

Domestic violence, tragedy, and reconciliation in Menander's *Perikeiromene*

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Introduction

Περικειρομένη or “The Girl whose Hair was All Cut Off” is a play about domestic violence by a soldier returning to civilian life. There is plenty of humor in the play, but the clash between the two central figures is serious, even allegorical. The soldier Polemon (“War”) and his beloved Glykera (“Sweetie”) must both transition into the civilized society of a Greek city state¹. The warrior needs to abandon violence as the solution to all his problems, learn the rules of civilian life, control his temper, and trust his partner, even when it looks as if she has betrayed him. The girl-friend needs to become a wife. They both need to join a larger community of family and friends that values peace and stability.

The plot famously begins with a punitive haircut. Polemon returns from fighting abroad to the news that Glykera, the woman he thinks of

¹ — The setting is almost certainly Corinth (Lamagna (1993) 41, Gomme and Sandbach (1973) 470 ad 125, Konstan (1995) 107, Arnott (1996) 380, Cusset (2003) 75.

as his wife, was seen embracing a young man on her own doorstep. The audience knows that the young man is her secret twin brother, but she will not jeopardize his position in a wealthy foster family by revealing this. Furious at the apparent betrayal, Polemon cuts off her hair. Angry and frightened, Glykera takes refuge with the young man's mother, giving further grounds for suspicion. Polemon escalates the violence by assembling his cronies to attack the house and retrieve her. He is stopped by an older and wiser friend named Pataikos, who explains that Polemon has no rights over Glykera since they are not, in a legal sense, married. Despondent, Polemon agrees to try persuasion, and sends Pataikos as his delegate. Pataikos knows Glykera well enough to tell her that it is foolish to break up over a haircut, but she rejects his advice. However, she has a secret: she is the daughter of citizens, exposed at birth with identifying tokens, which she now shows to Pataikos. He is astounded to discover his long-lost daughter and, in the joy of their reunion, convinces her to return to Polemon as a proper wife. The play ends with Polemon agreeing not to act like "a soldier" anymore and receiving Glykera with her father's blessing and a big dowry.

This paper examines a simple question: what does the haircut mean? It is an unusual gesture, no more common in antiquity than today, which is why it makes a good opening hook for a play. It's new, dramatic, and intriguing. This question has been approached from historical, legal, literary, and philosophical perspectives. These will be re-evaluated here, and a new approach offered, based on social science research into domestic violence.

How serious is the haircut? Ancient evidence

The question of how transgressive Polemon's behavior is within an ancient context starts with a basic question about hair styles in antiquity. Long hair was the norm for women: every style is long in Hurschmann's entry on "hairstyles" for women in the *New Pauly* and, as Kenkell notes, long hair was a symbol of female beauty from Homer to late antiquity². Nonetheless, some women occasionally wore their hair short. Vases depict women with short bobs which might easily be described as "cut all round". This kind of cut would be an easy one for Polemon to do if Glykera wore braids collected in a bundle, as many unmarried women did³. Some have read Glykera's haircut as a slave's⁴. Short-haired women on vases are often playing double pipes and therefore likely to be slaves. Some textual

2 — Hurschmann (2004) 1101-2, Kenkell (1991) 528 and n. 16.

3 — Lewis (2002) 27-8.

4 — Capps (1910) 133, Lamagna (1994) 22 n. 7, Sommerstein (2014) 20.

evidence also suggest this: the exclamation “you’re a slave with hair that long” (ἔπειτα δῆτα δούλος ὦν κόμην ἔχεις, Ar. *Birds* 911); the reference to a slave woman carrying water “on her close-cropped head” (ἐν κεκαρμένῳ κάρῳ, Eur. *El.* 107-8); and a recommendation that mothers of cowards should have “a bowl cut” as a public disgrace (σκάφιον ἀποκεκαρμένην, Ar. *Thesm.* 836-41). There is also Scholion R, which describes the latter as “a type of haircut appropriate for a slave”, and Pollux includes a mask for a “cropped-haired slave girl” (ἄβρα περίκουρος, mask number 43, *Onom.* 4.151.7) probably designating a slave, although there is also a κούριμος παρθένος (“cropped haired girl”, mask number 26, 4.138.8), which might be similar to Glykera’s⁵.

It is often difficult to determine the status of women in vase paintings. Lewis concludes, “short hair is indeterminate as a symbol; mourners can have cropped hair as well as slaves”⁶. Mourning, indeed, could involve even more drastic haircuts, if the evidence of tragedy is to be believed. Euripides’ *Electra* asks if Orestes can see “the hair of my head... cropped close with a sharp blade” (κράτα πλόκαμόν τ’ ἐσκυθισμένον ξυρῶ, Eur. *El.* 241). A more moderate gesture is the haircut Theoklymenos notices when Helen pretends to mourn Menelaus: “[Why] did you take the knife and cut [your] hair” (κόμας σίδηρον ἐμβαλοῦσ’ ἀπέθρισας, Eur. *Helen*, 1188). There is also the token effort Helen makes in *Orestes* (at least, according to Hermione): “[She] cut off just the ends of her hair, trying to keep her beauty unchanged” (παρ’ ἄκρας... ἀπέθρισεν τρίχας./σώζουσα κάλλος, 128-9). Even worse, Helen does nothing at all in *Trojan Women*, to Hecuba’s indignation: “you should come with shaved head” (χρῆν.../... κράτ’ ἀπεσκυθισμένην/ἐλθεῖν, 1025-7). We can assume considerable variation in mourning cuts, and hair could be torn, razored, or cut. As far back as Mycenaean larnakes and figurines, mourning women are shown with their hands raised over their heads, some with long hair⁷.

A few scholars have looked for traces of ritual in the haircut. Citing examples from Megara, Delos and Sparta, as well as *Hippolytus*, May argues that Glykera’s haircut anticipates her marriage at the end of the play, as does the bath she takes at Myrrhine’s house⁸. In a similar vein,

5 — Austin and Olson (2004) 275 ad 838-9. Petrides (2010) 80 speculates that Glykera’s mask might have “called to mind the tragic *kourimos* (‘cropped haired’)”. Translations from Menander are my own, text of Furley (2015); translations of Euripides, from Kovacs (1995-2003) and Collard and Cropp (2008); Sophocles, from Lloyd-Jones (1994); Aristophanes, from Henderson (1998-2007).

6 — Lewis (2002) 140. See May (2005) 276 for other examples of hair cut in mourning in tragedy. Xen. *Hell.* 1.7.8 (text of Brownson 1918) mentions short hair enabling a pretense of mourning.

7 — Iakovidis (1966) 45 (mourning) and 47 (his illustration 1, a larnax depicting women with long hair).

8 — May (2005) 285-7. *Hippolytus* refers to a ritual “cropping” (“[unmarried girls] will cut their hair”, κόμας κεροῦνται, 1426). On hair as an offering to the gods, see Steinger (1912a) *passim*

Philippides sees a distorted version of the wedding ritual, as in Terence's *Eunuchus*, which involves tearing the hair: "he ripped out [some of] her hair" (*ipsam capillo conscidit*, 646)⁹. This has met with skepticism. Petrides, for example, sees allusions only to ritual mourning and tragic grief, in what he calls a "falsification of pre-nuptial ritual" and a "symbolic rape"¹⁰. Henry, noting that hair cutting can symbolize death, sacrifice or mourning, suggests that Glykera's "shearing, disappearance and return" might be read as a type of ritual death and resurrection¹¹. Certainly, everyone in the play thinks the haircut is wrong. The prologue calls it "anger" (ὀργήν, 163) on Polemon's part and concedes that the audience might take it as an "indignity" (ἀτιμίαν, 168) to Glykera, a deviation, in Zagagi's words, "from a long-accepted code of social behavior"¹². Pataikos and Sosias initially regard it as misdirected violence – an ex-soldier forgetting how to behave in civilian life. Sosias is sarcastic, referring to Polemon as "our man with all the swagger just now, the belligerent one,/the one who doesn't let women have hair" (ὁ σοβαρός ἡμῖν ἀρτίως καὶ πολεμικός, /ὁ τὰς γυναῖκας οὐκ ἔων ἔχειν τρίχας, 172-3), and Glykera's maid Doris goes further, denouncing all soldiers as lawless and irresponsible: "Felons,/ all of them. No reliability" (παράνομοι/ἅπαντες, οὐδὲν πιστόν, 186-7). More circumspectly, Pataikos deems the behavior inappropriate: "she left because you didn't treat her properly" (ἀπελήλυθεν δ' οὐ κατὰ τρόπον σου χρωμένου, 492). He later turns his anger toward Polemon, once he realizes that Glykera is his daughter, calling the hair cut "rash" (προπετές, 1019) and demanding that he "forget about [being] a soldier" (τὸ λοιπὸν ἐπιλάθου στρατιώτης [ᾧν], 1018), as a precondition for receiving Glykera in marriage.

Historical factors make it difficult to see a positive subtext of ritual here. An imposed haircut was typically a punishment. The *Thesmophoriazusae* example cited above is indirect evidence for this, even if it is an imaginary extension of the practice. Cropped or shaved hair has been cited as a punishment for infidelity specifically, but the evidence is limited to men and may be ambiguous¹³. Ancient opinions on *Perikeiromene*, starting with the goddess Agnoia, treat the haircut as an unacceptable outburst of violence. This is also how Philostratus the Elder later interpreted it: "he was so bold as to poll her in a fit of anger" (κατετόλμησεν ὀργισθεῖς... ἀποκείρας, *Ep.* 16.3-4)¹⁴. Lucian has one hetaira ask another, "Someone who... doesn't slap or cut off hair... is he really a lover?" (ὄστις δέ... μήτε ἐρράπισέ ποτε ἢ περιέκειρεν... ἔτι ἐραστής ἐκείνός ἐστιν, *Dial. Mer.* 8.1-4 (§299), where "cut off hair" (περιέκειρεν) is probably a reference to this

and (1912b) 2118-9.

