. *Nu.* 1242), mostly in the form of warning, but also intending it as comfort. So, in Aeschylus’ *Suppliants*, Danaus reassures his daughters to be brave in the face of imminent abduction, for (732f.) “any mortal who shows contempt for the gods’ will *pay the penalty* (δώσει δίκην) *in time* (χρόνῳ).”⁸²³ Creon in Sophocles’ *Antigone* phrases his warning similarly, against the bribed men he suspected to be responsible for burying Polynices (303 χρόνῳ πότ’ ἐξέπραξαν ὥς δοῦναι δίκην “in time they will pay

⁸²¹ Cf. E. fr. 60. 1 K: χρόνος δὲ δείξει <σ>· ὧν τεκμηρίῳ μαθὼν / ἢ χρηστὸν ὄντα γνωσόμεσθα σ’ ἢ κακόν “time will show your true nature; by that evidence I will learn if you are a worthy man or not”. See also E. fr. **38a K.

⁸²² S. *El.* 477: Δίκαι, δίκαια φερομένα χερσὶν κράτη· / μέτεισιν, ὧν τέκνον, οὐ μακροῦ χρόνου “Justice will come (...) before long”. Cf. E. fr. 223. 86-87 K.

⁸²³ In the *Oresteia* the Erinyes are named as the executors of punishment that arrives *in time* (χρόνῳ): Ag. 462ff., *Cho.* 647-52. Cf. Ag. 702 for Wrath (Μῆνις) exacting delayed requital (ὕστερῳ χρόνῳ “at a later time”) “in accordance with the character of ὕστερόποινος Ἐρινύς (vv. 58f.)” (Fraenkel 1950a, 335).

the penalty”).⁸²⁴ An identical expression occurs in Euripides’ *Heracles* 740, in his fr. 1131. 5 N (= Trag. adesp. 624. 5 K-S), as well as in *Electra* 952 (more details below). The motif of paying penalty for injustice in time reminds us of Anaximander’s “rather poetical wording “ (according to Theophrastus) of fr. B1, where the qualitatively opposite materials of the world are said to “pay penalty and retribution to each other” (διδόναι ... δίκην καὶ τίσιν ἀλλήλοις) “according to the order of time” (κατὰ τὴν τοῦ χρόνου τάξιν). However, an important difference is noticeable here: while in the realm of human affairs justice is said to appear “in time” (χρόνῳ in all the mentioned instances),⁸²⁵ with no precise temporal determination due to the unpredictability of human existence, the exchange of prevalence between cosmic elements occurs in strictly defined temporal order, which guarantees maintaining of cosmic stability.

De Romilly generalises Aeschylus’ frequent mention of time in the context of achieving justice and executing punishment for injustice into his alleged “philosophy of time”, qualifying the earlier mentions of the same idea as “isolated remarks” and its later occurrences as devoid of “inner power” and “conviction”.⁸²⁶ However, Aeschylus’ focus on the particular image of time, as rightly argued by Lloyd-Jones (see above, n. 804), results from his literary preoccupations and his general view of life and reflects just one of many related literary expressions of an obviously complex concept of time.

Growing old in time and time growing old

An effect of the passage of time that is most intensely felt by mortals is that of growing old and approaching the inevitable end. The evidence of this may also be found in the

⁸²⁴ Cf. S. *Ph.* 1041.

⁸²⁵ Σὸν χρόνῳ in A. *Eu.* 555.

⁸²⁶ Romilly 1968, 61: “Indeed, with Aeschylus time is the means through which gods achieve justice; and the idea of time is practically always mentioned in the statements about justice, with more or less emphasis.”

use of χρόνος in early Greek lyric, where it occasionally refers to the (short) *duration of youth* (Mimn. 2. 3; Simon. eleg. 20. 11f.) or to the *period of ripeness*, which is said to have passed (Alc. 119. 9). In fifth-century tragedy we find χρόνος specifically used to refer to passage of time during which or as a result of which people get older. So, Eteocles (A. Th. 10ff.) calls to aid the state all those who have not yet reached the peak of their young manhood (τὸν ἐλλείποντ' ἔτι / ἥβης ἀκμαίας) and also those who have gone past their youth “in time” (τὸν ἐξηβον χρόνῳ). The chorus in Sophocles’ *Antigone* addresses Zeus as the ruler who does not age “with time” (608 ἀγήρως δὲ χρόνῳ⁸²⁷ δυνάστας). In the *Oedipus at Colonus* Theseus blames Creon’s old age for his unjust behaviour (930): ὁ πληθύων χρόνος γέρονθ' ὁμοῦ τίθησι καὶ τοῦ νοῦ κενόν “abundance of time makes you old and deprives you of reason at the same time.”⁸²⁸ However, we come across an interesting twist in this kind of context, for in them time is often mentioned as growing old itself: A. fr. 469 R (*Eu.* 286):⁸²⁹ χρόνος καθαιρεῖ πάντα γηράσκων ὁμοῦ “time overpowers all things ageing with them”⁸³⁰ and A. PV 981: ἀλλ' ἐκδίδασκει πάνθ' ὁ γηράσκων χρόνος “but ageing time teaches all things”. This semantic turn is commonly explained by the phenomenon I will tentatively label *internalisation of time*. Accounting for the image of ageing time in the *Prometheus Bound*, Eduard Fraenkel explains: “Zeus is still young and knows nothing yet of any trouble, but ... be it man or god, as he grows old, χρόνος itself grows old”⁸³¹ (but in the *Antigone* Zeus is explicitly described as not growing old!). Fraenkel finds further

⁸²⁷ See Jebb 1900, 117 (ad 608f.): “I doubt whether the dat. χρόνῳ could be instrumental or causal here (‘not made old by time’). It rather seems to be an adverbial dative of circumstance, ‘not growing old with time’.”

⁸²⁸ See Kamerbeek 1984, 135 (ad 929-31): “ὁ πληθύων χρόνος ‘the increasing time’, ‘your increasing age’. τοῦ νοῦ κενόν ‘bereft of your wit’, whereas normally wisdom is supposed to be the result of age.”

⁸²⁹ See Sommerstein 1989, 132 132 about this line not belonging to the *Eumenides*.

⁸³⁰ Cf. Sophr. fr. 56 K-A: καθαιρημένος θην καὶ τῆνος ὑπὸ τῷ χρόνῳ (τῷ χρόνῳ Ahrens, τῷ χρόνῳ cod.).

⁸³¹ Fraenkel 1950a, 63.

examples of this “conception that a man and the epochs of his life ‘run abreast’” in the expressions such as σύμφυτος αἰών (A. *Ag.* 105f.) and χρόνος ξυνών (S. *OC* 7 με χρόνος ξυνών μακρὸς διδάσκει “time that has long been my companion teaches me”). This personal experience of the advancing of one’s own time (i.e. lifetime)⁸³² is reflected in Euripides’ fr. 291 as well, where increasing age is linked with acquiring wisdom (ὁ γὰρ χρόνος διδάγμα ποικιλώτατον) and compared to the eagerness for action characteristic of youth.⁸³³ Related to this conception, in Fraenkel’s view, is the image of ξυνεύδων χρόνος in A. *Ag.* 894. There Clytemnestra mentions that in her dreams she saw an amount of suffering that, in reality, could not fit the time that “slept with her”, i.e. the duration of her dreams. To me this image also resembles the (not so common) usage of χρόνος, in which time is represented as doing or experiencing that which is done or experienced in time, for example *exhaling life* from the serpents in Pi. *N.* 1. 46f. (ἀγχομένοις δὲ χρόνος / ψυχὰς ἀπέπνευσεν).⁸³⁴ Besides, χρόνος can be described as (growing) old without direct connection with human experience, but simply indicating *advancing of time*, such as in Sophocles’ fr. 62 R: ἀλλ’ οὐδὲν ἔρπει ψεῦδος εἰς γῆρας χρόνου (“but no falsehood lasts into old age of time”), where the revealing effect of passage of time is implied. Perhaps this sense should be ascribed to the “ageing time” of PV 981 as well?⁸³⁵ The same image occurs in Critias’ fr. B26 (= Trag. adesp. 508): μετὰ τὴν σκιὰν τάχιστα γηράσκει χρόνος “after shadow, time grows old fastest”. Time is represented as apparently having its own age in the proverbial expression of antiquity, “being old as time itself”, found in Euripides’ *Bacchae* 201: πατρίους παραδοχάς, ἄς θ’

⁸³² Cf. A. *Ag.* 1300: ὁ δ’ ὕστατός γε τοῦ χρόνου πρεσβεύεται “the last of one’s time is valued most.” See schol. ad loc.: τίμιός ἐστι παρ’ ἀνθρώποις, φησὶν, ὁ ὕστατος χρόνος· ὅταν γὰρ πρὸς τὸ τέλος ἤκωσι, καὶ βραχὺ ζῆσαι κέρδος ἡγοῦνται.

⁸³³ See chapter six in Romilly 1968, 143-71.

⁸³⁴ See also A. *Ch.* 965 and commentary on the passage in Garvie 1986, 314.

⁸³⁵ See West 1983b, 192, n. 47.

ὁμήλικας χρόνῳ κεκτήμεθ’ “the traditions we have received from our fathers, old as time itself.” Finally, when referring to advanced duration χρόνος can be characterised as “old” (S. *Aj.* 600 παλαιὸς ἀφ’ οὗ χρόνος “long is the time since”, E. *Hipp.* 908 οὕτω χρόνος παλαιὸς “not long time ago”, E. *IA* 419 χρόνον παλαιὸν δωμάτων ἔκδημος ὄν “being a long time away from home”).⁸³⁶

3. Χρόνος signifying “time when”

In Aeschylus χρόνος also denotes *a point or space of time* (of irrelevant duration) *when* something occurs or is done or experienced. This sense is mostly found in *adverbial expressions*, such as ὑστέρῳ χρόνῳ “at a later time” (*Ag.* 702),⁸³⁷ τὸν πρὸ τοῦ χρόνον “in the time before that” (*Eu.* 462), χρόνῳ τεταγμένῳ “at the appointed time” (*Eu.* 945),⁸³⁸ ταῦτοῦ χρόνου “at the same time” (*fr.* 116. 2 R),⁸³⁹ and παντὶ χρόνῳ “at every season” (*Eu.* 965).⁸⁴⁰ In Aeschylus we also find combinations of *adverbials of time and χρόνος* used as tense-differentiating adverbial expressions of time: εἰσὸπιν χρόνου “at a future time” (*Supp.* 617), μεταῦθις ἐν χρόνῳ “in time yet to come” (*Eu.* 498).

ii) Sophocles

In Sophocles’ preserved plays and fragments χρόνος occurs in all cases of the singular, except for the vocative, as well as in the nominative and accusative plural (*OT* 561 and 1137). Its sometimes unprecedented usages may also be semantically classified as referring to “period of time”, “passage of time”, and “time when”, although these different senses are sometimes indistinguishable.

⁸³⁶ See also E. *Hel.* 625.

⁸³⁷ Cf. Pi. *P.* 4. 55, Antipho Soph. B54. See also S. *OC* 614, id. *Tr.* 18.

⁸³⁸ See Sommerstein 1989, 266: “χρόνῳ τεταγμένῳ: the young are not to be born premature and weak.”

⁸³⁹ Cf. S. *OC* 1655: ἐν ταῦτῳ χρόνῳ.

⁸⁴⁰ Lloyd-Jones 1979, 69.

1) Χρόνος signifying “time when”

Several examples of different adverbial expressions of the ‘adverbial + χρόνος’-type appear in Sophocles and denote *past* (point or period of) *time at or during which* something happens or is done or experienced: ἐν τῷ πάρος χρόνῳ “in former time” (*El.* 1446, *OC* 551),⁸⁴¹ τῷ τότ’ ἐν χρόνῳ “at that time” (*OT* 564 and 1030), τῷ ... πρόσθεν ... χρόνῳ “in time past” (*Tr.* 323), ἐν τῷ πρὶν χρόνῳ “in time before” (*Ph.* 1224).

Similar tense-determining χρόνος-phrases appear as nominal expressions, such as ἐκεῖνος χρόνος “that (past) time”, mentioned by the chorus in Sophocles’ *Ajax* 933 as the “mighty source of troubles” (μέγας ἄρ’ ἦν ἐκεῖνος ἄρχων χρόνος πημάτων)⁸⁴² or ὁ προστατῶν χρόνος in *S. El.* 782, “time standing before”, that is the “imminent time” (schol ad loc.: ὁ ἐγγινόμενος), which, Clytemnestra says, made her live as if she was about to die (ἀλλ’ ὁ προστατῶν χρόνος διῆγε⁸⁴³ μ’ αἰὲν ὡς θανουμένην). In both examples a determinate time is represented as causing things that happen at/during that particular time (cf. *Pi. P.* 12. 30).⁸⁴⁴ We should add to these nominal tense-determining phrases ὁ παρὼν χρόνος, “present time”,⁸⁴⁵ which occurs several times in Sophocles’ *Electra*, in the conversation between Electra and Orestes. Orestes warns his sister against wasting precious time in recalling her sorrows, for the time for doing that has not yet come (1251f.). To this she replies (1254f.): ὁ πᾶς ἂν πρέποι παρὼν ἐννέπειν / τάδε δίκαι χρόνος “every present (actual) time would be proper for me to make these just complaints.” Garvie’s rendering of the phrase ὁ πᾶς παρὼν χρόνος by “all time... as

⁸⁴¹ Cf. *E. fr.* 285. 8 K: τὸν πάρος χρόνον πλουτῶν “having been rich during a past time”.

⁸⁴² See Stanford 1963, 181: “‘that time, when ..., was the mighty beginner of sorrows’: semi-personification of time (cf. 646ff. and 714) as the great arbiter of destiny.”

⁸⁴³ See Kamerbeek 1974, 109 (ad 781. 2): “διῆγε with χρόνος as subject: ‘caused me to live’ (διάγω αἰῶνα, βίον, γῆρας or without βίον etc. ‘pass’, ‘spend’, ‘live’ is of course common); instances of causative διάγω *L.-Sc.* s.v. iii¹”.

⁸⁴⁴ The latter example may be linked to the conception of coming time as the bearer of destiny (*Pi. N.* 4. 43; *P.* 1. 56f.).

⁸⁴⁵ Cf. Gorg. B11. 5.

it comes” seems to me to communicate the sense of the Greek sentence well. Similarly, in *El.* 1288ff. Orestes advises Electra to let go of the superfluous talk, for it could deprive her of the opportunity to act provided by the (actual) time (1292 χρόνου γὰρ ἄν σοι καιρὸν ἐξείργοι λόγος). He then urges her to tell him only that which will suit “the now present time” (1293 ἃ δ’ ἀρμόσει μοι τῷ παρόντι νῦν χρόνῳ σήμαιν’). In both examples quoted “present time” is felt as firmly connected with the corresponding circumstances. In addition to this, it is described as “living” in *S. Tr.* 1169 (of the prophecy announced in the past for the future time that has become actual; cf. *S. Tr.* 173f.): ἦ μοι χρόνῳ τῷ ζῶντι καὶ παρόντι νῦν / ἔφασκε μόχθων τῶν ἐφεστώτων ἐμοὶ / λύσιν τελεῖσθαι “it (the oak at Dodona) said that at the time that is now alive and present my release from the labours that stood over me should be accomplished” (trans. Lloyd-Jones).⁸⁴⁶

2. Χρόνος signifying “passage of time” (and “time when”)

Time and the changing fortunes

As the fifth-century lyric poets repeatedly state, the human condition is unstable, people’s fortunes everchanging and nobody is permanently happy (cf. *A. Ag.* 554). Reversals of fortune happen *at or during a time* and *with the passage of time* and χρόνος may be named responsible for the changes that occur (cf. *S. Aj.* 933 above and *OC* 614 and 618 below). In Sophocles we find numerous expressions of time’s involvement in the alterations of fate : ἐν γὰρ βραχεῖ καθεῖλε κωλίγῳ χρόνῳ πάμπλουτον ὄλβον δαίμονος κακοῦ δόσις (fr. 646. 4 R) “for with a little effort and in a short time the gift of

⁸⁴⁶ Lloyd-Jones 1994. See Kamerbeek 1959, 238: “χρόνῳ τῷ ζῶντι καὶ παρόντι νῦν: a most striking phrase to denote the tragic moment of time in which destiny is to be consummated. Time is felt as a living agent.”

an adverse fortune ruins the happiness brought by vast wealth”,⁸⁴⁷ ταύτην νόμιζε τὴν πόλιν χρόνῳ ποτέ / ἐξ οὐρίων δραμοῦσαν εἰς βυθὸν πεσεῖν (*Aj.* 1082) “believe that this city, although it has run fair winds before, will in time sink to the bottom”. This sentence comes from Menelaus’ speech, in which he warns of the unpredictability of human situations. So does Oedipus in his answer to Theseus in *OC* 607ff. , which opens with this striking claim (608f.): μόνοις οὐ γίγνεται θεοῖσι γῆρας οὐδὲ κατθανεῖν ποτε, / τὰ δ’ ἄλλα συγγεῖ πάνθ’ ὁ παγκρατὴς χρόνος “for the gods alone there is no old age and death ever, but all other things are confounded by all-powerful time”.⁸⁴⁸ Oedipus continues his line of reasoning by demonstrating how changeable human affairs are: “the strength of the country perishes, so does the strength of the body” (*OC* 610). Human relations change as well, for “for some people now (τοῖς μὲν γὰρ ἤδη) and for others at a later time” (τοῖς δ’ ἐν ὑστέρωι χρόνῳ) pleasant turns into bitter and then into friendly again (*OC* 614). Therefore, Oedipus reminds Theseus, even if his relations with Thebes are happy at the moment, “immeasurable time as it passes brings forth countless nights and days” (617f. μυρίας ὁ μυρίος / χρόνος τεκνοῦται νύκτας ἡμέρας τ’ ἰών),⁸⁴⁹ in which the present harmony will be destroyed (619f.). The usage of χρόνος in this example clearly demonstrates conceptual unity behind its semantic variety: “passage of time” consists of nights and days,⁸⁵⁰ that is of “times when” adversals of fortune happen.

