A Divine-related Shade: κελαινός in the *Iliad*

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1. Introduction

This paper attempts to investigate κελαινός, one of the recognised dark, grey, or black colour terms, with the discovery of its metaphorical function, i.e., what the term symbolises in the *Iliad*. Liddell and Scott’s dictionary refers to κελαινός as *black, dark, murky*, etc. Chantraine mentions “[noir, sombre] dit chez Hom. du sang, de la nuit, d’une vague dans la tempête.” Cunliffe seems to consider the meaning of κελαινός to be more blackish, referring to it as “[D]ark in due, black or nearly black.” Wallace renders κελαιν-words into *black*, and κελαινός means blackish as well as the absolute colour. Moonwoman, however, regards κελαινός as ‘dark.’ Is κελαινός black, or grey? Or, somewhere in between? If so, where?

Let us have a look at the first appearance of κελαινός in the *Iliad*, which is located in the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon in book 1:

εἴ δ᾽ ὁγε μὴν πείρησαι, ἵνα γινώσκας καὶ ὁδὴν

αἰσθάνομεν κελαινόν ἐρχόμενεν περὶ δοῦρι.

(1. 1. 202)

"Come, try, if you wish, to make it clear to all: in an instant your dark blood will drip from my spear."

Edgeworth describes αίμα κελαινών as one of the formulaic uses in Homer, which means that there is no particular intention to use the colour element to create a specific context and it only helps the metrical requirement. However, the cumulative or/and associative uses of the colour elements clearly play an important role in the epic, contributing to what Edgeworth calls the colour clusters. Three or even more colour terms being used in rapid succession release the tension, or link together several episodes. If those clusters of colour terms play an important role in connecting groups of episodes, or affecting the context, then the colour expressions should be arranged for the context not only due to
the economy of metre, but also with the particular intention to set the scene, at least. There must be some proper reason why. In other words, the poet deliberately employs the word in order to imply his message.\textsuperscript{11} This is what I am going to tackle in this paper. I also doubt Platmäuer’s conclusion that the Greeks “felt little interest in the qualitative differences of decomposed and partially absorbed light.”\textsuperscript{12} because it does not necessarily mean that the Greeks did not have careful considerations on colour, or lights if many different colour epithets are received for many objects that are unlikely to vary much in colour (in our modern sense). As far as I have known, κελαυνός has not attracted scholars’ interests as much as μέλας or πολύς have elsewhere. This very foggy picture of κελαυνός is yet to be uncovered. Hereby I should like to explore the other possible world of darkness, κελαυνός in the \textit{Iliad}.

2. Κελαυνός in the context

There are 23 occurrences of κελαυνός in the \textit{Iliad}, including a compound word, κελαυνεφής, \textit{black with clouds, cloud-black}, etc; 1. 303, 397, 2. 412, 4. 140, 5. 310, 798, 6. 117, 267, 7. 329, 9. 6, 11. 78, 356, 747, 828, 845, 14. 437, 15. 46, 16. 384, 667, 21, 167, 520, 22. 178, and 24. 290. The referents of κελαυνός are αἷμα (blood), δέρμα (skin, hide), λαύρα (storm, hurricane), κῦμα (wave), νυξ (night), and χῆλα (earth). They are all easily visualised as grey, or black as well. Interestingly, excluding αἷμα, all of the other κελαυνεφής occurrences describe Zeus in the context\textsuperscript{13} : Ζεύς (Zeus), Κρονίων (son of Kronos), κύδιστος (most glorious), μέγιστος (greatest), πατέρ (father), ὀργικέρωνος (master of the bright lightning) and αἰθριναίων (dweller in heaven). Certainly the darkness implies the absolute awesome power of Zeus. According to Irwin, κελαυνός is similar to μέλας as κελαυνός seems to have a connection with “spotted, stained.”\textsuperscript{14} For Kober’s examination, κελαυνός is “a poetical word, used as a synonym for μέλας, but only when the indicated meaning is ‘dark’ rather than ‘black.’\textsuperscript{15} In this respect, κελαυνός can represent something dark, black perhaps. I have divided those referents into categories and made the table of κελαυνός (including κελαυνεφής) shown below.\textsuperscript{16} Now let us investigate further.

2 – 1 Dark Natural Environments

In the \textit{Iliad}, we could see five occurrences of κελαυνός that agree to natural environments; earth, storm, wave, and night. Three of five are actually positioned within a simile.

In book 16, Patroklos is eager to fight against Hektor, but somehow his horses carry him away. Then the simile is followed. The sound of Trojan horses galloping loudly on the battlefield is compared with the storm’s movement that burdens the dark earth, as Zeus pours down the strong,
heavy rain, and the river’s flow is swollen in spate and ruins men’s cultivation.

ως δ’ υπό λαίλαπι πᾶσα κελαινή βήρριθε χθών

ηματ’ ὀπωριών, ὅτε λαβρόστατον χρεί ύδωρ (I. 16. 384-5)

“As all the dark earth is burdened under a storm on an autumn day, when Zeus pours
down the most violent rain…”

Zeus is angry with men because they make corrupt judgements with no justice. Leaf notes on κελαινή here that “dark with the clouds that cover it.”17 Vivante, however, admitting that the adjective has a pointed meaning, considers κελαινή not being used as an epithet of earth.18 Nevertheless, the adjective of κελαινός certainly provides a dark image, and if Zeus in anger is involved with the violent rain, fearful or awesome, negative sense is conveyed. Also, it is during the battle, hence the darkness of the earth helps to intensify the tension on the context.