14 — Tr. Benner and Fobes, with "poll" in its pre-seventeenth century sense of "cut the hair" (OED s.v. I.1.a-b).

play)¹⁵. There is a similar reference to *scissos capillos* (“torn hair”) in “the wars of Venus” (*Veneris bella*) in Tibullus 1.1.53 in a context of door-breaking, which suggests an affair with a prostitute. Indeed, the only literary context in which violence of this kind regularly occurs is in genres that depict affairs between hot-tempered young men and hetairai who juggle customers. This evidence – the Greek anthology, for instance – is fictional, although Plutarch notes that hubris and “drunken abuse” (τὸ σὸν πάροιον, 1024), two failings Polemon is charged with, are acceptable with hetairai and slave girls but not with wives¹⁶. Furley is surely right that the haircut is a mild version of the trope of the lover’s jealous rage, much gentler than the beating or branding attested in sources like the Greek Anthology or Herondas.

Women’s suffering in Menander

Glykera herself reacts as if she were entitled to privileges of the higher status she knows she once had: she calls Polemon’s action hubris (“let him assault/[some other woman]”, εἰ[ς ἑτέραν τινα/ ὑβρίζετω, 723) and “impious” (ἀνόσι[ον], 724), both forms of transgressive conduct with implications for the larger community. The latter is to be taken in a figurative sense: less “sacrilege” (which is not applicable here) and more like the English “ungodly” in the sense of “outrageous”¹⁷. There has been debate over whether hubris should also be taken in a loose sense or, alternatively, it could be an actionable offense for a man to lay hands on a freeborn “unmarried wife” (παλλακή)¹⁸. The latter is Lape’s interpretation: the word hubris “casts [Glykera’s] injury as a harm requiring legal response or correction”, although she concedes that “the play never raises the possibility that Glykera might make use of judicial processes to exact compensation for her injury”¹⁹. But hubris covers more than what could be prosecuted under an Athenian “action for hubris” (γραφὴ ὕβρεως). Fisher defines it as “action deliberately intended to bring major and improper dishonour or shame on others”²⁰. This would mean that the perpetrator

15 — Text of MacLeod (1961). The New Comic topoi here can contextualize Glykera’s haircut. Jealous lovers routinely beat (ραπίζειν, *Dial. Mer.* 8.1 §299), and even threaten to kill, hetairai (φονεύειν, *Dial. Mer.* 8.3 §300). Ancient readers consistently took Polemon’s act as jealous rage (see Furley (2014) 114 n. 13).

16 — Plut. *Mor.* 140b3-12. Furley (2015) 15-6 (beating) and n. 63 (branding). Cf. *idem* (2014) 114 n. 13.

17 — [www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary s.v. 2](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/s.v.2).

18 — Sommerstein’s phrase, (2014) 21.

19 — Lape (2004) 177. Cf. Blanchard (2013) 143 (“c’est bien d’ὑβρις que le soldat et coupable”).

20 — Fisher (1998) 78. He sees hubris as “any form of grossly insulting behavior, typically and usually carried out as part of the abuse of wealth and power by members of the upper classes”. There is limited evidence that violence against women could be considered hubristic by Greek men

showed an unacceptable lack of self-control, even contempt, for the victim, which raises the question of Polemon's intention during his outburst of anger. Agnoia claims she drove him to it, contrary to his temperament ("he's not the sort/naturally", οὐ φύσει/τοιούτου ὄντα, 164-5), although Agnoia herself can be read as a pure symbol and externalization of strictly human behavior²¹. No other character, however, gives Polemon the benefit of any doubt. Attempts to read sanctions against female adultery into the word "indignity" (ἀτιμία, 168), such as restrictions on ornamentation, run against the prologue's assertion that the haircut was no such thing, nor was it premeditated, and Doris' term "felons" (παράνομοι, 186) is a blanket denunciation, not a threat of a lawsuit. Glykera clearly feels declassed when she uses the word "slave" (θεράπειν[αν], 725) but she only means that the violence reduced her to little more than a slave, who was always vulnerable to physical harm. For her, hubris must mean something similar to ἀνόσι[ov]: outrageous, and certainly insulting, behavior but not criminal assault.

Glykera's reaction here speaks volumes. Not only is she "capable of thought in a crisis", as Blanchard notes²², but she is also capable of self-sacrifice (she is, after all, protecting Moschion) – just not for Polemon's benefit. At the same time, she is asserting her natal status through adherence to a moral code appropriate to citizen women. Abandoning a lover for mistreatment is not unprecedented in Menander: Philoumene, in *Sikyonioidi*, flees to the sanctuary at Eleusis and reports her grievances against her lover and owner; Krateia, in *Misoumenos*, rejects the soldier Thrasonides (possibly because she believes he killed her brother) and warmly welcomes her father when he appears; Knemon's much abused wife walked out on him, without a word of blame from Pan, who tells the story. But there are also quietly suffering victims in the corpus, whose resignation and tolerance of mistreatment is praised, like the many rape victims and harshly treated wives (e.g., Nikeratos' in *Samia*). Titles of lost plays attest to further violence against women: "The Girl who was Slapped" (Ραπιζομένη), "The Girl who was Set on Fire" (Ἐμπιπραμένη), and "The Women who took Hemlock" (Κωνειαζόμεναι). Female victims are quite possible in the little known "Misogynist" (Μισογύνης), and

(Llewellyn-Jones (2020) 393), though the opinion here is Glykera's.

21 — Commentators are divided on the question of how literal Agnoia's intervention is. Fortenbaugh (1974) 435-6 and Cinaglia (2015) 104, 110 read it as compatible with full agency by Polemon; Agnoia simply set up the situation. Zagagi (1994) 149-56 sees divine/human causation operating in parallel, while Cusset (2003) 76-8 reads the goddess as an ever-present creative force who assumes the function of the poet, a compelling metapoetic reading of her claim to agency, though it is hard to demonstrate her presence beyond the prologue at a textual level. For a fully allegorical reading, see Del Corno (1966) 310. Violent rage of course is a common tragic motif (Cusset (2003) 77 n. 81).

22 — Blanchard (2013) 151.

“Bedded before wedded” (Προγαμῶν, tr. of Blanchard)²³. In the extant plays, women’s suffering is part of a metanarrative of virtue tested and rewarded. A common thread is the appearance of misconduct, secretly justified: Glykera acts out of family loyalty when she lets Moschion kiss her, though it may look like promiscuity to Sosias. In the end, as Blanchard notes, Menandrian gods protect the jeune première: this is always the story of Psyche²⁴.

Tragic models for Glykera

Women’s suffering at the hands of men is a point of continuity between Menander and tragedy and it is reasonable to presume many in his audience recognized these tragic elements, given how numerous they are²⁵. Glykera’s choice of family loyalty over self-interest, and particularly her choice of silence instead of exonerating speech, has clear precedents in tragedy. She is modeled in part on the stock type of the self-sacrificing virgin who dies for the benefit of family and country, often in accordance with a larger divine plan. Euripides’ *Macaria*, *Polyxena*, and *Iphigeneia* (at Aulis), as well as Sophocles’ *Antigone* and *Electra*, are well known examples²⁶; the motif also appears in Euripides’ *Erechtheus* and there are traces in *Theonoe* (*Helen*) and the Taurian *Iphigeneia*, not to mention the many daughters in myth who are sacrificed or nearly sacrificed to appease angry deities²⁷. In developing the motif of human sacrifice from myth, tragedy expanded the gesture of accepting death, ritually required in animal sacrifice, into an extended opportunity for the victim to articulate the values behind her decision. These women are liminal figures who forego normal maturation and marriage in order to obtain extraordinary benefits for family and country. The tragic models generally validate the victim’s suffering but also allow divergent views to be expressed, thus critiquing,

23 — Blanchard (2014) 246. Παρζομένη may have been similar to *Perikeiromene* (Meineke, cited by Kassel and Austin (1998) 208) There is verbal abuse and a suspicion of fakery in “The Girl who was Possessed” (Θεοφορούμενη, 19-23) but this may not have led to physical violence. See also James (2015) 122 on the genre’s systematic endangerment of the citizen daughter.

24 — Blanchard (1983) 403-4.

25 — Furley (2015) 1. On Menander’s extensive engagement with tragedy, see especially Webster (1960) 153-75, Katsouris (1975a) and (1975b), Hurst (1990), Gutzwiller (2000), Cusset (2003) and Martina (2016) Vol. 3.

26 — Of the three *Electra*’s, Sophocles’ is the best parallel for Glykera and Euripides’ treatment of the Aulis story is more relevant than Aeschylus’. The self-sacrifices of wives (*Alcestis*, *Evadne*) are omitted here as they exclude some key motifs.

27 — E.g., *Andromeda*, the daughters of *Leos*, *Hyacinthus*, and others (see Lloyd-Jones (1983) 89). Euripides wrote at least six plays of self-sacrifice during the Peloponnesian war. Not all victims were willing (e.g., *Andromeda* welcomes rescue, Collard and Cropp (2008) Vol. VII 115-22, 129a) and some were male (*Phrixus*, *Menoceus*), though daughters, being “simultaneously inessential and precious” (Scodel (1996) 114), were preferred.

and even undermining, the value system that demands the sacrifice. Glykera's story replicates these structural elements of tragic self-sacrifice. At the same time, the irony of her sacrifice is more pronounced in the New Comic world of *Perikeiromene*, where suffering for the benefit of a ne'er-do-well brother who is "always drinking" (μεθύοντ' αἰεὶ, 142) is even more extreme, impractical, and unnecessary than in the most improbable tragic examples.