In Sophocles and Euripides χρόνος often appears measured according to natural phenomena – days and nights, phases of the moon, courses of the sun – whose regular

⁸⁴⁷ The gods cause these changes of fortune (v. 6 ὅταν μεταστῇ καὶ θεοῖς δοκῇ τάδε).

⁸⁴⁸ Cf. πανδαμιάτῳ χρόνος in Simonides and Bacchylides.

⁸⁴⁹ Cf. *E. Supp.* 787: Χρόνος παλαιὸς πατήρ ... ἀμερᾶν “Time, the ancient father ... of days”.

⁸⁵⁰ Cf. *E. Ph.* 304f.: ἰὼ τέκνον, χρόνῳ σὸν ὄμ/μα μυρίαις τ’ ἐν ἀμέραις / προσεῖδον “Oh my son, at last I see your face, after countless days.”

cyclical exchange had long been observed and marked as the measure of temporality.⁸⁵¹

An interesting evidence of this is Teiresias' address to Creon in *Ant.* 1064ff., where the seer professes that the king "will not accomplish many racing courses of the sun, in which" he will have to sacrifice one of his own children (see also below *E. Hel.* 611ff.).

We can compare here Euripides' mention of the measurement of time according to yearly sowing in the *Troiades* 20 (ὥς δεκασπόρῳ χρόνῳ "after ten sowing seasons").

In addition to these instances where "time" (χρόνος) appears to be measured by natural phenomena, we come accross examples of χρόνος used as a measure of duration in S.

OT 73 (καί μ' ἥμαρ ἤδη ξυμμετρούμενον χρόνῳ "the day is measured by comparison with the time (of his absence)") and 963 (καὶ τῷ μακρῷ γε συμμετρούμενος χρόνῳ "[he died of sickness] and of the long long time with which his existence is measured").⁸⁵²

Time witnesses, reveals, conceals, judges, and changes

Different images of time sometimes combine and intertwine within one and the same expression, which clearly shows that they all rest on the same general concept. So, for example, in Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus* the personified "all-seeing Time",

represented in his witnessing capacity, is named responsible for the constant changes

that happen in time (*OC* 1454f. ὁρᾷ ὁρᾷ ταῦτ' ἀεὶ χρόνος, στρέφων* μὲν ἕτερα, / τὰ δὲ παρ' ἥμαρ αὖθις αὖξων ἄνω).⁸⁵³ The same metaphor occurs in S. *OT* 1213, where the

⁸⁵¹ Cf. S. *Ph.* 715: δεκέτει χρόνῳ, S. *OT* 1137: τρεῖς ὅλους ... ἐκμήνους χρόνους ("three whole periods of six months"), S. *Tr.* 44: χρόνον γὰρ οὐχὶ βαιόν, ἀλλ' ἤδη δέκα μῆνας, id. 164: χρόνον πρόταξας ὥς τρίμηνος, id. 247: τὸν ἄσκοπον χρόνον βεβῶς ἦν ἡμερῶν ἀνήριθμον, id. 648f. δυοκαιδεκάμηνον ἀμμένουσai χρόνον. See also *E. Hipp.* 369: παναμέριος ὁδε χρόνος "a whole-day time".

⁸⁵² See Kamerbeek 1967, 188 (ad loc.): "The long time is measure of his lifetime, his αἰών. One's lifetime lives with one and vice-versa (cf. *OC* 7, 8: χῶ χρόνος ξυνὼν / μακρός)."

⁸⁵³ Lines 1454-55 are corrupt (1454 ἐπεὶ μὲν ἕτερα MSS. For ἐπεὶ, Hartung conject. στρέφων, Wecklein, ἐπέχων, Meineke, ἐφείς). See Kamerbeek 1984, 200f.

“all-seeing Time” is described as revealing and also as judging (ἐφηῦρέ σ’ ἄκονθ’ ὁ πάνθ’ ὁρῶν χρόνος,/ δικάζει τὸν ἄγαμον γάμον). Another striking image of personified time is found in Sophocles’ fr. 301 R: ὥς ὁ πάνθ’ ὁρῶν / καὶ πάντ’ ἀκούων πάντ’ ἀναπτύσσει χρόνος “for all-seeing and all-hearing Time discloses all things”. This revealing capacity of time is manifested in fr. 918. 1 R as well,⁸⁵⁴ but we also find χρόνος represented as “obscuring all things and bringing them to oblivion” (S. fr. 954.1R χρόνος δ’ ἀμαυροῖ πάντα κείς λήθην ἄγει).⁸⁵⁵ This image evokes those of “all-powerful” (S. OC 609) and “all-overpowering time” in fifth-century poets (B. fr. 20A, 18f.; Simon. eleg. 88; Simon. 531 PMG). However, time’s apparently destructive ability may be viewed as a positive feature as well, as is evident from Sophocles’ *Ajax* 714, where the chorus celebrates Ajax’ eventual coming to his senses and his (apparent) showing repentance for his anger with the following words: πάνθ’ ὁ μέγας χρόνος μαραίνει “mighty Time makes all things fade”.⁸⁵⁶ The celebratory choral passage follows as a reaction to Ajax’ monologue, which opens with this statement about the contrary effects of time (646): ἅπανθ’ ὁ μακρὸς κἀναρίθμητος χρόνος / φύει τ’ ἄδηλα καὶ φανέντα κρύπτεται “long and immeasurable time brings forth all things obscure and hides them again after they have been revealed.” Throughout the monologue Ajax talks about change, starting with his own turning from a tough into a soft-spoken man under the influence of his wife (650-52) and concluding with his contemplation on the changing nature of friendship (678-82). De Romilly argues that for Sophocles “time is

⁸⁵⁴ πάντ’ ἐκκαλύπτων ὁ χρόνος εἰς τὸ φῶς ἄγει.

⁸⁵⁵ See. fr. 409. 2 R about forgetting “for a short period of time” (ὥς τοῖς κακοῖς πράσσουσιν ἡδὺ καὶ βραχὺν χρόνον λαθέσθαι τῶν παρεστώτων κακῶν).

⁸⁵⁶ MSS and the Suda contain τε καὶ φλέγει in continuation of the line. Stobaeus omits the words. Most modern editions leave them out as well, for metrical reasons, but some commentators suggest they should be kept for the reason of sense. See e.g. Stanford 1963, 153.

not the means of justice, but the cause of unsteadiness and lability in human life.”⁸⁵⁷ I hope to have shown that this is just one of the effects of passage of time, which Sophocles happens to focus on. At the same time, the usage of χρόνος in his plays reveals a rather complex image of time, with its various manifestations inventively combined and its distinct basic senses united.

What else happens in the course of time?

Numerous instances of the adverbial dative χρόνῳ and prepositional expressions ἐν/ξὺν χρόνῳ in Sophocles indicate that things proceed “with the passage of time” or happen “eventually”: one learns, finds out and realises “in time” (fr. 314. 352 R ἄρτι μανθάνω χρόνῳ, *El.* 330 κοῦδ’ ἐν χρόνῳ μακρῶι διδαχθῆναι θέλεις; *OC* 580 χρόνῳ μάθοις ἄν, *ibid.* 852 χρόνῳ γάρ ... γνώσῃ τάδε)⁸⁵⁸ and regains one’s sanity or acquires sense “eventually” (*Aj.* 306 ἔμφρων μόλις πῶς ξὺν χρόνῳ καθίσταται, *El.* 1013 αὐτὴ δὲ νοῦν σχῆς ἀλλὰ τῶι χρόνῳ ποτέ, *OC* 804 τῶι χρόνῳ φύσας φανῆι φρένας).⁸⁵⁹ Besides, Sophocles mentions that “in time” a house gets neglected (fr. 864. 2), sufferings become milder (*OC* 437), destiny is accomplished (*Aj.* 925), revenge delivered (*Aj.* 1026), joy granted (*Tr.* 201). The flow of time during which something happens may be felt to be fast or slow, and χρόνος can accordingly be described as such: *S.* *OC* 1602 ταχέϊ

⁸⁵⁷ Romilly 1968, 88. On the basis of this, she concludes (p. 89): “Time is no longer a coherent sequence, in which we painfully achieve the designs of transcendent justice; it becomes a series of rough, startling changes, which may occur in any manner, affecting both people’s fortunes and their feelings.”

⁸⁵⁸ Cf. *E.* fr. 773. 8 K: πεύσῃ δ’ αὐτὸ τῶι χρόνῳ σαφῶς “you will learn that clearly in time”. See also *S.* fr. 664. 1R: γῆρας διδάσκει πάντα καὶ χρόνου τριβή “old age teaches everything and passage of time”. Cf. *S. Ant.* 1078, in which change is prophesied to happen “in a not long lapse of time” (οὐ μακροῦ χρόνου τριβή).

⁸⁵⁹ One also grows old (*S. El.* 42) and dies (*A. Ch.* 295) in time.

᾿πορεύσαν ξὺν χρόνῳ “they went quickly (= in a brief time)”;
S. *Tr.* 395 σὺν χρόνῳ βραδεῖ μολών “having come slowly (= after a long time)”.⁸⁶⁰

3. Χρόνος signifying “period of time, limited duration”

Sophocles uses *accusative adverbials* of the epic type to indicate that actions, events and situations happen or are experienced in a quantitatively defined period of time: “be silent” (fr. 757. 1R τὸν πολὺν χρόνον, *Aj.* 311 πλεῖστον χρόνον),⁸⁶¹ “hold back, detain” (*Aj.* 415 πολὺν πολὺν δαρόν τε χρόνον, *Tr.* 248 τὸν πλεῖστον χρόνον, *Ph.* 349 οὐ πολὺν χρόνον),⁸⁶² “take charge of the house” (*Tr.* 542 τοῦ μακροῦ χρόνου), “please someone” (*Ant.* 74 πλείων χρόνος, ὃν δεῖ ἀρέσκειν), “remain, last” (*Ph.* 1076 χρόνον τοσοῦτον, εἰς ὅσον “for as long until”,⁸⁶³ *Ant.* 415 χρόνον τάδ’ ἦν τοσοῦτον, ἔστ’), “be doomed” (*Ph.* 1114 τὸν ἴσον χρόνον), “be gone” (*Tr.* 247 τὸν ἄσκοπον χρόνον βεβῶς ἦν ἡμερῶν ἀνήριθμον “for the unspeakable length of time, whose days are countless), “lie beneath earth” (fr. 572. 3R τὸν ἅπαντα χρόνον), “plunder” (*Aj.* 343 τὸν εἰσαεὶ χρόνον).

In Sophocles we also find *adverbial expressions* with χρόνος meaning “before long” (*Ph.* 821 and *OC* 821 οὐ μακροῦ χρόνου,⁸⁶⁴ *OC* 397 βαιοῦ κούχι μυρίου χρόνου, *Ph.* 360 οὐ μακρῶι χρόνῳ, *OC* 1648 χρόνῳ βραχεῖ), “after (a) long time” (*El.* 1273 χρόνῳ μακρῶι, *Tr.* 227 χρόνῳ πολλῶι, *Ph.* 598 χρόνῳ τοσῶιδ’⁸⁶⁵), and “for the rest of time” (*Ph.* 84 τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον). To these we may also add *prepositional expressions*

⁸⁶⁰ Cf. S. *Tr.* 599: ὡς ἐσμὲν ἤδη τῷ μακρῶι χρόνῳ βραδεῖς.

⁸⁶¹ Cf. *h. Cer.* 282.

⁸⁶² Cf. δ 594 and 599.

⁸⁶³ See Jebb 1898, 21: “εἰς marking a limit of time”. Cf. ζ 295: μεῖναι χρόνον, εἰς ὃ κεν ἡμεῖς ... ἔλθωμεν, ι 138: ἀλλ’ ἐπικέλσαντας μεῖναι χρόνον, εἰς ὃ κε ναυτέων / θυμὸς ἐποτρύνῃ (the Sophoclean example also appears in the context of sailing).

⁸⁶⁴ Cf. Cratin. 201 K-A: οὐ πολλοῦ χρόνου.

⁸⁶⁵ See Jebb 1898, 101 (ad loc.): “χρόνῳ τοσῶιδε = διὰ χρόνου τοσοῦτου, ‘after so long a time’.”

“in a long time” (*Ph.* 306 ἐν τῷ μακρῷ ... ἀνθρώπων χρόνῳ)⁸⁶⁶ and “after a long time” (*Ph.* 235, *OC* 88, *Ant.* 422 ἐν χρόνῳ μακρῷ).

Χρόνος signifying “age”

In the works of Sophocles and Euripides χρόνος is used several times to denote “age” in the sense of *the stage of human life*. This new semantic application of the word, based on its meaning “period of time”, may be traced back to some earlier mentions of χρόνος in contexts implying “age”: one thinks of the combination χρόνος ἀλικίας “period of prime” in *Pi. O.* 27 and χρόνος ἥβης “duration of youth” in *Simon. eleg.* 20. 11.⁸⁶⁷ The expression ἄλιξ χρόνος found in *Bacchylides’ Ode* 8. 23f., which signifies ‘internalised’ “age-period”,⁸⁶⁸ may perhaps be marked as a transitional usage. Eventually, in Sophocles and Euripides χρόνος alone comes to mean one’s “age”, “stage of life”: *S. Ant.* 681 (εἰ μὴ τῷ χρόνῳ κεκλέμμεθα “if we are not deceived⁸⁶⁹ by our (old) age”), *id.* 729 (εἰ δ’ ἐγὼ νέος, οὐ τὸν χρόνον χρὴ μάλλον ἢ τάργα σκοπεῖν “but if I am young, one should not consider my age rather than my merits”), *S. OC* 111f. (τινες χρόνῳ παλαιοί “some men advanced in age”), *id.* 374 (χὼ μὲν νεάζων καὶ χρόνῳ μείων γεγὼς “the younger son, inferior in age”), *id.* 875 (χρόνῳ βραδύς “made slow by age”), *E. Ion* 1041f. (κεῖ μὴ τῷ χρόνῳ πάρεστί σοι “even if in age it is not in your power”), *Heracl.* 702f. (λῆμα μὲν οὕτω στόρνυσι χρόνος / τὸ σόν, ἀλλ’ ἥβῃ, σῶμα δὲ φροῦδον “age has not yet laid low your proud spirit: it is in its youth, though your body is all spent”) (trans. Kovacs).⁸⁷⁰

⁸⁶⁶ See op. cit., 68 (ad 306): τῷ μακρῷ ... ἀνθρώπων χρόνῳ ‘in the long course of men’s lifetime’ (not the time during which men have existed).”

⁸⁶⁷ Cf. *E. El.* 20.

⁸⁶⁸ See above, p. 236.

⁸⁶⁹ Cf. *Ant.* 1218: θεοῖσι κλέπτομαι and *Tr.* 234: εἰ μὴ ξυμφοραὶ κλέπτουσί με.

⁸⁷⁰ Kovacs 1995.

iii) Euripides

My examination of the dramatic usages of χρόνος has so far revealed a number of typical motifs in the representations of time, many of which were recognised in the works of earlier authors as well. They now appear closely connected and often combined. These poetic motifs of time – depicting it as revealing, concealing, bringing justice, making old, getting old, etc. – rest on a complex concept of time, whose various manifestations are reflected in the polysemantic application of χρόνος as well as in the variety of its literary usages. Although the present study does not explore psychological effects of the perception of time on the composition and content of various tragedies, which seems to be the focus of de Romilly's study on tragic time,⁸⁷¹ the usage of time-terminology (which is the major source for her conclusions as well) does not seem to confirm her thesis about an "evolution" in the way time was represented by various tragedians.⁸⁷² Euripides, whose χρόνος-passages have already been mentioned many times in the above sections devoted to Aeschylus and Sophocles, clearly shares in their imagery of time and contributes to it with his characteristic audacity of expression and richness of imagination.

In Euripides' works χρόνος appears in all the cases of the singular, except for the vocative. I am again provisionally classifying his usages of the word according to the basic meanings, "period of time", "passage of time", and "time when".

⁸⁷¹ Cf. Romilly 1968, 122 (on time in Euripides): "Time now is seen but from a point of view of man's sensibility (...) Time is judged from the standards of our suffering. Time is mixed up in our emotions."