In book 11, Nestor speaks in retrospect about his previous achievements, giving a simile of how great he was as a warrior. He attacks his enemies moving like a hurricane, which is dark, in 11. 747.19

αὐτὸν ἐγὼν ἑπάρουσα κελαινὴ λαίλαπι ἱσος,

“And I charged on like a black storm-wind, and …”

After this long reminiscence, Patroklos is persuaded and departs to Achilles’ hut. Nestor aims to highlight his strength in his youth, as moving forward to his enemy like κελαινός storm, which is suitable for the context here. I agree with Irwin’s suggestion that “people in a threatening mood are compared to a "dark storm," in a double characterization.”20 Stressing the old man’s enthusiastic recollection of his prowess, κελαινός en larges the picture of darkness. It also shows Nestor’s vigorous behaviour.

At the beginning of book 9, the Achaians’ mind in turmoil is compared with the swollen wave in the sea, which indeed provides a dark image.

ως δ’ ἀνεμοι δύο πόντων ὀρίστενον ἱψίσεντα,

Βορίης καὶ Ζέφυρος, τό τε Θρήκθηκεν ἀγητον,

ιλθόντ’ ἐξαισινης’ ἀμοιδις δὲ τε κύμα κελαινον

κρύθεται, πολλῶν δὲ παρίξ ἄλα φύκος ἔχουνεν

ως ἵδοντες θυμος ἕνι στιθίσασιν Ἀχαιῶν. (II. 9. 4 - 8)
"As when two winds come suddenly and whip the fish-filled sea, the north wind and the west wind, blowing down from Thrace: the mass of the dark swell rears into crests, and piles the seaweed thick along the shore. So the Achaian’s spirits were troubled in their breasts."

Leaf recognises κέλαινος as “proleptic, so as to become dark.” Irwin seems to take the colour of the sea here as black. This simile addresses the Achaian’s internal state of mind, which is confused in distress. Κέλαινος surely strengthens their uncertain, stressed concern. Here is not just an ornament for the line but rather functions to increase the negative, fearful sense, which could connect to death.

There are two examples of dark night with κέλαινος in the Iliad. In book 5, Aineias, a Trojan, is hit by a huge boulder thrown by Diomedes.

---- αὐτὸς ὁ γ’ ἕρως

ἐστι γνῖς ἱριστῶν καὶ ἱρισσάτῳ χειρὶ ποχεῖν

γαῖης· ὁμφὶ δὲ ὅσῳ κέλαινη νῦς ἱκάλυμε (U. 5. 308-10)

"The hero dropped to his knees and stayed there, leaning with his heavy hand on the earth: and black night covered over his eyes."

Aineias would have perished, but Aphrodite rescues him, thus he survives at the time. According to Kirk, the ending is fortified because of the alliteration and assonance of κέλαινη νῦς ἱκάλυμε. We can see almost the same expression in book 11.

"Εκτῶρ δ’ ἥκ’ ἀπέλθην ὄνδραμε, μῖκτο δ’ ὄμιλω,

στῇ δὲ γνῖς ἱριστῶν καὶ ἱρισσάτῳ χειρὶ ποχεῖν

γαῖης· ὁμφὶ δὲ ὅσῳ κέλαινη νῦς ἱκάλυμεν (U. 11. 354-6)

"Hektor quickly ran a great way back to join the mass of his men, then dropped to his knees and stayed there, leaning with his heavy hand on the earth: and black night covered over his eyes."

On the battlefield, Diomedes’ spear hits Hektor, but later he comes back to his senses, jumps into his chariot, and escapes the black doom (κῆρα μέλαινον). This time the bronze (χαλκός) helmet Apollo gave him protects Hektor. As we can see, both of κέλαινος night covers Trojans, Aineias and Hektor. But both of them somehow escape from their death. However, in fact, the formulaic phrase that dark
(night) covers warriors’ eyes appears elsewhere in Homer and implies that they die.\textsuperscript{28} Perhaps the poet, in allocating κελαινός night to the Trojans exclusively, foretells the Trojans’ fate. I shall approach this point later, to integrate it toward the conclusion.

\textbf{2 – 2 Dark Hide}

Κελαινός is employed to describe material once in the \textit{Iliad}, δίρμα:

\begin{quote}
όμφας δὲ μιν σφορὰ τύπτε καὶ συχίνα δίρμα κελαινόν,

άντυχ᾽ ἤ πυμάτη θεῖν ἀσπίδος ὀμφαλώσεσθ᾽.
\end{quote}

(\textit{Il.} 6. 117-8)

"And as he went the dark leather of the rim that ran round the edge of his bossed shield kept tapping top and bottom, at this ankles and his neck."

This is narrated after Hektor encourages his men to fight. Hektor goes to Ilios to tell old men of council and wives to pray to the gods, which was Helenos’ suggestion. Kirk states that Hektor’s shield here is "simply a ‘black skin’ in 117."\textsuperscript{29} Probably as generally accepted, armour is usually described by dark colours, and can be bright only when polished or illuminated by sunshine. Whether it is entirely dark or partially dark, the darkness of Hektor’s shield\textsuperscript{30} suits the context, since it supplies a manly and brave but somehow negative impression to the readers with his going to the battle, from which he will not return. In book 6, Hekabe and Andromache fail to persuade Hektor not to go, and Hektor is killed later by Achilles.