These stories of human sacrifice often begin with the gods: Persephone requires the sacrifice of a noble maiden in order to grant Demophoon a military victory; Artemis demands Iphigeneia's death at Aulis; an oracle demands the death of the daughters of Erechtheus. The divine mandate does not always require direct communication. Antigone and Electra are confident, without being told, that they have divine will on their side, and the plays' resolutions confirm as much. Similarly, Helen and Theonoe (who survive the risks they take) know they are acting in accordance with divine will and are vindicated in the end²⁸. Glykera may not know it, but she too is part of a divine plan on the part of Agnoia to reveal her true birth. By allowing Moschion to kiss her, she initiates a chain of events that fulfills the goddess's intent, starting with Polemon's angry response ("the beginning.../of the revelation", ἀρχὴν.../μηνύσεως, 165-6), and ending with her "finding.../her own [sc. kin]", (τοὺς θ' αὐτῶν.../εὗροισεν, 166-7). Agnoia approves of Glykera's conduct, describing it in positive terms that emphasize her creditable motives. However, like Antigone and Electra, who look to the gods for approval, Glykera (unwittingly) sides with the divine at the cost of human retaliation. Her behavior, like theirs, demonstrates the moral paradox of honorable conduct that looks like its opposite: embracing an apparent lover, committing "a crime that is holy" (ὄσια πανουργήσασα, *Ant.* 74) or working evil perforce ("one's conduct must be bad", ἀνάγκη κάπιτηδεύειν κακά, *Soph. El.* 309). Menander's play preserves this vestigial motif of divine approbation, but without the heroine realizing that her suffering has a divine purpose and thus without the traditional motivation of piety. Moreover, the need for Glykera's suffering is even more dubious than in the most problematic tragic cases: the demanding god is a joke figure, not a death substitute like Kore, or even an Olympian²⁹. Agnoia mimics the anthropomorphized deities who demand sacrifice but what she instigates is a parody of the tragic virgin's death. She is also an abstraction, a presiding emblem of comedy, who

28 — E.g., Helen follows Hermes' ἔπος, *Eur. Hel.* 56-9, while Theonoe has an innate "temple to Justice" (ιερόν τῆς δικῆς, 1002) to guide her; each is vindicated (1657, 1667).

29 — As Miles (2014) 81-3 argues, deified abstractions such as Agnoia should be regarded gods but there can be an element of playfulness. See also Cinaglia (2015) 106-11.

fosters false suspicions through natural human behavior and sets up the recognition that will dispel the errors.

Polemon may have been driven, in some sense, to his fit of rage, but it is important in tragic terms that Glykera act voluntarily. Willing victimization is a key element in stories of tragic daughters who suffer for their kin. For example, Iphigeneia, Polyxena and Macaria explicitly accept their deaths and Praxithea advocates for the sacrifice of one of her daughters³⁰. In different circumstances, Antigone and Electra both emphasize that they act of their own free will, even when threatened with death, while Iphigeneia and Theonoe make similar claims³¹. Glykera follows this tradition in making a positive choice to accept what could easily have been an assault (and often is, in New Comedy). Structurally, the haircut may be read as a comic analogue for the deaths of tragedy, a “social death” through reduction in status (this is one definition of the experience of slavery), analogous to the reduced circumstances of Antigone and Electra, who are also deprived of their birth right to wealth, preeminent status and marriage. Glykera too is temporarily forced into inaction and left to lament her effective separation from a brother she cannot acknowledge freely (160-1).

One prominent element of the tragic virgin’s sacrifice is her willingness to forego marriage and children. A motif from funeral monuments is reflected in tragic language equating the death of unmarried girls with a kind of marriage to death, giving rise to the language of marriage to Hades (“Hades... will soon make her his bride”, Ἅιδης νιν... νυμφεύσει τάχα, Eur. *IA* 461) or Acheron (“I shall be the bride of Acheron”, Ἀχέροντι νυμφεύσω, *Ant.* 816)³². The women, however, emphasize the very real marriages they are giving up³³. The marriage Glykera sacrifices is, of course, only a pretense – a relationship never expected to be permanent with a partner who is “not dependable at all” (βέβαιον δ’ οὐθέν, 144) and who can only be called a lover (ἑρῶν, 499), despite his pretensions³⁴.

30 — *IA* 1375, 1503, *Hec.* 548, *Heracl.* 550-1, *Erech.* fr. 360.4.

31 — Boasting that she expected her death (*Ant.* 460), Antigone asks Creon to hurry (499). Electra says much the same when told that Aegisthus intends to imprison her (*Soph. El.* 387). Iphigeneia accepts death as the potential cost of rescuing Orestes (*IT* 1004-5); Theonoe risks it (perhaps unknowingly) in rescuing Helen and Menelaus (*Hel.* 1627).

32 — See Seaford (1987) 106, Rabinowitz (1993) 56, and Foley (1985) 69 on shared ritual elements between marriage and funerals and Seaford *passim* on their function in these plays.

33 — Iphigeneia, for example, explicitly accepts remembrance of her death *instead of* children and marriage (*IA* 1398-9), while Polyxena sharply distinguishes between her symbolic marriage to the dead Achilles and the real marriage she is giving up, calling herself a “bride that is no bride (νύμφην τ’ ἄνυμφον, *Hec.* 612). Antigone likewise calls herself “unmarried” (ἄγαμος, 867) and “unwedded” (ἀνυμέναιος, 876-7. Electra uses similar language (*Soph. El.* 164-5, 187), even dedicating her girdle (ζῶμα) to Agamemnon’s tomb (452), a distorted marriage gesture. See also *Heracl.* 579-80, *IT* 369-71.

34 — There is, Konstan notes (1983) 110, (1987) 127, and (1995) 110-1, both informal language describing the liaison as marriage (Doris’ use of “husband” (ἄνδρα, 186) and references to

With this “marriage” lost, and no possibility of contracting a new one, Glykera is in a liminal position like several of the tragic victims, notably Euripides’ *Electra*, whose *mésalliance* with the farmer is never consummated. As Ormand notes, “she continuously and deliberately walks the line between *parthenos* and *gune* [‘girl and wife’]” assuming the freedom to leave the house and engage in a perpetual mourning that is a kind of psychological persecution of Clytemnestra³⁵. A real marriage would limit this disruptive potential, and the same is true of Glykera. If she were married to Polemon and actually guilty of adultery, he would be expected to divorce her; instead, she has the liberty to walk out on him (but only to shelter with kin, which an unhappily wedded woman might also do), dismissing his distress and eventually collecting the few possessions he did not give her, in a final gesture of rejection. Glykera recognizes none of the constraints that would bind a married woman: neither his authority, nor the physical limitation of his house, nor the counsel of his closest friend. Like *Electra*, she enjoys the freedom to devote herself to the male ascendant of her natal family, but at the cost of social standing, protection, and her livelihood. Both Sophocles’ and Euripides’ *Electra* famously appear in rags and similarly Glykera leaves behind her rich *κόσμος* (“clothing and jewelry”, 516), and the social position it emblemizes³⁶.

There is a kind of empowerment here. Women willing to risk their lives for family and country are released from some of the rules that governed the conduct of elite young women. Public appearances, speech, and actions that would otherwise bring accusations of immodesty are excused. For example, Iphigeneia’s public address at the moment of her sacrifice meets with unanimous approval (“everyone heard and felt amazement”, *πᾶς δ’ ἐθάμβησεν κλυών*, *IA* 1561), as does Polyxena’s (“the host shouted its approval”, *λαοὶ δ’ ἐπερρόθησαν*, *Hec.* 553). Antigone gains city-wide fame and Iolaos praises Macaria, though she herself apologizes for appearing out of doors³⁷. At the same time that circumstances require exceptions and legitimize public actions, the women are depicted as compliant by nature with (in Foley’s words, of Antigone) “female status, limits, and priorities”³⁸. On a smaller scale, Glykera is allowed to appear at the thres-

Moschion as an “adulterer” (*μοιχός*, 357, 370, 390), and sufficient ambiguity to confuse Polemon. Sommerstein (2014) 18 rightly describes Glykera’s position as “an inferior and stigmatized status”, although it may be overstating Glykera’s choices to argue that she accepted it for Moschion’s sake. The Old Woman could not legally arrange a real marriage (Konstan (1983) 192-3 n. 25).

35 — Ormand (1999) 65-7, following Winnington-Ingram (1980) 233.

36 — *Soph. El.* 191, *Eur. El.* 185.

37 — *Ant.* 692-8, *Heracl.* 484-5, 474-5.

38 — Foley (2001) 192. Modesty at the point of death, for example, is a repeated motif: Macaria conceals her body (*Heracl.* 561) and asks “to breathe my last in the hands... of women” (*ἐν γυναικῶν χερσὶν ἐκπνεῦσαι βίον*, 566); Polyxena leaves veiled (*Hec.* 432) and stipulates that men not touch her body (548), as does Iphigeneia (*IA.* 1559).

hold that would have marked a firm boundary, had she been a legitimate wife. Agnoia contextualizes the embrace from Moschion with multiple justifications of Glykera's conduct: she was engaged in necessary work (sending a slave on an errand), while Moschion had made a point of "deliberately hanging around/her house all the time" (ὄντος ἐπιμελῶς τ' αἰεὶ/φοιτῶντος τὴν οἰκίαν, 152-3), because he was "pretty pushy" (θρασύτερος, 151) and wanted to start an affair. Implicit here is the idea that Glykera rarely appeared in public, unless it was unavoidable, and even then she kept to the threshold. She did nothing to make herself deliberately available to Moschion. Even when she abandons Polemon, she takes refuge in women's quarters, where Moschion assumes she will veil herself at his approach (312). She appears veiled in the first act (at least, as depicted on a third century mosaic from Antioch depicting this scene) and presumably in both her fourth act scene with Pataikos and (probable) final appearance in the fifth act³⁹. Moreover, the conversation with Pataikos – to all appearances an unrelated man – is sanctioned, indeed requested, by Polemon. This is not unheard of: a married woman could share her husband's friends, though a humble detail of this sort rarely appears in tragedy⁴⁰. It is Glykera's combination of modesty and assertiveness, public appearance but a norm of seclusion, that mirrors the exceptionality of the tragic virgin.