⁸⁷² See especially her conclusions on p. 141.

1. Χρόνος signifying “period of time, limited duration”

As in the case of the adverbial τὸν δι’ αἰῶνος χρόνον (A. Ag. 554), in Euripides χρόνος is often found to denote *duration* that is determined by the context as referring to human life:⁸⁷³ Alc. 670 (ψέγοντες ... μακρὸν χρόνον βίου), Alc. 295 (ἔζων ... τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον), Supp. 1118 (πολλοῦ τε χρόνου ζώσης), Alc. 650 (βραχὺς δέ σοι ... ὁ λοιπὸς ἦν βιώσιμος χρόνος, cf. Alc. 243), Alc. 713 (Διὸς γε μείζονα ζώης χρόνον), Med. 901 (πολὺν ζῶντες χρόνον). A recurring *nominal phrase* defines the duration signified by the word as an in-between interval, ὁ ἐν μέσῳ χρόνος (E. Heracl. 173, HF 94, Ion 1394, Ph. 588).⁸⁷⁴

There are numerous instances of *adverbial accusatives with χρόνος* in Euripides. In some of them the noun is combined with adjectives meaning “all”, “entire”, which imply the sense of continuity, so that the adverbials may be rendered by “always, constantly” (see above on the similar adverbials in Pindar): Med. 1100 (ἐσορῶ μελέτη / κατατρυχομένους τὸν ἅπαντα χρόνον “I see them exhausted by worry all the time”) and id. 25 (τὸν πάντα συντήκουσα δακρύοις χρόνον “weeping all the time”).⁸⁷⁵ We also find many examples of the adverbial accusatives of the epic type in Euripides, which denote that various activities, states and situations last long⁸⁷⁶ or short time:⁸⁷⁷ “living together” (fr. 22. 5 K χρόνον πλεῖστον), “being asleep” (fr. 398. 1 K πολὺν χρόνον), “drifting about on the sea” (Cyc. 700 πολὺν χρόνον), “waiting” (Med. 389 ἔτι σμικρὸν χρόνον, cf.

⁸⁷³ Cf. E. Alc. 693 of the duration of posthumous existence: ἦ μὴν πολὺν γε τὸν κάτω λογίζομαι / χρόνον, τὸ δὲ ζῆν σμικρὸν ἀλλ’ ὅμως γλυκύ “truly I regard the time below as long and life as short but sweet for all that” (trans. Kovacs).

⁸⁷⁴ See Mastronarde 1994, 320 (ad 588-59): “ὁ ἐν μέσῳ χρόνος takes its sense from its context. In Her. 94 it is ‘between now and our inevitable death’, while in Ion 1393-4 it is ‘between the time it was abandoned and now’. Here, after Et. says it is ‘no longer’ time for words, the prospective sense ‘from now to the time of decisive action’ is better (...).”

⁸⁷⁵ Cf. E. Ph. 1522f. προκλαίω μονάδ’ αἰῶνα διάζουσα τὸν αἰεὶ χρόνον “I lament the lonely life I will lead forever”. Cf. E. Orest. 207.

⁸⁷⁶ Cf. the nominative χρόνος δαρός in E. HF 702.

⁸⁷⁷ Cf. the dative adverbials οὐ χρόνῳ μακρῷ (E. Hipp. 1322) and οὐ μακρῷ χρόνῳ (E. IT 306). See also πολλῷ χρόνῳ “after a long time” in E. IA 640.

HF 957), “being away” (*Hec.* 1220 χρόνον πολλόν, *IT* 481 μακρόν χρόνον, *IA* 660 πολλόν χρόνον, *id.* 680 δαρὸν χρόνον), “associating with” (*El.* 940 βραχὺν χρόνον), “flowering” (*El.* 944 σμικρὸν χρόνον), “taking time” (*IT* 789 οὐ πολλόν χρόνον), “sitting” (*IT* 1339 δαρὸν χρόνον), “sacrificing” (*Ion* 1130 μακρόν χρόνον), “speaking” (*Hel.* 777 μακρόν χρόνον), “wandering” (*Orest.* 55 δαρὸν χρόνον), “being a maiden” (*Orest.* 663 μακρόν χρόνον). In *E. IT* 921 Strophius is said to have been childless “for some time” (χρόνον τινά).⁸⁷⁸ Other accusative adverbials found in Euripides are χρόνον ὅσον “for as long” (*Rh.* 856, *Hel.* 612)⁸⁷⁹ and χρόνον “for a while” (*Rh.* 865).⁸⁸⁰

To these adverbial expressions that define duration we can relate numerous examples of question-phrases involving χρόνος. The most common in the tragedians is πόσον χρόνον, “how long?”, whose reference (the duration it asks about) is determined by the context: *S. OT* 558 (πόσον τιν’ ἤδη δῆθ’ ὁ Λαῖος χρόνον, / δέδρακε ποῖον ἔργον),⁸⁸¹ “How long is then since Laius... Did what?”,⁸⁸² *E. IA* 815 (πόσον χρόνον / ἔτ’ ἐκμετρήσαι χρὴ πρὸς Ἰλίου στόλον; “how much more time must we measure out until the journey to Ilium?”), *E. Hel.* 773 (πόσον χρόνον πόντου ’πὶ νώτοις ... ἐφθείρου; “how long were you wandering over the surface of the sea?”). In Euripides’ *Helen* 111ff. the phrase appears twice in the conversation between Helen and Teucer, with different references:

πόσον χρόνον γὰρ διαπεπόρθηται πόλις;

ἐπτα σχεδόν τι καμπίμους ἐτῶν κύκλους.

Χρόνον δ’ ἐμείνατ’ ἄλλον ἐν Τροίᾳ πόσον;

⁸⁷⁸ Cf. *E. Alc.* 356 and *S. fr.* 314. 142.

⁸⁷⁹ Cf. *E. Hec.* 436, *HF* 618.

⁸⁸⁰ Cf. prepositional expression in *E. Ph.* 487: <ἐς> τὸν ἴσον χρόνον “for an equal time”.

⁸⁸¹ Creon’s response contains χρόνος in the plural: μακροὶ παλαιοὶ τ’ ἂν μετρηθεῖεν χρόνοι “long periods of time reaching far into the past could be counted.” Oedipus then asks if the seer mentioned him “at that time” (τῷ τότε ἐν χρόνῳ).

⁸⁸² Cf. *E. Orest.* 88 and 421.

“How long is it since the city was sacked?”⁸⁸³

Almost seven years have gone full circles.⁸⁸⁴

And how much longer were you waiting at Troy?”⁸⁸⁵

In the fifth-century tragedians we also come accross the question-phrase formed with the interrogative pronoun, τίς χρόνος “how much time?”.⁸⁸⁶ A. PV 623 (τίς ἔσται τῇ τάλαιπώρῳ χρόνος; “how long will it be for poor me?”),⁸⁸⁷ S. OT 735 (τίς χρόνος τοῖσδ’ ἐστὶν οὐξεληλυθώς; “how much time has passed since these events”), E. *Ion*, 353 (χρόνος δὲ τίς τῷ παιδὶ διαπεπραγμένῳ; “how much time has passed since the child was killed?”).

2. Χρόνος signifying “passage of time” (and “duration”)

Justice, law, and change

Time (χρόνος) is most commonly mentioned by Euripides in connection with the subjects we have already identified in the works of his predecessors: revealing of truth, fulfilment of justice, changes of fate, transience of life, permanence of glory, etc. Euripides combines various semantic applications of χρόνος in addressing these subjects, while expressing them in his often extraordinary manner. So, for example, in reproaching the dead Aegisthus, Electra cites as his greatest mistake his relying on wealth (*El.* 938f.), for “unjustly” (ἀδίκως) acquired money can remain in a fool’s

⁸⁸³ Cf. *Hel.* 401: ἀλῶμαι χρόνον ὅσον περ Ἴλιου / πύργους ἔπερσα. See Kannicht 1969, 126 (ad 401f.): “(...) mit brachylogischer Attraktion des Relativum, “ich irre die ganze Zeit, seit ich Ilion zerstört habe, über die Meere.”

⁸⁸⁴ See Allan 2008, 161 (ad 112): “Greek measured time in relation to the periodic cycles of the natural world, especially the agricultural seasons (e.g. *Tro.* 20 δεκασπόρῳ χρόνῳ, *El.* 1152 δεκέτεσιν σποραῖσιν; cf. ἄροτος for year at Soph. *Trach.* 69, 825) and the sun, moon, and stars (114 σελήνας).”

⁸⁸⁵ See Kannicht 1969, 48 (ad 113).

⁸⁸⁶ Cf. E. *Orest.* 1211: ἤξει ... τίνας χρόνους; “how soon ... will return?”. See West 1987, 265 (ad 211): “genitive of time within which, as e.g. Soph. *El.* 478.”

⁸⁸⁷ See Griffith 1983, 202: “i.e. how many days or years of wandering she must endure.”

possession “only a brief time” (*El.* 943f. *σμικρὸν ἀνθήσας χρόνον*),⁸⁸⁸ whereas good character is a lasting value. Aegisthus’ bad character was, however, unmasked by time (*id.* 952 *ἐφευρεθείς χρόνῳ*)⁸⁸⁹ and he eventually paid the penalty (*id.* 953 *δίκην δέδωκας*).⁸⁹⁰ The motifs of impermanence of the unjustly acquired possession, change of one’s fortune, revealing of truth, and eventual punishment are all displayed here against the background of time. Electra concludes her speech with the reminder that justice is inevitable, albeit often delayed (*El.* 954ff.).⁸⁹¹ The chorus reinforces her claim: “Justice has a great power” (*ἔχει γὰρ ἡ Δίκη μέγα σθένος*). Euripides refers to its delayed arrival with the memorable genealogical metaphor mentioned above (*fr.* 222): “They say that Justice is a child of Time”.⁸⁹² Another striking metaphor expressing the same idea is that of the long “foot of time” (*Bacch.* 888ff.):

κρυπτεύουσι δὲ ποικίλως

δαρὸν χρόνου πόδα καὶ

θηρῶσιν τὸν ἄσεπτον.

“[the gods] craftily conceal

the slow walk of time

and they hunt down the impious man.”

Personified time is represented here as a bearer of justice. His foot is long and his pace therefore slow (notice the merging of space and time; cf. *S. OC* 1602 and *Tr.* 395 quoted above); his approaching is concealed from people (for we do not know when

⁸⁸⁸ Cf. the identical message of *fr.* 362. 12 K: *ἀδίκως δὲ μὴ κτῶ χρήματ’*, *ἣν βούλῃ πολλὸν / χρόνον μελάρχοις ἐμμένειν* “do not get possessions unjustly if you want them to stay for long in your house.”

⁸⁸⁹ Cropp 1988, 162 (ad 952-53): “time has found you out: *χρόνῳ* could mean ‘in time’, ‘in the end’, but the personification is more pointed and has ample precedent...”

⁸⁹⁰ In addition to the instances of *δίκην διδόναι* in Euripides already mentioned, cf. *χρόνῳ* ... *τείσει δίκην* in *Rh.* 893f.

⁸⁹¹ See also *E. Andr.* 779-84 for the unjust victory turning joyless and disgraceful “in time” (*ἐν χρόνῳ*).

⁸⁹² Cf. *E. fr.* 223.1 N and *Heracl.* 941: *εἴλε σ’ Δίκη χρόνῳ*; “has Justice caught you at last?”

justice will arrive).⁸⁹³ The image of the foot of time occurs in the fragmentary play *Alexandros* as well (fr. 42 K καὶ χρόνου προύβαινε πούς “and Time’s foot moved on”) and it is later parodied by Aristophanes (*Ra.* 100 and 311). To the above statement about the slow but sure advance of divine justice Euripides links the need of respecting “that which is divine and lawful for a long time and originates in nature” (894ff. ὅ τι ποτ’ ἄρα τὸ δαιμόνιον / τό τ’ ἐν χρόνῳ μακρῷ νόμιμον / ἀεὶ φύσει πεφυκός).⁸⁹⁴ Similarly to the quoted *Bacchae* passage, the chorus in Euripides’ *Heracles* states that “the gods take care to tell the unjust from the pious” (772ff. τῶν ἀδίκων ... καὶ τῶν ὀσίων ἐπαίειν). Mortals are tempted to recklessly transgress law in order to achieve wealth and fortune, for “none of them can bring himself to face the hinder part of time” (777 χρόνου γὰρ οὔτις ἔτλα τὸ πάλιν εισορᾶν).⁸⁹⁵ The wealth gained through transgression of law is, however, eventually lost (780).

Change of fortune

Change of fortune sooner or later awaits every human, for – as we have read many times in various fifth-century authors – no man is permanently happy (E. fr. 273 K παῖσιν γὰρ ἀνθρώποισιν, οὐχ ὑμῖν μόνον, / ἢ καὶ παραυτίκ’ ἢ χρόνῳ δαίμων βίον / ἔσφηλε, κούδεις δι’ τέλους εὐδαιμονεῖ “to all humans, not just to us, sooner or later god spoils life and no one is fortunate right through the end”).⁸⁹⁶ The same idea is expressed

⁸⁹³ See Seaford 1996, 220: “Here the slowness belongs to the concealment required by the hunt, the time personified as if an agent of the gods.”

⁸⁹⁴ For the philosophical background of this concept (in the light of the opposition νόμος–φύσις), see Egli 2003, 210f.

⁸⁹⁵ Bond 1981, 271: “777 can hardly be taken as a general statement that men have not the courage to look on the future. All men indeed lack the ability to foretell the future exactly; but it is the foolish (or lawless) man who lacks the courage to look upon the future. The γὰρ suggests that 777 is limited to the lawless man defined in 774f.”

⁸⁹⁶ Cf. E. fr. 304. 3ff.: τυχὰς δὲ θνητῶν / τὸ μὲν μέγ’ εἰς οὐδὲν ὁ πολὺς χρόνος / μεθίστησι, τὸ δὲ μείον αὖξων “Time in its length changes what is great to nothing and increases what is less.”

by the chorus in the *Orestes*, in their lament over the destiny of the Pelopidae, “different troubles befall different men in the fullness of time” (981 ἐν χρόνῳ μακρῶι).⁸⁹⁷ This changeability of human situation is vividly conveyed by Amphitryon in the *Heracles*: “our life is but a trifle” (503 σμικρὰ μὲν τὰ τοῦ βίου) ... “time does not know how to preserve our hopes intact but worries about its own affairs and flies on”⁸⁹⁸ (506 ὥς ἐλπίδας μὲν ὁ χρόνος οὐκ ἐπίσταται σώζειν, τὸ δ’ αὐτοῦ σπουδάσας διέπτατο).⁸⁹⁹ The passages quoted reveal an occasional interchange of roles between *divinity* and *time* identified in Pindar’s χρόνος-passages as well. The chorus in Euripides’ *Phaethon*, however, best explains the ‘true’ nature of their relationship (fr. 796. 2 K): “god has given, and time has achieved” (θεὸς ἔδωκε, χρόνος ἔκρανε).⁹⁰⁰

Relief and forgetfulness

Ocasionaly, however, χρόνος itself is proclaimed a deity. Sophocles explicitly names it a god due to its capacity to bring relief by easing one’s pain (*El.* 178 χρόνος γὰρ εὐμαρῆς θεός). It appears twice as the subject of the verb μαλάττω in Euripides’ *Alcestis* (381 and 1085), both times in answer to Admetus’ complaints about losing his wife: “time will soften your pain” (cf. *Orest.* 1201 χρόνῳι μαλάξει “he will calm down in time” (*Electra* about Menelaus)).⁹⁰¹ In the *Iphigenia in Aulis* time and custom are

⁸⁹⁷ West 1987, 251: “in the fullness of time: ‘anything can happen in the fullness of time’ (Hdt. 5.9.3), especially reversals (e.g. Soph. *Aj.* 646ff., *OC* 607ff.).”

⁸⁹⁸ Trans. Kovacs 1998.

⁸⁹⁹ On the subject of time’s betraying human hopes, see E. *Ph.* 398.

⁹⁰⁰ E. fr. 800 K: φεῦ μήποτ’ εἶην ἄλλο πλὴν θεοῖς φίλος / ὥς πᾶν τελοῦσι, κἂν βραδύνωσιν χρόνῳι “may I never be anything but dear to the gods, for in time they fulfil everything, even if they are slow” (trans. Collard 2004). Cf. A. *Supp.* 137: τελευτὰς δ’ ἐν χρόνῳι πατὴρ παντόπτας (i.e. Zeus).