\textbf{2 – 3 Dark Blood}

In book 1 as cited above, Achilles and Agamemnon argue over the gifts that they have received from the battle. Because of Agamemnon’s arrogance, Achilles decides to withdraw from the fight. In that scene, Achilles threatens that Agamemnon’s blood would drip from Achilles’ spear. Also, Achilles speaks ζῷο μελάνη (black ships) in 300. What is the colour of κελαινός for blood? Black, or dark?\textsuperscript{31} Or, does it indicate ‘colour’? In the \textit{Iliad}, blood often is accompanied with μῆλας.\textsuperscript{32} Pulleyn’s point on the σῶμα κελαινόν seems to be reasonable; deoxygenated venous blood has a very dark colour and oxygenated arterial blood is bright red, thus the difference in terminology for blood might reflect actual observation.\textsuperscript{33} Perhaps the poet distinguishes κελαινός with other terms, based on his observation of the blood’s colour. However bright κελαινός is, the poet perceives the difference between κελαινός and μῆλας.

If not, then why should he use different terms for σῶμα? It should not be purely because of the metrical requirement. Otherwise, why does the poet add the adjectives to σῶμα? The line could have been
composed without the ornament as well. The length of dark range of κελαίνος is still unclear, but as we start examining each of the κελαίνος blood contexts, the fact that the blood with κελαίνος is associated only with the Achaians should be noticed. That reveals the poet’s aesthesical skill in composing his story, handling colour terms along with his plot.

In book 7, Nestor appeals to the Achaians, proposing that they should stop their fight temporarily and bury the dead bodies.

> πολλοὶ γὰρ τεθνάσαν κόρη κομόωμετε Ἀχαιοί, 
vōn vōn σῶμα κελαίνον ἱέρροον ἀμφί Σκαμανδρὸν
ἔσκεδας ὡς Ἀρης, ψυχὰ δ’ Ἀιδόσι κατῆλθον
(II. 7. 328-330)

"many long-haired Achaians have been killed, and their dark blood now lies shed by fierce Ares along the lovely stream of Skamandros, and their souls gone down to Hades."

Many Achaians bleed from the battle and are dead. Their κελαίνος blood lies. Nestor’s suggestion is agreeable to hold the funerary practice as the deads’ souls go to Hades. Another Achaian character who has κελαίνος blood is Eurypylus. Eurypylus asks a favour of Patroklos, to help him, in book 11. Eurypylus is injured, so his dark blood, σῶμα μέλαν (813), gushed from his painful wound.

> ἀλλ’ ἐμὲ μὲν σὺ σάρκωσον ἄγων ἐτὰ νῆμα μέλαιναν,
μηροῦ δ’ ἐκταῖ ὀισιον, ὦτ’ οὐτοῦ δ’ σῶμα κελαίνον
νῦ’ ὑδατι λιορῶ, ἐτὶ δ’ ἥπα εὔρημα πώσαε,
(II. 11. 828-830)

"But help me at least and take me to my black ship. Then cut the arrow from my thigh, and wash the dark blood from it with warm water, and spread soothing medicines on the wound..."

Patroklos is on his way to speak to Achilleus as persuaded by Nestor. He wonders whether he should stop there taking his time for Eurypylus, but eventually Patroklos accepts Eurypylus’ favour and helps him, in order to stop Eurypylus’ pain. The poet also employs κελαίνος for blood in 845 when Patroklos actually washes away Eurypylus’ blood. Curiously, Eurypylus’ blood is described as μέλας in 813, then about fifteen lines below that, κελαίνος is applied to his blood twice. Does the colour of blood change as time passes by, as we regard in the modern times? The difference between μέλας and κελαίνος should be discussed separately as an individual subject, but at present it might be fair to suggest that at least the poet distinguishes the dark colour κελαίνος for blood and how κελαίνος functions in the Iliad should be addressed. Within those four appearances of κελαίνος, they all are
Achaeans’ blood; Agamemnon’s possible blood in book 1, the dead Achaeans’ blood in book 7, and that of the injured Eurypylus in book 11. After all, Agamemnon and Achilles do not physically fight against each other but clash verbally, hence Agamemnon’s blood does not flow from Achilles’ spear. The κελαινός rather intensifies the threatening mood. Although many of the Achaeans are dead, their bodies are properly treated, eventually, due to Nestor’s proposal in book 7. Eurypylus is wounded, but again healed by Patroklos. They all are not entirely negative at all, as slight positiveness can be recognised. As we move on to investigating κελαινός’ metaphorical function, the positive usage of κελαινός, which symbolically pins down the sense of life for the Achaeans, is to be illustrated.

Strangely enough, the poet arranges κελαινέφις with αἴμα in the Iliad as well.35 As mentioned above, κελαινέφις basically means ‘dark-cloud.’ Are the darkness of clouds and that of blood somehow connected by this comparison? Pulleyrn seems to accept the possible comparison because κελαινέφις also applies to αἴμα, but Pullyen finds it difficult to see. Rather, Leumann’s suggestion is taken as a more plausible proposal: the formula of κελαινέφις αἴμα were falsely born because of a wrong metrical division. It should have been originally Ζεύς κελαινέφις or so.36 Let us examine whether the combination of κελαινέφις with αἴμα denotes some indications or not, and if so, how darkness of cloud and blood are associated with each other, which would help our investigation of what kind of imagery connection could be pictured through κελαινός.

