

## ***Tecmessa in Sophocles' Tragedy "Aias" and the Image of "Umm Walad" in the Classical Literature***

This research aims to spot the captive women in the classical society through the literature, and if these captive women would be slaves all the rest of their lives or would be there any change affecting them. The research uses Tecmessa in Sophocles play "Aias" as an example to illustrate the status of this social category.

The image of "Umm Walad" is an Arabic tradition. And it can be traced back to The Pre-Islamic era (Jahiliyah) and it is one of the consequences of tribal conflicts. The victorious one has all the rights to have men and women of the conquered as spoils. The victorious men became masters and owners of the slave women, and had the right to have sexual relations with their captive women.

The Arabic warrior in the Pre-Islamic era preferred to take a slave woman as a wife because she would not take a dowry from him<sup>(1)</sup>. And if one of these spoils gave birth to a child for her owner, her life was changed, she would get a good position in her master's house, and was set free after his death. The same phenomena continued in the Islamic era as well. The slave woman who gave birth to a son for her master was called "Umm walad"<sup>(2)</sup>, and thus the slave women had more chances of emancipation than the male slaves and so that their lives would be transferred from slavery to freedom in the Pre-Islamic and the Islamic era too<sup>(3)</sup>.

In the Greek literature there is a feminine character who had been mentioned in *Ajax* (*Αἴας*) of Sophocles (written in 440 BC.), this character is a very rich femme in the classical literature, it is Tecmessa "ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ", who was created by Sophocles. The poet Sophocles was the first Greek tragedian writer to mention Tecmessa in his *Ajax* "*Αἴας*".

Tecmessa was well-born woman; she was the daughter of Teleutas (Teuthras), king of Phrygia. During the Trojan War, Ajax son of Telamon and Periboea plundered Phrygia, neighbor of Troy, slew king Teleutas, and took his daughter Tecmessa as a captive woman. Tecmessa became concubine or mistress of her owner Ajax.<sup>(4)</sup>

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(1) حمدى منصور: السبيبة في الشعر الجاهلى. مجلة جامعة النجاح للأبحاث (العلوم الإنسانية) مجلد ٢٤ (٣)؛ ٢٠١٠ ص ٩٦٥ .

(2) Campo J. E., Encyclopedia of World Religion, "Encyclopedia of Islam", Facts On File books, New York, 2009, see *slavery* p. 629-630.

(3) Madden J., "Slavery in the Roman Empire, Numbers and Origins", *Classics Ireland*, vol. 3, 1996, p. 7.

(4) Schenker D. J., Masterpieces of Ancient Greek Literature Part I, 2007, p. 12.; Cf., March J., Cassell's Dictionary of Classical Mythology, Cassell & Co., UK., 2001, see Tecmessa, p. 722-723.; Cf., Cook J. W., Encyclopedia of Ancient Literature, Facts On File Ink., New York, 2008, see Ajax, p. 27.

Sophocles in his *Ajax* “Αἴας” assured that Tecmessa fell in love with her master Ajax, but he didn't say if she was his mistress willingly or not<sup>(1)</sup>. She was in great grief when she found out that her master had killed himself. So she cried out with words of lament as should a good woman who lost her dear husband do<sup>(2)</sup>. Sophocles did not forget to tell us that she got a son from Ajax named Eurysaces. However, he did not care for what should be her destiny after the death of her master.

Sophocles made Tecmessa a Phrygian princess, in the kingdom of her father. The chorus of *Ajax* in line 210 named her daughter of Phrygian Teleutas “παῖ τοῦ Φρυγίου <σὺ> Τελεύταντος”, and in 331 named her daughter of Teleutas “Τέκμησσα, δεινά, παῖ Τελεύταντος”.

And after that the chorus had shown the real status of Tecmessa, alluding that she was a captive woman in a war, and her master Ajax loved her very much:

λέγ', ἐπεί σε λέχος δουριάλωτον  
στέρξας ἀνέχει θύριος Αἴας.  
(Soph. Ajax, 211 – 212 )

And then the chorus said that he had never seen a hapless captive-woman like Tecmessa:

Τὴν δουρίληπτον δύσμορον νύμφην ὄρῳ  
Τέκμησσαν, οἴκτω τῷδε συγκεκραμένην.  
(Soph. Ajax, 894–895)

In the dialogue between Tecmessa and Ajax she was trying to persuade him that the perils were our destiny and we cannot turn them (τῆς ἀναγκαίας τύχης οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδὲν μεῖζον ἀνθρώποις κακόν). To sound more persuasive, she said that she had been a princess for the very rich Phrygian king, but now she was a slave (εἰμὶ δούλη) and a concubine, but she couldn't decide if this change in her life was according to God or in Ajax' hands (θεοῖς γὰρ ὁδὸς που καὶ σῇ μάλιστα χειρί)<sup>(3)</sup>. She had lost her country, which had been ravaged by

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(1) Bell R. E., Women of Classical Mythology: a Biographical Dictionary, ABC-Clio, USA & England, 1991, see Tecmessa (1) p. 410.

