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## Night as a conceptual metaphor in *Iliad* 10

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### Abstract

This paper explores the significance of night in Book 10 of Homer's *Iliad* through the theoretical framework of Conceptual Metaphor (CM), a cognitive-based interpretation of how the mind construes language. Book 10 relates a self-contained episode within the *Iliad*: the planning and execution by the Greeks of a daring night raid into the Trojan territory. The choice to focus on night in Book 10 was motivated by the dominance of night in this book and its agency over a narrative which plays out completely in the hours of darkness. The research question that this paper poses is as follows: How does night function as a conceptual metaphor in *Iliad* Book 10? A content analysis of Book 10 finds night to function as a CM in three aspects. First, the CM of NIGHT = DISRUPTOR OF DAY (the capitalisation follows cognitive linguists' convention of expressing metaphorical relations in upper-case) in that when the activity of day, namely conflict, is transferred to the unfamiliar environment of night, there is disorientation, particularly in how time is experienced. Second, NIGHT = SLEEPSCAPE recognises the power of sleep and the result when it is withheld due to exceptional circumstances. Third, NIGHT = CLANDESTINE articulates the sense of jeopardy fermented in an atmosphere of secrecy and deception. This paper concludes that night as a CM accentuates the atmosphere and drama of Book 10, demonstrating the usefulness of CM as an analytical tool.

### Introduction

Homer's *Iliad* is important on many levels, notably in the richness of its language. The focus of this paper is on metaphor as a linguistic device, illustrated through a case study of night as a conceptual metaphor (CM) in *Iliad* Book 10. This is not an arbitrary selection

since night has special significance in the night raid, unique in the *Iliad*,<sup>1</sup> that Book 10 describes. The night determines how events in Book 10 unfold and gives deeper insight into characterisation as the protagonists react to the nocturnal environment. The case of night in Book 10 powers the argument that metaphor is a creative resource which not only embellishes the text as a literary product – aesthetically – but shapes the vision of reality that an audience constructs for the poem – cognitively. The lens of cognition is powerful for appreciating how metaphor in the poem creates meaning in the listeners’ minds. Consequently, metaphor is explored from a cognitive perspective rather than its traditional, largely stylistic treatment along with simile.

The plot of Book 10, commonly referred to as the *Doloneia* after Dolon, a Trojan character central to the plot, can be summarised as follows. Night has fallen but Agamemnon, tormented by setbacks in the war, convenes a council where Diomedes and Odysseus are selected for a spying mission on the Trojan camp. The Trojans hatch a corresponding plan, with Dolon volunteering in the hope of booty. In fact, Diomedes and Odysseus capture Dolon and, before killing him, cajole intelligence regarding the recent arrival of Thracian warriors under king Rhesus. The pair slaughter these slumbering Trojan allies and seize their valuable horses and trappings. The two heroes return to acclaim.

As this brief synopsis shows, night as a phenomenon is integral to Book 10 as it provides cover for the Greeks’ venture. It is argued in this paper that night functions as a metaphor in Book 10, showcasing the book’s value as a narrative constructed on multiple levels to illustrate complex themes developed throughout the *Iliad*. In this vein, in his study of the relationship between Agamemnon and Menelaus in Book 10, Sammons comments that ‘the poet exploits the peculiar intimacy of his nocturnal context to shed light on some problematic aspects of earlier scenes.’<sup>2</sup> ‘Problematic’ refers to the brothers’ projected image as equal and united, which is often contradicted by Agamemnon’s authoritarianism. Sammons argues that night encourages frank exchanges, such as Agamemnon’s admission that Menelaus ‘πολλάκι...μεθιῇ’ (‘often slacks’).<sup>3</sup> The oxymoron of Sammons’

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<sup>1</sup> Tsagalis 2024a: 125.

<sup>2</sup> Sammons 2009: 28.

<sup>3</sup> Hom. *Il.* 10.121. West’s 1998 Teubner text is used for all quotations from the *Iliad*. Translations are my own.

‘nocturnal context to shed light’ reveals how powerful night is as a metaphor. Night, paradoxically, can be illuminating because it highlights – this verb is chosen deliberately – key features of the narrative.

However, Book 10 as a case study requires some justification as it is not typical of the larger poem. As identified by the Townley scholion,<sup>4</sup> there are grounds for athetising Book 10 from the *Iliad*’s canon. Similarly, Leaf argues that ‘the book forms no essential part of the story of the *Iliad*’ mainly resting on the fact that this is a self-contained episode never alluded to again.<sup>5</sup> Another well-voiced concern is the perceived unheroic nature of the ambush in killing a defenceless enemy.<sup>6</sup> Linguistically, Book 10 is also marked, for example, by Odyssean formulae.<sup>7</sup> Whatever the authenticity of the Doloneia, which cannot be established with total certainty,<sup>8</sup> it coheres fully with the *Iliad* in terms of narrative quality and themes. As evidence of the latter, Tsagalis provides examples such as the ‘isolation before defeat’ motif experienced by Dolon in Book 10 and Hector in Book 22.<sup>9</sup> Hence, contemporary commentators are convincing in concluding that *Iliad* 10 has purpose and value because it offers a distinctive narrative to the developing poem.<sup>10</sup> The Doloneia explores some of the issues and themes that run through the *Iliad*, evoked through metaphor as the agency of night, as elaborated presently.

The analysis of night as a metaphor in this paper operates within a cognitive framework. This extends from Aristotle’s basic definition of a metaphor: ‘μεταφορὰ δὲ ἐστὶν ὀνόματος ἀλλοτρίου ἐπιφορὰ’ (‘A metaphor is the application of a word signifying something else’).<sup>11</sup> Conceptual Metaphor (CM) theory, first developed in the seminal work of Lakoff and Johnson,<sup>12</sup> goes further than this basic definition, recognising metaphor as a cognitive

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<sup>4</sup> Townley Homer (2013); see Tsagalis (2024b, pp. 11-15) for a discussion of the validity of this scholion as evidence for the inauthenticity of Book 10.