Blood is ornamented with κελαινέφις five times in the Iliad. In book 4, Menelaos’ dark blood is described with κελαινέφις. His blood spurts out because of Pandaros’ arrow: αὐτίκα δ’ ἔρρειν αἴμα κελαινέφις ἐξ ὑπελήγης. “and immediately dark blood trickled from the wound.”37 Athene tried to defend him, but still the arrow manages to scratch Menelaos’ flesh. Menelaos’ wound is immediately followed by a simile, which gives a vivid image of how Menelaos’ blood spurts out (141-147). Like ivory stained with crimson dye ( ‘Ἡς δ’ ὤτε τις τ’ ἐλέφαντο γυνὴ φοινικῆ μήπη), Menelaos’ skin is discoloured by blood.38 Diomedes’ blood is also accompanied with κελαινέφις in book 5: ὅν δ’ ἱσχῶν τελαμώνα κελαινέφις αἵμ’ ἀπομόρφυνε. “he was lifting up the strap and wiping away the dark blood.”39 Here Diomedes, injured from Pandaros’ arrow, wipes the dark blood. Then Athene comes beside him and spurs him to fight (800-813). Diomedes is of course willing to keep going to the battle. One more Achaeian whose blood is described with κελαινέφις is Achilles in book 21:... σύντο δ’ αἵμα κελαινέφις ἦ δ’ ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ “... so that the dark blood spurted out, and the spear...”40 Asteropais’ spear hits Achilles’ right arm, and his blood spurts out. However, Asteropais is killed by Achilles later, as narrated τὸν δὲ σκότος ὅσοι καλύψας/ἀσθενοῦσιντ: “darkness covered over his eyes as he gasped in death.”41
The blood of κελαινεφής is also applied to two Trojans; Sarpedon and Hektor. In book 14, Hektor, injured, vomits dark blood:

\[\text{ίξιμερος δ’ εἰπ’ γοῦνα κελαινεφής οὖμ’ ἀπήμεσεν’}
\[\text{αὕτη δ’ ἔξοπισεν πλήττο χήρωι, τὰ δὲ οὐδὲν}
\[\text{νῦξ ἱκάλυψε μελαῖνα} \quad (\text{Il. 14. 437-439})

[Hektor]...sat up on his heels vomiting dark blood. And then he sank backwards to the earth again, and black night covered over his eyes.”

This scene reminds us of the dark night that covers Hektor in book 11 we have seen above. The formulaic phrase that dark night covers characters in Homer denotes death, and this scene perhaps foreshadows Hektor’s death later in the Iliad. Although Hektor does not lose his life here, Aias’ stones hit Hektor with devastating accuracy and his strength collapses. His fellows, Poudydamas, Aineias, Agenor, Sarpedon, and Glaukos protect Hektor and carry him away from the fighting. Then Hektor vomits dark blood. The darkness of his blood actually darkens the scene as well as representing the weakened Hektor. In book 16, Zeus tells Apollo to clean Sarpedon’s dead body:

\[\text{‘ει δ’ ὁγε νῦν, φίλε Φοίβε, κελαινεφής οὖμα κάθηκεν}
\[\text{ἔλθώ τε ἐκ βαλέων Σαρπηδόνα, καὶ μον ἐπεύτα} \quad (\text{Il. 16. 667-8})

“Come, dear, Phoibos, go now and clean the dark blood from Sarpedon away from the weapon’s range, and then…”

Sarpedon is already dead. This is the only case that blood with κελαινεφής is used for dead person. As ordered, Apollo carries Sarpedon away, washes, anoints and dresses the dead body, which is set down in Lycia for the burial. There are only two Trojans who appear with κελαινεφής οὖμα, and it might be possible to assume that Sarpedon’s funeral process here forecasts Hektor’s doom as well.

All appearances of κελαινεφής blood operate effectively, and indeed darken the context, in order to convey how severe the battle is. The dark colour possesses the role to highlight the moments, thus the all of κελαινός and κελαινεφής with blood are necessary arrangements that the poet intends for this story. The characters who have dark blood with κελαινός and κελαινεφής in the Iliad are; Agamemnon, the Achaians (unspecified), Eurypylus (2x), Menelaos, Diomedes, Hektor, Sarpedon, and Achilles. They all are male, and mortal. The main stage of the Iliad is the battlefield where the Achaians and Trojans fight, in which sense it is understandable that male characters’ dark blood is described. Nonetheless, why not female? Why does the poet not associate blood with κελαινός for the
female, and the immortals? Is the colour of female’s blood different? More darker, or brighter? Do the mortals carry a different kind of blood inside? It is intriguing enough to invite further investigation on other dual association\textsuperscript{43}, but it is reasonable to claim that there must be colour or light perception, since the poet assigns blood with κελαινός and κελαινεφής solely to male mortals.

Further, considering the Trojan’s blood and Achaian’s blood, the description of the Trojan blood fully clearly provides a darker sense, i.e., a sad tone for the context. Obviously Sarpedon is dead already. Hektor is carried away from the battle and the Achaians see Hektor leaving the battlefield, then their spirit fills for battle. On the other hand, the Achaians’ dark blood is treated properly, e.g., the Achaians’ dead bodies are honoured with appropriate funeral ceremonies. Also, Euryphlyos’ pain is healed. That delivers the impression of recovery. Menelaos, Diomedes, and Achilles do not leave the battle immediately even after they are wounded. Further, they do not die. Their spirit is rather full of fight, and they bravely return to the battle. Moreover, Achilles uses the κελαινός blood in an active way; he plots to let make Agamemnon’s dark blood spurt out. In other cases, the blood of the characters who are mentioned flows out. Only Achilles, whose blood spurs out in book 21 as well, threatens that other character’s blood will flow. All in all, the description of Achaian’s blood possesses some sort of brave or vigorous sense, which is related to life. The poet selects the κελαιν- word because it is essential for his plot, to make a dramatic storyline. The colour κελαινός (if it is named as a ‘colour’) dramatises the moment of the scene. Therefore, colours, lights or shades at least, should be distinguished by the poet while composing his lines.