These sacrifices do not entail complete abnegation of the self. The tragic victims are allowed to articulate the values that underlie their decision, and their speeches share rhetorical elements with funeral orations⁴¹. The women are acting for the practical, tangible benefit of others (saving lives, ensuring proper burial, avenging murder) and seeking intangible rewards for themselves. In asserting themselves, they often invoke values associated with aristocratic males. One example is the moral imperative to help loved ones or φίλοι, a concept broad enough to encompass kin, kith, and compatriots. Macaria explicitly dies for her brothers, while Iphigeneia in Tauris invokes family, race and fatherland, and Praxithea stresses the importance of patriotism⁴². Glykera's commitment to benefiting φίλοι is explicit in the prologue: "knowing he [Moschion]/was her brother, she didn't pull back [sc. from the embrace]" (τῶι προειδέναι/ἀδελφὸν ὄντα οὐκ ἔφυγε, 156). In the preceding scene, now lost, she probably refused to defend herself (a likely reconstruction and consistent with the Antioch mosaic mentioned above, where she is turning away from Polemon with

39 — On this mosaic, see Gutzwiller and Çelik (2012) 581-90.

40 — Plutarch, *Conj. Praec.* 140d.

41 — See further Wilkins (1990) 179-83 on common ritual and rhetorical elements of the self-sacrifice motif.

42 — *Heracl.* 557, *IT* 144ff, 175-7, 346, 473-6, *Erechb.* fr. 360.5-6, 14-15, 53-5, and fr. 360a. Iphigeneia in Aulis dies to benefit Greek women (1380) and ultimately all Greeks (1554).

her arms crossed – a non-speaking gesture), just as she later holds herself bound by an oath to Myrrhine to protect Moschion's secret. At least three times in the play Glykera chooses to honor the bond of kinship and to protect Moschion, rather than herself. She may even have refused to renounce future contact with him, a topic that is likely to have come up in the first act, which clearly centered on the accusation and Polemon's reaction. Glykera's situation is far from life or death; effectively, she is abetting an adoption scam that a benevolent deity is trying to expose, and yet her priorities align significantly with those of tragic self-sacrificing virgins⁴³.

The converse of helping friends was harming "enemies" (ἔχθροί), and the military context of the virgin sacrifices is rarely far away in tragedy. Macaria, Polyxena, Iphigeneia, and the Erechtheids die in the midst of war; Antigone and Electra make their grand gestures in its immediate aftermath. *Perikeiromene* is also a post-war plot, following on Polemon's demobilization. When given a chance to explain herself in Act IV, Glykera stresses her unwillingness to create "hatred" (ἔχθραν, 715) with the family that took her in. Although she does not explicitly label Polemon an enemy (i.e., ἔχθρός), her language of hubris, as well as "ungodly" (ἀνόσι[ov], 724) and slave-like treatment ("[thinking he] could [abuse me] like some slave girl", φ[ί]λομο[ν]ος ἄν' θεράπειν[αν αἰκίσαι τίνα] 725), together with her rejection of Pataikos' entreaties, underscores that Polemon is a φίλος (i.e., "friend/family") no more. Doris, her outspoken confidant, describes him in terms that exaggerate his hostility: being "a felon" (παράνομος), committing "injustice" (ἄδικα), and enjoying Glykera's tears (186-90). Even Sosias believes that the "belligerent" Polemon (πολεμικός, 172) treated Glykera more like a defeated enemy than a wife.

Another aristocratic value the tragic women claim is the desire for "glory" (κλέος) or honor (τιμή), that is, widespread, public recognition, comparable to what men achieve for heroic feats⁴⁴. As Rabinowitz and

43 — Moschion was given to a rich woman (i.e., Myrrhine, 122) and evidently raised as legitimate. Hence his "apparent pre-eminence" (εἶναι δοκοῦντα λαμπρόν, 149). Furley (2015) 91 and (2015b) 41-3 hypothesizes that Pataikos married Myrrhine and adopted him. At Athens, however, a child of unknown parents could not be adopted by citizens (Gomme and Sandbach (1973) 473, Huebner (2013) 514-5). It has been suggested that "Corinthian" legal institutions are essentially Athenian in this play (see Furley (2015) 9-10, with further citations) but this need not be the case for adoption specifically. Concerns about distinguishing servile from freeborn would likely have been widely shared in Greek cities. It would, admittedly, be economical to have Pataikos married to Myrrhine but his personality is utterly unlike that of the "master" described by Daos at 364-5. The latter is sometimes identified with the Philinus whose daughter Moschion will marry (Arnott (1996) 379, Blanchard (2013) 176 n. 3, see further Konstan (1995) 191 n. 10), but this seems unlikely, given the absence of any hint of a daughter in Myrrhine's otherwise well-described household (cf. Del Corno (1966) 302).

44 — References to κλέος or τιμή sought, promised, and received are frequent: *Herac.* 534, 598; *IA* 1376, 1383-4, 1399 and 1504; *Erech.* 370.73, 77-9; *Hel.* 999-1001, *Ant.* 4-5, 86-7, 502-3, 695-9, *Soph. El.* 973. Φιλοφυχεῖν is rejected *Hec.* 315, 48, *IA* 1385, *Herac.* 516-9.

Foley note, they reassert the “masculine warrior code”⁴⁵. Several go as far as to denounce “clinging to life” (φιλοψυχεῖν, *Heracl.* 518, 533, *Hec.* 315, 348, *IA* 1385) as cowardly. Nor are these idle wishes: the plays stress that the women will receive the fame they seek. Similarly, within the narrow scope of her three-oikos world, Glykera is also concerned about reputation. The prologue notes that she would like to acknowledge her brother “freely” (ἐλευθέρως, 161), that is, to behave like a freeborn citizen, rejecting an illegitimate culture of secrecy and baby-swapping, and being seen to honor kinship ties. There is more than a hint of her discomfort with lies and pretense, underscored by Myrrhine’s insistence on an oath of silence. In her only preserved speech, in Act IV, Glykera seeks to preserve a reputation for honorable behavior. She rejects not only the idea of an affair with Moschion, but also the kind of character traits it would demonstrate: it would be “brazen” (ἰταμῶς, 713), “out of my mind” (ἄφρόνως, 715), “indecent” ([ἀκοσμίας], restored, 716), and “shameless” (οὐδ’ αἰσχ[ύνομαι], 717). Person by person, she works through her social circle, expressing concern about how they would perceive her – in short, about the reputation she would have if she gratified Moschion’s wishes: could she have fled to Moschion’s mother (708) for this purpose? Could he have brought her “as a hetaira” into the same house as his father (711)? Would she have chosen to “earn hatred” (ἔχειν ἔχθραν, 715) and arouse the suspicion of Polemon and Pataikos (“you (pl.)”, ὑμῖν, 716)? She is particularly concerned about her standing with Pataikos: “and you came, convinced of all this,/assuming that [I’ve become] that kind of woman?” (καὶ σὺ ταῦτα συμπεπ[εισμένως]/ἤλθες, τ[ο]ιαύτην θ’ ὑπέλαβες [με γεγονέναι;], 718-9). It is clear that she expects the men to learn, at some point, that she is not erotically involved with Moschion. Her self-image, with its emphasis on reputation, the primacy of kinship, and claim to virtues like “shame”, (αἰσχύνη: “[have I] no shame”, οὐδ’ αἰσχ[ύνομαι], 717) or “good sense” (σωφροσύνη, the opposite of being “senseless”, ἄφρων, which she rejects: “and I decided, just like this,/to be out of my mind”, εἰλόμην δ’ οὕτως ἐγ[ὼ]/ἄφρόνως ἔχειν, 714-5) derives from her tragic lineage: these are the aspirations and ideals of the daughters of royalty.

Even Glykera’s oath speaks to reputation: “yet ask my own concerns, for I may speak these/but the rest I swore to the lady not to utter” (τάμὰ μ’ ἐρώτα, ῥήτὰ γὰρ ταῦτ’ ἐστὶ μοι·/ἐκεῖνα δ’ αὐτῇ μὴ φρ[ά]σειν ὁμώμοκα, 790-1). Although Pataikos does not know why she made it, he recognizes its sanctity when he refrains from asking her to divulge anything but her own story. Vows of silence are of course a stock device in tragedy. The virgin “who keeps a suppliant’s secret and thus puts his/her own life at

45 — Quotation from Rabinowitz (1993) 36, cf. *eadem* (1983) 25 and (1993) 57. See also Foley (2001) 160 and 179 (the women seek “recognition normally accorded to male heroes”).

risk” (Chong-Gossard) is a recurring figure⁴⁶. Hippolytus, Theonoe and Ion all vow or agree not to disclose a secret, as do the choruses in *Medea*, *Helen* and *Iphigeneia in Tauris*, allowing schemes to unfold at personal cost. Hippolytus is famously killed for refusing to clear himself by violating his oath; Theoklymenos threatens Theonoe (1624-6), while Thoas threatens the chorus (1431-4). As Montiglio observes, silence can be a precursor to death, both medically and in terms of tragic plot trajectories (e.g., Phaedra, Niobe), while simultaneously constituting a distinctively feminine virtue⁴⁷. In this sense, Glykera’s silence reflects a quasi-tragic indifference to her own welfare, like Phaedra’s, while it also perpetuates a scheme, as in the Euripidean “catastrophe survived” plays, like *Helen* and *Iphigeneia in Tauris*. Here the cost is merely the loss of a secure social and financial position, effectively the same loss that left her exposed as a child. Like her tragic forebears, she too is motivated both by sympathy for her beneficiaries (Myrrhine, Moschion) and a heroic ideal of the sanctity of oaths.

In tragedy, the daughter’s extreme commitment to the larger group and willingness to sacrifice herself for its welfare reflects her biological inheritance from her natal family, particularly her father. Socially coded language equating high birth with personal virtue is frequent, even when, paradoxically, the rest of the family may be incapable of this kind of sacrifice⁴⁸. Several figures locate their virtues broadly in racial qualities as Greeks, defined in opposition to “barbarians”, like the Trojans⁴⁹. As in Glykera’s case, there is often a contrast between what birth status requires and what can be expected in the reduced circumstances in which these women actually find themselves⁵⁰. *Perikeiromene* is not as explicit as *Heracleidae* or *Hecuba* about the idea of heritable qualities from elite birth, but the notion is there. Although Glykera wins no praise within the preserved text for honoring her hidden kinship with Moschion, she nonetheless wants to behave ἐλευθέρως (161) – with “freely” covering a complex of virtues identified with freeborn, and particularly legitimate,

46 — Chong-Gossard (2008) 183.