⁹⁰¹ See also Admetus’ response in *Alc.* 1086: εἰ χρόνος τὸ κατθανεῖν “if by time you mean death”. Cf. E. fr. 45 K.

expected to ease Clytemnestra's sorrow caused by giving her daughter away (694 ἀλλ' ὁ νόμος αὐτὰ τῷ χρόνῳ συνισχνανεῖ).⁹⁰²

Counting on the forgetfulness that passage of time brings, the sons of Oedipus, according to Teiresias, were hoping to obscure the memory of their father (*Ph.* 872f. ἄ συγκαλύψαι ... χρόνῳ χρήζοντες).⁹⁰³ But oblivion does not always apply (*E. Andr.* 774ff.): οὗτοι λείψανα τῶν ἀγαθῶν / ἀνδρῶν ἀφαιρεῖται χρόνος· ἅ δ' ἀρετὰ καὶ θανοῦσι λάμπει "time does not diminish what noble men leave behind them, and even when they are dead their excellence shines out."⁹⁰⁴ This passage resembles Simonides' encomium to the fallen of Thermopylae (531 *PMG* = F 261 Poltera) and restates the current idea of the immortality of the glory won by ἀρετή.

Truth

The revealing capacity of the passage of time is mentioned by Euripides many times, in the linguistic and semantic contexts that are familiar to us from his predecessors.

Χρόνος appears as the subject of the verbs εὐρίσκω (*E.* fr. 224. 136 K, cf. *E. Ion* 575), δείκνυμι (*E.* fr. 60. 1 K, *HF* 805f.), ἐκφαίνω (*E. Hipp.* 430) and is said to be able to expose wrongdoers (*E.* fr. 303.4 K) and unmask people's true characters (fr. 60.1 K).

Personified χρόνος is described as "informer" (μηνυτής) in *Hipp.* 1051 and in the mentioned fragment of the *Antiope*.⁹⁰⁵ The most intriguing passage of this type is found in Phaedra's speech in *Hippolytus* 428ff.: κακοὺς δὲ θνητῶν ἐξέφην' ὅταν τύχηι / προσθεὶς κάτοπτρον ὥστε παρθένοι νέαι/ χρόνος "the wicked among the mortals are

⁹⁰² Cf. the two forces jointly at work in *E.* fr. 61b. 8 K.

⁹⁰³ See Mastronarde 1994, 403 (ad 872): "ἄ συγκαλύψαι ... the verb alludes here not only to physical concealment of the blinded Oed., but to the obscuring of memory of the past by silence."

⁹⁰⁴ Trans. Lloyd 1994.

⁹⁰⁵ Cf. Halleran 1995, 240 (ad 1051): "μηνυτής was a legal term for 'informer', commonly found in the orators, but in tragedy only here, *Antiope*, F. 48.107 (Kambitsis), where this image is paralleled exactly, and Aesch. *Eum.* 245."

exposed whenever Time holds up to them a mirror, as to a young girl”. The motif of the wrongdoers being exposed by time is familiar enough, and the striking image of time holding a mirror to them has provoked various interpretations.⁹⁰⁶

Teaching, learning, finding out in time

There are many instances in Euripides of the dative adverbials χρόνῳ and ἐν χρόνῳ, which indicate that actions, states and events happen “in time” or “at last”, “eventually”.⁹⁰⁷ Learning and finding out “in time” is mentioned several times (fr. 773. 8 K, fr. 1132. 35 K, *Med.* 912, *Rh.* 829). Χρόνος is referred to as a subject “providing learning” in the *Supplices* 419f. (ὁ γὰρ χρόνος μάθησιν ἀντὶ τοῦ τάχους / κρείσσω δίδωσι), which stresses the need for taking time when making political decisions.⁹⁰⁸ In addition to these instances, the dative adverbials apply to the following verbs: “become wise” (fr. 581. 2 K ἐν μακρῷ χρόνῳ), “praise” (*Alc.* 1036), “make up a quarrel” (*Med.* 904), “give up” (*Med.* 1218), “look upon” (*Heracl.* 869), “do good” (*Heracl.* 1029), “say” (*Hipp.* 1181: χρόνῳ ... ποτ’, *Bacch.* 294), “appear” and “embrace” (*El.* 578 and 579, *Ph.* 166), “return” (*HF* 607), “seize the occasion” (*Ion*, 659), “create a name” (*Ion*, 830), “join in the dancing” (*Hel.* 1468), “come” (*Ph.* 295 and 1043a).

3. Χρόνος signifying “time when”

In Euripides χρόνος also appears in tense-differentiating adverbial expressions of time.

In the accusative, they denote time when (i.e. during which) something happens or is

⁹⁰⁶ See Halleran 1995, 186 (ad 428-30): “Time’s mirror and the simile of the young maiden provide an enigmatic and provocative conclusion to Ph’s speech. The revelatory power of time was commonplace (...) The image of a revealing mirror can be found in several places (e.g. Aesch. *Ag.* 839 and F. 393...), but a woman’s mirror typically reflects what it sees (cf. *Med.* 1161-2, *El.* 1071), not what is hidden and needs to be revealed.” Cf. Barrett 1992, 238.

⁹⁰⁷ Cf. E. fr. 360. 3K: οἱ δὲ δρῶσι μὲν, χρόνῳ δὲ δρῶσι.

⁹⁰⁸ See Morwood 2007, 177 (ad 417-18).

done or experienced: *Supp.* 1040 (χρόνον μὲν οὖν / τὸν πρόσθ' ἐφρουρεῖτ' ἐν δόμοις “in the time before she was guarded closely in the house”); time for which an action is intended/to which it refers: *Hipp.* 1118 (ῥάιδια δ' ἤθεα τὸν αὔριον μεταβαλλομένα χρόνον αἰεὶ “changing my adaptable ways for the next day always”);⁹⁰⁹ time up to which a period stretches: *Hel.* 1650 (εἰς μὲν γὰρ αἰεὶ τὸν παρόντα νῦν χρόνον “up to the present time”,⁹¹⁰ cf. *Ion* 1349 ἐς τὸν ὄντα νῦν χρόνον). In the dative, such adverbials indicate time when something happens or is done or experienced: *Andr.* 5 (ζηλωτὸς ἔν γε τῷ πρὶν ... χρόνῳ “enviable in time past”), *Bacch.* 622 (ἐν τῷιδε τῷ χρόνῳ “while this was going on”). In *Ion* 15 the nominative χρόνος denotes “due time”, when Creusa was expected to give birth (ὥς δ' ἤλθεν χρόνος, / τεκοῦσ' ἐν οἴκοις παῖδ'). Similarly, in line 1582 Athena mentions “the allotted time” when Ion’s grandsons will settle in the island cities of Cyclades (σὺν χρόνῳ πεπρομένῳ).⁹¹¹

Uncreated and self-creating time

As Franziska Egli notes in her study on Euripides’ work in the context of contemporary intellectual trends, the plays of this tragedian are permeated by reflections of contemporary philosophical doctrines and intellectual tendencies in general.⁹¹² This includes some current ideas of time as well. In a fragment of the *Bellerophon*, which mentions the recurring subject of the impermanence of unjustly acquired wealth and

⁹⁰⁹ Cf. fr. 1028 K: ὅστις νέος ὦν Μουσῶν ἀμελεῖ / τὸν τε παρέλθοντ' ἀπόλωλε χρόνον / καὶ τὸν μέλλοντα τέθνηκεν “any man who in his youth neglects the Muses has perished for the time that is passed and is dead for the future”. Cf. the prepositional expression in Crit. B27. 3 (= TrGF 43 F 23): τὴν παραιντὶχ' ἡδονήν / ἔχθραν καθίστησ' εἰς τὸν ὕστερον χρόνον “turns the present friendship into hatred for the future.”

⁹¹⁰ Allan 2008, 341 (ad 1650): “εἰς ... αἰεὶ τὸν παρόντα νῦν χρόνον: an elaborately phrased equivalent of the temporal expression (unique to tragedy) δεῦρο ... ἀεὶ (e.g. Aesch. *Eum.* 596, *Eu. Med.* 670, *Ion* 56), ‘until now’. The amplification suits the god’s exalted and didactic tone.” Cf. S. *El.* 961.

⁹¹¹ Cf. S. *Ph.* 199 (about the time fated for the fall of Troy): ὅδ' ἐξήκοι χρόνος, ὃ λέγεται / χρῆναι σφ' ... δαμῆναι. For χρόνος denoting the allotted time of death see S. *Tr.* 166f. and *Ant.* 461.

⁹¹² Egli 2003, 18.

eventual punishment of the bad, time exhibits its revealing capacity, but it is also defined as “being unborn” (fr. 303. 3ff. K): ὁ γὰρ οὐδενὸς ἐκφύς / χρόνος δικαίους ἐπάγων κανόνας / δείκνυσιν ἀνθρώπων κακότητος ὅμως⁹¹³ “for time, which was born from nothing, adduces standards which are just and shows the wickedness of men in spite of all.”⁹¹⁴ The idea that time is unborn may be traced back to Pherecydes’ doctrine about the everlasting divine triad, which includes Χρόνος, but it may also be found in philosophers contemporary to Euripides, such as Democritus (Arist. *Ph.* 251b16 = DK68 A71).⁹¹⁵ In a fragment of Euripides’ *Pirithous*, which some ascribe to Critias, a “self-generated” (αὐτοφυής) deity is addressed (E. *Pirith.* fr 593. 1 N = Critias 43 fr. 4.1 *TrGF*), but there is no clear evidence as to which god was intended. From as early as Satyrus’ *Vita Euripidis*, this fragment has been linked to Anaxagoras’ doctrine.⁹¹⁶ Its close connection with another fragment of the same provenance made some scholars suggest that the deity addressed is actually Χρόνος, the time-god.⁹¹⁷

iv) Critias?

E. *Pirith.* 594 N (= Critias 43 fr. 3 *TrGF*):

ἀκάμας τε χρόνος περί γ’ ἀενάωι

ρεύματι πλήρης φοιτᾷ τίκτων

αὐτὸς ἑαυτόν...

“Tireless Time runs

full of its everlasting flow

⁹¹³ ὅμως West 1983b, 72.

⁹¹⁴ Trans. Collard et al. 1995.

⁹¹⁵ See above, p. 162.

⁹¹⁶ See Egli 2003, 49ff. Egli herself suggests the following (51): “Es ist Zeus, es ist der νοῦς, es ist der Äther – alles Namen für den höchsten Gott.”

⁹¹⁷ Op. cit. 51, n. 3.

giving birth to himself”

It is interesting that both adjectives that describe the deity/-ies in the two *Pirithous* fragments, αὐτοφυής and ἀκάμας, appear as attributes of Heracles in an Orphic hymn that represents him as the father of Time.⁹¹⁸ What is more important, however, is that in the fragment quoted time is described as self-renewing (unlike the ageing “ordinary historical time”)⁹¹⁹ and we have seen that cyclical conceptions of time were quite prominent in the doctrines of the fifth-century philosophers, such as Empedocles. According to Aetius, ‘Pythagoras’ defined time as the “sphere of the surrounding” (Aet. 1. 21. 1) and we mentioned Heraclitus’ being credited with the conception of the Great Year by some doxographers (Aet. 2. 32. 3 and Censorin. 18. 10 = DK22 A13). Egli points out that conceptions similar to Euripides’ ever-flowing stream of time⁹²⁰ may be found in the works of his contemporary, the comedian Hermippus, as well as in the fourth-century poet Skythinus, who was said to have turned Heraclitus’ teaching into verses.⁹²¹ It would be a mistake to try to find a single source for the image of time presented by the fragment quoted. I therefore agree with Egli’s conclusion, which assumes that the two *Pirithous* fragments belong to the same choral song, “daß Euripides diesem Lied eine stark philosophische Prägung gab, nicht indem er sich auf einen Philosophen stützte, sondern indem er verschiedene Vorstellungen, die im 5. Jahrhundert bekannt waren, miteinander kombinierte.”⁹²² The origin of the image of the “wise craftsman Time” in the “Sisyphus fragment”, which is again ascribed to both Euripides and Critias, should perhaps be interpreted in a similar manner (Critias DK88

⁹¹⁸ Orph. H. 12, 3 and 9. Cf. West 1983a, 190ff.

⁹¹⁹ West 1983a, 192. Cf. Orphic Χρόνος ἀγήραος.

⁹²⁰ For the image of forward-flowing time cf. A. Eu. 853: οὐπιρρέων γὰρ τιμώτερος χρόνος / ἔσται πολίταις τοῖσδε.

⁹²¹ Egli 2003, 52, especially n. 3 and 4.

⁹²² Ibid. 53.

B25, 34f. τό τ' ἄστερωπὸν οὐρανοῦ δέμας, / Χρόνου καλὸν ποίκιλμα τέκτονος σοφοῦ
“and the star-filled face of heaven, the beautiful design of the wise craftsman Time”). In
his article entitled “Greek Religion and Philosophy in the Sisyphus Fragment”,⁹²³
Charles Kahn supports Dihle’s widely accepted conclusions, which suggest Euripidean
authorship of the fragment. This, Kahn further argues, reflects on the question of
attribution of the ideas found in the fragment, for “in Euripides’ plays we can find all
manner of religious sentiment and belief, generally adapted to the character or
circumstances of the speaker.”⁹²⁴ The image of Time, the clever builder of heaven,
whatever its origin, must have been felt to fit in well with the rationalistic account on
the origin of religion.

⁹²³ Kahn 1997.

⁹²⁴ Op. cit., 250.

X P O N O Σ IN COMEDY

Most of the numerous occurrences of χρόνος in the extant evidence of Old Comedy come from Aristophanes. These usages do not bring anything new in terms of meaning of the word and imagery of time expressed by it, but, when compared to the χρόνος-usages in tragedy, they do present an interesting insight into how the conceptual content behind the word and mental images inspired by it are reflected in different literary contexts. Aristophanes sometimes transfers ready-made tragic χρόνος-passages into his comedies, mostly for the sake of parody, but he occasionally uses them as convenient current ideas, which blend effectively with the new surroundings. Linguistically, however, comic χρόνος-usages demonstrate marked regularity.

The most common type of usage of χρόνος in Old Comedy is the *adverbial accusative of duration*.⁹²⁵ The oldest recorded literary use of the word thus proves to be the most persistent and most commonly applied one throughout the archaic and early classical periods. In the old comedy these adverbials indicate duration of actions, states and events denoted by the following verbs: “lend” (ὀλίγον χρόνον χρήσας, Ar. fr. 581. 11 K-A), “abuse” (πολὺν χρόνον σκῆπτρα τρίψειν, Ar. Av. 633f.), “drink” (Ar. Ach. 141 τοῦτον ἔπινον τὸν χρόνον), “urinate” (πολὺν χρόνον οὐρεῖς, Ar. Th. 615), “endure” (ἀλλ’ ἀνάσχεσθ’ ... ἔτι ὀλίγον χρόνον, Ar. Lys. 766),⁹²⁶ “remain” (ὀλίγον μεῖναι χρόνον, Ar. Eq. 667), “wait” (ἐπανάμεινόν μ’ ὀλίγον χρόνον, Ar. Nu. 803), “plot against” (ὁμῶν ἐπιβουλεύοντε πολὺν ἤδη χρόνον, Ar. Pax, 407), “be somewhere” (χρόνον ... ἂν ἤμεν ... πολὺν, Ar. Ach. 136), “be away” (ἦν ἀφ’ ἡμῶν τὸν πολὺν τοῦτον χρόνον, Ar. Pax,

⁹²⁵ The nominative form of the noun appears in Ar. fr. 593. 11 K-A (see also genitive τοσοῦτου χρόνου in line 10). Its reading in fr. 695. 3 is controversial (Casaubon, Kock, PCG read χορός, Nauck καιρός).

⁹²⁶ Cf. the usage of the adverbial τὸν πρότερον χρόνον “during the time before” in a similar context (Ar. Lys. 507: ἡμεῖς τὸν μὲν πρότερον ... χρόνον ἐξηνείχομεθ’ [ἐξηνείχομεθ’ Blaydes, duce Reisig: ἡνείχομεθα Γρ: ἡνείχομεθα R]).

601), “live together” (ξυνὼν πολλὸν χρόνον, Ar. Av. 200), “hoodwink unnoticed” (πολλοῦ πολλὸν με χρόνον ἐλελήθεις ἐγκρυφιάζων, Ar. Eq. 822), “cheat” (ὅσον με παρεκόπτου χρόνον, Ar. Eq. 859), “be ruined and worn out” (ἱκανὸν χρόνον ἀπολλύμεθα καὶ κατατετρίμμεθα πλανώμενοι, Ar. Pax, 354), “be uncelebrated” (ἀνοργίαστά σοι χρόνον τοσοῦτόν ἐστιν, Ar. Lys. 899), “be grieved at” (βαρέως φέρειν πολλὸν ἤδη χρόνον, Ar. Th. 385), “make a peace treaty” (τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον σπουδᾶς ποιήσασθαι, Ar. Th. 1160),⁹²⁷ “keep together” (συνέχης ἀμὲ πολλὸν χρόνον, Ar. Lys. 1265), “hang on to” (οὐ κατέξω ταῦτα τὸν πλείω χρόνον, Ar. Ra. 160), “stay in one’s head” (ἐν τῇ κεφαλῇ ἐμμένει πολλὸν χρόνον, Ar. Ec. 1120), “regain sight” (ἀναβλέψης μικρὸν χρόνον, Ar. Pl. 126). This kind of adverbial may also be determined in respect of tense (Ar. Pl. 1093): ἱκανὸν πρότερον χρόνον “long enough in the past” and τὸν πρότερον χρόνον “in the time before” (Ar. Lys. 507). In a fragment of “Epicharmus” (170. 14f. Kaibel = Pseudepicharmeia 276. 7f. K-A) the accusative adverbial πάντα τὸν χρόνον indicates the *permanence* of change in human life (ὁ μὲν γὰρ αὖξεθ’, ὁ δὲ γὰ μὲν φθίνει / ἐν μεταλλαγῇ δὲ πάντες ἐντὶ πάντα τὸν χρόνον “one grows and other decays, all are in change all the time”).⁹²⁸ The same adverbial refers to “all time to come” in Ar. Nu. 463f. (τὸν πάντα χρόνον μετ’ ἐμοῦ ζηλωτότατον βίον ... διάξεις “for the rest of time you will lead with me the most envied life”).

