

ΤΑΛΑΣ IN SOPHOKLES, ELEKTRA

In a play with so many female characters it is scarcely a matter for comment that feminine adjectival forms may predominate. Yet in the case of *τάλας* the frequency with which it is associated with women in comparison with other tragedies is of some small interest. Further, when we examine the phrases and the position in the verse in which *τάλανα* occurs, we may discern something about the extent of 'variatio' which Sophokles occasionally employs.

The frequency of *τάλας* in the *Elektra* may be observed from the table below:

Used of → Used by ↓	Elektra	Chrys.	Kly.	Agam.	Orestes	Misc.
Elektra	165 (a), 304 (a), 450 (a), 674 (b), 788 (b), 807 (b), 812 (a), 883 (b), 1108 (b), 1115 (b), 1138 (a), 1143 (b), 1209 (b), 1284 (c).	879 (b) 887 (b) 924 (b)	273 (d) 1426 (d) (both derogatory)	245 (d)	1141 (b)	284 (d) (<i>δυστάλαναν δαῖτ'</i>)
Chrysothemis	388 (b)	902 (c) 926 (a) 930 (b)				
Klytaimestra			1409 (b)			
Orestes						1179 (b) (<i>συμφορᾶς</i>)
Chorus						1413 (b) (<i>γενεά</i>)

Observations:

1. In the table above a. = self-commiserating (1); b. = exclamatory; c. = joyful; d. = third-person reference (thus purely adjectival). Occasionally more than one connotation is present in the word at a particular place (2).

2. Of the 29 occurrences there is only one compound (284), only two are masculines (245, 1141), and only three are not applied directly to a woman (284, 1179, 1413) (3).

3. *Táλαωα* appears in the context of the following phrases:

οἴμοι τ. (x 8), always at beginning of verse; never in lyric; at v. 1179 fem. gen. sing., elsewhere always nom.

ᾠ τ. (x 4), position varies in trimeters, never in lyric.

τ. (x 3), position in verse varies; occurs in both lyric and trimeters.

ᾠ τ. ἐγώ//ἦ τ., ἐγώ (x 3), at or near end of verse; never in lyric.

ἦ τ. ± noun (x 3), position varies in trimeter.

οἱ γῶ τ. (x 2), both occur at beginning of trimeters.

κάμοῦ τ. (x 2), both occur at beginning of trimeters.

ᾠ noun τ. (x 1), lyric.

For the record, *τάλαωα* occurs in other plays as follows (4):

Soph.: Aj. 5: 340, 341, 787, 850, 903 (ᾠ ταλαίφρον γύναι); Ant. 4: 82, 554, 880, 1180; Tr. 10: 307 (*δυστάλαωα*), 320, 651 (*τάλαωαν δυστάλαωα καρδίαν*), 705, 792, 877, 878, 1084 (*νόσος*), 1148; O.T. 2: 1236 (*δυστάλαωα*), 1373; Ph. 0; O.C. 12: 318, 828, 1263 (*ταλαίνης νηδύος*), 1427, 1438, 1442 (*δυστάλαωα*), 1683, 1692, 1711, 1715, 1727, 1734 (*δυστάλαωα*); Fragments 1: 606 Pearson.

Aisch.: Pers. 3: 445, 517, 575 (*αἰδάν*); Sept. 2: 262, 808; Suppl. 0; Ag. 8: 385 (*Πειθῶ*), 1070, 1107, 1143 (*φρεσῶν*), 1158, 1247, 1260, 1295; Cho. 2: 605, 743; Eum. 2: 780 = 810; P.V. 2: 566, 571.

Eur.: Alc. 1: 250; Med. 16: 34, 59, 277, 437, 504, 511, 902, 990, 996, 1016, 1028 (*δυστάλαωα*), 1057 (*θυμέ*), 1184, 1244 (*χείρ*), 1260 (*Ἐρινύν*), 1279; Heracl. 3: 433 (*ἐλπίς*), 447 (*δυστάλαωα*), 567; Hipp. 15:

(1) For this usage see E. W. Handley, *The Dyskolos of Menander*, London 1965, ad 438.

(2) E. g., v. 674 may be felt equally to be (a); v. 1413 may be (c): cf. Jebb's note, ad loc.

(3) There is an indirect association with Elektra at v. 1179, and perhaps with Klytimestra (as well as others) at v. 1413.

(4) The O. C. T. has been the text followed. Rhes. and Eur. Cycl. have not been included, nor have the fragments of Aischylos or Euripides been consulted. Unless otherwise noted all references are to *τάλαωα simplex*, and are used of women.

39, 300, 327, 339, 366, 372, 570 (*δυστάλαα*), 738 f., 811, 816, 841, 860, 1082 (*δυστάλαα*), 1144, 1241 (*ἀρά*); Andr. 11: 140 (*παντάλαινα*), 292 (*πόλει*), 363 (*πόλω*), 394 (*πατρίς*), 455 (*πόλις*), 489, 534, 748, 822, 1017, 1017 f.; Hec. 16: 210, 233, 404, 514, 661, 667 (*παντάλαινα*), 676, 693, 694, 813, 913, 1064 (bis), 1108 (*ζόης*), 1273 (*κυνός*), 1287; Supp. 6: 271, 605 f., 924, 941, 1034 (*δυστάλαα*), 1124; H.F. 4: 115, 973, 996, 1371, — cf. [452] (*ψυχῆς*) —; Ion 3: 763, 793 (*ποδός*), 1252; Tro. 10: 290, 498, 502, 624, 780 (*Τροία*), 869, 1272, 1324 (*Τροία*), 1329, 1331 (*πόλις*); El. 7: 220, 419, 1109, 1161, 1171, 1183, 1206; I.T. 8: 26, 344 (*καρδία*), 549, 565, 805, 866, 893 (bis); Hel. 11: 139, 240, 240 (*ἔρω*), 336, 614, 791, 798, 833, 857, 1124, 1285; Phoen. 4: 1294 (bis), 1429, 1710 (*φυγάν*); Or. 12: 73, 131, 167, 266, 301, 402, 466 (*καρδία*), 826 f., 858, 1286, 1490, 1564; Ba. 6: 1200, 1245 (*χερσίν*), 1282, 1284, 1306, 1353; I.A. 10: 460, 876, 880 (bis), 888, 1100, 1313, 1315 (*δυστάλαω*'), 1345, 1434 (5).

Some brief observations may be offered to conclude this note:

1. Easily the most frequent of the compounds is *δυστάλαα*; such compounds are lacking in Aischylos whose use of the simple form is much more sparing than Sophokles' and Euripides'.
2. The adjective not infrequently qualifies parts of the body.
3. In two plays in particular (Andr., Tro.), Euripides uses the adjective to qualify various words for the state.

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(5) Of the occurrences listed above where *τάλαα* qualifies a noun which does not automatically indicate a woman, a considerable number refer, in fact, to a female: Soph., Tr. 651; O.C. 1263; Aisch., Ag. 1143; Eur., Medea 1057, 1244; H.F. [452]; Ion 793; I.T. 344; Hel. 248; Ba. 1245.