3. Divine dark clouds\textsuperscript{44}

We have looked at five occasions of κελαινεφής already, and in this new section I would like to seek the rest, in order to clarify κελαινός’ connotation. As we approach κελαινεφής that basically represents Zeus\textsuperscript{45} below, the symbolical association of κελαινός with divinity will be elucidated.

Πατήρ, father, which represents Zeus, is employed twice with κελαινεφής in the Iliad. In book 21, gods gather for the assembly and they all sit around Zeus: καὶ δ’ ἐξον παρὰ πατήρ κελαινεφήν: “and they took their seats besides the Father, the lord of the dark clouds.”\textsuperscript{46} Athene speaks to Zeus, complaining that Zeus is planning to save Hektor from death in book 22\textsuperscript{47}:

\begin{center}
\textquote{ω�.@ πατήρ ἀργυρέρους, κελαινεφής, οἶνον ἔιπές·

ἀνάρα θητῶν ἔντα, πάλαι πετρωμένον αἴση,}
\end{center}
A Divine-related shade: κελαίνος in the Iliad

Zeus does not intend to act in the way that Athene anticipated. Rather he tells Athene to do what she has in her mind (183-185).

Кρονίων is used in conjunction with κελαίνεφης four times. In book 1, Achilles asks Thetis to go to Olympus and beseech Zeus, in order to let the Achaian realise their foolishness of not respecting Achilles:

πολλάκι γάρ σεο πατρός ἐν μεγάροισαν ἀκουσά
ἐνυχμοῦν, ὡτε ἦπῃθα κελαίνεφη Κρονίων
ὁ ἦν ἀθανάτοισιν ἀεικα λογίν ἀμύναι,
ὁπποτό μὲν ἐκποταῖς Ὧλυμπαιν ἦπελθον ἄλλοι,

"Ἡρ τ’ ἡ Ἱοςίδες καὶ Παλλᾶς Ἀθηνή.

"I often heard you in my father’s house telling with pride how you alone among the immortals rescued the son of Kronos, lord of the dark clouds, from a shining plight, when other Olympian gods sought to bind him fast – Hera and Poseidon and Pallas Athene.”

Achilles hopes that Zeus is under an obligation to Thetis because of her previous service to Zeus. Here κελαίνεφης Zeus is more likely related to the Achaian side. Thetis’ supplication to Zeus is in fact successful. The scenes in book 6 and 24 where we could see Zeus described as κελαίνεφης are related to the Trojan side. Hektor refuses the offer of wine from his mother, Hekabe, because it is shameful to take the wine with unwashed hands, and he says: οὐδὲ η ἢ ἱερή κελαίνεφη Κρονίων/ αἵραιται καὶ λύθρω

πεπαλαγμένον εὐχαρίσθαι. "no-one can offer prayers to the son of Kronos, lord of the dark clouds, all spattered with blood and filth.” Distressed Hekabe, in book 24, suggests Priam to pray to Zeus, hoping that Priam may return from the enemy: ἄλλ’ εὐχή σὺ γ’ ἐπειτα κελαίνεφη Κρονίων / Ἰδαῖος, ὑ τξ τα Τροίθην κατὰ πάσαν ὁρᾶται, "So pray then to the son of Kronos, lord of the dark clouds, Zeus the god of Ida, who looks over all the land of Troy.” Perhaps it is normal to look up to the sky, imagining that gods are watching us, then pray. Interestingly, in both of these prayer-related κελαίνεφης, it is the Trojans who would pray. The last use of κελαίνεφης with Κρονίων is positioned in book 11:
πάντες δ’ ἦτοίωντο κελαινεύφεα Κρονίωνας,
οὖνεκ’ ὡρα Τρώεσσιν ἔβουλτο κύδως ὀρέξαι.

(ILL. 11. 78-79)

“They were all at issue with the son of Kronos, lord of the dark clouds, because it was his will to give glory to the Trojans.”

This scene is very Iliadic, providing the contrast between mortals and immortals; gods are sitting and watching men from the upper air, while men are battling desperately on the earth. Next, Zeus appears with κελαινεύφες once in book 2 of the Iliad. Agamemnon actually prays to Zeus, with many decorative expressions:

“Ζεὺς κύδιστε μέγιστε, κελαινεύφες, σιθίρι ναίων,
μὴ πρίν ἐπ’ ἡλίων δύναι καὶ ἐπ’ καψάς ἠδιν,
πρὶν με κατὰ πρηνές βαλέειν Πριάμου μελαθρὸν
αιθαλέον, πρῆσαι δὲ πυρὸς δήπο τῷν τῆμασθοι,
’Εκτόρεων δὲ κητόες περὶ στήθεσι δαιξῃ
χαλκῷ χωγάλεον πολίς δ’ ἀμφ’ αὐτὸν ἐταῖροι
πρηνές εἰ κοινῆν ὃδε λαξάοιτο γαῖαν.”