The accusative χρόνον is also used as a *direct object* with the verbs διάγειν (Ar. V. 1006 ὥσθ’ ἡδέως διάγειν σὲ τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον “so that you will spend the rest of

⁹²⁷ The meaning of the adverbial τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον is “‘for the time that remains’, i.e. ‘for ever’. An occasional *metri gratia* variant of the far more common τὸ λοιπόν” (Austin and Olson 2004, 337 (ad 1160-61). Cf. Cratin. fr. 26 K-A: ἵνα σιωπῇ τῆς τέχνης ῥάζωσι τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον “so that they may silently snarl at the art for the rest of time”).

⁹²⁸ Cf. l. 11f. K-A: καὶ τὸ δὴ κἀγὼ χθὲς ἄλλοι καὶ νῦν ἄλλοι τελέθομες, / καὶ θὺς ἄλλοι κοῦποχ’ οὗτοί καττὸν <αὐτὸν αὖ> λόγον. Cf. Eur. fr. 391 K-A: ἦ πολλὰ γ’ ἐν μακρῷ χρόνῳ γίγνεται/ μεταλλάγη τε πραγμάτων (for μεταλλάγη τε MSS have μεταλλαγεται i.e. μεταλλαγαί τε).

your life pleasantly”) and (most probably)⁹²⁹ (ἐν)διατρίβειν (Ar. *Nu.* 198f. ἀλλ’ οὐχ οἶόν τ’ αὐτοῖσι πρὸς τὸν ἀέρα / ἔξω διατρίβειν πολλὸν ἄγαν ἐστὶν χρόνον “but it is not allowed to them to spend too much time outside in the air” and Ar. *Ra.* 714 χρόνον ἐνδιατρίψει).⁹³⁰ In addition to these usages, there is a single instance of a previously unrecorded prepositional expression with the accusative, ὑπ’ αὐτὸν τὸν χρόνον “about the same time” (Ar. *Ach.* 139).

The dative form is used adverbially. It most commonly implies the sense of “passage of time” and indicates that the action, state or situation designated by the verb occurs “in time”, “eventually” (τῷ χρόνῳ [ποτ’]).⁹³¹ We find it in the familiar context of the execution of divine justice: when in the *Clouds* Strepsiades mocks the idea of swearing an oath before the gods to back his denial of debt to Pasiās (1240f.), the creditor warns him: “I swear that in time you will pay the penalty” (1242 ἢ μὴν σὺ τούτων τῷ χρόνῳ δώσεις δίκην). In the comic context, however, divine justice does not play the part it has in tragedy and the idea of eventual punishment for wrongdoings does not have the tragic proverbial value (cf. especially A. *Supp.* 732f., E. fr. 1131. 4 N (=Trag. ad. 624 K-S)). It appears adapted to specific comic purposes, expressed with a hint of irony, although apparently couched in formal idiom. So for example Pheidippides introduces his ironic warning to his father (which announces the *peripeteia* of the play), that he will regret investing in his son (i.e. Pheidippides himself), with the opening phrase of a serious oath (*Nu.* 865): ἢ μὴν⁹³² σὺ τούτοις τῷ χρόνῳ ποτ’ ἀχθέσει “I swear you will regret this one day”. A version of the idea of eventual punishment appears in the fragmentary context of Aristophanes’ *Banqueters* as well, where an old

⁹²⁹ διατρίβω can also be intransitive. See LSJ, s.v.

⁹³⁰ This verb regularly takes the nouns denoting “life” as its object (see Ar. *Nu.* 463f.).

⁹³¹ [τῷ] χρόνῳ ποτ’ appears in S. *Ant.* 303, *El.* 1013, *Aj.* 1082, *Ph.* 1041, E. *Hipp.* 1181.

⁹³² See LSJ, s.v. ἢ i 1: “esp. ἢ μὴν used in oaths and asseverations, *Il.* 2. 291, 7. 393, A. *Pr.* 73, 168, etc.”

man and his son challenge each other to interpret specifically coined terminology (fr. 205. 3 K-A): ἤ μὲν ἴσως σὺ καταπλιγήσει τῷ χρόνῳ “I’m pretty sure you’ll be tripped up eventually” (the verb is said to come from orators).⁹³³ Another instance of a familiar poetic motif is found in a fragment of Aristophanes preserved by Photius in the explanation of the form ἀμαυροῖς (652 K-A): σαντὸν ἀμαυροῖς, ὥστε λήσει<ς> τῷ χρόνῳ “but you obscure yourself, so that in time you will be forgotten.” This closely resembles Sophocles’ fr. 954 R, where time is said to obscure everything and take it into oblivion, and is also comparable to Simonides’ encomium to the fallen of Thermopylae (531 *PMG*). In addition to the passages mentioned, the adverbial τῷ χρόνῳ also refers to “achieving agreement” (Ar. *Nu.* 66 τῷ χρόνῳ κοινῇ ξυνέβημεν) and “scaring away” in time (Ar. *V.* 460 ἀποσοβήσιν τῷ χρόνῳ).

The prepositional expression ἐν μακρῷ χρόνῳ νυκτός “through the long watches of the night” (Ar. *Ra.* 931) is clearly adapted from Euripides’ νυκτὸς ἐν μακρῷ χρόνῳ (*Hipp.* 375f.), but while Euripides uses it to refer to Phaedra’s sleepless worrying over human sufferings, Aristophanes comically applies it to Dionysus’ long contemplations on a fantastic being (ἱππαλεκτρύων).⁹³⁴ The adverbial phrase ἐν ἀκαρεῖ χρόνῳ, “in no time” (lit. “in time too short to cut”), indicates a quick loss of wealth in the hands of a fool (Ar. *Pl.* 244) and is equivalent to ἐν μικρῷ χρόνῳ, ἐν βραχεῖ χρόνῳ which we have already come across.⁹³⁵ The quantified πολλοστῷ χρόνῳ signifies a “very long period of time *after which*” the chorus of peasants in *Peace* 559 hopes to return to their beloved orchards and fields.⁹³⁶

⁹³³ Line 4: τὸ καταπλιγήσει τοῦτο παρὰ τῶν ῥητόρων.

⁹³⁴ See Del Corno 1985, 213 (ad 931).

⁹³⁵ E.g. Pi. *O.* 12, 11-12a, A. *Pers.* 713, S. fr. 646 R. See Holzinger von Weidich 1940, 91f.

⁹³⁶ Cf. e.g. S. *El.* 1273, *Tr.* 227, *Ph.* 598.

There is also an instance of a tense-determining χρόνος-phrase signifying “time when” (Ar. *Ra.* 705 ὕστερῳ χρόνῳ “at a later time”). The only extant example of a plural form of the noun in comedy, the dative χρόνοισιν, refers to “age” (Ar. *Ec.* 637 πατέρας <γὰρ> ἅπαντας τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους αὐτῶν εἶναι τοῖσι χρόνοισιν νομιοῦσιν “they will regard all men older than themselves as their fathers, (reckoning) by the time-relationships”).⁹³⁷

When it comes to the genitive form χρόνου, we recognise several typical usages. Firstly, it appears either on its own or paired with a quantifying adjective to signify “(long) time since when”: Ar. *Eq.* 943-44 (οἷος οὐδεὶς πῶ χρόνου ἀνὴρ γεγένηται “such as no man has been since a while”),⁹³⁸ Ar. *Th.* 806 (χρόνου πολλοῦ ... ὑμῶν οὐδεὶς ἐγχειρεῖ πολεμίζειν “it has been a long time since any of you has attempted to compete”), Ar. *Pl.* 98 (πολλοῦ γὰρ αὐτοὺς οὐχ ἑώρακ’ ἐγὼ / πῶ χρόνου “I have not seen them since a long time now”). The same sense is found in the question πόσου χρόνου “how long has it been since” (Ar. *Ach.* 83 and Eup. fr. 193. 1 K-A). Secondly, the genitive χρόνου occurs in the prepositional expressions διὰ χρόνου “after a time, after a while” (Ar. *V.* 1252, *Pax.* 570, 710, *Lys.* 904, *Pl.* 1055) or διὰ πολλοῦ χρόνου “after a long time” (Ar. *V.* 1476 and *Pl.* 1045).⁹³⁹ Finally, there are two instances of the genitive ἐκείνου τοῦ χρόνου, denoting “that past time”, which appear preceded by two different prepositions. In the *Birds* 1518 the past time the phrase refers to is implied by the context:

θύει γὰρ οὐδεὶς οὐδὲν ἀνθρώπων ἔτι

⁹³⁷ The dative form χρόνοισιν seems to have an instrumental use here. Plural is used because many different people are involved; χρόνοι refers to their ages. See Leeuwen 1905, 89 (ad 637): “τοῖσι χρόνοισιν] aetatis habita ratione.” Cf. Ussher 1973, 164.

⁹³⁸ See Neil 1901, 133 (ad 943): “Genitives of ‘time since when’ are common with a numeral or vaguer adjective, πέντε ἐτῶν, πολλοῦ χρόνου, etc.; χρόνου alone is partly excused by πῶ (...), but no other parallel is quoted except the curiosity ἀκάθαρτον in Lucian, *Lexiph.* 19 by Kock.”

⁹³⁹ See also the question ποίου χρόνου in Ar. *Pl.* 1046, which refers to the time-phrase in 1045.

θεοῖσιν, οὐδὲ κνῖσα μηρίων ἄπο

ἀνῆλθεν ὡς ἡμᾶς ἀπ' ἐκείνου τοῦ χρόνου.⁹⁴⁰

“None of the human race sacrifices anything

To the gods any more, nor has any aroma

From thigh-bones come up to us since that time.” (trans. Sommerstein)⁹⁴¹

In Eupolis' fr. 130 K-A the phrase is used to describe the generals “of the past” (ἐκ ἐκείνου τοῦ χρόνου).

A particular usage of the the genitive χρόνου is of special interest for the investigation of the imagery of time in early Greek literature. In the comic dialogue between Strepsiades and Amynias in the *Clouds*, the latter character explains that interest (ὁ τόκος) is the tendency of one's debt to grow “day by day and month by month as time flows on” (1287ff. κατὰ μῆνα καὶ καθ' ἡμέραν / πλέον πλέον τὰργύριον ἀεὶ γίγνεται, / ὑπορρέοντος τοῦ χρόνου). Apart from being represented as consisting of days and months, time is here pictured as a stream,⁹⁴² as in some other fifth-century dramatic passages, such as Aeschylus' οὐπιρρέων χρόνος “time flowing on” (*Eu.* 853)⁹⁴³ and Critias' ever-flowing stream of time, which constantly renews itself (43 fr. 3 *TrGF*).⁹⁴⁴ We can also compare Pindar's wavelike αἰών in *I.* 3. 18 and 8. 14 (see above, p. 211ff.). Similarly, time is envisaged as advancing in the above mentioned *Frogs* passages (100 and 311), where Euripides' image of the foot of time is parodied, and it is described as going forward, ἰὼν (πὸρσῳ), in *Pi. O.* 10. 55 and *S. OC* 618.

⁹⁴⁰ Cf. *Av.* 920: ταυτὶ σὺ πότε ἐποίησας; ἀπὸ ποίου χρόνου; “When did you compose these? Beginning when?”

⁹⁴¹ Sommerstein 1987. The temporal period the phrase refers to is implied in 1515 (ἐξ οὗπερ ὑμεῖς ᾠκίσσατε τὸν ἄερα).

⁹⁴² Teuffel 1856, 164 (ad loc.): “ὑπορρ. χρ. tempus quod dum quid aliud fit (sensim) elabatur.”

⁹⁴³ Envisaged as a bearer of fortunes: οὐπιρρέων γὰρ τιμιώτερος χρόνος / ἔσται πολίταις τοῖσδε.

⁹⁴⁴ Cf. West 1983a, 191, n. 41 for additional evidence of the same conception. West suggests that “Heraclitus' image of the river into which one cannot step twice is a related idea” (ibid). He links the river-image of time to its representation as a snake-god in the Orphic Hieronyman theogony (loc. cit.).

The numerous and often picturesque representations of time found in fifth-century drama and the rich semantic content of the term χρόνος clearly indicate that the early dramatic authors were fascinated with the phenomenon of time and its intellectual and poetic potential. They might have occasionally borrowed ideas from some current philosophical doctrines, which further enriched their diverse and lively imagery of time.

ΑΙΩΝ IN DRAMA

The usages of αἰών in fifth-century drama, although not as numerous as those of χρόνος, are representative of the word's semantic application throughout archaic and early classical Greek literature. In the sixty-one instances in which it appears, αἰών exhibits all the different senses I have encountered in my research so far as well as some meanings not found before.⁹⁴⁵ This section will therefore serve as a kind of retrospective of the early meanings of αἰών.

i) "Vital force"

The majority of early epic usages of αἰών clearly reflect the meaning "vital force". In the Homeric poems αἰών is envisaged as *something* within the body which gives it strength and vigour and it is described as "flowing away" and "being wasted away" (Hom. ε 152, 160f., σ 204), which results in decrease of one's vital energy. It is occasionally represented as "leaving" the body altogether (Hom. E 685, Π 453, η 225) and some epic heroes are "deprived" of it (Hom. ι 523, X 58, [Hes.] Sc. 331). These instances of *definite loss* of one's "vital force" point to the death of the body. We find traces of this early usage in fifth-century tragedy as well: in *Prometheus Bound*, Prometheus prophesies to Io that the descendants of Epaphus, the son she will have with Zeus – fifty women fleeing marriage with their cousins and the men pursuing them – will return to Argos. There, however, "each woman will deprive her husband of his vital

⁹⁴⁵ A single example of αἰών denoting "generation", as a collective description of people born and living at about the same time (see *OED*, s.v. "generation" 5a, particularly 6a), is found in A. *Th.* 744: παλαιγενῇ γὰρ λέγω / παρβασίαν ὠκύποινον / αἰῶνα δ' ἐς τρίτον μένειν "For I speak of the transgression born long ago, punished swiftly, but remaining to the third generation" (trans. Sommerstein)

force” by the stroke of a sword (PV 862 γυνή γὰρ ἄνδρ’ ἕκαστον αἰῶνος στερεῖ,⁹⁴⁶ / δίθηκτον ἐν σφαγῇσι βάψασα ξίφος).⁹⁴⁷ In addition to this, the glossographer Hesychius (s.v. αἰών) preserves a short phrase from Euripides’ *Philoctetes* (fr. 801 K): ἀπέπνευσεν αἰῶνα “has breathed forth vital force”. This association of αἰών with breath is unprecedented and Hesychius explains it as resulting from the identification of αἰών with ψυχή (αἰῶνα τὴν ψυχὴν λέγει).⁹⁴⁸

ii) “Duration of life, lifetime”

Already in its earliest recorded usages in the Homeric poems αἰών exhibits a tendency towards assuming a durative sense “lifetime”, and the notion of *duration* (of *vitality* or *actuality*) is identifiable in the semantic core of the multilingual word-family originating from the IE root **aiw-*. Besides, Greek αἰών gradually adopts the general sense “life”, which refers to quality and duration of individual existence, and both these senses of “life” are expressed by αἰών in many dramatic passages (this general sense is the prevailing semantic application of the word in fifth-century tragedy). So, for example, the chorus of elders in Aeschylus’ *Persians* react to the messenger’s news about the Persian defeat by condemning their own *longevity*.⁹⁴⁹ They wish they did not live to hear about the disaster of the Persian army (262ff. ἦ μακροβίωτος ὁδε γέ τις αἰῶν

⁹⁴⁶ The synonymous epic verbs and expressions are εὖνιν ποιεῖν (ι 523) and ἀμέρδεν (X 58, [Hes.] Sc. 331).

⁹⁴⁷ A strike of lightning is mentioned as the cause of Semele’s death in a passage of Euripides’ *Bacchae*. Simultaneously with giving birth to Dionysus, Semele “left her life at the stroke of thunder” (E. *Bacch.* 93: λιποῦς αἰῶνα κεραυνίῳ πλαγαῖ). Although her dying is described through inversion of the typical epic expression, αἰών can hardly be interpreted as having the typical epic meaning “vital force” here.