(2) Tecmessa said that about the death of Ajax in line 966; it is bitter thing for her: “Ἐμοὶ πικρὸς τέθνηκεν”; Cf., Dik H., Word Order in Greek Tragic Dialogue, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007, p. 46.

We can say that Tecmessa of Sophocles is a fine link between the captive women's laments of epic poetry and those of the later tragedy, all of them had their own characteristics. Tecmessa brought the epic lamentation and cried its words and pathos on the theater not in singing, and in her speech, especially, when echoed the words and character of Andromache and Bireis in the Iliad of Homer.; Cf., Due` C., The Captive Woman's Lament in Greek Tragedy, University of Texas Press, USA., 2006, p. 54, 56.; Cf., Ormand K., “Silent by Convention? Sophocles' Tekmessa”, *AJP.*, vol. 117, number 1, spring 1996, p. 39.; Tecmessa had echoed Andromache of Homer many times in many situations, situations, in her words and emotions.; Cf., Worthen T. D., “XEIPIAN: Ajax 494-95”, *Classical Philology*, vol. 69, No. 2, Apr., 1974, p. 116-117.

(3) Soph. Ajax, 485 – 491:

Ajax' spear (*σὺ γάρ μοι πατρίδ' ἥστωσας δορί*) and her parents had gone to Hades, so Ajax now was her country and all her family (*τίς δῆτ' ἐμοὶ γένοιτ'* ἀν ἀντὶ σοῦ πατρίς)<sup>(1)</sup>. Then, as she said, he became all her hope (*τίς πλούτος; ἐν σοὶ πᾶσ' ἔγωγε σφόζομαι*).

Thus Tecmessa did not forget to state that she became Ajax' slave (*νῦν δ' εἰμὶ δούλη*), but afterwards she became his bed-fellow (*τὸ σὸν λέχος ξυνῆλθον* = shared your bed), and did her best to please him<sup>(2)</sup>.

So there was no surprise, for the audience, when she addresses him as "Ajax my dear = ὁ φίλ' Αἴας", announcing her love for him; she said that she obeyed him in every thing "*Αλλ' ὁ φίλ' Αἴας, πάντ' ἔγωγε πείσομαι*"<sup>(3)</sup>. Before that, she described Ajax with the adjective (*κλεινὸς*), and said he was a glorious man (*ὁ κλεινὸς Αἴας*), and before that too, she used three adjectives to describe him<sup>(4)</sup>, she said that he is the great and terrible and a man who had a strong shoulder (*ὁ δεινὸς μέγας ωμοκρατής Αἴας*).

These words which Tecmessa used to describe her country's aggressor made some of confusion: how could the killer of her father and all her family, who ravaged her country and took her as his bed-fellow become great, good and strong?!

But attentive reading can show that she became alone and did not have any man to protect her, except Ajax her captor, so she found him her protector and her man, Ajax

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*Ὥ δέσποτ' Αἴας, τῆς ἀναγκαίας τύχης  
οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδὲν μεῖζον ἀνθρώποις κακόν.  
Ἐγὼ δ' ἐλευθέρου μν ἐξέφυν πατρός,  
εἴπερ τινὸς σθένοντος ἐν πλούτῳ Φρυγῶν·  
νῦν δ' εἰμὶ δούλη· θεοῖς γὰρ ὁδ' ἔδοξέ που  
καὶ σῇ μάλιστα χειρί· Τοιγαροῦν, ἐπεὶ  
τὸ σὸν λέχος ξυνῆλθον, εὖ φρονῶ τὰ σά·*

(1) Soph. Ajax, 514 – 518:

*'Εμοὶ γὰρ οὐκέτ' ἔστιν εἰς ὃ τι βλέπω  
πλὴν σοῦ· σὺ γάρ μοι πατρίδ' ἥστωσας δορί·  
καὶ μητέρ' ἄλλῃ μοῖρᾳ τὸν φύσαντά τε  
καθεύλεν "Αἰδου θανασίμους οἰκήτορας·  
τίς δῆτ' ἐμοὶ γένοιτ' ἀν ἀντὶ σοῦ πατρίς;*

(2) Soph. Ajax, 492 – 493:

*καὶ σ' ἀντιάζω πρός τ' ἐφεστίου Διός  
εὐνῆς τε τῆς σῆς, ἥ συνηλλάχθης ἐμοί,*

Cf., Cairns D. L., AIDOS: the Psychology and Ethics of Honour and Shame in Ancient Greek Literature, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1993, p. 232.; Cf., Ormand K., Op. Cit., p. 48.