47 — Montiglio (2000) 228-35.

48 — E.g., (εὐγενής) *HerACL.* 553, *Ant.* 38, *IA* 1595, *Hec.* 381, *El.* 257-8; (γενναῖος) *IA* 1402, 1411, 1422; (γενναϊότης) *Erech.* fr. 370.69 (embodying qualities of the father or *genos*), *HerACL.* 540, *Ant.* 38, *Hec.* 620-1, *Erech.* fr. 360.45, *Soph.* *El.* 1081. See also Rabinowitz (1993) 63 on Macaria as “the true inheritor of Herakles’ courage”.

49 — E.g., Iphigeneia, praised for her “noble heart” (ἀἷμ’ ἀριστον, *IA* 1421), holds herself as a Greek ideal (1386, 1502) and the antithesis of Helen (1417-20). So does Iphigeneia in *Tauris* (356, 440-6), who implicitly contrasts Agamemnon’s readiness to commit sacrificial murder with her own reluctance (360). See also *Hec.* 380, 598 (nobility by virtue of birth).

50 — Polyxena, for example, stresses that misfortune cannot change innate nobility (*Hec.* 597-8) and regards death as an escape from present slavery (365-6), and thus a restoration of her birth status, both freeborn and royal (550-2). Electra, too, represents her behavior as a rejection of the slavery to which she feels reduced (189-90) and lays claim to the virtues of inherited nobility (257-8).

status – and to resist treatment she regards as appropriate to a slave (725)⁵¹. Her eventual decision to reconcile with Polemon is evaluated in highly positive terms. It is important enough to be quoted by Pataikos, who approves and pronounces it proof of “Greek character” (1006-8):

πάνυ σοῦ φιλῶ τὸ [“νῦν δι]αλλαχθήσομαι·
 ὅτ’ εὐτύχηκας, τότε δέ[χεσθαι] τὴν δίκην
 τεκμήριον τοῦτ’ ἐστ[iv Ἑλλ]ηνος τρ[όπου].

I just love your saying, “Now I’ll be reconciled”.
 When your luck is good, to accept a penalty paid then
 that’s the mark of a Hellenic nature⁵².

This is more than simply capitulating to a father’s orders, like a good Greek daughter. Employing personal success to benefit, and not harm, shows the kind of self-control that prevents acts of hubris. Glykera is as moderate in success as she was steadfast in distress, and as outspoken for her beliefs in isolation as she is silent in the presence of a guardian (κύριος) to speak on her behalf. In civic terms, she makes a decision to rejoin and rebuild a ruptured community by making peace with, rather than continuing to reject, a member who has made restitution through suffering (in his own opinion) and by being the unwitting instrument of Glykera’s good fortune (according to Pataikos, 1021-2). This act of forgiveness confirms her true lineage, not merely as his freeborn child but also as the legitimate Greek citizen she now is⁵³. These qualities are not gendered, familial, or attached to a specific polis. In fact, it is Glykera, not Moschion, who embodies qualities Pataikos admires, as evidenced by his decisions: she gets a choice about her marriage; Moschion’s is decided in his absence. Nor is her behavior particularly “Corinthian”, in a city known for its pleasures and prostitutes. Pataikos is pitching his praise to the Greek

51 — Schaps (1998) notes that free women at Athens regarded enslavement as utterly degrading (163) and could expect both freedom of speech (171-2) and physical inviolability by any but a “(male) legal guardian” (κύριος, 169), which Polemon is not.

52 — On “Hellenic nature” here, see Webster (1960) 21-2 and Blanchard (2008) 540 (comparing with Taurian Iphigeneia). For an Aristotelian reading of Glykera’s forgiveness (as “equitable” behavior), see Lamagna (1994) 60.

53 — This is a slightly different interpretation than that of Konstan (1987) 139, who also reads citizenship as defining her behavioral constraints, but only *after* she is recognized, when her “independence as concubine is dissolved into the silent role of wife”. Konstan sees discontinuity in Glykera’s behavior and argues that this reflects a disconnect between two plots, the quarrel with Polemon and the recognition by Pataikos. I see less inconsistency: an idealized sister becomes an idealized daughter (and implicitly, soon, an idealized wife). With Foley (2001) 181-3, I see Greek women’s ethics within a context of social roles that can change. Glykera’s initial defiance, like Electra’s, is rendered unnecessary by the advent of male kin, who take over its function. This reading takes the reforms Pataikos demands of Polemon as credible and Glykera’s quoted consent as evidence of a real choice, even if, as Konstan notes (1987) 135, it is pre-determined by genre requirements that lost daughters marry their first and only lover.

speaking world in which an honorably “Hellenic” character would garner wide sympathy⁵⁴.

Iphigeneia famously remains “father-loving” (φιλοπάτωρ, *IA* 638) and forgives Agamemnon⁵⁵. Even though Pataikos, like Agamemnon, initially chose his daughter’s death, Glykera also retains a strong emotional connection to her birth family, evident in her distress over being exposed (“How I tremble, wretched [me]”, ὡς τρέμω τάλαγ’ [ἐγώ], 805), her pity for his change of fortune (“Ye gods, a dreadful [fate]!”, ὦ θεοί, δεινοῦ πό[τμου], 807) and her close attachment to her tokens. The play parades her loving familiarity with these as she recites detail after detail from memory, even correcting Pataikos when he misidentifies one of the embroidered animals. Her language here emphasizes the tokens’ function as “identifiers.../of my mother and father” ([γνωρίσματα...]/τοῦμοῦ πατρὸς καὶ μητρός, 742-3); in contrast, they are merely “embroideries” (ποικίλα, 756) when she is talking to Doris. Her forgiveness may be more than just proof of “Greek” character. It is possible to see imitation of Iphigeneia, the daughter who is most famously mistreated by her father in myth. Like the other victims – Macaria, Iphigeneia, Polyxena, Antigone and Electra – Glykera manifests an unbreakable emotional connection with the family, a commitment to serve its interests, and a willingness to suffer on its behalf – all maladaptive behaviors for a fatherless woman on the brink of prostitution, and yet all in line with the ideals of legitimate, citizen birth. She clings as much as the tragic victims do to what she once was⁵⁶.

Her values are not uncontested, which is also in the tradition of tragedy. Attempts to prevent or limit the self-sacrifice are common⁵⁷. The heroic values that drive the self-sacrifice may be glorified, but there are also voices of opposition and the women’s justifications can seem like mere rationales for actions determined by their inflexible aristocratic temperaments.

54 — Lamagna (1994) 42. Corinth was associated with prostitution in antiquity (Rosivach (1998) 172 n. 9), though this stereotype is not explicitly invoked in the surviving fragments of the play. Conversely, neither is the real-life role model for women’s independence and leadership, Cratesipolis, who defended nearby Sicyon at the head of her late husband’s army and ruled it for six years (Diodorus tells the story, noting qualities that have been observed in Glykera as well, such as intelligence and confidence: “she possessed, too, skill in practical matters and more daring than one would expect in a woman” (ἦν δὲ περὶ αὐτὴν καὶ σύνεσις πραγματικὴ καὶ τόλμα μείζων ἢ κατὰ γυναῖκα, 19, 67, tr. Geer 1954).

55 — *IT* 992-3 (forgiveness). Rabinowitz (1983) 24 notes the transfer of her Electra-like attachment from father to fatherland. See also Bacalexi (2016) 61-4.

56 — As an unmarried woman of respectable birth, she owes loyalty first to her natal family. See Foley (2001), esp. 67-72, 123-5, 153, and especially 172-8, on the phenomenon in both tragedy and Greek culture.

57 — Iolaos, for example, proposes a lottery to choose the victim (*Heracl.* 544-5) and quietly opposes Macaria’s decision, refusing to watch her death and even hinting that he disapproves of Persephone’s demand (600-1). Achilles tries to prevent the “folly” (ἀφροσύνη, *IA* 1430-2) of Iphigeneia’s death, while Hecuba argues that a bull would be a more fitting sacrifice (261). Ismene and Chrysothemis also counsel moderate conduct (*Ant.* 61-2, *El.* 398).

The grand gestures can be flashpoints for ideological tensions. As Foley observes, “The focus on the innocent victim intensifies sympathy for his or her noble death, but the cause for which the victim dies is frequently dubious and the consequences of the ritual death are often ambiguous”⁵⁸. *Perikeiromene* includes a tragic-derived debate between Pataikos, who counsels prudence, and Glykera, who rejects this course of perceived dishonor. Pataikos is primarily grounded in the comic world, though he can play a tragic role here, in the recognition scene, which functions as para-tragedy (imitation, but not mockery, of tragedy), with comic commentary by Moschion⁵⁹. Glykera’s lofty talk of oaths of silence, shame, decency, and reputation meets with well-reasoned opposition. Pataikos regards her decision to abandon Polemon as “foolish” (γελοῖον, 748) and impractical. The warning “you should have thought/about everything” (ὕπερ πάντων [ἐ]χρηῆν/[ὄρᾱ]ν σε, 748-9), indirectly alludes to her lack of resources. She is overreacting (“So you’ve [rejected] the guy/completely?”, [ἀπέγν]ωκας σὺ [γὰρ]/κομιδῆι τὸν ἀνθρωπον, 745-6). After all, she is “not [the only one]/this dreadful thing has happened to” (οὐχὶ [σοὶ μόνον]/γένεγε τὸ δεινὸν, 723-4, if correctly restored)⁶⁰. This is a response calibrated for a hetaira: without family to turn to, abandoning a steady means of support for a trivial reason would indeed be foolish. Glykera, however, does not respond like a hetaira. She is dismissive (“I know my interests best”, ἐγώϊδα τὰμ’ ἄριστα, 749) and invokes the concepts of hubris, impiety and enslavement (723-5, cited above) – all implicit claims to both status and better merit.