⁹⁴⁸ For the connection of ψυχή with breath/breathing see DELG s.v. ψυχή: “nettement sentie comme un souffle, d’où association traditionnelle avec ἀπο-, ἐκ-πνεῖν (Simon. 48, 2 Page, Pi. N. 1, 47, E. *Or.* 1163, etc.)”. Cf. Hom. E 696f.: τὸν δ’ ἔλιπε ψυχή, κατὰ δ’ ὀφθαλμῶν κέχντ’ ἀχλὺς. / αὐτὶς δ’ ἀμπνύθη... See also Pi. I 7. 34: εὐανθέ’ ἀπέπνευσας ἀλικίαν, S. *Aj.* 1031: ἔστ’ ἀπέψυξεν βίον.

⁹⁴⁹ In a passage of Euripides’ *Bacchae*, however, “human life” is pronounced “too short to think non-mortal thoughts (396f. τό τε μὴ θνητὰ φρονεῖν / βραχὺς αἰών).

ἐφάνθη γεραιοῖς/ ἀκούειν τόδε πῆμ' ἄελπτον).⁹⁵⁰ The longevity of the Persian elders is expressed by the pleonastic phrase μακροβίωτος αἰών, “long-lived life,” and expressions of this kind are not uncommon in tragedy. Compound adjectives whose second part is -αἰών often appear paired with nouns signifying “life” (S. *OT* 518 βίου μακράϊωνος,⁹⁵¹ S. *Tr.* 81 βίοτον εὐαίων', E. *Supp.* 960 δυσαίων ὁ βίος, E. *Hel.* 213 αἰὼν δυσαίων τις). The first part of these compound adjectives colours the semantic nuance of -αἰών into determining quality or quantity of existence (S. *OC* 151f. δυσαίων μακράϊων θ', ὅσ' ἐπείκασαι “it seems your life has been unfortunate and long”, E. *Ion*, 125 and 142 εὐαίων, εὐαίων εἶης “may you be fortunate”, E. *Bacch.* 426 εὐαίωνα διαζῆν “to live a happy life”). In addition to this, the first part of these compound adjectives occasionally takes over semantically, as in S. fr. 592. 3 R (τὸν εὐαίωνα πλοῦτον “wealth which brings happiness”),⁹⁵² E. *IA* 550 (εὐαίονι πότμωι “happy fortune”), and S. *Aj.* 193 (μακράϊονι ... ἀγωνίωι σχολᾷ “long-lasting pause from battle”).

The sense of temporal extension of life is stressed in two Euripidean passages containing αἰών: in *Alcestis* 337 Admetus declares he will love his wife, who is sacrificing herself so he can live, “for as long as his life extends” (ἔστ' ἂν αἰὼν οὐμὸς ἀντέχηι). In quite a different context *Ion* criticises the Athenian political system by exposing the attitude of a tyrant (*Ion* 623ff.), “who stretches out his life in fear” (ὅστις δεδουκῶς καὶ περιβλέπων⁹⁵³ βίαν⁹⁵⁴ / αἰῶνα τείνει⁹⁵⁵).

⁹⁵⁰ See Hall 1996, 130 (ad 262-64): “The Greek is impossible to translate literally. The chorus say that as old men (γεραιοῖς) their own life (αἰών) has manifestly been (ἐφάνθη) lived too long (μακροβίωτος), since they have to hear about the unforeseen disaster.”

⁹⁵¹ Cf. A. fr. 350, 2 R: μακράϊωνας βίου and [Hes.] fr. 276. 4 M-W: μακρόν ... αἰῶνα βίοιο.

⁹⁵² Cf. S. *Ph.* 829f. (Υπνε) ... ἔλθοις εὐαίων, εὐαίων ὄναξ “come happy and giving happiness”. See schol. ad loc.: εὐαίων· εὐμενής, καλῶς ἄγων ἡμῖν τὸν αἰῶνα.

⁹⁵³ περιβλέπων Stob., παραβλέπων LP.

⁹⁵⁴ βίαν Steph.; βίον LP; βίου N.

⁹⁵⁵ Cf. A. *Pers.* 46: τείνοντα χρόνον (see p. 244 above).

In the above section on χρόνος in tragedy I mentioned the phenomenon I called *internalisation of time*, which refers to the idea, recognisable in several tragic contexts involving χρόνος, that man and his life *grow (old) together*. So, for example, Sophocles describes Oedipus' "(life)time" as his companion, pointing to the experience the king's old age has brought him (S. OC 7).⁹⁵⁶ Similarly, the chorus in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, consisting of old men of Argos, professes to have the authority to tell of the auspicious departure of the Greek expedition against Troy, "for my innate lifetime still inspires me with divine power of persuasion, the prowess of songs" (105f. ἔτι γὰρ θεόθεν καταπνεῖει / πειθῶ, μολπᾶν ἀλκᾶν, σύμφυτος αἰών). The scholiast interprets the phrase σύμφυτος αἰών with γῆρας, the "old age" characteristic of the chorus: even though they are old, the men of Argos are still capable of singing convincingly about the past.⁹⁵⁷ Hartung rightly compares E. HF 678 ἔτι τοι γέρων ἀοιδὸς κελαδῶ⁹⁵⁸ μναμοσύναν, "the aged singer still sings of Mnemosyne".⁹⁵⁹ In both passages the damage that ageing has on memory may be implied.⁹⁶⁰ The meaning of σύμφυτος αἰών in Ag. 106, referring to the "old age" of the chorus, may further be compared to the mention of Iphigenia's "maiden life" (αἰῶνα⁹⁶¹ παρθένειον) in Ag. 229.

In addition to the instances cited, αἰών denotes "lifetime" in the words of the chorus of Theban maidens in the *Seven against Thebes* (Th. 219): μήποτ' ἐμὸν κατ'

⁹⁵⁶ See above, p. 250f.

⁹⁵⁷ Schol. ad 105-7: ὁ γὰρ σύμφυτός μοι αἰών, ὃ ἐστὶ τὸ γῆρας, διὰ τὴν εἰς θεοὺς πειθῶ μολπὴν μοι καὶ ἀλκὴν καταπνεῖ· ὃ ἐστὶν εἰ καὶ γέρων εἰμὶ ὅμως μέλπω τὰ γεγονότα· πέποιθα γὰρ ὅτι εἰς πέρας αὐτὰ ἄξουσιν οἱ θεοί. M

⁹⁵⁸ κελαδῶ Steph.; κελαδεῖ L.

⁹⁵⁹ Hartung 1853, 176.

⁹⁶⁰ See, however, Barlow 1996, 154 (ad 678): "γέρων ἀοιδὸς literally 'an old singer'. The same phrase is used earlier in the play at 110 where the old singer is similarly compared with the old swan which sings most sweetly before its death."

⁹⁶¹ See Fraenkel 1950a, 131f. for the alternative reading αἰῶ τε, suggested in place of αἰῶνα by Müller. The accusative αἰῶ has been restored in A. Ch. 350 as well (by Ahrens): ἐπιστρεπτὸν αἰῶ "life to be admired". Orestes uses these words to describe that which he and his sister would have inherited as a memory of their father, had he been killed at Ilium.

αἰῶνα λίποι θεῶν / ἄδε πανάγυρις “never, so long as I live, may this divine assembly abandon us”. The same sense of αἰών is found in the statement of the chorus of Erinyes in the *Eumenides*, who profess that “the man who has clean hands” suffers no wrath from them and “goes through life unharmed” (*Eu.* 315: ἀσινῆς δ’ αἰῶνα δοιχνεῖ).⁹⁶²

ii a) Δι’ αἰῶνος

Αἰών is commonly found to imply the durative aspect of “life” in the prepositional expression δι’ αἰῶνος, which occurs nine times in fifth-century tragedy. I already mentioned its usage in Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon*, in a statement of the impossibility of permanent happiness for humans (553f.): τίς δὲ πλὴν θεῶν, ἅπαντ’ ἀπήμων τὸν δι’ αἰῶνος χρόνον; “who, save for the gods, is free from suffering throughout his life?” In this example the adverbial accusative ἅπαντ’ ... χρόνον indicates the notion of continuity, whereas the prepositional expression δι’ αἰῶνος points to the entirety of the individual life (“continually throughout life”).⁹⁶³ Degani explains that the phrase δι’ αἰῶνος means “from one end of life to the other”,⁹⁶⁴ but these ends are not always the beginning and end of one’s life. In the *Persians* 1008 δι’ αἰῶνος is used attributively to denote “lifelong good fortune” of the Persians, which has now been unexpectedly⁹⁶⁵ denied to them (πεπλήγμεθ’ ὅϊα δι’ αἰῶνος† τύχαι “we have been struck down from our lifelong (good) fortune”).⁹⁶⁶ The phrase refers to the permanence of their happiness

⁹⁶² See Sommerstein 1989, 137 (ad 315): “Contrast *Ag.* 1341-2 where it is strongly implied, and *Ch.* 1018-20 where it is asserted, that no mortal life is wholly ἀσινῆς. The Erinyes themselves will later threaten innocent Athenians with their wrath (711ff., 778ff.).”

⁹⁶³ The phrase has the same implication in the context of Epaphus’ birth, *A. Supp.* 581f.: γείνατο παῖδ’ ἀμεμφοῖ, / δι’ αἰῶνος μακροῦ πάνολβον “she gave birth to a perfect child, blessed throughout his long life.” Although “long”, Epaphus’ αἰών is not “unceasing” like that of his father (see below, *A. Supp.* 574).

⁹⁶⁴ Degani 1961, 64.

⁹⁶⁵ Cf. *Pers.* 1005ff. and 1026f.

⁹⁶⁶ I translate West’s emendation of the problematic manuscript readings: πεπλήγμεθ’, οἱ, τᾶς δι’ αἰῶνος τύχας (West 1990, 95).

up until the defeat.⁹⁶⁷ We can compare the attributive usage of δι' αἰῶνος in the *Eumenides*, in a choral passage that describes the destiny of the unrighteous man by using the metaphor of his sailing through choppy waters. Eventually, “he fails to surmount the crest of the wave” (562) and “wrecks the ship of his former lifelong prosperity on the reef of Justice and perishes” (563ff. δι' αἰῶνος δὲ τὸν πρὶν ὄλβον / ἔρματι προσβαλὼν Δίκας / ὤλετ').⁹⁶⁸ In Sophocles' *Electra*, however, the phrase seems to refer to the future (1024 ἄσκει τοιαύτην νοῦν δι' αἰῶνος μένειν “strive to keep such a mind throughout your life”, i.e. for the rest of your life). The same may be said about the words of the chorus in Euripides' *Alcestis*, expressing their wish for a loyal wife (475 ἔμοιγ' ἄλυπος δι' αἰῶνος ἂν ξυνεῖη “she would be with me throughout life, without causing me pain”).⁹⁶⁹ These tense-references are, however, of no essence for the semantic application of this αἰών-expression; δι' αἰῶνος may be said to emphasise the *permanence* of the state or action to which it refers (when used adverbially, it is best rendered by “always” and when attributively, by “permanent”). The ultimate expression of the notion of permanence is found in Aeschylus' *Suppliants*, where the phrase is attributed to the rule of Zeus “throughout his unstoppable life” (574 δι' αἰῶνος ... ἀπαύστου).

A somewhat puzzling case of δι' αἰῶνος occurs in Euripides' *Hippolytus*, in Artemis' announcement of the future cult in Hippolytus' honour. The goddess professes

⁹⁶⁷ In the *Choephoroi* 26 the expression may be said to refer to the lifetime of the slave-women until the moment of their speaking. Actually, the whole sentence indicates the *permanence* of their misery: δι' αἰῶνος δ' ἰγμοῖσι βόσκειται κέαρ “throughout my life my heart is fed with lamentation”. See, however, Degani 1961, 65: “dice il coro alludendo alle presenti dolorose circostanze.”

⁹⁶⁸ See Sommerstein 1989, 182: “δι' αἰῶνος: to be taken with τὸν πρὶν ὄλβον, ‘his former prosperity that had lasted all his life long’. (...) Editors have mostly joined δι' αἰῶνος ... ὤλετ', but the gap between adverbial phrase and verb is then so wide that when sung the words could hardly be understood without a (rhythmically undesirable) pause after δέ.” Cf. schol. ad loc. τὸν πολυχρόνιον δὲ ὄλβον ἑαυτοῦ προσκρούσας τῷ βραχεῖ τῆς δίκης ὤλετο.

⁹⁶⁹ See Parker 2007, 154 (ad 474-75): “ἄλυπος: the word can mean ‘free from pain’ (...) or ‘not causing pain’ (...). The latter must be the meaning here, since in this context the wife's happiness is irrelevant.”

that young girls will cut their hair before marriage and dedicate it to Hippolytus (1426f.) δι' αἰῶνος μακροῦ / πένθη μέγιστα δακρύων καρπουμένωι “who will enjoy the fruits of the greatest mourning of their tears over a long time.” In this context, which seems to conflate two different customs belonging to the cult (dedication of hair before marriage and its cutting in mourning),⁹⁷⁰ αἰών cannot be taken to refer either to the lives of the girls or to that of Hippolytus, but to *time* in general. Semantically, we can compare the usage of μακρὸς αἰών in *Medea* 429f.: μακρὸς δ' αἰὼν ἔχει / πολλὰ μὲν ἀμετέραν ἀνδρῶν τε μοῖραν εἰπεῖν “time in its long expanse can say many things of men’s lot as well as of women’s”.⁹⁷¹ These examples demonstrate another type of generalisation of the meaning of αἰών: as if accumulating in itself a series of individual lifetimes, αἰών comes to denote the superordinate notion “time”.

iii) Quality of life

In a passage of Euripides’ *Hecuba* we find references to quality and quantity of “life” united in the word αἰών: after Agamemnon asks Hecuba if a “free life” (754f. ἐλεύθερον αἰῶνα) is what she is after, Hecuba replies that she is willing to be a slave “for the rest of her life” (757 αἰῶνα τὸν σύμπαντα, literally, “her whole life”) provided she has her revenge.⁹⁷²

In a number of dramatic passages αἰών appears combined with various epithets that define quality of “life”. The majority of these epithets can be provisionally classified as ‘negative’ or ‘positive’. Negative descriptions of life appear in connection with tragic individuals: Electra chose a “life of lamentation” (*S. El.* 1086 πάγκλαντον

⁹⁷⁰ See Halleran 1995, 266 (ad 1426).

⁹⁷¹ Trans. Kovacs 2001.

⁹⁷² See Gregory 1999, 135: “Hecuba is not exhibiting a degraded preference for a life of slavery. Rather, her statement is a variation on conventional poetic avowals of willingness to die upon the attainment of some cherished goal.”

αἰῶνα),⁹⁷³ Ismene mourns her “wretched life” (S. *OC* 1736 αἰῶνα τλάμον’) and Antigone her “piteous lonely life” (E. *Ph.* 1519ff. αἶλινον ... μονάδ’ αἰῶνα); Philoctetes wishes to escape his “hated life” (S. *Ph.* 1348 στυγνὸς αἰών) and Euadne also longs for Hades desiring to end the suffering of her life (E. *Supp.* 1000-5 πρὸς σ’ ἔβαν .../ἐς Ἅιδαν καταλύσουσ’ ἔμμοχθον / βίον αἰῶνός τε πόνους). Most commonly, however, this type of expression appears in reflections on the disadvantages of the human condition in general: in Euripides’ *Orestes* the chorus remind us that no human is safe from misfortunes and point to the uncertainty of human life labelling it “unstable” (981 βροτῶν δ’ ὁ πᾶς ἀστάθμητος αἰών).⁹⁷⁴ The chorus in the *Hippolytus* express the same thought by describing life as “always wandering” (1109f. μετὰ δ’ ἵσταται ἀνδράσιν αἰών / πολυπλάνητος αἰεὶ), and the changeability of human fortunes is also strikingly referred to by the chorus of slave women in the *Iphigenia in Tauris*. They accentuate the “heavy life” of those who experience misery after happiness (1122 τὸ δὲ μετ’ εὐτυχίας κακοῦσθαι θνατοῖς βαρὺς αἰών).⁹⁷⁵ Deianeira in Sophocles’ *Trachiniae* sums up the same realisation with this ancient saying (2f.): οὐκ ἄν αἰὼν’ ἐκμάθοις βροτῶν / πρὶν ἄν θάνῃ τις, οὔτ’ εἰ χρηστὸς οὔ τ’ εἴ τωι κακός “you cannot judge a mortal’s life and know whether it is good or bad until he dies”.⁹⁷⁶ Although seemingly suggesting the opposite, the opening of the *makarismos* uttered by the chorus in the *Antigone* 583 “serves only as a brief foil to the negative alternative”:⁹⁷⁷ εὐδαίμονες οἷσι κακῶν ἄγευστος αἰών, “blessed are those whose life has not tasted of evil”. In reality, however, nobody is

⁹⁷³ In *Agamemnon* 715 the city of Ilium is said to have endured “a life of ruin and lamentation” (ἥπαμπρόσθη πολύθρηνον / αἰών’). For a discussion of the corrupted text see e.g. Fraenkel 1950a, 337 (ad 714f.).

⁹⁷⁴ Cf. E. fr. 803a K: ὁ γὰρ πᾶς ἀσθενὴς αἰὼν βροτοῖς “for the whole of mortals’ life is frail”.