<sup>5</sup> Leaf 1900: 423.

<sup>6</sup> Hainsworth 1993: 154; Gorzelany 2018: 112. Dué 2012: 176, however, counters the suggestion of unheroic discourse.

<sup>7</sup> West 2011: 234.

<sup>8</sup> Montanari 2010, *passim*, demonstrates that ancient commentators were divided over Book 10.

<sup>9</sup> Tsagalis 2024b: 80.

<sup>10</sup> Myrsiades 2023: 132.

<sup>11</sup> Aristotle *Poet* 1457b.

<sup>12</sup> Lakoff and Johnson 2003.

system for representing and sharing knowledge in the process of communication. Cognitively, language is not just what we think but how we think. Lakoff and Johnson claim that ‘most of our ordinary conceptual system is metaphorical in nature’,<sup>13</sup> illustrated by mapping concepts onto metaphors such as ARGUMENT = WAR and TIME = MONEY. Thus, one may explore TIME = MONEY through phrases such as ‘*How do you spend your free time?*’ and ‘*Any delay will cost you dear*’.

CM has fruitfully, if sparsely, been applied to Homer before. In two separate studies,<sup>14</sup> Horn appreciates CM for establishing a network of associative meaning. From *Iliad* 5,<sup>15</sup> Horn relates ‘χήρωσε δ’ ἀγυιάς [Ιλίου]’ (‘widowed the streets [of Troy]’) to other gendered imagery of the city as a woman.<sup>16</sup> Particularly pertinent for the case of Book 10,<sup>17</sup> Horn connects ‘ἐπὶ ξυροῦ ἴσταται ἀκμῆς’ (‘on a razor’s edge’) to the metaphor of Zeus’ scales and PHYSICAL IMBALANCE = UNCERTAINTY as a CM.<sup>18</sup> Also of relevance for this study, Zanker identifies night with the metaphor EVENTS = AGENTS.<sup>19</sup> Thus in *Iliad* 14 when Sleep (personified) recounts how he escaped Zeus’s wrath through fleeing to Night, similarly personified and referred to as ‘δμήτρεα θεῶν...καὶ ἀνδρῶ’ (‘subduer of gods and men’),<sup>20</sup> Night is EVENT, a cyclical occurrence, and AGENT, because as a goddess she has power, even over Zeus.

Following this line of argument, the main purpose of metaphor in the sense of CM is not rhetorical, as it is in Aristotle’s definition,<sup>21</sup> but conceptual, because here metaphor codes our experience of the world and gives coherence to how we describe it and how it is understood. Consequently, CM is adopted as a vehicle for appreciating the significance of night in book 10 by building an understanding of the conceptual system which allows the metaphor to operate. This paper thus seeks to answer the following research

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<sup>13</sup> Lakoff and Johnson 2003: 4.

<sup>14</sup> Horn 2020; Horn 2021.

<sup>15</sup> Hom. *Il.* 5.642.

<sup>16</sup> Horn 2020: 11.

<sup>17</sup> Hom. *Il.* 10.173.

<sup>18</sup> Horn 2021: 454.

<sup>19</sup> Zanker 2019: 87.

<sup>20</sup> Hom. *Il.* 14.259.

<sup>21</sup> Shields 2014: 449.

question: How does night function as a conceptual metaphor in *Iliad* 10? The premise behind this question is that night is both literal and metaphorical in *Iliad* 10, as the hours of darkness relate to how the narrative is conceptualised. In terms of methodology, this paper presents a case study, with the ‘case’ in question being the application of CM to night in one book of the *Iliad*. As with all case studies, the issue of generalisability arises,<sup>22</sup> in other words whether the findings can be extrapolated beyond one book. However, this paper argues that CM offers a more powerful understanding of metaphor that can inform Homeric studies and other fields of study beyond the epic genre. The method used to answer the research question is interpretative content analysis, which analyses textual data to make inferences about communicative meaning.<sup>23</sup> In short, content analysis works by identifying units, whether words or stretches of text, as evidence either to support a preestablished theoretical framework – CM, in this instance – or to suggest fresh directions grounded in the findings. The evidence used here comprises references to night in Book 10, all of which were intuitively analysed in terms of a CM theoretical framework. The idea of night as a CM was found to work on multiple levels, each of which is explored in turn in the subsequent sections.

## Night and day

Day is the default time-period for the *Iliad*, the time where all the central narrative happens. Normally, night provides respite from war, so the nocturnal setting in Book 10 is atypical because it is characterised by violence rather than repose. The Greeks’ ambush is premeditated rather than spontaneous, and the protagonists are mindful that it is an unusual scenario. The initial motivation of the ambush is precautionary, as Agamemnon tells Nestor:

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<sup>22</sup> Gagnon 2010: 3.

<sup>23</sup> Drisko and Maschi 2016: 57-80.

δυσμενέες δ' ἄνδρες σχεδὸν ἦται· οὐδέ τι ἴδμεν  
μή πως καὶ διὰ νύκτα μενοινήσωσι μάχεσθαι.

The enemy camp is near. Nor do we know  
Whether they may not be eager even in the night to fight.<sup>24</sup>

The atypicality of a night attack is manifest both syntactically and lexically. Syntactically, the Trojan's eagerness ('μενοινήσωσι') is subjunctive in mood, showing the speaker's uncertainty. This subjunctive is licensed by the negative subordinator μή which, according to Chantraine's Homeric grammar is associated with propositions 'exprimant la crainte' – here, fear of the fight and the night.<sup>25</sup> Lexically, the particle καὶ in the second foot of line 101 emphasises the peculiarity of fighting διὰ νύκτα. Both parties are inured to war, but their usual experience is that of battle by day. To them, the prospect of a night conflict is new and unsettling.