To sum up: the Glykera-Moschion plotline transfers a recognizable pattern that normally culminates in death into ordinary Greek life and the tragi-comic tradition of the last-minute rescue⁶¹. “Ordinary life” is of course a fictional construct in New Comedy, which is why it is important to recognize the literary heritage behind Glykera’s choice of suffering over

58 — Foley (1985) 66. Plays like Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon* and Euripides’ *Hecuba* emphasize the “moral evil” of wasting a particularly precious kind of object (Scodel (1996) 111, 126). The Aulian Iphigeneia dies for patriotic ideals that are not fully shared by the cynical men who surround her (Rabinowitz (1983) 23). There is a similar ambivalence in *Hecuba*, *Heracleidae* (see n. 55), and *Erechtheus* (Praxithea has to argue, presumably with Erechtheus, Collard and Cropp (2008) Vol. VII 364). Explicit critiques are made of Antigone and Electra by allies and enemies alike, as the plays thematize the question of the value of their suffering (see Foley (2001) 183, e.g., on the competing forms of moral reasoning in *Antigone*).

59 — On the mix of modes in this scene, see Gomme and Sandbach (1973) 519-20, Goldberg (1980) 53-5, Lamagna (1994) 51-2, Furley (2014) 110, (2015) 28-9, and (2015) 38-9, and Cusset (2003) 191-200.

60 — Furley’s (2015) restoration of 723. Sudhaus’ conjecture οὐχ ἐκούσιον (printed in Sandbach (1990), Arnott (1996) and Blanchard (2013) also undermines her decision (“it didn’t happen voluntarily” sc., on Polemon’s part).

61 — Theonoe and Iphigeneia are saved by a *deus ex machina*, but Euripides’ Antigone seems to have escaped death through recognition of some kind: φωραθεῖσα μετὰ τοῦ Αἰμόνος δίδεται πρὸς γάμου κοινωνίαν (“Antigone is detected in company with Haemon and is joined with him in marriage”, Aristophanes of Byzantium, cited in Collard and Cropp (2008) Vol. VII test. iia 160-1).

exoneration. New Comedy's realism was a highly qualified kind, often densely allusive with prior texts and highly shaped by its own artistic conventions. Glykera's idealism, though comically ill-suited to this "fictional-contemporary world", is consistent with that of the tragic daughters who face death for the sake of brothers and fathers⁶². So, indeed, is her isolation and the singularity of her extreme moral choice. The latter is emphasized through contrast: she voluntarily suffers for her family, whereas Moschion is more interested in self-indulgence than self-denial and Pataikos, the play's apparent moral authority, reveals an unheroic dread of poverty through his opposition to the break-up and his original decision to expose his children⁶³. In a world where the brother she protects only wants to sleep with her and her lover turns to drink and threats of suicide, it is a poignant irony that only Glykera upholds the code of honor, self-sacrifice, and oaths. Like Iphigeneia, Polyxena and Helen, she performs a tragic feminine ideal within a pragmatic, morally compromised circle of men, whose behavior undercuts the values she upholds. In the end, tragic consequences are averted through recognition and embedded in a context of humorous commentary and outrageous foils that ironize and undermine the loftier aspirations of a character like Glykera. Menander domesticates and limits the civic altruism of the self-sacrificing royal maidens in tragedy to benefit a small group of households, rather than the polis as a whole, while retaining rhetorical, thematic, character and plot elements of the tragic prototypes.

A philosophical perspective

Another lens has also been applied to the ethical questions *Perikeiromene* raises. Philosophical interpretations, grounded in Menander's well attested connection to the Peripatetics, have evaluated Polemon's and Glykera's behavior through the framework of Aristotelian virtue ethics and Aristotle's classification of misconduct along the spectrum of ἀτυχήματα, ἀμαρτήματα, and ἀδικήματα ("misfortunes", "errors", and "injustices"). Lamagna sees Glykera choosing the honorable over the useful (a point emphasized in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*) when she initially refuses to reconcile; later she shows πραότης ("mildness"), a virtue that Aristotle defines as a mean between an excess and a deficit of anger (*EN* 1108a6)⁶⁴. Conversely, Polemon shows "a lack of self-control" (ἀκρασία, a term that occurs widely

62 — Quotation from Miles (2014) 83.

63 — He pleads the difficulty of adjusting to poverty after wealth (805) and the folly of a beggar's raising children (812). Konstan (1983) 117-8 also reads Pataikos as a questionable moral authority: being a merchant was a risky and suspect profession and as such the sign of a "problematic relationship to the city-state society".

64 — Lamagna (1994) 59.

in the Aristotelian ethical corpus)⁶⁵. Scholars like Lamagna have noted the absence of premeditation before the haircut and cited Aristotle's argument that actions committed "in ignorance" (μετ' ἀγνοίας, *EN* 1135b12) are forgivable, "provided that the agents are not ignorant of general ethical principles and... the mistake caused by a not unworthy passion, such as anger" (lack of anger being as much a defect as excess)⁶⁶. This would class the action as an ἀτύχημα ("misfortune", *EN* 1135b16-17), and Polemon would exemplify the vice of προπέτεια ("rashness", *EN* 1150b19), along the model of a Theophrastan χαρακτήρ ("character", a two-dimensional figure drawn to exemplify a particular vice)⁶⁷. This is a constricting model, however, for a figure like Polemon who is clearly capable of change (he must surely be read as something more complex than an exemplum of a vice), and Fortenbaugh has demonstrated that the act is read from different perspectives within the play, which could put it under more than one Aristotelian classification. For example, neither Doris nor Glykera takes it as lightly as a "misfortune" (ἀτύχημα): Doris in fact calls it an "injustice" or ἀδίκημα ("what you're going through is so wrong", ὡς ἄδικα πάσχεις, 188), although she is motivated by anger with Polemon and loyalty to Glykera. The prologue anticipates similar objections from the audience ("if anyone was offended by this/and thought it disgraceful, he should reconsider", εἰ τοῦτ' ἔδυσχέρανέ τις/ἀτιμίαν τ' ἐνόμισε, μεταθέσθω πάλιν, 167-8), who are clearly not expected to take the act as a mere misfortune. Given Glykera's presumption that Polemon will continue his "hubris" (ὕβριζέτω, 723), it is unlikely that she thinks of his behavior as the (excusable) result of "misguided and excessive anger" or sees other exculpatory factors, including Aristotelian distinctions⁶⁸. There is some sympathy for her point of view in the play. Cinaglia identifies an overall negative presentation of Polemon's behavior (an "injustice", ἀδίκημα), reading his lack of self-control as a fault that outweighs his ignorance⁶⁹. Glykera's innocence is one factor here; the bizarreness of the violence is another. Polemon should divorce a cheating "wife": physical punishment, however unusual, is simply the wrong response.

65 — Blanchard (2013) 143, Furley (2014) 114 n. 13.

66 — Quotation from Lamagna (1994) 55 (my translation). Cf. Blanchard (1983) 350 n. 104 (*NE* V 1135 b 11-1136 a 9).

67 — Tierney (1935) 249, Webster (1950) 204-5, and Lamagna (1994) 56 see an ἀτύχημα here. Cinaglia (2015) 114 sees an ἀδίκημα. Casanova (2014) 140 rightly cautions that Menander's types differ significantly from Theophrastus' in not being centered on a single fault and Polemon, in particular, is drawn to amuse, not to teach Aristotelian ideas about responsibility.

68 — Quotation from Fortenbaugh (1974) 440, who notes that multiple Aristotelian classifications are possible here (430-1).

69 — Cinaglia (2015) 114, *eadem* (2014) 154, 159.

Intimate partner violence in antiquity

The issue of hubris poses a more general question about tolerance for intimate partner violence in Menander's fourth-century Greek world. Those who see violence as endemic in ancient Greek society assume that it was common against wives⁷⁰. There are a handful of literary references assembled by Llewellyn-Jones, some of which purport to discuss daily life, e.g., the Magistrate's threat in *Lysistrata*, "If you hadn't shut up you'd have got a beating!" (κἂν ᾧμωζές γ', εἰ μὴ 'σίγας, 516), but most of which are hypothetical, such as Semonides, "On Women": a man can't stop her barking, "not by knocking out her teeth/with a stone", οὐδ' εἰ χολωθεὶς ἐξαράξειεν λίθωι/ὀδόντας, 17-9)⁷¹. More realistic is the fear of Κνemon's daughter that he will beat her ("I'll get beaten", πληγὰς λήψομαι, *Dysk.* 205) or her nurse ("he'll beat her/to death", ἀπολεῖ.../παίων ἐκείνην, 195-6) if he learns about the lost bucket and her errand for water. Few, if any, other instances of the common phrase "to be beaten" (πληγὰς λαμβάνειν) in Greek refer to women (there are too many to examine every instance in full, but masculine subjects and participles are very frequent). This evidence does not, however, prove that the phenomenon did not happen. As Scafuro notes of sexual offenses, considerable efforts were taken to keep them out of the public eye and away from formal litigation⁷². There is no reason to think violence against wives and children was treated differently. Pomeroy notes that domestic violence rarely enters the historical record, and cites Augustine's telling observation that many wives, even those with gentle (*mansuetiores*) husbands, have faces disfigured by beatings⁷³. Later authors like Plutarch condemn such behavior as unmanly because it

70 — Fisher (1992) 77, Llewellyn-Jones (2003) 256, *idem* (2020) 397 (it is probable that "domestic violence was so routine that it did not warrant mention in the sources"), argues on the basis of Greek literary sources and cross-cultural evidence for "traditional masculine violent cultures" (387) from social anthropology. It was much more prevalent, of course, against enslaved women (Fitzgerald (2009) 106).

71 — Llewellyn-Jones (2011) 243-52. Tr. Svarlien (1995). This is satirical: the "Dog-Wife" is being treated like an unwanted stray, having stones thrown at her (Fitzgerald (2009) 111-3, cf. Llewellyn-Jones (2020) 390 (the poem is "social satire").

72 — Scafuro (1997) 213 "these are offenses which men and women took pains to conceal". Cf. Llewellyn-Jones (2020) 385 "some men preferred not to make public the sexual scandal of their private lives".