And this is the role of the captive woman for her master and her owner: Cf., Hall E., "Asia unmanned: images of victory in classical Athens"; *War and Society in the Greek World*, edited by Rich J. and Routledge S. G., London and New York, 1st ed., 1993, the last ed. 1995, p. 112-113.

(3) Soph. Ajax, 529.

(4) Soph. Ajax, 205-206.

became her master in every aspect of her life<sup>(1)</sup>: she found herself beside him, and she felt she was nothing without him. She became not only a follower but more<sup>(2)</sup>; she had identified herself with her captor. Ajax became every thing for Tecmessa, and she could not see her life without him, especially after the death of all her family's members, he became her homeland, wealth and welfare<sup>(3)</sup>:

τίς δῆτ' ἐμοὶ γένοιτ' ἀν ἀντὶ σοῦ πατρίς;  
τίς πλοῦτος; ἐν σοὶ πᾶσ' ἔγωγε σώζομαι.  
(S. Aj. 518 -519)

So she cried when she recognized that he would commit suicide. She urged him not to do that, but when he did, she lamented him loudly as any honest woman who loved her husband would do<sup>(4)</sup>.

Tecmessa was very afraid of the future<sup>(5)</sup>, she did not wish to lose her lovers again, or lose her social status. Once she was a princess and became a bedfellow for her aggressor. Then, she obtained a good position with that aggressor, so she was afraid of losing these things or becoming a bedfellow for another man again<sup>(6)</sup>.

(1) In line 485 Tecmessa call Ajax with the address form “my lord” (<sup>τ</sup>Ω δέσποτ' Αἴας), this word (ο δέσποτης) has many meanings, all of them indicate the one who has power over, maybe the slaves or the entire house, and Tecmessa has a position between a wife and concubine.

(2) In 368 Tecmessa prays to Ajax not to suicide or kill himself, (Μή, δέσποτ' Αἴας, λίσσομαι σ', αὐδα τάδε.), Tecmessa will be lost without Ajax, her aggressor. So she urges him to pray for her. If he dies she will die too:

ΤΕ. "Οταν κατεύχῃ ταῦθ', ὄμοῦ κάμοι θανεῖν  
εὔχου· τί γὰρ δεῖ ζῆν με σοῦ τεθνηκότος; (S. Aj., 392-393)  
And in another action she urges him with his son and gods not leave her alone:  
ΤΕ. Οὕμ' ως ἀθυμῶ· καὶ σε πρὸς τοῦ σοῦ τέκνου  
καὶ θεῶν ίκνοῦμαι μὴ προδοὺς ήμᾶς γένη.

(S. Aj., 587-588)

Cf., Sewell-Rutter N. J., Guilt by Descent: Moral Inheritance and Decision Making in Greek Tragedy, oxford University Press; Oxford, 2007, p. 167-168.

(3) - Due` C., op. cit., p. 52.; Cf., Cook J. W., op. cit., p. 27.

(4) Ormand K., op. cit., p. 37.

When Tecmessa used the word “διευνέται”, in her dialogue with Ajax, pointing to their sexual relation, she wanted to tell him he is her bedmate; so he mustn't leave her alone.; Cf., Worthen T. D., Op. Cit., p. 116.

(5) Tecmessa in this tragedy is a fearful captive woman; usually waiting for the worst.; Cf., Dik H., op. cit., p. 130.

(6) Soph. Ajax, 494 – 505:

μή μ' ἀξιώσῃς βάξιν ἀλγεινὴν λαβεῖν  
τῶν σῶν ὑπ' ἐχθρῶν, χειρίαν ἐφείς τινι.  
^Ηι γὰρ θάνης σὺ καὶ τελευτήσος ἀφῆς,  
ταύτη νόμιζε κάμε τῇ τόθ' ήμέρᾳ  
βίᾳ ξυναρπασθεῖσαν Ἀργείων ὕπο

Tecmessa tried to get a legitimate position in her new community <sup>(1)</sup>, Alluding that any spoil wanted to inherit someone had the right to mourn. So her words and lamentation had shown her strong soul and her considerable political savvy <sup>(2)</sup>.