(ILL. 2. 412-8)

“Zeus, greatest and most glorious, lord of the dark clouds, dweller in heaven, grant that the sun should not sink and the darkness come on before I have thrown Priam’s palace headlong to the ground, blackened in the smoke, and burnt its gateways with ravaging fire, and ripped Hektor’s tunic on his chest to tatters with the bronze: and may many of his companions fall face down in the dust about him and sink their teeth in the earth.”

Agamemnon requests in his prayer that Zeus would give glory to the Achaian, but Zeus would not fully grant his prayer, yet (419-420). Here not only κελαινεύφες, but also καψάς (darkness), αἰθαλάες (smoky), and χαλκός (bronze), other expressions that can describe colours, are used for visual effect. Further, other terms we could acknowledge as possibly colour-related are displayed: πρήθῳ (burn), πύρ (fire), δαίως (burning), and κονδα (dust). They vividly strengthen the darkness. As Edgeworth claims, if the colour terms are exhibited successively, there is the poet’s intention. That is, the poet intensifies the darker aspects of Agamemnon’s prayer with those subsequent colour-related terms.

Apart from the divine assembly or interlocution scenes, the other occurrences of κελαινεύφες are somehow linked with prayer to Zeus. Again, only Achilles handles κελαινεύφες in his special own way; Achilles does not pray to Zeus by himself, but rather uses the third person, Thetis, between
Zeus and him, while the other mortals who actually say κέλαινος pray to Zeus by themselves. Achilleus could entreat Zeus without asking Thetis. It is likely that Achilleus manipulates Thetis, in order to obtain what he wants.53 After all his wishes are accomplished in the end. Here again I would suggest that the poet deliberately distinguishes Achilleus from the other mortal characters with the different arrangement of κέλαινος for the context, aiming to portray Achilleus as a main character. In short, adapting the same term, the poet elaborates each character’s individuality within his story as well. All κέλαινος presentations, which principally features Zeus as black-clouds, seem to be associated with power, or divinity more specifically, and in consequence awesome sense is delivered. Imagining the colour of dark-clouds in the sky where Zeus is linked with κέλαινος clouds should be dark, or nearly black, without doubt.

Summary

The characters who are related to κέλαινος in the Ηλιακ are; Agamemnon, the Achaians (unspecified), Eurylykos, Menelao, Diomedes, Hektor, Sarpedon, Achilleus, and Zeus. All are men and only one immortal. Pursuing the connotation of κέλαινος, I would like to submit that there is a κέλαινος-centred, two-dimensional imagery sequence in the Ηλιακ: the upper part of dark — sky — divinity — κέλαινος — portentousness chain goes down to be connected to the lower world of dark, which covers both negative and positive imageries: death — sorrow — blood — κέλαινος / portentousness — vigour. I am inclined to think κέλαινος is more likely negative, thus not situated in the right middle of extremes between black and white. The maneuvre of κέλαινος with blood and Zeus rather indicates the poet’s intention to render the divine connotation to κέλαινος and foster the overall linkage of imageries in his story.54 My proposal on the metaphorical function of κέλαινος, if I may symbolise the term in a word, is portentous, or alarming. It is a dark, divine-related manifestation. Also, describing the Trojans passively with κέλαινος, in contrast to the actively-described Achaians, illustrates a remarkable parallel with the storyline of the Ηλιακ; the Trojans generally share a negative, sorrowful, deathly image, but on the other hand, from the context surrounding the Achaians, a positive, vigorous image towards life can be sensed. There is a well-organised contrast to allow recognition that the Trojans context tends to be passive, while that of the Achaian is active. The characters who are covered by something dark are Trojans. On the contrary, we could see the Achaians acting with something dark together, e. g., young Nestor moves like dark wind-storm. After my analysis, I should like to summarise what κέλαινος symbolises in the Ηλιακ as below:
 Kelaino/j

Zeus = dark-clouds

↓ symbolical endowment (?)

| divinity |
|——|

| passive / negative darkness | Kelaino/j |
|——|——|

| active / positive darkness |
|——|

| the Trojans | portentousness |
|——|——|

| the Achaians |
|——|

The Trojans | unfortunate, sorrow |

Kelojvos should be regarded as enveloping a certain range of darker shades. In shades, the contexts also include shades from deep dark (negatively narrated Trojans) to lighter dark (positively narrated Achaians), which strikingly parallels the storyline of the Iliad. Thus, the poet observes the object, recognises its colour, or shade, and chooses the term for it as he thinks necessary, in order to compose a beautiful, colourful story.

4. Conclusion

Kelaino/j is probably not exactly black like μάλας but a very dark colour, since Kelaino/j largely darkens the context, though Kelaino/j is used positively for the Achaians’ case. However, the whole picture of Kelaino/j occurrences is dark, very close to black. Hence the parallel between the positively-assigned Achaians and the negatively-assigned Trojans, which reveals the poet’s skill, is delineated within the dark grey coloured painting. The brighter shade of the Achaians’ Kelaino/j signifies a slight sense of positiveness in darkness. The poet consistently tends to present contrast even within the dark world.