73 — "Many women married to more gentle husbands appeared with faces disfigured by bruising" (*matronae multae, quarum viri mansuetiores erant, plagiarum vestigia etiam debonestata facie gererent*, *Conf.* 9.9.19, text and translation of Hammond 2016), Pomeroy (2007) 121. Fitzgerald (2009) 113-5 notes that Monica herself adopts a servile manner to forestall abuse, effectively surrendering her "status as a free woman", a dilemma much like Glykera's. Synodinou (1987) 22 makes a similar point about Hera in the *Iliad*, the earliest abused wife in Greek literature, on which see also Fitzgerald (2009) 117-9 and Schaps (2006). For another Christian response to domestic violence, see Schroeder (2004).

reduces a man to “a mere woman’s antagonist”, which is more or less what Sosias says (172-3, cited above)⁷⁴.

A small number of artistic representations of male violence against women may have a domestic context. An Attic kylix in the Milan museum shows a man gripping a woman by her (long) hair while holding a sandal, presumably to strike her – both common forms of 21st century domestic violence. It is, however, impossible to identify the status or relationship of the two figures with certainty⁷⁵. A red-figure *χοῦς* (wine jug, 450 BCE) in the Metropolitan Museum of Art depicts a frightened woman answering the door while a (probably) drunk and angry man batters it with a staff: will she be next⁷⁶? In general, there is little archaeological evidence of domestic violence, which is not surprising, given the difficulty of determining the causes of detectable injuries (e.g., skeletal damage). There is, however, the evidence of Hellenistic marriage contracts from Egypt which prohibit husbands from mistreating (*κακουχεῖν*), evicting (*ἐκβάλλειν*), or committing hubris against (*ὕβριζειν*) their wives⁷⁷. Complaints from women describe “laying ha/nds on me (in a hostile sense)” (*με... τὰς χεῖρας ἐπιφέρων*, *BGU* 1105.19-20), as mistreatment (*κακουχία*, *BGU* 1105.18) or hubris (*καθυβρίζει*, *BGU* 1105.19), so this is clearly physical violence, and the word hubris suggests the victims perceive it as undermining their status (cf. “as [would not happen] even/to a bought woman”, *ὡς οὐ/δέ ἀργυρωγήτωι*, *BGU* 1105.20-21), as does Glykera, 725)⁷⁸. The balance of evidence suggests that physical violence against wives was far from unknown and it is hard to avoid the conclusion that at least some members of *Perikeiromenē’s* ancient audience were also perpetrators, even if they regarded their own violence as a legitimate means of control. This was not a publicly acceptable position, however, as evidenced by the Egyptian marriage contracts, texts such as Plutarch’s *Advice to the Bride and Groom*, and the prologue’s concern that Polemon’s behavior will alienate the audience. Whether anyone sympathized with Polemon is impossible to know, but the play invites a kind of psychological distancing that is well known in modern contexts (discussed below): violent men tend not to regard themselves as such or identify with violent behavior that they consider excessive in other men.

74 — Quotation from Dossey (2008) 37. Fitzgerald (2009) 105 notes that the advice in Plutarch’s *On Parental Affection* and *On Brotherly Love* implies that domestic violence was prevalent.

75 — Milan, Museo Archeologico A 8037, c. 490 BCE. Lewis (2002) 125 fig. 3.26 questions the traditional erotic reading of this scene, which has no hint of a sympotic context, citing comparable scenes of women being beaten on a lekythos and in an Etruscan tomb.

76 — Llewellyn-Jones (2020) 380-2, fig. 18.1.

77 — Vêrilhac and Vial (1998) 275.

78 — *BGU* (*Berliner Griechische Urkunden*) IV 1105 (Berlin collection) is one of many examples of this kind of language.

Anthropological research shows that punitive haircuts are not unknown in pre-modern societies. An unfaithful wife among the south-western U.S. Arapaho might have “the tip of her nose or her braids, or both” cut off by her husband for suspicion of infidelity⁷⁹. Llewellyn-Jones cites an Assyrian law that punished prostitutes by pouring pitch on their heads, a practice he interprets as a disfigurement intended to destroy the hair (among other things)⁸⁰. There was also a sixth century law among the Burgundians that compensated “a freewoman who is deprived of her hair... by a freeborn man and can prove it with witnesses” with twelve solidi and another twelve as a fine⁸¹. To account for this bizarre law, Llewellyn-Jones speculates about hair symbolizing “personhood” (inasmuch as women touched their braids in swearing an oath) and points to mythological precedents, such as Loki robbing Sif of her hair. There are classical examples of this: Nisus and Scylla, Samson and Delilah.

This is limited and distant evidence, but it does attest to forcible hair cutting as a punitive phenomenon in real life, which is reasonably consistent with the attitudes of Sosias and Doris, who agree that Polemon has done something wrong and know that he suspects infidelity. It is possible that Polemon intended to spoil Glykera’s beauty, since he was reacting to the news that she has another lover, but no one in the extant sections of the play actually says this and it is far from clear that the audience even sees the cropped hair. Glykera’s appearances are few and she is veiled in the Antioch mosaic and Ephesian wall painting of the play⁸². She veils off-stage in Myrrhine’s house – or at least Moschion assumes she will (312)⁸³. If veiling indoors is her “custom” (ἔθος, 312), it is hard to imagine she converses with Pataikos on the street with a bare head, and she is clearly conscious of her birth status throughout. Although veiling could also be a sign of social aspiration by some hetairai, Glykera dismisses the notion that she might become Moschion’s hetaira (711-3). In veiling, she is insisting on what she is (at a minimum, a monogamous concubine or “unmarried wife”, παλλακί), rather than pretending to be what she is not.

79 — Hilger (1952) 212.

80 — Llewellyn-Jones (2003) 124-5.

81 — Kenkell (1991) LB 33.

82 — Blanchard (2008) 534 argues that she is dressed to leave Polemon in the Ephesus painting, with her cloak and veil (hiding the haircut).

83 — As Cairns (2002) 75 notes, veiling can communicate a woman’s “modesty” (αἰδώς) both as an “occurrent affect” (here, from Moschion’s perspective) and abiding quality (as the audience knows).

How serious is the haircut? Modern evidence

There may have been laws at times and places in the Greek-speaking world against what we would call intimate partner violence, as well as a widely shared belief that it was unmanly, and usually unnecessary, to use physical force against a wife. Neither is incompatible with widespread prevalence of behavior which is, by its very nature, enacted in the private sphere and frequently invisible to both society and the law. This is certainly the case in the United States and many modern countries. In 2015 the CDC estimated one in four women worldwide had experienced domestic violence and an older study also put the rate at 25 % as well⁸⁴. Snyder, reviewing domestic violence in the contemporary U.S., bluntly describes it as “common as rain”⁸⁵. Cross-cultural evidence suggests wide prevalence since at least the early 19th century. A 1989 study based on the Human Relations Area Files (a cultural data archive, compiled mid-century) identified what was then called “wife beating” in 84.5 % of samples drawn from around the globe, with varying levels of intensity: in 18.8 % of the societies studied it occurred in all households, in 29.9 % in a majority, in 37.8 % in a minority, and 15.5 % never or very rarely⁸⁶. The literary evidence, at least, suggests it is unlikely that classical Athens fell into the last category.

A social sciences model affords a new approach to the question of Polemon’s treatment of Glykera. Drawing on contemporary studies of intimate partner violence, specifically among military veterans, the rest of this paper reevaluates the *Perikeiromene* in light of this evidence. This approach is inspired by work such as Shay’s *Achilles in Vietnam* (1995), Deacy and McHardie’s work on uxoricide in pregnancy (2013) and Meineck and Konstan’s collection *Combat Trauma and the Ancient Greeks* (2014)⁸⁷. There is a need for caution in assuming that complex phenomena remain stable over time and are not a product of highly specific socio-cultural conditions. There are also significant differences between the real people on whom these studies are based and fictional characters of limited depth. The argument can be made, however, that there is a neurological evidence for certain aspects of combat trauma that reflect basic human biochemistry, as for example, increased activity in the amygdala

84 — Nason-Clark and Fisher-Townsend (2015) 7 and Tjaden & Thoennes (2000) iii and 9. Daly (2019) 11 estimates that domestic violence affects one in three intimate relationships or marriages.

85 — Snyder (2019) 5, who also notes “twenty people in the United States are assaulted *every minute* by their partners” (6, original italics).

86 — Levinson (1989) 31.

87 — James’ paper in Meineck and Konstan (2014) is a particularly insightful study of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder in Menander’s *Aspis*, where Daos experiences conditions known to contribute to this syndrome.

and reduced activity in the hypothalamus in an individual who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder when they experience cues to prior trauma that elicit flashbacks, or sudden, intense experiences of re-living the original trauma⁸⁸. Some findings have a neurological base that transcends time and culture.

It is difficult to say where exactly Athens fell on the spectrum identified in the 1989 study, but it identified correlations between intimate partner violence against women and other factors that have some bearing on the relationship between Glykera and Polemon. It found, for example, that economic inequality in favor of men, male dominance in family decisions and “a propensity for adults to settle conflicts violently outside the home” are strong predictors of domestic violence against women. Conversely, factors which predict low levels of violence include women’s freedom to divorce and “frequent and regular intervention by neighbors and kin in domestic disputes”⁸⁹. That is, the danger signs for Glykera include Polemon’s wealth, his eagerness to attack Moschion’s house, and his insistence on control. The latter is evidenced by his sheer disbelief that she can leave him. The stalking (through Sosias), the suicide threat, and the lavish gifts can also be read as attempts at control⁹⁰. On the other hand, Glykera can and does leave, Myrrhine offers her shelter, and Pataikos effectively undertakes to monitor Polemon’s behavior in the future. As in the contemporary United States, resolving the domestic issue also means resolving the larger social problem that the hyper-violent Polemon poses after his demobilization. Several incidents of violence in *Perikeiromene* can be read productively from the perspective of contemporary social sciences, although this paper does not go as far as Furley in identifying PTSD in Polemon⁹¹.