With her lament and mourning, Tecmessa wanted to gesture that implicitly reinforces her claim as mother of his only heir, and herself as a legitimate wife<sup>(3)</sup>. Tecmessa was not a fragile restricted woman but she was a strong and can maneuver for the sake of her status. We saw that maneuvering in her dialogue with Ajax; When she was trying to persuade him not to suicide, he told her that she spoke so much; “Πόλλα ἄγαν ἥδη θροεῖς”(Soph. Ajax, 592). In these words he tried to tell her that; she must not speak much and it is better for a woman and she must deal with him as an ideal Athenian wife <sup>(4)</sup>, His words might also mean that she was a restricted woman and must not forget that, so she answered him using the word my king “ἄνωξ” and aded; ” because of my fearing“:

AI. Πόλλα ἄγαν ἥδη θροεῖς.  
TE. Ταρβῶ γάρ, ὥνωξ.  
(Soph. Ajax, 592-593)

Tecmessa used a divine and blessed word “ἄνωξ” to address Ajax when he reminded her with its slavery position, while in another situations she had used the word “δεσπότης = master“ in the vocative case “ δέσποτα = O my master “ to address Ajax her master<sup>(5)</sup>. This word came from “δεσποτεία“which means the relation of master to slaves.

ξὺν παιδὶ τῷ σῷ δουλίαν ἔξειν τροφήν.  
Καί τις πικρὸν πρόσφθεγμα δεσποτῶν ἐρεῖ  
λόγοις ίάπτων· «'Ιδετε τὴν ὄμευνέτιν  
Αἴαντος, ὃς μέγιστον ἵσχυσε στρατοῦ,  
οἵας λατρείας ἀνθ' ὅσου ζῆλου τρέφει».  
Τοιαῦτ' ἐρεῖ τις, κάμε μὲν δαίμων ἐλᾶ,  
σοὶ δ' αἰσχρὰ τάπῃ ταῦτα καὶ τῷ σῷ γένει.

Cf., Cairns D. L., op. cit., p. 232.; Cf., Worthen T. D., op. cit., p. 116.

(1) Due` C., op. cit., p. 51, 123.; Cf., Foley H. P., Female Acts in Greek Tragedy, Princeton University Press, Princeton and Oxford, 2001, p. 87.

(2) Her considerable political savvy had shown in her concentrated speech on their sexual relation because of which she was his only son's mother.; Cf., Worthen T. D., op. cit., p. 116.

(3) Foley H. P., op. cit., p. 90-91, 93.

Although that, she didn't do as Andromache in her speech with Hector in the Iliad. Andromache used the word “γήνον” (Hom. Il., 24, 723-726., 6, 405-409) while Tecmessa didn't use this word at all in the Ajax tragedy. There is a great deference between both of them, Andromache is Hector's wife, but Tecmessa is merely a slave woman and a concubine.; Cf., Worthen T. D., op. cit., p. 116.

(4) Ormand K., op. cit., p. 42, 50, 52, 56.

(5) Tecmessa had used the vocative “δέσποτα“ to address Ajax, and this word shows the slavery relation between them.

TE. Μή, δέσποτ' Αἴας, λίσσομαί σ', αὖδα τάδε. ( 368 )

.....  
TE. Ὡ δέσποτ' Αἴας, τῆς ἀναγκαίας τύχης. ( 486 )

But when Ajax was alone, he spoke to himself and said that he was very strong as the iron but when he met this woman and loved her, he changed and became worried about her future and their son too:

Κάγω γάρ, ὃς τὰ δείν' ἐκαρτέρουν τότε,  
βαφῇ σίδηρος ὥς, ἐθηλύνθην στόμα  
πρὸς τῆσδε τῆς γυναικός· οἰκτίρω δέ νιν  
χήραν παρ' ἔχθροῖς παιδά τ' ὄρφανὸν λιπεῖν.  
(Soph. Ajax, 650-653)

Tecmessa was a very intelligent woman in using her words, she was concentrating on their son's future in her dialogue with Ajax; she did not mention her future as a slave widow after his death but mentioned her orphan son<sup>(1)</sup>.

Sophocles showed a complex position toward Tecmessa in this tragedy, because no one can determine if she was a slave or a wife, especially when Teucer “ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ“, the half-brother of Ajax, went to Agamemnon “ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ“ to bury the body of Ajax, he used the word “γυνή“ to allude to Tecmessa, with this word he declared that Tecmessa was the wife of Ajax<sup>(2)</sup>:

Καὶ μὴν ἐς αὐτὸν καιρὸν οἴδε πλησίοι  
πάρεισιν ἀνδρὸς τοῦδε παῖς τε καὶ γυνή,  
(Soph. Ajax, 1168- 1169).