The divine-related connotation of Kelaino/j, portentous, still remains in the dark; however, I shall have to wait to reach a more compelling clarification, since there are other Greek terms that indicate darkness. As Berlín and Kay also admit that it is necessary to do more work on Greek colour terms (if at all) “in order to determine the essential correctness of Gladstone’s belief that the Greek of Homeric times actually had terms only for “dark” and “light” shades,” further investigation on the dark, countless shades world is to be continued. Nonetheless, as a shade colour, whether it has connotations of hue, the meaning or representation of Kelaino/j should not be reduced to a strict
chromatic meaning. It is certainly not an insignificant embellishment. Instead, καλαίνος is to be regarded in the context as a signifier of portentous mark, which perhaps conveys some negative or positive messages to us. I hope I have shed some light on the divine καλαίνος function portrayed in the Iliad. Let us envisage that Zeus embraces everything from the sky as dark-clouds, and we ought to receive the messages that Zeus intends to deliver from the deep dark-coloured καλαίνος clouds.

Liverpool
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Appendix: Uses of κελαδως in the Iliad

κελαδως

The state of human beings and (the human body):

blood – [1. 303] (A)
[7. 329] (A)
[11. 828] (A)
[11. 845] (A)

Materials:

lute – [6. 117] (T)

Natural environments:

night – [5. 310] (T)
[11. 356] (T)

earth – [16. 384] (?T) <in simile>

storm, hurricane – [11. 747] (A) <in simile>

wave – [9. 6] (?A) <in simile>

κελακεφής

The state of human beings:

blood – [4. 140] (A)
[5. 798] (A)
[14. 437] (T)
[16. 667] (T)
[21. 167] (A)

Relations:

father – [21. 530]
[22. 178]
A Divine-related shade: κρανώς in the Iliad

Proper Names:

Son of Kronos – [1. 397]
[6. 267]
[11. 78]
[24. 290]

Zeus – [2. 412]

Miscellaneous:

most glorious – [2. 412]
greatest – [2. 412]
dweller in heaven – [2. 412]
master of the bright lightning – [22. 178]

*(A) means that objects or persons referred to are on the Achaian side. (T) means on the Trojan side.

2. M. Platnauer, “Greek Colour-Perception,” Classical Quarterly 15, 1921, 153; In Platnauer’s article, κελαινός is categorised as one of three Greek words that denote black. The other two words are μέλας and κατακορής. According to Platnauer, there is no distinction between κελαινός and μέλας, while κατακορής is a quantitative word. Young discusses that μέλας is black, but more likely means dark, as is its synonym κελαινός; D. Young, “The Greek’s Colour Sense,” Review of the Society for Hellenic Travel 4, 1964, 45. Ellis also mentions that “black” means “dark” in Homeric Greece; H. Ellis, “The Colour-Sense in Literature,” Contemporary Review 69, 1896, 719.


6. F. E. Wallace, Color in Homer and in Ancient Art, Massachusetts, 1927, 51 (see also 18f, 22, 28-31, and 59f. for κελαινός).

7. B. Moonwoman, ”Color Categorization in Early Greek,” Journal of Indo-European Studies 22, 1994, 45, 48, 50f. In Moonwoman’s division, dark category words in the epic poems are μέλας, κελαινός, and κυάνος, excluding πορφύρες. There are no words for ‘dark’ or ‘black’ in the Mycenaean Greek records except κελαινός. Also, κελαινός does not appear outside of Homer and Hesiod in early Greek.

Also, proper names in this paper are referred from Hammond’s translation.

9 R. J. Edgeworth, *The Colors of the Aeneid*, New York, 1992. 3. According to Edgeworth, there are six identifiable ways of using colour terms in Classical literature: formulaically, functionally, allusively, decoratively, cumulatively, or associatively. Of course two or more of these might appear at one time.

10 Edgeworth, ibid, 2 and 43-52. See also his article on colour clusters in the Homeric poems; "Color Clusters in Homer," *Eos 77*, 1989, 197-200.


12 Platnauer, op. cit., 162. The idea of colour-blind Homer was a major viewpoint from the early beginning of the discussion on this topic, originated from Gladstone; W. E. Gladstone, "Homer’s Perception and Use of Colour," *Studies on Homer and the Homeric Age III*, Oxford, 1858, pp. 457-499. Gladstone does not mention κελαυνός in this article, but he does in his later article, categorising κελαυνός as belonging to the blackness group: "The Colour-Sense," *Nineteenth Century* 2, 1877, 382. For the discussion on brightness, darkness, and shades of grey, see pp. 382ff. See also A. E. Kober, "Some Remarks on Color in Greek Poetry," *Classical World* 27, 1934, 189-191.

13 It seems to have been agreed that κελαυνός mainly represents Zeus. Cunliffe clearly states that κελαυνός is '(1) (The) god of the black cloud. Epithet or a name of Zeus’; Cunliffe, op. cit., 222. Leaf also notes on κελαυνός at 2. 412, suggesting ‘god of the black cloud. The epithet is also applied to blood, dusky, the significance of the second element having been weakened – a phenomenon familiar in the Tragedians but very rare in H.”; Leaf, op. cit., 80.

14 E. Irwin, *Colour Terms in Greek Poetry*, Toronto, 1974, 219. Her work has been particularly instructive to examine colour in Homer and other ancient poetries.


15 A. E. Kober, *The Use of Color Terms in the Greek Poets*, New York, 1932, 37. It is also noteworthy that, "while κελαυνός, like μῆλος, is used to describe deep and also restless waters, it is not used to
describe shaded waters.”; Kober, ibid., 39.