⁹⁷⁵ The chorus in Sophocles’ *Philoctetes* point to the unhappiness of mortals whose life is not moderate (179: οἷς μὴ μέτριος αἰών). For different interpretation of μέτριος see Ussher 1990, 118.

⁹⁷⁶ Cf. Hdt. 1. 32. 5.

⁹⁷⁷ Griffith 1999, 223.

permanently happy. Apart from its changeability, human existence is also marked by its transience: while we can have second thoughts when it comes to the organisation of our homes, we can have no change of heart with regard to our life (E. *Supp.* 1082ff. ἀλλ' ἐν δόμοις μὲν ἦν τι μὴ καλῶς ἔχῃ / γνώμαισιν ὑστέραισιν ἐξορθούμεθα, / αἰῶνα δ' οὐκ ἔξεστιν).⁹⁷⁸ Finally, and more specifically, Euripides twice refers to exile as a “miserable life” (E. fr. 30. 2 Κ οἰκτρὸς τις αἰὼν πατρίδος ἐκλιπεῖν ὅρους) and a “life of helplessness, hard to live through” (E. *Med.* 646f. δῆτ' ἄπολις γενοίμαν / τὸν ἀμηχανίας ἔχουσα δυσπέρατον αἰὼν').⁹⁷⁹

As for the positive descriptions of αἰὼν, in the *Agamemnon* we read that the nightingale (Procne) was given a “sweet life without tears” by the gods (A. *Ag.* 1148 γλυκὺν τ' αἰῶνα κλαυμάτων ἄτερ). The same epithet is attached to the noun in the *Odyssey* (ε 152) as well as in the pseudo-Hesiodic *Scutum* (331), where αἰὼν denotes “vital force”. In the Aeschylean passage, however, γλυκὺν τ' αἰῶνα in Cassandra's words answers to ἀμφιθαλῆ κακοῖς ... βίον, “life abounding in evil”, the description of the destiny of Procne given by the chorus a few lines before (1144f.).⁹⁸⁰ A synonymous epithet is ascribed to αἰὼν in Euripides' fr. 239 Κ, albeit with a negative implication: ὁ δ' ἡδὺς αἰὼν ἢ κακὴ τ' ἀνανδρία / οὔτ' οἶκον οὔτε πόλιν ἀνορθώσειεν ἄν “a pleasant life and base unmanliness cannot restore a family or a city”. Finally, in two Euripidean instances the quality of life, denoted by αἰὼν, is directly linked to the experience of marriage: a “blessed life” (μακάριος αἰὼν) is ascribed to men who have well constituted marriages in *Orestes* 603 and the life of women who manage to ensure that their

⁹⁷⁸ Cf. Pi. *O.* 2. 15-17.

⁹⁷⁹ Mastronarde 2002, 279 (ad loc.): “the article here has the force ‘the one that exile entails’; since περᾶω may refer to motion across an expanse or motion across a limit and thus out of an expanse, it cannot be determined which sense is foremost here in δυσπέρατος.”

⁹⁸⁰ See Fraenkel 1950b, 525: “The same is true of αἰῶνα in the Herodotus passage, which I have just quoted (7. 46. 2): the whole conversation of Xerxes and Artabanus turns upon the ἀνθρώπων βίος.” Cf. Pi. *P.* 2. 26: γλυκὺν ἐλὼν βίον.

husbands do not resent the marriage yoke is pronounced “enviable “ (ζηλωτὸς αἰών) in *Medea* 243.

The chorus in *Andromache* ask Peleus “what life will you have in the future?” (1215 τίν’ αἰών’ ἐς τὸ λοιπὸν ἔξεις;) and he responds by describing the misery that awaits him “childless and alone”. In Sophocles’ *Ajax*, however, the same pronoun-noun combination refers to “life” envisaged as an active power closely connected with the notion of ‘destiny’ (641ff.):

ὦ τλᾶμον πάτερ, οἷαν σε μένει πυθέσθαι
παιδὸς δύσφορον ἄταν,
ἄν οὔπω τις ἔθρεψεν
αἰὼν Αἰακιδᾶν ἄτερθε τοῦδε.

“Wretched father, how grievous is your son’s doom,
which you have yet to hear about,
doom that life has never before
engendered for any of the Aeacidae except for him.”

The usage of αἰών in this instance can be compared to that in Pi. *O.* 9. 60, where αἰών is mentioned as “bringing doom of childlessness” to Locrus.

As I argued in the above discussion on αἰών in Pindar, the noun sometimes semantically approaches the idea of ‘destiny’(and ‘Destiny’): on the one hand, it may be applied to the *destined* content / length of *life*, which can be represented as affecting the individual it belongs to;⁹⁸¹ on the other hand, αἰών may refer to *course of life*, envisaged

⁹⁸¹ See e.g. Pi. *O.* 2. 10f. : αἰὼν δ’ ἔφεπε μόρσιμος, πλοῦτόν τε καὶ χάριν ἄγων. Cf. S. *Tr.* 34f.: τοιοῦτος αἰὼν εἰς δόμους τε καὶ δόμων / ἀεὶ τὸν ἄνδρ’ ἔπεμπε λατρεύοντά τωι. See Easterling 1982, 78 (ad 34): “τοιοῦτος αἰὼν balances 4ff. where D describes her own fortunes.”

as the bearer of things that befall us. These applications of αἰών can be recognised in fifth-century tragedy as well.

iv) Αἰών and destiny

iv a) Destined life(time)

Aeschylus in *Supplices* mentions μόρσιμος αἰών, the expression found twice in Pindar, who uses it with reference to *allotted timespan* (Pi. I 7. 41f.) and *allotted content of life* (O. 2. 10f.). In Aeschylus' *Supplices*, however, the phrase seems to indicate *allotted life* in general.⁹⁸² It refers to the future existence of Epaphus, which was (pre)determined by Zeus' touching Io (by which act Epaphus was conceived) and then fulfilled through the birth of the baby bearing the name derived from the touch (45ff. ἐπωνυμία δ' / ἐπεκραίνετο μόρσιμος αἰών / εὐλόγως, / Ἐπαφόν τ' ἐγέννασεν).

Quite contrary to this example, in which αἰών denotes "predestined life" that 'results' in Epaphus' being brought to this world, the noun is occasionally found to indicate the allotted posthumous existence which awaits the human in the underworld. So, for example, the chorus in Euripides' *Phoenissae* mourns over the dead bodies of Jocasta, Eteocles, and Polynices "who have received as their lot the lifespan of darkness" (1482-84 νεκρῶν τρισσῶν ... κοινῶι θανάτῳι / σκοτίαν αἰῶνα λαχόντων).⁹⁸³ Similarly, Iphigenia bids farewell to the light of the Sun, as she is getting ready for the darkness of death: "I have a different life, a different lot to live" (IA 1507f. ἕτερον αἰῶνα καὶ μοῖραν οἰκήσομεν).

⁹⁸² See Friis Johansen and Whittle 1980, 45 (ad 46): "so Weil ('vita fatis promissa') and Tucker ('a fated life')".

⁹⁸³ Mastronarde 1994, 562 (ad 1484): "αἰών is usually the shape and fortune of one's life before death, but here the epithet transfers the term to the afterlife, viewed as separate allotment of existence. Cf. IA 1507-8 ἕτερον ἕτερον αἰῶνα καὶ μοῖραν οἰκήσομεν; Med. 1039 ἐς ἄλλο σχῆμ' ἀποστάντες βίου; TrGF adesp. 279h. 1-2 μακρὸν δὲ τὸν κατὰ γᾶς αἰῶνα τελευτῶμεν βροτοί; Pindar I 7, 41-2 ἕκαλος ἔπειμι γῆρας ἐς τε τὸν μόρσιμον αἰῶνα (virtually 'death')."

However, in a surprising twist of expression, αἰών, which is mentioned as the object of “allotting” in *Phoenissae* 1484, appears as the subject of the same verb in a passage of *Helen* (211ff.):

αἰαῖ δαίμονος πολυστόνου

μοίρας τε σᾶς, γύναι.

αἰὼν δυσαίων⁹⁸⁴ τις

ἔλαχεν, ἔλαχεν, ὅτε σ' ἐτέκετο ματρόθεν

χιονόχρῳι κύκνου πτερῶι

Ζεὺς πρέπων δι' αἰθέρος.

“Alas, alas, for your mournful

fate and destiny, woman!

A miserable life received you [as its portion]

when Zeus begot you from your mother

shining through the air

on the wings of a snow-white swan.”

As Allan rightly remarks, “the Chorus see H.’s life ruled by a power (δαίμων; cf. 455, 669) and an apportioned lot (μοῖρα) that are equally full of sorrow (πολυστόνου). The notion that one’s destiny was set at birth leads naturally to an account of H.’s conception (213-16).”⁹⁸⁵ The unusual ‘reversed’ usage of αἰών, which seemingly represents it as a power ‘responsible’ for Helen’s destiny, is meant to stress her position of a “passive victim of external powers”,⁹⁸⁶ more specifically, of the circumstances of

⁹⁸⁴ Allan 2008, 176 (ad 213-14): “δυσ- or α- compound adjectives combined with a cognate noun or verb form a type of oxymoron popular in tragedy, e.g. 363 ἔργ’ ἀνεργ’, 690 γάμον ἄγαμον; cf. Fraenkel on Aesch. *Ag.* 1142 νόμον ἄνομον, Breitenbach (1934) 236-8.”

⁹⁸⁵ Op. cit., 175 (ad 211-28).

⁹⁸⁶ Allan 2008, 176.

her life. In the following example, however, αἰών assumes the role of active power, in a context that reveals the close kinship between the concepts denoted by χρόνος and αἰών.

iv b) Active power

In yet another tragic passage mentioning the theme of the changeability of human fortune (this time in the context of the joy caused by a change for the better)⁹⁸⁷ the chorus in Euripides' *Heraclidae* utter this gnomic statement (899f.):

πολλὰ γὰρ τίκτει Μοῖρα τελεσσιδῶ-
τειρ' Αἰών τε Χρόνου παῖς.

“for Fate that gives completion

and Life, the child of Time,

bring forth many things.”

The passage clearly differentiates between three personified powers, Destiny, Life, and Time. The first two are represented as bringing about change in human life.⁹⁸⁸ In addition to that, personified Time is said to be the father of Life, which brings to mind Wilamowitz's distinction between αἰών as time relative to human experience, i.e.

“lifetime”, and χρόνος as time absolutely.⁹⁸⁹ In Pindar's second Olympian personified Χρόνος is represented as “the father of all”, because everything takes place *in the course of time*, and Euripides calls Χρόνος “the ancient father of days” (*Supp.* 787).

Pindar also mentions that αἰών consists of “its rolling days” (*I.* 3. 18-18b), and

Sophocles describes it as consisting of months (*El.* 850ff.):

⁹⁸⁷ Cf. E. *Heracl.* 895ff.: *τερπνὸν δέ τι καὶ φίλων / ἄρ' εὐτυχίαν ἰδέσθαι / τῶν πάρος οὐ δοκούντων.*

⁹⁸⁸ Cf. E. fr. 575. 3 K: *μακρὸς γὰρ αἰὼν μυρίους τίκτει πόνοους* “long life brings about innumerable troubles”. The fragment as a whole tackles the subject of the disadvantages of a long life (cf. A. *Pers.* 262ff.). Note that αἰών is the subject of the verb τίκτω as in *Heracl.* 899f. (cf. S. *Aj.* 645: *ἔθρεψεν αἰών*).

⁹⁸⁹ Cf. above, p. 243 and n. 807.

κάγῳ τοῦδ' ἴστωρ, ὑπερίστωρ,
πανσύρτωι παμμήνωι πολλῶν
δεινῶν στυγνῶν τ' αἰῶνι.

“And I know that well, all too well,
with my life swept through all its months
full of troubles and terrors.”⁹⁹⁰

Just as in the Pindaric image of the *rolling course of life* (I. 3. 18 and 8. 15), this description of αἰών *sweeping through* its many months relates to the idea of passage of time (χρόνος) through its association with the image of a torrent.⁹⁹¹ Similarly, in Euripides' *Heracles* life (αἰών) is described as a “rolling stream” and, as such, it is represented as an active power which increases wealth of individuals (671f. ἀλλ' εἰλισσόμενός τις αἰ/ὼν⁹⁹² πλοῦτον μόνον αὔξει).⁹⁹³

v) Poetic periphrases

In addition to the usages mentioned so far, in fifth-century tragedy αἰών also appears in poetic periphrases, combined with personal pronouns, whose meaning it emphasises. In Euripides' *Phoenissae* Antigone is asking her father to show *himself* using this type of periphrasis (1532f. πάτερ γεραιέ, δεῖξον, / Οἰδιπόδα, σὸν αἰῶνα μέλεον)⁹⁹⁴ and the chorus in Aeschylus' *Choephoroe* explains that Clytaemnestra denied Agamemnon a proper burial in order to make his death unbearable *for Orestes* (442 μόρον κτίσαι

⁹⁹⁰ See Kells 1973, 158: “as a full sea ‘sweeps’ many waves, so Electra’s life is full of all the world’s troubles, endured over all the months of the year.”

⁹⁹¹ Finglass 2007, 367 compares M. Ant. 4. 43: ῥεῦμα βίαιον ὁ αἰών.

⁹⁹² Cf. Pi. I. 8. 15: αἰών ... ἐλίσσων βίου πόρον “roll life’s stream along” (LSJ, s.v. ἐλίσσω i 2), Pi. N. 6. 55: τὸ ἐλίσσόμενον αἰεὶ κυμάτων (of waves).

⁹⁹³ Cf. Pi. O. 2. 10f.

⁹⁹⁴ See Mastronarde 1994, 576 (ad 1532-33): “This is effectively followed by ὅς (‘you who ...’) rather than ὅν or ὅσον as in Π⁵, which would throw further emphasis on αἰῶνα (cf. ZPE 38 (1980) 34 with n. 62).”

μωμένα / ἄφερτον αἰῶνι σῶι).⁹⁹⁵ The same type of usage appears in the soldier's prayer to Cybele⁹⁹⁶ in Timotheus' *Persae* (127ff.):

†λίσσων χρυσοπλόκαμε

θεὰ Μᾶτερ ἱκνοῦμαι

ἐμὸν ἐμὸν αἰῶνα δυσέκφευκτον.

The opening of the prayer is corrupted. West fills the supposed lacuna by restoring the first person verb form (to conclude the preceding conditional) λίσσοί[μαν, and then introduces the imperative σῶσ]ον to open the prayer.⁹⁹⁷ The object of this request for help is the periphrasis ἐμὸν αἰῶνα, intended to mean simply “me”.⁹⁹⁸ This demands that the adjective δυσέκφευκτον is ascribed an active sense such as “finding it hard to escape”. The same adjective appears in line 119, where it probably has a passive meaning, and adjectives of this type, as Hordern puts it, “fluctuate freely in meaning (Fraenkel, *Nomina Agentis*, II 76; Ed. Fraenkel on *A. Ag.* 12, 238; Barrett on *E. Hipp.* 677-9)”.⁹⁹⁹

There are only two extant examples of αἰών in fifth-century comedy, one in Cratinus fr. 1.5 K-A αἰῶνα πάντα συνδιατρίψειν “spend all time with” (cf. *E. Hec.* 757) and one in Diocles (5th/4th century) fr. 14. 5 K-A μηδ' ἀγόμφιον ποτε / αἰῶνα τρίγηι “never to live toothless life”. The language of these fragments is high-flown, echoing

⁹⁹⁵ See Garvie 1986, 164 (ad 440-42): “‘seeking to make his death intolerable for you to live with’ (lit. ‘for your life’).”

⁹⁹⁶ Cf. Hordern 2002, 192 (ad 124): “Ματρὸς οὐρείας: ‘the Mountain Mother’, to be identified with Cybele; cf. h. Hom. 14. 1, Pi. Fr. 70b. 9 (Dith. 2), fr. 95. 3, Ar. Av. 746 Μητρὶ ὀρεΐαι, 873ff., etc.”

⁹⁹⁷ West 1982, 3.

⁹⁹⁸ E.g. Hordern 2002, 195, who notices that periphrasis is in general common for personal pronouns (e.g. *E. El.* 1195, *Ion* 1475, etc.) and compares *E. Alc.* 337 and *Ph.* 1532.

⁹⁹⁹ Hordern 2002, 190.

tragic style. Degani remarks that this sparse use in comedy confirms that αἰών is a literary or intellectual word in the fifth century, not an everyday one.¹⁰⁰⁰

* * *

In comparison to the earliest examined examples in the Homeric poems, the semantic scope of αἰών clearly broadened in the period covered by the present study. In fifth-century drama, the word exhibits several distinct meanings. The early epic “vital force” is still to be found in tragedy, while the general sense “life” gradually takes over, itself assuming different (specialised) semantic roles, guided by the contexts in which αἰών appears. In the fifth century, we find αἰών approaching and occasionally assuming the meaning “time”, normally denoted by χρόνος. This comes as a result of the conceptual similarity between the notions denoted by the two words that could perhaps be traced back to their earliest recorded senses, although at first sight the Homeric ideas of almost palpable “vital force” and a rather insubstantial “period of duration” seem completely unrelated. This will be discussed in the conclusion.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Degani 1961, 57.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

Of life and time

“In the headaches and in worry
Vaguely life leaks away,
And Time will have his fancy
To-morrow or To-day”

W. H. Auden, *As I Walked Out One Evening*

The above examination of the meanings of χρόνος and αἰών has led us through hundreds of passages of various literary works created by numerous authors in several genres during a period of around four centuries. It revealed the polysemantic nature of both terms in this early period of their literary and philosophical application and at the same time a lively imagery of time and life, which may be said to reflect intensive preoccupation with the concepts the two words denoted.