In line 1169 Teucer used the word “γυνή“ which has many meanings: “woman”, “wife”, “spouse” and “concubine”, and used another word to increase our confusion, when he used the word “παῖς“ to denote the son of his brother Ajax from Tecmessa.

In the dialogue between Agamemnon and Teucer, Sophocles wanted to say something about the captive women in the Greek society through Tecmessa. He wanted to say that these captive women had a social progress status when they gave birth sons for their masters<sup>(3)</sup>. So the researcher supposes that Sophocles created the dialogue of Agamemnon and Teucer for that point. Sophocles let Teucer praises his mother Hesione in his dialogue with Agamemnon, although she was a captive woman for his father Telamon<sup>(4)</sup>. Hesione

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TE. Ὡ δέσποτ' Αἴας, τί ποτε δρασείεις φρενί; ( 585 )

(1) Worthen T. D., op. cit., p. 116.

(2) Lyons D., Gender and Immortality: Heroines in Ancient Greek Myth and Cult Princeton University Press, 1996, P. 203.

(3) Demand N., Birth, Death, and Motherhood in Classical Greece, Baltimore and London; the Johns and Hopkins University Press, 1994, p. 31.

(4) Teucer said that he was a slave because his mother was a barbarian woman

”Οδ' ἦν ὁ πράσσων ταῦτα, σὺν δ' ἐγὼ παρὼν  
ο δοῦλος, οὐκ τῆς βαρβάρου μητρὸς γεγώς.“  
(Soph. Ajax, 1288-1229).

But now he is a great warrior and a king of Cyprus.; Cf., Cairns D. L., op. cit., p. 237 - 238.

was the daughter of Laomedon, king of Troy. Telamon and Heracles had destroyed Troy and killed Laomedon, and then Heracles gave Hesione, the princess of Troy, as a captive woman for his partner Telamon<sup>(1)</sup>.

The dialogue between Agamemnon and Teucer was very bitter; Sophocles concentrated on the real status of the restricted women and their sons with their masters. Agamemnon in attacking Teucer wanted to say that, he had his characteristics and social position from his citizen mother, so Teucer was not even fit to speak to him<sup>(2)</sup>.

Teucer knew that he was not as Ajax; who was a legitimate son for their father Telamon but he was “νοθός“. The father of Teucer was a citizen man and his mother was a restricted woman, while Ajax was “γνήσιος“; because his parents were citizens. So the status of Eurusaces, son of Ajax, was as the status of his uncle Teucer, both of them were “νοθοί“ because the father of both them was a citizen man and got them from a non-citizen woman<sup>(3)</sup>.

It can be said that Ajax did what his father had done before: both of them destroyed and ravaged a foreign city and took the daughter of the killed king as a concubine, then this captive woman having born her master a son, would have a higher position than that concubine or slave woman because of her son, and this son became a prince. So Ajax was a parallel to his father Telamon, his son was a parallel to Ajax' half brother Teucer, and Tecmessa was a parallel to Teucer's mother Hesione<sup>(4)</sup>.

Sophocles in this play said a very important thing- that the children who came from purchased slave women or captivated women become freed and their mother could reside in the hero's household, and he tried to give the rights of citizenship and an inheritance to

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(1) Soph. Ajax, 1299-1305:

δος ἐκ πατρὸς μέν εἰμι Τελαμῶνος γεγώς,  
ὅστις στρατοῦ τὰ πρῶτ' ἀριστεύσας ἐμὴν  
ἴσχει ξύνευνον μητέρ', ἡ φύσει μὲν ἦν  
βασίλεια, Λαομέδοντος, ἔκκριτον δέ νιν  
δώρημα κείνω 'δωκεν Ἀλκμήνης γόνος.  
Ἄρ' ὁδ' ἀριστος ἐξ ἀριστέοιν δυοῖν  
βλαστῶν ἀν αἰσχύνοιμι τοὺς πρὸς αἷματος,

(2) Soph. Ajax, 1259 – 1263:

Οὐ σωφρονήσεις; οὐ μαθὼν δος εἶ φύσιν  
ἄλλον τιν' ἄξεις ἄνδρα δεῦρ' ἐλεύθερον,  
ὅστις πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἀντὶ σοῦ λέξει τὰ σά;  
Σοῦ γὰρ λέγοντος οὐκέτ' ἀν μάθοιμ' ἐγώ·  
τὴν βάρβαρον γὰρ γλωσσαν οὐκ ἐπαιώ.

Cf., Ormand K., op. cit., p. 47.