One grounds for anxiety is a perception that time plays out differently at night as compared with day. The protagonists in Book 10 are acutely conscious, firstly, that this is night, and secondly, that time is precious. Once Diomedes and Odysseus have been selected for the mission, Odysseus impresses upon his companion a sense of urgency:

ἀλλ' ἴομεν· μάλα γὰρ νύξ ἄνεται, ἐγγύθι δ' ἠώς,  
ἄστρο δὲ δὴ προβέβηκε, παροίχωκεν δὲ πλέων νύξ  
τῶν δύο μοιράων, τρίτάτῃ δ' ἔτι μοῖρα λέλειπται.

But let's go. For night is fast departing, and near is dawn,  
The stars have moved on, and of the night,  
More than two parts have gone, with just the third left.<sup>26</sup>

The time markers ἠώς and νύξ are in stressed position at the end of the first two verses, and the mid-verse νύξ is placed after the caesura for further emphasis. While Odysseus' injunction ἀλλ' ἴομεν is a syntactically simple clause without complements, the description of waning night is spread over a series of coordinate clauses with the verbs of movement προβέβηκε and παροίχωκεν, contrasting with the static λέλειπται. Odysseus is giving a graphic description of night to show its potency.

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<sup>24</sup> Hom. *Il.* 10.100-101.

<sup>25</sup> Chantraine 1953: 208.

<sup>26</sup> Hom. *Il.* 10.251-253.

Odysseus also refers to the commonplace division of night into three parts, which must be read as a metaphor because time is intangible and continuous. This componential metaphor of night acknowledges that time periods may be unequal in terms of their content and consequence, which impacts the narratology. Indeed, several commentators have noted that the action in *Iliad* 10 is unequally distributed. For example, Hainsworth lauds ‘a deliberate balance that makes the first half slow and the second packed with incident.’<sup>27</sup> Sammons questions why the first half of the book is primarily concerned with characterisation rather than advancing the tale, and deduces that the narrative prepares the audience for an explosive finish in ambush and slaughter.<sup>28</sup> The action during the night gathers pace throughout the Doloneia so that the third  $\mu\omicron\iota\pi\alpha$  is the climax. To misquote the adage, the deffest hour is before dawn.

This is not to say that the first half of Book 10 has less value. A combination of slower and faster moving sections, accentuated by the metaphor of night as time, is a narratological strategy for manipulating the audience. De Jong provides several examples of how the narrative can be slowed down, claiming that the technique which she refers to as ‘retardation’ is important for dictating the rhythm of the poem.<sup>29</sup> An example of retardation is the delay in the confrontation between Achilles and Hector by intermissions such as the Theomachy in Book 21.<sup>30</sup> Whilst night offers relief from the fighting, it is also a time of suspense, because darkness creates vulnerability and uncertainty, making it a natural stimulus for the angst of Agamemnon that begins Book 10. Retardation accentuates this suspense. What would perhaps be tedious by day becomes dramatic at night, but above all, night is not illuminated by the light of day, which marks it as intrinsically suspect.

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<sup>27</sup> Hainsworth 1993: 155.

<sup>28</sup> Sammons 2009: 45.

<sup>29</sup> De Jong 2007: 32.

<sup>30</sup> Hom. *Il.* 21.136-382.



In summary, night and day are mutually dependent concepts and one must follow the other, but Book 10 demonstrates that night has special qualities that determine events and how characters engage. Time is a scarce resource for protagonists constantly threatened by a premature death, and the drama and pathos of this is heightened during a high-risk night venture. Furthermore, through the narratological technique of retardation, the rhythm of the action builds to a crescendo only possible in the confines of night. What is natural and expected during the day becomes less so at night, so the decision to bring the battle from the hours of light to those of darkness is of tremendous consequence. In short, the night of Book 10 is one where convention, measured by the standards of day, is challenged and upended. In terms of CM, the relationship can thus be expressed NIGHT = A DISRUPTOR OF DAY. What happens by night reflects an alternative scenario to when the activity happens by day. Disruption is where there is a clash between these competing narratives of day and night.

### Night and sleep

Night is essentially recuperative because it brings sleep. Writing from a medical perspective, Askitopoulou observes how the Greeks associated sleep with healing, which justified their physicians in prescribing soporifics as remedies.<sup>31</sup> As material evidence for the therapeutic connotations of sleep there is the phenomenon of incubation at various sanctuaries of Asklepios. For example, Dillon discusses the Asklepieion at Epiduros,<sup>32</sup> the appeal of which is attested by the *iamata* of pilgrims from far-flung lands. Sleep was associated with maintaining and restoring physical and mental health, often through vague, supernatural means, including divine intervention through dreams.<sup>33</sup> Given that magic and religion were intertwined with science in the classical period and beyond,<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Askitopoulou 2015: 73.

<sup>32</sup> Dillon 1994: 241-244.

<sup>33</sup> Webster 2018: 117.

<sup>34</sup> Marx-Wolf and Upson-Saia 2015: 269.

Homer's audience cannot be accused of naivety in subscribing to the power of sleep and of the night as its provider.

Book 10 is framed around the metaphor of night as repose. The night closing Book 9 signals composure, with the Achaeans taking 'ὑπνου δῶρον' ('the gift of sleep')<sup>35</sup> Hainsworth therefore makes a valid point in noting that '[n]othing ... prepares the ground for the sleeplessness and apprehension that dominate the first scenes of book 10.'<sup>36</sup> There is a noticeable shift in tone when the focus turns to Agamemnon:

Ἄλλοι μὲν παρὰ νηυσὶν ἀριστῆες Παναχαιῶν  
εὔδον παννύχιοι, μαλακῶ δεδμημένοι ὕπνῳ·  
ἀλλ' οὐκ Ἀτρεΐδην Ἀγαμέμνονα, ποιμένα λαῶν,  
ὕπνος ἔχε γλυκερὸς πολλὰ φρεσὶν ὀρμαίνοντα.