16 See Appendix I.


For the dark earth, see Wallace, op. cit., 15; Irwin, op. cit., 94ff, 104ff, 187-193. Her insightful viewpoint on the opposition of earth and sky, which is the basis for describing earth as “dark,” is discussed in chapter 5. See also A. E. Harvey, “Homeric Epithets in Greek Lyric Poetry,” *Classical Quarterly* 7, 1957, 216f.

19 Willcock seems to prefer “hurricane” here; Willcock, op. cit (1978), 310.

20 Irwin, op. cit., 197. There are three occasions of dark storm, including 11. 747; ἔρημος 12. 375 and 20. 51.

21 Leaf, op. cit., 372.


23 For the discussion of “dark night,” see Wallace, op. cit., 28; Irwin, op. cit., 159ff. The most frequently applied term for night is, of course, μίλας. Death is described as dark night which overwhelms the eyes elsewhere, and interestingly makes a contrast with “to live,” i.e., “to see the light of the sun.”


25 Leaf, op. cit., 491.

26 *II*. 11. 360.

27 *II*. 11. 351: ——— πλάγχθη δ ὁ πό χαλκόφι χαλκός.

28 Kirk, op. cit (1990), 92. See also J. Griffin, *Homer on Life and Death*, Oxford, 1980, 91f; J. Morrison,

29 Kirk, op. cit (1990), 170; Wallace, op. cit., 22. Postlethwaite recognises here as "the dark ox-hide"; Postlethwaite, op. cit., 99. According to Vivante, we could probably appreciate better the epithets of material which Homer uses, e. g., cup, sword, etc., because bronze, golden, silver imply the respective colours in Homer but not brown, yellow or grey, which maybe Homer does not have any specific words for; Vivante, op. cit., 124 (Materials and color).

30 Leaf, op. cit., 265. Wilcock mentions that this description of Hektor’s shield is one of the few memories of the Mycenaean body-shield; Wilcock, op. cit (1978), 243.


33 Pulley, op. cit., 205. According to Pulley, σύνο καλαίνον is a rhetorically powerful way to end the speech with the vivid image of Agamemnon’s blood spurting out.

34 11. 845: δέν βάλος περιπεκείς απ’ αύτού δ’ σύνο καλαίνον


35 Kober, op. cit (1932), 38.

36 Pulley, op. cit., 221f. See also Wallace, op. cit., 19 (the fresh blood is ἵπταματος but the blood exposed to air is φοινος); M. Leumann, *Homerische Wörter*, Verlag Friedrich Reinhardt, 1950, 202ff., 333, and 340ff (on καλαίνος); Janko, op. cit., 217.

37 II. 4. 140.


39 II. 5. 798.
40 II. 21. 167. According to Postlewaite, "the blood gushed out in a dark cloud" in 167 and it is the only occasion that Achilles is wounded in the entire story, which signifies the fact that Achilles will now have to accept his imminent death; Postlewaite, op. cit., 260.

41 II. 21. 181-2. Σκότος is also one of the shades of grey colour terms, which presents gloomy, dark, etc. Cf. The phrase of τὸν ὁ διὸ σκότος ἄδει Καλύψει (τι) is usually implies somebody’s dying; G. S. Kirk, op. cit (1990), 92.

42 Janko notes on κελαυνεψης here that it is from κελαύνω-κεφης, ‘dark-clouded,’ and was originally a title of Zeus. But later it is misapplied to blood; Janko, op. cit., 217. Friedrich regards it as ‘blackish blood’ in his argument: W. Friedrich, Wounding and Death in the Iliad, Duckworth, 2003, 29ff.

43 Irwin, op. cit, esp. 188. Also a colour imagery sequence including the opposite association between male and female is seen in Catullus: J. Clarke, ‘Colour Sequence in Catullus’ ‘Long Poems’; Colour in the Ancient Mediterranean World, edited by L. Cleland and K. Stears with G. Davies, BAR International Series 1267, 2004, 122-125.

44 Homer’s cloud is also described as dark elsewhere (mostly with κοκάσως and μέλας) and generally anticpates something unfortunate. See M. W. Edwards, Homer: Poet of the Iliad, Baltimore and London, 1987, 112f. ‘a dark cloud of death’ presents the end of a man’s life. The colour of dark clouds in Homer might be a good subject to explore. For dark clouds, see Irwin, op. cit., 85ff, 107, 170ff.

45 Κελαυνεψής occurs by itself without epithet in 15. 46 in Hera’s speech to Zeus: τῇ ἶμεν ἢ κακῇ δή σῷ, κελαυνεψής, ἡγεμονεψής.

46 II. 21. 520.


48 Pulleyen suggests that κελαυνεψής here is usually translated ‘black with clouds’; Pulleyen, op. cit, 221ff.

49 II. 6, 267f.

50 II. 24, 290ff.

51 II. 2. 412. Kirk notes that κελαυνεψής might be held ‘to give a sinister foretaste of κυκλάλων in 415; Kirk, op. cit (1985), 159.

52 μέλαθρον (roof) can be added here, because it actually should be meant ‘blackened,’ which derives from μέλαινα, but not certain.

53 For the entreating structure, see L. M. Slatkin, The Power of Thetis and selected essays.
One possibly provocative viewpoint is that perhaps κελαίνος does not only denote colour but also sound. It may appear cinematographic and anachronistic as an idea but considering how in many occurrences κελαίνος means dark and thunderous at the same time, e.g., a wound with blood running, κελαίνος might be associated with sound. It would be an interesting topic to explore in the future, as it would also help to explain the association with Zeus.


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Compare with Wallace, op. cit., 59f.