(3) Ibid, p. 43-45, 49.

(4) Bell R. E., op. cit., p. 410 – 411.; Cf., Ormand K., op. cit., p. 46, note 30.

these children<sup>(1)</sup>. The son of Ajax, Eurysaces, from Tecmessa had given his mother a kind of status because he was his only legitimate heir<sup>(2)</sup>.

Tecmessa had an ascending hierarchy in the Ajax's tragedy, especially in Ajax's dialogues with the different characters of the play. He used different words in speaking about Tecmessa in the tragedy. First he spoke to the chorus and demanded her obedience in line 528 “έὰν μόνον τὸ ταχθὲν εὖ τολμᾶ τελεῖν”. In this situation Tecmessa was standing beside him mourning and shedding tears, but he didn't give her any care but asked her to bring his son Eurysaces in line 530 “Κόμιζέ νύν μοι παῖδα τὸν ἐμόν, ως ἵδω”. Through these lines 528-530, there were two different situations, one for Ajax who entirely neglected Tecmessa and concentrated on his son whom he considered him as part of his family. The other situation was for Tecmessa who was trying to show her position to Ajax when she answered him with “my love Ajax I usually obeyed you” in line 529<sup>(3)</sup>. Moreover, there was another situation for Tecmessa in line 541, recalling her son and saying to him that: “Ω παῖ, πατὴρ καλεῖ σε = my son, your father is calling you”. Here Tecmessa showed her son as a legal son and a heir for Ajax.

Ajax, as it has already been made clear, was a lord and he had a son from his concubine, while Tecmessa was a restricted woman and bore a son for her master, but she tried to manifest her position for Ajax and his family. After she had brought her son to her master Ajax, he entrusted him to his half-brother Teucer, and asked him to take the child to his home where his parents Telamon and Eriboia were, to take care them in their old-age<sup>(4)</sup>.

Tecmessa has no part in this familial relation (Ajax, Teucer, Eurysaces, Telamon and Eriboia). Sophocles recognized that the concubine who had a son for her master would be set free after his death, and at this time only, she could obtain her previous royal status. So she assured that she was the only woman who had born a son for Ajax, and Eurysaces was the son of his father Ajax, and she want to be a legitimate wife for Ajax.

Sophocles did not forget to focus on Ajax' emotion and his pity for the future of Tecmessa and his son after his death:

πρὸς τῆσδε τῆς γυναικός· οἰκτίω δέ νιν  
χήραν παρ' ἔχθροῖς παῖδά τ' ὀρφανὸν λιπεῖν.  
(Soph. Ajax, 652 – 653)

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(1) Foley H. P., op. cit., p. 88.

(2) Kirk Ormand, op.c., p. 43- 46.

(3) 'Αλλ' ὁ φίλ' Αἴας, πάντ' ἔγωγε πείσομαι.

(4) Soph. Ajax, 567 – 571:

κείνω τ' ἐμὴν ἀγγείλατ' ἐντολήν, ὅπως  
τὸν παῖδα τόνδε πρὸς δόμους ἐμοὺς ἄγων  
Τελαμῶνι δείξει μητρί τ', Ἐριβοίᾳ λέγω,  
ώς σφιν γένηται γηροβοσκός εἰσαεὶ  
μέχρις οὖ μυχοὺς κίχωσι τοῦ κάτω θεοῦ.

Ajax realized that Tecmessa would be a widow “χήρα“ and his son would be an orphan “όρφανὸς“ after his death, so he was pitiful “οἰκτίρω“ for them. Ajax with these emotions tried to pave the way for a new transitional status for Tecmessa and Eurysaces. She would be his legitimate wife and Eurysaces would be his legitimate heir<sup>(1)</sup>.

So when the chorus recognized something wrong with Ajax, they began to modify their way of addressing Tecmessa, beginning with the bride “νύμφη“ in line 894, then when they recognized Ajax' death, they addressed her ” O wretched wife = ὁ ταλαιφρών γύναι“, and in line 940 they used this term “γύναι“ again.

And now it was realized that Tecmessa had a good position in this tragedy, she was not a free concubine “παλλάκτη“<sup>(2)</sup> because Ajax did not take her by a concubinage “παλλακείο“, so her son for him was not son of concubine “παλλακίνος“ but a legitimate son “παῖς“. And she was not a legitimate wife “άκοιτις“ too, but she was a slave as she announced herself “δούλη“ and shared his bed “λέχος ξυνῆλθον“ then, after his death, she would be a woman or a wife “γυνή“.