By the ships, the other Achaean lords  
Slept the night through, subdued by soft sleep.  
But not Agamemnon, son of Atreus, shepherd of men.  
Sweet sleep did not hold his swirling mind.<sup>37</sup>

The association between sleep and night is consolidated by εὔδον παννύχιοι, with the chiasmus of εὔδον...ὕπνῳ highlighting the appeal of sleep to warriors, and the repetition of the prefix παν (Παναχαιῶν...παννύχιοι), prefiguring a connection between the Achaeans and night in this episode. The emphatic position of ἀλλ', the first word in line 3, marks Agamemnon's agony and lack of sleep. The adjective γλυκερὸς, which collocates with ὕπνος sixteen times in Homer,<sup>38</sup> is almost mocking because there is nothing 'sweet' about Agamemnon's predicament.

Furthermore, in the second distich, the syntax mirrors the hold (literally, ἔχε) that the lack of sleep has over the Greek leader because ὕπνος is the grammatical subject and Ἀγαμέμνονα is the object. Sleep has forsaken Agamemnon, so he cannot exercise the basic bodily need for rest. The accumulative effect of these linguistic choices shows the

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<sup>35</sup> Hom. *Il.* 9.713.

<sup>36</sup> Hainsworth 1993: 150.

<sup>37</sup> Hom. *Il.* 10.1-4.

<sup>38</sup> Grosheva 2013: 232.

potency of sleep, or rather its absence. Night has agency not just in what it imparts, but also in what it may deprive – sleep.

What follows can then be interpreted as the consequence of a night without sleep: restlessness, clandestine activity, violence, and possibly, as suggested earlier, displays of unheroic behaviour. Certainly, a sleepless night is abnormal and this departure from the norm characterises the composition of Book 10. Thus, the simile which immediately follows lines 1-4, where Agamemnon's laments are compared to Zeus' hurling of lightning bolts, has an incongruity often noted by commentators. Leaf, for example, deems it 'a singularly pointless comparison.'<sup>39</sup> The key word in Leaf's critique is actually 'singularly', for this night is indeed singular, and Homer's rather peculiar simile is used to project the image of the book's disjunction from the rest of the narrative. Yet, the simile is important because it reinforces the metaphor of the agency of the night. Zeus and Agamemnon are compared here but the comparison is shown to be false. Zeus controls nature, bringing 'ὄμβρον ἀθέσφατον ἢ ἐχάλαζαν/ἢ νιφετόν' ('unspeakable rain or hail / or snow'),<sup>40</sup> but Agamemnon is controlled by another agent of nature: night and its capacity for inducing sleep. To introduce another metaphor, Agamemnon is sleepwalking through the night of Book 10, little knowing the machinations he will set in motion.

Also foiled of a night of sleep is Nestor, because Agamemnon needs his counsel. Both leaders turn out to have cameo roles in the drama because they play no part in the ambush. However, Nestor rouses the main protagonists, Odysseus and Diomedes. In both cases, the narrative stresses that the duo were forced from sleep. Nestor 'φθεγξάμενος' ('calls out') to slumbering Odysseus,<sup>41</sup> the opening consonant cluster (φθ, a labial then dental stop) in this participle reproducing a rude awakening, and he teasingly questions Diomedes: 'τί πάννυχον ὕπνον ἄωτεις;' ('Why are you sleeping all night?').<sup>42</sup> Odysseus and Diomedes are in unfamiliar territory because the end of sleep does not coincide with the end of night. They must transfer to the night a prowess typically demonstrated by day, contravening any notion of night as a safe space from war. Even at

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<sup>39</sup> Leaf 1900: 426.

<sup>40</sup> Hom. *Il.* 10.6-7.

<sup>41</sup> Hom. *Il.* 10.139.

<sup>42</sup> Hom. *Il.* 10.159.

the end of the book when the mission is completed, there is no hint of resuming sleep, which West notes as odd.<sup>43</sup> Wrenched from sleep, and from the concept of night as repose, the heroes experience night differently and adjust their actions accordingly.

It is not only by the allocation, gift, or denial of sleep that night exercises agency in Book 10. Sleep is also a communication channel through dreams and their portents, as demonstrated in the episode at the heart of the Doloneia: the slaughter of the Thracians and their leader Rhesus. Just before the moment of death, a dream is attributed to Rhesus:

κακὸν γὰρ ὄναρ κεφαλῇφιν ἐπέστη  
τὴν νύκτ', Οἰνεΐδαο πάις, διὰ μῆτιν Ἀθήνης.

For a bad dream stood over his head  
That night, the grandson of Oineus, by the trickery of Athena.<sup>44</sup>

Both Leaf and Hainsworth comment that these are troublesome lines syntactically and semantically.<sup>45</sup> Οἰνεΐδαο πάις (Diomedes) must be in apposition to κακὸν ὄναρ, but it is unclear whether κακὸν ὄναρ represents an actual dream, or if it is a metaphor. Hainsworth favours the latter interpretation: 'the bad dream was Diomedes, sword in hand, not *of* Diomedes' [original emphasis].<sup>46</sup> In any case, the nature of the dream is secondary to its significance in building atmosphere and impressing the audience. This impression includes irony, for, as observed by Montiglio, 'Rhesus' dream of death merges with his death in slumber.'<sup>47</sup> There is also pathos because the dream, whether actual or metaphorical, alerts Rhesus to the impending danger, though he is powerless to respond to, let alone repel, his attackers. Rhesus' dream is thus κακὸν not only in content, as a nightmare, but also in its efficacy: he cannot act upon the warning of impending doom.

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<sup>43</sup> West 2011: 246.

<sup>44</sup> Hom. *Il.* 10.496-497.

<sup>45</sup> Leaf 1900: 459; Hainsworth 1993: 201-202.

<sup>46</sup> Hainsworth 1993: 202.

<sup>47</sup> Montiglio 2016: 16.