In order to get a fuller grasp of the philosophical ideas which motivate the usages of χρόνος and αἰών in the Presocratics, I broadened the scope of my research so as to include reports of secondary sources and general cosmological discussions that provide a framework for the early philosophical speculations on time. This enabled me to acquire a truer picture of the semantic content behind the extant examples of χρόνος and αἰών in the Presocratics. It turned out that, although the early philosophical applications of the two words build on their meanings in non-philosophical literature (which presumably reflects spoken language more closely), the specific philosophical contexts modify the meanings of χρόνος and αἰών and thus form a particular semantic tradition. The peculiarity of the philosophical applications of χρόνος and αἰών is evident in the association of time with the concepts of cosmic justice and logical necessity,

which resulted in Parmenides' denial of motion and temporality on the one hand, and on the other, in the introduction of the notion of strict temporal order in ceaseless cosmic changes. Χρόνος was used to express this cosmic regularity (Anaximand. B1, Emp. B17. 29 and B110) and also to denote precise periods of duration of cosmic events (Emp. B30). Αἰών also found its usage in Presocratic cosmologies, albeit in controversial contexts, Heraclitus' B52 and Empedocles' B16. 2 and 17. 11. In the first two of these fragments αἰών apparently comes close to meaning "time", normally expressed by χρόνος. These instances of cosmic χρόνος and αἰών and Plato's definitions (*Tim.* 37D) of the immovable "eternity" (αἰών) of the ideal being and measurable "time" of the world (χρόνος) have inspired scholars to look for the non-philosophical sources of what became recognisable senses of the two words. For χρόνος in early epic referred merely to (long or short) duration of states and rarely actions, whereas αἰών apparently went through a striking semantic transformation from denoting "vitality" in Homer to "eternity" in Plato.

It has been observed, and my examination also confirmed, that already in early epic αἰών exhibits a tendency towards assuming the meaning "lifetime", for vitality can only be realised through duration, and this combination of senses is believed to belong to the semantic core of the word αἰών (see Chapter ii). However, Degani goes a step further and argues that the sense of "totality" was also fundamental to this semantic root, as is evident from the meaning of the Homeric adverb αἰεί / αἰέν and later also from the expression δι' αἰῶνος, both meaning "always".¹⁰⁰¹ This semantic nuance granted, it becomes easier to account for the 'difficult' semantic transition from "vitality" to "eternity". However, in my discussion above I did not come across clear

¹⁰⁰¹ Degani 1961, 50f.. See also Keizer 2010.

evidence for the presence of the idea of “totality” in the actual uses of αἰών, unless perhaps as a secondary development resulting from the word’s applications in Presocratic cosmologies. Degani’s semantic reconstruction is clearly inspired by his understanding of Aristotle’s philosophical argumentation in *De caelo*, which also tries to account for the fact that αἰών has apparently rather different ‘human’ and ‘cosmic’ senses (*Cael.* 279a22-28):

Καὶ γὰρ τοῦτο τοῦνομα θεῖως ἔφθεγκται παρὰ τῶν ἀρχαίων. τὸ γὰρ τέλος τὸ περιέχον τὸν τῆς ἐκάστου ζωῆς χρόνον, οὗ μὴθὲν ἔξω κατὰ φύσιν, αἰών ἐκάστου κέκληται. κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν δὲ λόγον καὶ τὸ τοῦ παντὸς 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,¹⁰⁰² 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)¹⁰⁰³

This “almost lexicographic description”¹⁰⁰⁴ appears in Aristotle’s discussion concerning the “things outside the heaven” (τὰ κεῖ), to which αἰών is also ascribed. A detailed examination of this particular usage of αἰών¹⁰⁰⁵ and a comparison with other mentions of the word in Aristotle (and Plato) lies, however, outside the scope of the

¹⁰⁰² Cf., however, Keizer 2010, 82: “the completeness (τέλος) which encompasses the time of everyone’s life (ζωή).” It seems to me that, as Barnes’ translation suggests, τὸ τέλος τὸ περιέχον should be taken in an active sense, as *ongoing* rather than *completed* duration.

¹⁰⁰³ Barnes 1984, 463. Barnes renders every instance of αἰών in this passage by “duration” (cf. loc. cit., n. 8: “‘Duration’, αἰών, is derived from ‘always existing’, αἰεὶ ὄν.”)

¹⁰⁰⁴ Keizer 2010, 82.

¹⁰⁰⁵ See Leggatt 1995.

present study. However, independently of its philosophical implications, Aristotle's digression on the meaning of αἰών reveals the notion of "duration" as the common substratum of the 'human' (lifetime) and the 'cosmic' (all time and eternity) applications of the word.¹⁰⁰⁶

Aristotle also tells us that αἰών "was divinely uttered by the ancients" (παρὰ τῶν ἀρχαίων) and we have seen that Heraclitus explicitly ascribes divine power (βασιληίη) to his αἰών in B52. This implies that αἰών was imagined as an active force, whose influence people felt or observed. Pindar represents αἰών as having influence both in the realm of individual existence (N. 2. 7f.) and on a more general level, where it approaches the sense of "time" (I. 3. 18, I. 8. 14f.).¹⁰⁰⁷ However, he uses χρόνος in a similar way, namely as that which "directs" individual human fortunes (P. 1. 46, O. 13. 28) and brings about that which befalls us (N. 4. 43). I argued that it is through their association with destiny, which they deliver, that χρόνος and αἰών acquire these attributes of power and that, semantically, at the basis of these usages lies the sense of passage of time. Χρόνος is found to have this meaning already in Solon, who indicates that time brings about justice (fr. 4. 16 and 36. 3 W) and reveals truth (fr 10 W).

In her 2005 article "The meaning of *time*: polysemy, the lexicon and conceptual structure", Vyvyan Evans examines the phenomenon of principled polysemy¹⁰⁰⁸ on the example of the English word "time". She argues that "a form such as *time* has, at the synchronic level, a number of distinct lexical concepts or senses independently stored in semantic memory. These derive in a principled way from a historically earlier sense (or senses). At the synchronic level the distinct senses can be analysed as being related by

¹⁰⁰⁶ See Elders 1966, 145: "τέλος means fulfilment, i.e. duration which connects human being to the duration of the all of which it is a portion."

¹⁰⁰⁷ Heraclitus in B52 probably combines both senses.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Evans 2005, 38: "Principled polysemy is an approach which seeks to account for the meanings associated with words as not being absolute and fixed, but rather as being capable of changing over time."

virtue of a semantic network. The senses are organised with respect to a Sanctioning Sense, which typically (although not inevitably) has parallels with the diachronically earliest sense.”¹⁰⁰⁹ Without going into details of her elaborate theoretical discussion, I will point to the results Evans presented concerning the semantic network of English “time”, for they turn out to be relatable to my discussion on the early meanings of Greek χρόνος and, to certain extent, αἰών. After a lengthy methodological analysis, Evans establishes (1) “the Duration Sense” as the Sanctioning Sense for “time”,¹⁰¹⁰ from which several ‘secondary’ senses developed: (2) “the Moment Sense”, (3) “the Matrix Sense”, (4) “the Measurement-system Sense”, and (5) “the Commodity Sense”.¹⁰¹¹ It turns out that most of these senses generally correspond to those I reconstructed for χρόνος in early Greek literature. The “Duration Sense” refers to “an interval which is co-extensive with a particular state or process.”¹⁰¹² “Moment Sense” indicates “a discrete or punctual point or moment without reference to its duration” and roughly correlates to what I named “time when” in the above discussion (Evans’ examples of this sense contain the phrases “at any time”, “by the time”, “at appropriate time”).¹⁰¹³ The “Matrix Sense” is comparable to the meaning “passage of time” I reconstructed for χρόνος and occasionally αἰών, for it is “likened to bodies of water such as streams or rivers, which prototypically ‘flow’”¹⁰¹⁴ (see above on Pi. I. 3. 18, E. *Pirith.* 594 N (= Critias 43 fr. 3 *TrGF*), A. *Eu.* 853, S. *El.* 851f., E. *HF* 671f.). Evans offers several literary examples of this sense, including a translation from Marcus Aurelius (4. 43), in

¹⁰⁰⁹ Evans 2005, 39.

¹⁰¹⁰ According to four criteria she established for adducing the Sanctioning Sense: the criterion of earliest attested meaning, of predominance, predictability, and of lived temporal experience (op. cit., 49).

¹⁰¹¹ Evans 2005, 52.

¹⁰¹² Evans 2005, 48.

¹⁰¹³ Op. cit., 53.

¹⁰¹⁴ Evans 2005, 60.

which Greek αἰών is rendered by English “time”!¹⁰¹⁵ As a further development of this “Matrix Sense”, Evans mentions the “Agentive Sense”, pointing to the examples of time being imagined as the avenger, healer, innovator, etc., and represented as devouring all or revealing all, and the like. As for the final two senses in Evans’ classification, the “Measurement-system Sense” is relatable to the cases where χρόνος is applied to recurring periods of natural changes, which lead to establishing standard systems for measuring time.¹⁰¹⁶ The “Commodity Sense”, which refers to “an entity which is valuable, and hence can be exchanged, traded, acquired, etc.” (e.g. “time is money”), is not recognisable in the uses of early Greek αἰών and χρόνος.

This brief comparison with Evans’ analysis of the polysemy of “time” reveals significant parallelism with early Greek uses of χρόνος, including the central position of the sense of “duration” in both words’ semantic networks. I argued above that this semantic nuance was shared by χρόνος and αἰών and that it belongs to both their semantic cores. In the sense “duration”, χρόνος was applicable to all types of actions, states and events, including the early epic eventless ‘meantimes’ (spent in waiting, being kept and being away). It is therefore understandable how χρόνος, which denoted “periods” occupied by events and those between events, could come to signify “passage of time” as an indefinite duration in which a sequence of events takes place.

On the other hand, as mentioned above, from its earliest uses αἰών may be found to combine the sense of “duration” with that of “vitality” and to approach the sense “lifetime” (see e.g. Hom. Δ 478 (= P 302)). I believe that its cosmic applications in the

¹⁰¹⁵ Evans 2005, 61: “Time is like a river made up of the events which happen”. Other examples Evans quotes also evoke some ancient usages of αἰών and χρόνος (ibid.): “(a) Time, like an ever-rolling stream, /Bears all its sons away (Isaac Watts, ‘Psalms cx’), (b) A wonderer is man from his birth,/ He was born in a ship/ On the breast of the river of Time (Matthew Arnold, ‘The future’), (d) Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in (H. D. Thoreau, *Walden*, ‘Where I lived, and what I lived for’).”

¹⁰¹⁶ Evans 2005, 68: “It is probable that the Measurement-system Sense developed from the Duration Sense by employing periodic behaviour to measure duration.”

Presocratics also contain this semantic combination and refer to the *(ever)lasting dynamic* of the universe (ἄσπετος αἰὼν in Emp. B16. 2, οὐ ... ἔμπεδος αἰὼν of the four roots in Emp. B17. 11, and the divine αἰὼν πεσσεύων of Heraclit. B52). Plato may have relied on the durational aspect of the Presocratic αἰὼν only, and neglected the dynamic, when he chose this term to name his concept of timeless eternity (“immovable always”),¹⁰¹⁷ but he probably also drew on the popular etymology of αἰὼν as αἰεὶ ὄν (see Aristotle’s explanation above).

However, outside of the philosophical tradition αἰὼν remains inseparable from the idea of “life”. Soon after denoting the rather concrete “vital force” in the Homeric poems,¹⁰¹⁸ αἰὼν starts to exhibit the generalised meaning “life”, encompassing both its quantitative and qualitative aspects, which is also reflected in the use of -αἰών as the second part of compound adjectives (μακραίων, δολιχαίων, ἰσαίων, εὐαίων, δυσαίων).¹⁰¹⁹ Even in the occasional instances of its generalised semantic application, in which it reflects the meaning “time”, αἰὼν is closely connected with the idea of (human) life: in *I.* 3. 18 Pindar mentions the effects of “αἰὼν with its rolling days” in the context of the changeability of human fortunes (as compared to the invulnerability of the gods); the same holds for the “treacherous αἰὼν”, which is said to “unroll the course of life” in *I.* 8. 14f. This specific semantic value of αἰὼν is implied in Euripides’ distinction

¹⁰¹⁷ See Leggatt 1995, 205: “In Homer, αἰὼν means ‘life’, as well as the ‘life-time’ or ‘life-span’ of a creature (...), αἰὼν in the philosophical literature takes on the meaning ‘eternity’ (in the sense of unlimited duration, i.e. ‘sempiternity’; see e.g. Heraclitus DK22B52 ... Empedocles DK31B16.2 and 17.11). Finally, Plato uses the term to mean ‘eternity’ in its strict, atemporal sense, i.e. in the sense ‘outside of time’ (Timaeus 37d3ff.).”

¹⁰¹⁸ Further concretisation of the meaning of αἰὼν is recognisable in some instances of the Homeric hymns (*h. Merc.* 42 and 119), in the Hippocratic corpus (according to Hesych., s.v. αἰὼν), and in Pindar’s fr. 111.

¹⁰¹⁹ Αἰὼν is occasionally described as “destined” (Pi. *O.* 2. 10, *I.* 7. 41, cf. *A. Supp.* 46).

between the related concepts of personified and active “Lifetime” and “Time” in E.

Heracl. 900 (Αἰών ... Χρόνου παῖς).¹⁰²⁰

This example clearly shows that χρόνος had a more general application than αἰών, both when denoting *limited duration* and as *unlimited passage of time*. Through the association of these two senses χρόνος came to signify “time when” as well, namely when position of the first in the second was considered, without asking for its duration. Owing to this polysemy, as well as to the generality of its semantic applications, χρόνος acquired numerous specific usages already in archaic and early classical literature, such as “appointed time”, “age/era”, “innate (life)time” (αἰών has the equivalent usage), “present time” and “past occasion”, as well as the “uncertain future”. The most striking usages of χρόνος, however, rest on its denoting “passage of time”, which connects past, present and future, and surpasses individual existences. It precedes every creation and succeeds every destruction, untiring in its forward run. This priority of uncreated “time” over all other things that come to be found its expression in mythical cosmogonies with (Un)ageing) Χρόνος as a creator god (Pindar calls it the “Father of all” in *O.* 2. 10). The permanence of time is often expressed through the idea of regular cosmic cycles in the Presocratics (Empedocles, Heraclitus, ‘Pythagoras’),¹⁰²¹ while some of the early philosophers seem to make distinction between eternity that precedes creation of the cosmos and the time of the world (Philolaus?). In addition to this, time (χρόνος) is mentioned as the expression of the regularity of the observable natural changes (Anaximander), exchanges of days and nights and of different seasons. Euripides thus

¹⁰²⁰ I suggested that the instances of the generalised μακρὸς αἰών in tragedy (*E. Med.* 429 and *Hipp.* 1426) could be taken to imply accumulated individual lives.

¹⁰²¹ Cf., however, instances of “ageing time”, implying its linear flow (*A. PV* 981, *S. fr.* 62 R, *Crit. fr.* B 26 (= *Trag. adesp.* 508, etc.). See above p. 256.

calls χρόνος the “ancient father of days” (*Supp.* 787) and in fifth-century tragedy time is often represented as consisting of days, months, and years (see above, n. 851).

Due to its everpresence, χρόνος was imagined as witnessing all, and thus as the (often personified) bearer of truth, justice and hope. Although time (or Time) sees the end of everything and takes it into oblivion, χρόνος can also preserve the memory of the brave and noble deeds, of military and athletic excellence, of human virtue (also in eschatological contexts) and artistic renown. According to a story coming from Athenaeus (347e),¹⁰²² following an unjust defeat in competition, Aeschylus said that he dedicated his tragedies to Χρόνος, in the knowledge that it would bring him the honour he deserved.

The earliest extant uses of χρόνος and αἰών in the Homeric poems show limited semantic applications which only indirectly reflect the strong sense of temporality that permeates the poems. Epic heroes complain about being “long” ((πολὸν) χρόνον) they have been away from home and their loved ones; they are acutely aware of the transience and fragility of human existence in the hands of imperishable gods, for they are at constant and imminent risk of losing their “vital force” (αἰών). However, with the two words’ semantic development, influenced by the contexts in which they appeared, the uses of χρόνος and αἰών soon came to paint a colourful picture of the early poets’ and philosophers’ ideas concerning life and time.

¹⁰²² He gives as the source “Theophrastus or Chamaileon ἐν τῷ περὶ ἡδονῆς (= Theophrastus fr. 553 Fortenbaugh, Chamaileon fr. 7 Wehrli = 9 Giordano).

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