Sophocles in *Ajax* could give us the social progression in the status of the captive women in the Greek society, and how these restricted women get their freedom again. He also alluded to the Greeks' opinions of the concubines, during the life of their masters and when they had sons for them, then their opinions after the master's death<sup>(3)</sup>.

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(1) As it was said before that, Tecmessa was very intelligent, because she didn't say the words widow “χήρα“ or orphan “όρφανὸς“ in her speech with Ajax, so when she focused on the future of their son after Ajax' death, (469-499, 510- 519) she let him say that clearly. And with his saying she had her target to be a legitimate wife and her son to be a legitimate heir.; Cf., Worthen T. D., op. cit., p. 116.

(2) Demand N., op. cit., p. 29-31.

(3) There is another a Greek poet wrote about Tecmessa in his works called Quintus Smyrnaeus, and he lived in Smyrna in Ionia during the third century (fl. ca. 375 AD.). He was a Greek epic poet and he was the author of a late post-homeric Greek epic poem in 14 books. He concentrated to fill the gaps in the events of the Trojan wars, these matters which Homer didn't give any care, so one of his works is entitled “matters omitted by Homer” (posthomeric). He said that Tecmessa was a captive of Ajax' spear and she became his bride, and bore him a son in the following passage:

Ἡ α μέγα στενάχων. Ἐπὶ δὲ στενεύ δῖος Τέκμησσα,  
Αἴαντος παράκοιτις ἀμύμονος, ἦν περ ἐοῦσαν  
ληιδέιην σφετέρην ἄλοχον θέτο, καὶ μιν ἀπάντων  
τεῦξεν ἄνασσαν ἔμεν <όπε>όσων ἀνὰ δῶμα γυναῖκες  
ἔδνωται μεδέουσι παρ' ἀνδράσι κουριδίοισινρ  
ἢ δέ οἱ ἀκαμάτοισιν ὑπ' ἀγκοίνησι δαμεῖσα  
Εὐρυσάκην τέκεθ' νίὸν ἐοικότα πάντα τοκῆι.  
(Quintus Smyrnaeus:Posthomeric, V, 521- 527)

From this passage it would be said that Quintus didn't say more about the new status of Tecmessa after she had bore a son to Ajax, She became his wife “δῶμα γυναῖκες“ after her child Eurysaces “Εὐρυσάκην τέκεθ' νίὸν“ had come. Eurysaces manumitted his mother Tecmessa. Here it could be said that Quintus had seen Tecmessa as in the pre-Islamic era where the concubines who bore sons for their masters In Addition, he was more transparent than Sophocles in his writing about Tecmessa, because he was free-spoken in his addressing to her as it was in the Islamic and Pre-Islamic era.; Cf., Cook J. W., op. cit., S.V., Quintus Smyrnaeus.; Cf., Encyclopedia Britannica CD 99, 1994-1999, S.V., Quintus

In the Roman period there were two writers who had written about Tecmessa, First, Horace, who saw these captive women in a lower category<sup>(1)</sup>. Horace in his “*Odes Liber II*“ said about Tecmessa that; she was a low class, but there is nothing or shameful if her master liked this woman and took her as a wife or loved her:

Ne sit ancillae tibi amor pudori,  
Xanthia Phoceu. Prius insolentem  
serva Briseis niveo colore  
movit Achillem;  
movit Aiacem Telamone natum  
forma captivae dominum Tecmessae;  
arsit Atrides medio in triumpho  
virgine rapta,  
barbarae postquam cecidere turmae  
Thessalo victore et ademptus Hector  
tradidit fessis leviora tolli  
Pergama Grais.

(Hor. *Carm. II. 4. 1*)

Here Horace's view is that it was not only Ajax who loved (*amare*) his handmaiden (*ancilla*), but Achilles and Hector too. And this love wasn't shamefully for anyone of them. We must note that, Horace had used the word “*captiva*” to denote to Tecmessa. He assured that Tecmessa was a captive woman for her master “*dominus*” Ajax, and despite her lower state or class “*forma*” her master loved her.

Thus, it is obvious that Horace's concept of the captive women was the same as the Islamic and pre-Islamic concepts. The captive women were inferior class, but the free women were higher class. Yet, he realized that the slave women would go up to higher class as soon as they bore sons for their masters.

Obviously the concubines or slave women had rights that they did not have before. These slave women were getting two sights, one for that woman who was purchased and the other one for the woman who was won in a war. Gradually they came to have the same rights and be put on the same scale with the freed citizen wives, so the children had the same rights whether they were came from slave women or citizen wives<sup>(2)</sup>.