Metrically, by positioning τὴν νύκτ as the first foot of line 497, the poet does not allow listeners to forget the nocturnal context. The accusative case of τὴν νύκτ[α] poses another syntactical conundrum. While duration can be expressed through an accusative of time,<sup>48</sup> Leaf raises a valid objection that ‘the sense required is not ‘[Rhesus dreamt] all night through,’ but ‘in the night.’’ (i.e., an adverbial.)<sup>49</sup> This is more than just a grammatical nicety, because it relates to CM in that the accusative emphasises the length of the night, which is a driving force in this book and portion of the *Iliad*. Furthermore, τὴν νύκτ is Rhesus’ last night alive, but sleep renders him unconscious of this, at least until the dream. The Thracian King only makes a fleeting appearance in Book 10, in contrast to his centrality in Euripides’ *Rhesus*, a retelling of *Iliad* 10. Rhesus’ only contribution to the narrative in *Iliad* 10 is as a victim, and he is merely numbered as ‘τὸν τρισκαιδέκατον’ (‘the thirteenth [killed]’), not even named at death.<sup>50</sup> However, unlike the twelve Thracians slaughtered before him, Rhesus’ death is personalised, largely by the event of the dream. Such focus on one person’s fate shows the metaphor of night as an agent to be more than abstract, for here it exercises a real, malign, influence on individual protagonists.

This is the only occurrence of a dream in Book 10, but it coheres with other instances of night and sleep in the *Iliad* to create textuality, in the sense that a familiar reference, whether an epithet or stock scene, ‘project[s] holistic concepts’.<sup>51</sup> Thus, in Book 23 when the ghost of Patroclus visits sleeping Achilles, the phrase ‘στῆ δ’ ἄρ’ ὑπὲρ κεφαλῆς’ (‘he stood over Achilles’ head’) recalls that used in Book 10 “κακὸν γὰρ ὄναρ κεφαλῆφιν ἐπέστη”.<sup>52</sup> However, there is some dissymmetry here, as in Book 10 the apparition is of a living being (Diomedes), while in Book 23 it is of the deceased Patroclus, though in both cases the dreamers are doomed: Rhesus will never awake, Achilles will not return from Troy. Furthermore, neither dream’s message has any impact. As discussed above, Rhesus cannot prevent his death, and in Book 23, Patroclus’ injunction for a swift funeral is redundant as this has already been arranged.<sup>53</sup> Both dreams carry a sense of futility as the

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<sup>48</sup> Boas et al. 2019: 365-366.

<sup>49</sup> Leaf 1900: 459.

<sup>50</sup> Hom. *Il.* 10.495.

<sup>51</sup> Foley 2015: 20.

<sup>52</sup> Hom. *Il.* 23.68; Hom. *Il.* 10.496.

<sup>53</sup> Gazis 2018: 48.

message is lost. Sleep is therefore a frustrating nocturnal messenger, in the sense that dreams can inform characters but cannot influence the action in the narrative.

In sum, night offers a beguiling predicament for the protagonists in Book 10 because the promise of sleep and the relief that it brings is withdrawn by the pressure of events. What they lose is more than a night's rest, as they are compelled to assert their heroic identity in an unfamiliar and challenging context. Furthermore, the futility of Rhesus' dream warns that the heroes cannot expect any guiding light from this traditional source of inspiration. Therefore, we may formulate NIGHT = SLEEPSCAPE as a CM to express the idea that while night is normally the environment for sleep and recuperation, the ὕπνου δῶρον that it gives is not unconditional and may be revoked in the pressures of war. The repercussions of this are significant, not least because those who are able to resist sleep have power over those who cannot. This is most evident in the slaughter of the sleeping Thracians, a climax to the book which illustrates how central sleep is to the narrative and the varying fortunes of the protagonists. For the Thracians' sleep facilitates the Achaean's raid, and their death in sleep moves the narrative from risky venture to glorious return. NIGHT = SLEEPSCAPE is thus a pertinent CM, because here sleep and the safety of night cannot be guaranteed, which highlights the sense of unease endemic to Book 10.

## Dark night

The plot of Book 10 is based on deceit and subterfuge. Both the Greeks and Trojans seize night as an opportunity to launch pre-emptive and surreptitious raids. Night facilitates clandestine activity because of the cover of darkness. Evidence for this is that night is given the epithets 'ὀρφναίη' ('murky') three times and 'μέλαινα' ('black'), also three times.<sup>54</sup> On the assumption that the multiple repetition of νύκτα δι' ὀρφναίη and νύκτα μέλαινα is significant to CM, I proceed to treat each formula in turn, sequentially analysing the passages containing them. The aim is not to distinguish the two formulas, but to describe their cumulative effect in reproducing the atmosphere and impact of dark night.

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<sup>54</sup> Respectively, Hom. *Il.* 10.83, 276, 386 and 297, 394, 468.

## Murky night

Nestor is first to refer to νύκτα δι' ὀρφναίην, when awoken by Agamemnon:

τίς δ' οὔτος κατὰ νῆας ἀνὰ στρατὸν ἔρχεται οἷος  
νύκτα δι' ὀρφναίην, ὅτε θ' εὖδουσι βροτοὶ ἄλλοι;

Who are you slipping alone by the ships through the camp  
in the murky night, when other folk sleep?<sup>55</sup>

Nestor is immediately alerted to the danger because he deduces that this as yet unknown presence must have some resolute reason to make his way alone (οἷος) at night. ὀρφναίην is emphatic here because it contrasts with the description of of Nestor's armour a few lines earlier, specifically his 'φαεινὴ τρυφάλεια' ('shining helmet') and 'ζωστήρ παναίολος' ('flashing belt').<sup>56</sup> As Leaf observes,<sup>57</sup> Book 10 pays especial attention to arming scenes, but this is not simply a decorative detail. Nestor's armour has a brightness associated with day – the conventional time frame for battle – emphasising the unsettling context of νύκτα δι' ὀρφναίην. For the shine of the armour would not be visible at night, and even if it were, it could become a liability if it were to make the wearer easier to target. The night poses a personal risk to Nestor, which is significant because 'Nestor is surrounded by a kind of glow in the *Iliad*' in that he is revered as a counsellor and statesman.<sup>58</sup> Roisman's 'glow' metaphor confirms, unwittingly, Nestor's alignment with light rather than darkness.

