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ἐπ' ὠκυμοίρω τοῦτον Ἀσκληπιοδότῳ
πατήρ Νόητος χῶσεν εὐερκῆ τάφον,
καὶ ξεστὸν οἰκτρ[ο]ῦ παιδὸς ἀνφὶ σήματι
ἔθηκε βωμόν, πενταέτους τε εἰκῶ τέκνου
κενὴν ὄνησιν ὀμμάτων χαράξατο,
τὴν πᾶσαν εἰς γῆν ἐλπίδων κρύψας χαράν·
μήτηρ δὲ ἐν οἴκοις, ἅ τάλαινα, ὀδύρεται
νικῶσα θρήνοις πενθίμην ἀηδόνα.

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The reading ἅ τάλαινα has been repeated for 172 years from the *editio princeps* (Ph. Le Bas, *RPh* 1 (1845) 34) through the collections of Kaibel (*EG* 246), Peek (*GVI* 661), VÉrilhac (Παῖδες ἄωροι 164), and Corsten (*I.Kios* 79), right up to Merkelbach and Stauber's. 'On a lieu d'être surpris de l'emploi du dialecte dorien', Le Bas noted, and left it at that. Kaibel, the only other scholar who thought it worth a comment, writes: 'ἅ τάλαινα non sollicitandum: articulus in hac forma legitimus et forma dorica archetypi est' (Kaibel, *EG* p. 94).

Maybe; but there is an alternative. Everything else in this epigram is in unimpeachable Attic. Dialectal instability is well attested in Greek verse inscriptions, but it should not be presumed without good evidence. Of course the stone, *teste* Le Bas, reads αταλαινα, without diacritics. A better reading is ἅ τάλαινα. The exclamatory particle, 'expressing pity' among other things (LSJ⁹ *s.v.*), is found twelve times – excluding repetitions – in the three tragedians, whose language, style, and metre the poet evidently echoes. For the phrase cf. Semon. fr. 7.76 W.² ἅ τάλας, B. 16.30 (*Dith.* 2.30) ἅ τάλ[αι]ν', both referring to a third person, as here.

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