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Smyrnaeus.; Cf., Christmann A., “The Qura'n, Morality and critical Reason” S.E.P.S.M.E.A., vol. 106, Brill; Leiden, 2009, p. 278.

(1) The status of concubine is different from the status of a wife, it is lower. And this status is not in Rome only but in all ancient societies.; Cf., Brault P., “Playing the Cassandra Prophecies and the Feminine in the Polis and Beyond”; Bound the City Greek Tragedy, Sexual Difference, and the formation of the Polis. Edited by: McCoskey D. E. and Zakin E., state University of New York, Albany, 2009, p.198, 310-311.

(2) Foley H. P., op. cit., p. 88-89. The status of *nothoi* changed in the Greek society over time.; Cf., Ormand K., op. cit., p. 43.

The second Roman poet was Ovid. In his “*ars amatoria*”, he described Tecmessa as a very unhappy slave “mulier maestissima” and surely did not say a good word “quaeque solent uerba iuuare uiros!” for her lover Ajax:

odimus et maestas; Tecmessam diligit Ajax;  
nos hilarem populum femina laeta capit.  
numquam ego te, Andromache, nec te, Tecmessa, rogarem,  
ut mea de uobis altera amica foret.  
credere uix uideor, cum cogar credere partu,  
uos ego cum uestris concubuisse uiris.  
scilicet Aiaci mulier maestissima dixit  
'lux mea' quaeque solent uerba iuuare uiros!

(Ov. *Ars.*, 3, 517- 524)

In this passage Ovid used the word “vir” denoting Ajax, but he did not want to say that Ajax was the man of Tecmessa; he was her husband and her lover. He also used the verb “diligere” which doesn’t mean “love”, but means a milder emotion than the verb “amare”. Before that he spoke about the sad or mournful “maesta” women, and this description was before the second word “Tecmessa”, as if he wanted to tell us that Tecmessa was a sad woman, so she let Ajax love her as he liked. And this adjective is the opposite of “laetus, -a, -um” which means “cheerful”, and this adjective was used to describe the other women; surely Tecmessa was not within them. Ovid wanted to say that Tecmessa was not a cheerful woman but she was sad. Moreover, it should be remember that Tecmessa as a sad woman in Ovid echoed the Sophoclean image about this character. Sophocles mentioned that Tecmessa was an ill-fated woman (*δύσμορον νύμφην*) and she had been won by the spear (*δουρίληπτον νύμφην*), and that she usually wailed (*οἴκτω τῷδε συγκεκραμένην*):

Τὴν δουρίληπτον δύσμορον νύμφην ὄρῳ  
Τέκμησσαν, οἴκτω τῷδε συγκεκραμένην.  
(Soph. *Ajax*, 894-895)

Apparently neither Horace nor Ovid refused the marriage of Tecmessa to her master Ajax in spite of her inferior status. Both of them (Horace and Ovid) did not pay any attention to the previous high status of Tecmessa; they did not say any thing about her father king of Phrygia.

**In conclusion**, we can say that Tecmessa was a virtuous concubine in Sophocles. She was very intelligent woman, although some of classicists and of those interested in social studies portrayed Tecmessa as a weeping and mournful woman because she was used to weeping and lamenting.

Tecmessa was a noble born woman, she was a princess in Phrygia, and Ajax won her in a war with his spear, so she did not forget her previous royal status. So, it could be said that Tecmessa was not a peaceful or quiet concubine as some said. Tecmessa was a reflection of the power and strength of the woman and her ability to fulfill her purpose even if she was in a weak spiritual and social state. Her weapons in so doing, in realizing her goals, were weakness, weeping and mourning.

***Tecmessa in Sophocles' Tragedy "Aias" and the Image of "Umm Walad" in the Classical Literature***

Tecmessa was a concept for that woman who could fulfill her purpose and raised herself and her social status by weeping and mourning. Furthermore, she could protect herself, her children and her social status by employing weakness, mourning and weeping.

She recognized that she became a slave woman for her hero or the aggressor of her country, but she refused to be a barbarian concubine. She wanted to be as she was - a princess or a queen - so she loved her hero Ajax and became his bedfellow and born a child for him. She knew her rights: if she had a child she would be set free and her son too, so she had planned to have a son for Ajax. This son would set free his mother and would not be a slave again for another master.

Tecmessa in the classical literature was as *umm walad* in the pre-Islamic era; both of them (the classical literature and pre-Islamic era) were giving the captive women a high status when they gave birth to a son for their masters and after their death; they had the rights of citizenship and became freed women. These captive women who born a son for their master were called *umm walad* in pre-Islamic literature. So we can call Tecmessa *umm walad* of the classical literature.

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