A night which is ὀρφναίη complements the 'φάσγανον ἄμφηκες' ('two-edged sword') of Diomedes in that it both helps and hinders the ambush.<sup>59</sup> It helps because of the element of surprise and hinders because the path that the ambushers take is not visible to them. Hence, Odysseus is relieved when Athena sends a heron (ἑρωδιὸν) to be their guide 'νύκτα δι' ὀρφναίην',<sup>60</sup> intervening 'at the right psychological moment as the heroes move out into the darkness.'<sup>61</sup> The heron's screech reassures the Achaeans of two things: first, that

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<sup>55</sup> Hom. *Il.* 10.82-83.

<sup>56</sup> Hom. *Il.* 10.76-77.

<sup>57</sup> Leaf 1900: 423.

<sup>58</sup> Roisman 2005: 22.

<sup>59</sup> Hom. *Il.* 10.256.

<sup>60</sup> Hom. *Il.* 10.276.

<sup>61</sup> Hainsworth 1993: 182.

they are literally on the right track, and second, that they have the gods' favour. The ease with which the heron navigates the bush contrasts with the blindness of the heroes, who hear but cannot see the bird. Equally invisible is the goddess who sent the heron, Athena, although Odysseus and Diomedes pray to her in turn, beseeching her protection.<sup>62</sup> The gods have no need to appear physically because they can announce themselves through nature. In this passage, their presence is signalled audially via the heron, and elsewhere by other means and senses, for instance, visually through Zeus' famed thunderbolts. In contrast, mortals are at the mercy of darkness, lacking power over the natural world.

The Greeks' tense progress 'νύκτα δι' ὀρφναίην' has a dramatic quality captured by Hesk, who analyses Book 10 in terms of cinematic narrative, framing, for example, Agamemnon's turmoil in the opening scene as a reaction camera shot.<sup>63</sup> With this approach, Hesk appreciates the role of the physical setting and how 'darkness obscures what can be seen, and thereby enhances the significance of what can be heard – especially when one is in hostile territory.'<sup>64</sup> The onomatopoeic participle 'κλάγξαντος' is used to represent the cry of the heron, echoing its carrying sound.<sup>65</sup> This is certainly significant, not just for Odysseus and Diomedes, but also for the Trojans, because the Achaean advance means their doom. The terrain itself is not hostile for the Trojans, but even they are compromised by operating 'νύκτα δι' ὀρφναίην', as is evident in Hector's appeal to a volunteer's 'κῦδος' in undertaking the sortie.<sup>66</sup> The perils of darkness create a level playing field as the defenders are denied, for the duration of one night, the home advantage which has extended the war into its tenth year.

The first victim of the murky night is Dolon, who is totally helpless against the combined force of Odysseus and Diomedes. There is no heron to guide Dolon, and thus he becomes the 'ἄλιος σκοπὸς' ('useless scout') that he himself previously scorned.<sup>67</sup> Predictably, Dolon is captured, and Odysseus extracts intelligence from him:

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<sup>62</sup> Hom. *Il.* 10.278-294.

<sup>63</sup> Hesk 2013: 37-40.

<sup>64</sup> Hesk 2013: 43.

<sup>65</sup> Hom. *Il.* 10.276.

<sup>66</sup> Hom. *Il.* 10.307.

<sup>67</sup> Hom. *Il.* 10.324.



πῇ δὲ οὕτως ἐπὶ νῆας ἀπὸ στρατοῦ ἔρχεαι οἶος  
νύκτα δι' ὀρφναίην, ὅτε θ' εὕδουσι βροτοὶ ἄλλοι;

Why like this are you going to the ships from the camp alone  
in the murky night, when other mortals sleep?<sup>68</sup>

This couplet is almost an exact match with that of Nestor quoted previously. The difference is that Nestor's addressee is the great Agamemnon, whereas Odysseus' is the pathetic Dolon. Physically overpowered, unable to negotiate the night like his captors, Dolon is thus outwitted. Trying, in vain, to appease the Achaeans, Dolon reveals the arrival of Rhesus, turning the plot in a new direction as Odysseus and Diomedes transform from scouts to bounty hunters, finishing off Dolon first. The familiar epithet πολύμητις ('wily') is applied to Odysseus just before he addresses Dolon, favourably contrasting Odysseus' resourcefulness with Dolon's ineptitude.<sup>69</sup>

The irony that the name Δόλων derives from δόλος (trick) is not lost on commentators such as Duffy.<sup>70</sup> Dolon is therefore not worthy of his own name. He is positioned almost as an anti-hero in the way that his actions mirror those of the genuine heroes Odysseus and Diomedes. For example, just as the two Greeks arm in anticipation of the raid, Dolon similarly prepares himself. However, Dolon's garb seems ill-suited to his character's overall achievements in the narrative, especially the 'ῥινὸν πολιοῖο λύκοιο' ('hide of a grey wolf')<sup>71</sup> that he dons, as painted on a calyx-krater in the British Museum depicting Dolon's capture.<sup>72</sup> Davidson argues that the association between wolves and deception makes Dolon's dress appropriate, as he aims to outwit the Greeks.<sup>73</sup> Steiner concurs, claiming that on his solo mission Dolon represents a Homeric motif of the lone wolf which hunts by stealth at night.<sup>74</sup> However, despite its symbolic appearances, Dolon's wolf disguise fails, as does his scheming, which shows he is not a creature of the night while emphasising his lack of heroism.

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<sup>68</sup> Hom. *Il.* 10.385-386.

<sup>69</sup> Hom. *Il.* 10.382.

<sup>70</sup> Duffy 2020: 101-102.

<sup>71</sup> Hom. *Il.* 10.334.

<sup>72</sup> The British Museum 1846.

<sup>73</sup> Davidson 1979: 64-65.

<sup>74</sup> Steiner 2015: 350.

Dolon is no trickster. The true δόλος lies in the night that has made an already foolhardy mission suicidal for Dolon. If his rashness in accepting the mission is owing to a confidence that night gives him some advantage, perhaps the element of surprise, he is truly deceived and achieves ignominy rather than the κῦδος that Hector proffered.

## Black night

Emboldened by the sign of divine assistance in the heron, Odysseus and Diomedes press on:

βάν ῥ' ἴμεν ὥς τε λέοντε δύω διὰ νύκτα μέλαιναν,  
ἄμ φόνον, ἄν νέκυας, διὰ τ' ἔντεα καὶ μέλαν αἶμα.

They ventured out like two lions through the black night,  
amid the slaughter, amid the corpses, through the armour and black blood.<sup>75</sup>

The lion simile is a familiar heroic motif, occurring 40 times in the Iliad.<sup>76</sup> Indeed, their eventual attack on the Thracians is compared to 'λέων μήλοισιν ἀσημάντοισιν' ('a lion [attacking] unguarded sheep').<sup>77</sup> Lions were a real presence in Greece in the classical period,<sup>78</sup> so the simile would have resonated with a contemporary audience. As added similitude, lions would attack at night because their prey is more vulnerable in the hours of darkness. The dangerous blackness of night finds corroboration in the fact that the blood is black. This association of night, blood and death is a reminder that violence is central to the epic. As put by Weil, '[t]he true hero, the true subject, the center of the Iliad [sic, no italics] is force.'<sup>79</sup> After killing Dolon, the path of Odysseus and Diomedes leads only to more killing. In their lust for violence, they are not like lions, which only attack when hungry or threatened, as with the lion in the Book 12 simile 'ἐπιδευῆς / δηρὸν ἔη κρειῶν' ('has

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<sup>75</sup> Hom. *Il.* 10.297-298.

<sup>76</sup> Hainsworth 1993: 185.

<sup>77</sup> Hom. *Il.* 10.485.

<sup>78</sup> Alden 2005: 336.

<sup>79</sup> Weil 2007: 378.

long lacked meat').<sup>80</sup> Homeric heroes court violence as it allows them to demonstrate their heroism. Night poses a conundrum because it imperils the person yet provides opportunities to attack others unawares.

Dolon offers no resistance to Odysseus and Diomedes, his tears and entreaties are more lamb than lion, and this restraint from violence marks him as unheroic. However, Dolon is not exactly a coward nor totally naïve since he was aware of the danger involved in his mission, telling his captors that 'ἤνώγει δέ μ' ἰόντα θοὴν διὰ νύκτα μέλαιναν' ('[Hector] commanded me to go through the swift, black night').<sup>81</sup> Added to the blackness of night is the quality θοὴν (swift), which both Leaf and Hainsworth struggle to account for as an epithet.<sup>82</sup> Here, there is perhaps the irony that Dolon, despite being initially introduced as 'ποδῶκης' ('fleet-footed'),<sup>83</sup> an epithet applied to the far superior Achilles, was not swift enough to escape; in addition, there is pathos in the simile of a deer fleeing hounds.<sup>84</sup> Night has neutralised the Trojan defenders' advantage, and with it Dolon's speed.

Later, θοὴν is also coupled with 'νύκτα μέλαιναν' as Odysseus and Diomedes creep up on the sleeping Thracians. The Greeks first mark with leaves where they have deposited the spoils from the murdered Dolon 'μὴ λάθοι αὖτις ἰόντε θοὴν διὰ νύκτα μέλαιναν' ('in case they missed the spot on their return through the swift black night').<sup>85</sup> The appropriation of enemy goods was one of the privileges of war and a symbol of triumph.<sup>86</sup> The raiders have to take the precaution of marking the spot because it is black night. As for the use of 'swift', no doubt Odysseus and Diomedes would anticipate a speedy return once the Thracians were despatched given the risk of the larger Trojan camp being alerted. The hunters risk becoming the hunted, a reversal which encapsulates the duplicity of night.

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<sup>80</sup> Hom. *Il.* 12.299-300.

<sup>81</sup> Hom. *Il.* 10.394.

<sup>82</sup> Leaf 1900: 452; Hainsworth 1993: 193.

<sup>83</sup> Hom. *Il.* 10.316.

<sup>84</sup> Hom. *Il.* 10.360-364.

<sup>85</sup> Hom. *Il.* 10.468.

<sup>86</sup> Husby 2009: 16.

Darkness, articulated through the formulas νύκτα δι' ὀρφναίῃ and νύκτα μέλαινα, thus gives the night a thrilling sense of jeopardy. Greeks and Trojans alike decide to take the initiative at night because they both recognise its opportunities and risks. However, the dangers that night presents are hidden, and therefore the protagonists are confounded. The prime example of this is the hapless Dolon, who sees this night as a chance for the prizes and κῦδος he has probably been denied in the regular day fighting (he is not mentioned in previous books). However, Dolon is outmanoeuvred physically, by being captured, and mentally, by being cajoled into revealing the Thracians' arrival, thus sealing their doom. Night creates delusions and defies the protagonists' plans. Night also presents an uneven hand, as Diomedes' and Odysseus' luck in surprising the sleeping enemy matches the Thracians' misfortune in being betrayed by Dolon. The final CM that we may read here is thus NIGHT = CLANDESTINE. The true nature of night is concealed from mortals, who need a combination of pluck, resourcefulness and, most elusively, the gods' favour, to negotiate the challenges of darkness. Similarly, the direction of the narrative is somewhat shrouded, featuring abrupt transitions, most notably the scouting mission turning into a killing spree. Dark night provides an atmosphere where there are no assurances.

## Conclusion

This paper has analysed night in *Iliad* 10 through the lens of Conceptual Metaphor, which appreciates metaphor as the construal of meaning, rather than simply a rhetorical device. A content analysis of Book 10 has led to the formulation of night as a CM in three aspects:

1. NIGHT = DISRUPTOR OF DAY

2. NIGHT = SLEEPSCAPE

3. NIGHT = CLANDESTINE

NIGHT = DISRUPTOR OF DAY reflects the turmoil and trauma when the business of day, conflict, is transferred to the unfamiliar environment of night. Time is experienced differently in a new scenario and much of the drama comes from switching up the pace

of the narrative during the night, through retardation and then acceleration, and the protagonists' resulting struggle to adapt. NIGHT = SLEEPSCAPE is recognition of the power of sleep and the reaction when it is withheld due to the pressure of events. A night without sleep is exceptional and has exceptional consequences. NIGHT = CLANDESTINE is evident through the formulas of darkness 'νύκτα δι' ὀρφναίῃ' and 'νύκτα μέλαινα.' Night is a vehicle for secret activity and surprise, where the opportunity for heroism is always tempered by hidden danger.

To answer this paper's research question, 'How does night function as a conceptual metaphor in *Iliad* 10?', we can see that approaching night as a CM is fundamental for exploring the complexities of a narrative which constitutes '[a] lifetime in a night' in Ulyssean terms.<sup>87</sup> CM emphasises night as a departure from the norm, which is seen both in the plot of Book 10 and in the actions of its protagonists. Concerning the plot, we can see this in how the grand scheme of a night raid is unusual because of the obvious risk and uncertain value of the action: the slaughter of the Thracians brings booty but achieves nothing in the larger picture of the war – the captured horses are not even used in the funeral games. The Trojans' corresponding nocturnal foray lacks all credibility with the choice of Dolon. Concerning the actions of the protagonists, night allows a flouting of the heroic code, as Odysseus and Diomedes murder the sleeping Thracians in cold blood. The hand-to-hand combat of other books may be harrowing, but at least it is fair, unlike the violence undertaken by night.

At night, things are either not what they seem, or they are invisible. This aspect of night darkens the Doloneia with a strong sense of uncertainty and mystery. Rhesus' dream of his own death is an example of this. Dreams were seen as signs which should be interpreted and acted upon, hence the flourishing of professional dream interpreters.<sup>88</sup> Rhesus is not allowed to heed his nocturnal warning because he is killed in his sleep, which makes the purpose of the dream unclear. As a further puzzling example, the night raid is initiated by Agamemnon and he dominates the early part of Book 10, but he is nowhere to be seen by the conclusion; As another example, Diomedes

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<sup>87</sup> Joyce 1922: 81.

<sup>88</sup> Thonemann 2020: 20.

addresses Dolon by name although Dolon has not previously shared this information with him.<sup>89</sup> And as a final example, Apollo only chooses to intervene for the Thracians once they have already been killed.<sup>90</sup> However, this is not evidence of the book's inconsistency, because each of the aforementioned events has rationale behind it: Agamemnon retires from the narrative so as not to overshadow Odysseus and Diomedes; the name 'Dolon' is put into Diomedes' mouth in mockery of his lack of δόλος; and for tactical reasons, Apollo must lose his personal contest with Athena in this instance. The confusion of the night makes the narrative challenging to unravel and invites multiple interpretations, adding to the Doloneia's richness rather than making it faulty.

Night as a metaphor embraces death and is a grim reminder of this natural consequence of war. Indeed, the Greek assembly takes place on ground cleared of corpses left by Hector, who only left off the slaughter 'ὅτε δὴ περὶ νύξ ἐκάλυψε' ('when night covered him.')

<sup>91</sup> The phrase is chilling as a presentiment of Hector's own demise. Death, darkness and night are each used as subjects of the verb καλύπτω in this formula, including Hector's death in Book 22: 'τέλος θανάτοιο κάλυψε' ('the end of death covered [him]').<sup>92</sup> The dealer of death cannot escape it, which is equally true of Hector's vanquisher, Achilles. This cycle of death, X kills Y in revenge for Z's death, is typical of the battle scenes, for example, Paris slays Euchenor because Meriones slew Harpalion.<sup>93</sup> The chain of revenge is relentless and more links are added to the chain as the conflict intensifies. Night also works in a cycle and, as the Thracians find out, is no less deadly than the day.

Finally, CM has been shown in this paper to strengthen textual analysis. First, it recognizes that metaphors are not isolated events but part of thematic patterns that create coherence. The dark and clandestine atmosphere of night heightens the tensions and drama of Book 10. Second, situated in context, CM is sensitive to the dynamic of the narrative. For example, often the metaphor is put in the characters' mouths, oratio recta,

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<sup>89</sup> Hom. *Il.* 10.447.

<sup>90</sup> Hom. *Il.* 10.515.

<sup>91</sup> Hom. *Il.* 10.201.

<sup>92</sup> Hom. *Il.* 22.361.

<sup>93</sup> Hom. *Il.* 13.643-672.

as when an impatient Odysseus tells Diomedes ‘νὺξ ἄνεται’ (‘night is waning’).<sup>94</sup> The metaphor shows Odysseus’ consciousness of time and how he carefully articulates this to encourage rather than rebuke his companion. Third, CM pays close attention to linguistic form. In terms of lexis, this paper has demonstrated, with the examples of epithets for night, ‘ὄρφναίη’ and ‘μέλαινα’, that these formulas are loaded with semantic importance. Regarding grammar, it has argued that the convoluted syntax describing Rhesus’ dream mirrors the chaos of the night. CM is not a tool that can be applied mechanically, for example by analysing concordance lines out of context, but when used with sensitivity and insight it is a powerful resource.

The central argument of this paper confirms the value that the Doloneia contributes to the *Iliad*. While Book 10 may not be pivotal to the overall narrative of the *Iliad*, it fully conforms to the standard of the greater poem as a work of supreme artistry. In part, this confirmation is achieved through the CM of night as darkness, whereby it acquires agency in directing the narrative, explores broader themes, and shapes characterisation. As a thought experiment, imagining the Doloneia in a daytime setting would render it almost incomprehensible. Reactions to Book 10 will differ, but no listener or reader could be left unconvinced of the significance of night for its narrative construction.

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<sup>94</sup> Hom. *Il.* 10.251.

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