Contemporary studies of intimate partner violence identify a wide range of behaviors as constituting “physical violence”. A 2000 research report from the National Institute of Justice, at the U.S. Department of Justice, that surveyed 8000 women and 8000 men included the following examples of physical assault in its screening questions: throwing something that could hurt, pushing, grabbing, or shoving, pulling hair, slapping or hitting, kicking or biting, choking or attempting to drown,

88 — Sherin and Nemeroff (2011) 270-1. Shay (1995) 91-3, 186 notes that combat hyperarousal, particularly when prolonged, changes the body’s physiology and brain function; he sees symptoms of both already attested in the *Iliad*.

89 — Levinson (1989) 7, 79-80. Llewellyn-Jones (2020), following Fisher (1998), classifies Athens as a highly violent society, “suffering from the strains of a machismo ideology” (382) in which “male violence operating around the adjuncts of honour and shame clearly entered into domestic life” (384).

90 — Motz (2014) 37 (stalking as a way to terrorize the victim); Daly (2019) 19 (unwanted gifts as stalking).

91 — Furley (2015) 17 n. 69.

hitting with an object, beating up, threatening with a gun, threatening with a knife or other weapon, using a gun, and using a knife⁹². A more recent study from 2015 noted that 20 % of men in a batterer intervention program in Washington state admitted *on their intake form* to pushing, restraining, gripping and grabbing to prevent leaving, punching holes in walls, pounding/slamming on a table, hitting with an open hand, slapping, shaking, punching with a fist, throwing objects at or near their partners, blocking, raising their voices, destroying family property or vehicles, choking, kicking and bumping⁹³. Victims commonly present with musculoskeletal problems, cardiovascular problems, lacerations, and bruises⁹⁴. Hair cutting, however, is rare as a form of intimate partner violence. Even hair-pulling, which is included in most standard surveys, is relatively rare. Tjaden and Thoennes found 9.1 % of the 8000 women they survey reported hair pulling⁹⁵. But there is the occasional case of forcible hair cutting, like the one reported in the *Telegraph* in 2006, when a man was sued for bodily harm after he cut off his ex-girlfriend's pony tail with kitchen scissors. The judge ruled, "Where a significant portion of a woman's hair is cut off without her consent, this is a serious matter – not trivial or insignificant – amounting to bodily harm"⁹⁶. Non-consensual, often drastic, haircuts are common in enough in the western world to generate lively online discussions. For example, posing the query "Can someone cut your hair without consent?" to Quora, a Q&A site founded by former Facebook employees, generates a range of examples: teenagers holding down a schoolmate to cut off his hair, a 2011 case in Ohio where seven men forcibly cut the hair and beards of a group of Amish men (their leader was sentenced to fifteen years), or an elementary school teacher who cut the hair of several pupils while attempting to sing the "Star Spangled Banner"⁹⁷. Opinions run strong: words like "assault" and "battery" run through these responses – even comparisons to rape. Wisconsin in fact has a law against cutting hair without consent⁹⁸. And this is a relatively small

92 — Tjaden and Thoennes (2000) 6 and 11. Daly (2019) 8 offers an overlapping, though slightly different, list.

93 — Nason-Clark and Fisher-Townsend (2015) 8.

94 — Marshall *et al.* (2005) 867.

95 — Tjaden and Thoennes (2000) 11. Daly (2019) 8 also identifies hair-pulling as an indicator of domestic violence.

96 — Leonard (2006), *The Telegraph* 18 Jan 2006.

97 — www.quora.com/Is-it-against-the-law-to-cut-someones-hair-against-their-will. See also "Ohio Amish beard-cutting ringleader gets 15 years", Kim Wendel, *USA Today*, Feb. 8, 2013 (www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/02/08/amish-beard-cutting/19027571). "California teacher faces charges after forcibly cutting a student's hair while singing anthem", Kimberly Hutcherson, *CNN*, December 10, 2018 (www.cnn.com/2018/12/08/us/california-haircut-teacher/index.html).

98 — SPS 50.210 (3). Licensees (i.e., barbers) may not provide services to a patron without first obtaining the consent of the patron or legal guardian of the patron. https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/sp/professional_services/050/50/ii/210/4.

selection. The web site “TV Tropes” catalogues fifty-three examples of real forcible haircuts, from those inflicted on French women who had slept with the Nazis, to mutilations of murder victims, to politically motivated outrages, such as cutting off the braids of First Nations children forced to attend assimilation schools⁹⁹. Instances like Polemon and Glykera’s are not unheard of, though they typically do not come to the attention of the justice system and are not part of standard screenings for intimate partner violence.

On the other hand, Polemon used an implement, probably his sword. This would suit a fit of rage; also, he later sends Sosias to fetch it (355) and a Terence scholion identifies it as the tool he uses (presumably based on better knowledge of the play than we have)¹⁰⁰. He may even be holding it in his right hand on the Antioch mosaic of the opening scene¹⁰¹. The sword changes the picture significantly. Intimate Partner Violence that involves a weapon, such as a knife or gun, is considered “severe” and is infrequent¹⁰². Tjaden and Thoennes found 0.9 % of incidents reported involved the use of a knife¹⁰³. Merely threatening an intimate partner with a weapon is considered an extreme form of violence today and indeed there is evidence, summarized by Fisher, that it was unacceptable for Greek citizens of the classical era to bear arms publicly in peacetime (instead, the common fighting weapons were ostraca or stones)¹⁰⁴. On the other hand, disfiguring the victim is very common. In addition to lacerations and bruises, often to the head and upper torso, victims are often given black eyes, which one study attributed to a desire to “signify ownership” through a kind of branding, both marking the victim as property and making her less attractive to others¹⁰⁵.

This is particularly relevant to *Perikeiromene*. Polemon may well intend, as Rosivach notes, “to make her unattractive to other men now that he feels he can no longer trust her”¹⁰⁶. Furthermore, although our

99 — <https://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/TraumaticHaircut>. This site must be approached with caution, as some “Real Life” examples are less well documented than other categories (such as Pro Wrestling or Live Action TV).

100 — “Gripped by suspicion of adultery, the soldier cuts off his girlfriend’s hair” (*miles suspicione percussus adulterii gladio amatae amputat c[ri]nes* (Schol. Bemb. ad Ter. Eun. 61). See also Furley (2014) 111 “possibly with his sword”.

101 — Gutzwiller and Çelik (2012) 586 (“the odd circular fold of Polemon’s chiton below his right hand seems to outline a hilt with the blade continuing over the left knee”).

102 — Marshall *et al.* (2005) 864.

103 — Tjaden and Thoennes (2000) 11: 0.9 % of female victims; 0.8 % of male. Daly (2019) 112 puts the rate of domestic violence that did not involve a weapon at 77 % for the period 2003-2012 (a statistic from the U.S. Department of Justice).

104 — Fisher (1998) 87.

105 — Motz (2014) 26, “her black eye serves as both physical and symbolic evidence of his ownership of her body, and his power to mark it as his”.

106 — Rosivach (1988) 173 n. 13.

culture reads “ownership” metaphorically in these cases, in antiquity it could be literal and the practice of disfigurement through tattooing or stigmata was one way in which slaves could be marked as property, often as punishment for running away¹⁰⁷. Although the haircut in *Perikeiromene* is something of an oddity – its major dramatic purpose is novelty – the physicality of the punishment and resulting disfigurement might have been perceived as violating the boundary between slave and free – the act of ἀτιμία the Prologue mentioned¹⁰⁸. And indeed, there are parallels from the 19th century American South and the Caribbean. When Harriet Jacobs’ master cut off her hair, in anger over her relationship with another man, she understood that he meant to remind her of his authority¹⁰⁹. A similar case was reported in Barbados in 1836, when an interracial woman was punished for insubordination by having her head shaved¹¹⁰. Jacobs eventually escaped to the north, after a harrowing seven years’ hiding, and the Barbados woman showed so much “insubordination” – because she was angry about being shaved – that the chief magistrate at the time concluded that “punishments of a degrading nature” were best avoided. In some contexts, then, even enslaved people have been able to resist this kind of physical humiliation.

Veterans, however, are a special kind of perpetrator and Polemon’s behavior is explicitly connected to his military background. Sosias links the two when he complains about Polemon’s “belligerence” (being πολεμικός, 172) and “not letting women have hair” (τὰς γυναῖκας οὐκ ἔωλ ἔχειν τρίχας, 173), and at the end Pataikos tells him, “forget about [being] a soldier (στρατιώτης)” 1016. In the modern world, this connection between violence outside and inside the home is all too real. Intimate partner violence rates in the 21st century United States are higher among people exposed to violent networks, notably gangs, and those who have a background of living dangerously¹¹¹. Not surprisingly, rates among active duty soldiers and veterans can be much higher than in the general population¹¹². An estimated 13.5 % of veterans *without psychopathology* (typically PTSD) perpetrated IPV during 2004, the year of the data sampling; *with* psychopathology, the rate can be as high as 58 %, depending on the study¹¹³. Polemon’s recent service and the close connection he maintains

107 — Hunter (1994) 170-1.

108 — So Sommerstein (2014) 20 notes: Polemon can assault Glykera *qua* παλλακή (“unmarried wife”) “cropping her hair as if she were a common slave” because she has no formal protections, but he cannot get away with it. “Menander’s world is one in which cruel behaviour to a free person (slaves are another matter) is likely to be known about and unlikely to be readily tolerated” (21).

109 — Jacobs (2000) 86.

110 — Patterson (1982) 62.

111 — Nason-Clark and Fisher-Townsend (2015) 61, 64.

112 — Marshall *et al.* (2005) 864 (up to three times higher); Motz (2014) 174.

113 — Marshall *et al.* (2005) 865-6.

with the bellicose Sosias would put him in a high-risk category today, and in fact, this is precisely the behavior that he demonstrates: threats, harassment and stalking¹¹⁴. Polemon sends Sosias back repeatedly to the house “since he has no way/to hear what’s going on in here” (οὐκ ἔχων δ’ ὅπως/ τάνταυθ’ ἀκο[ύσ]ηι γινόμενα, 177-8) and he attempts to pursue Glykera into Myrrhine’s safe house. Both actions would meet most contemporary definitions of stalking, which can also include sending unwanted gifts. Polemon sets great store by the κόσμος (“clothing and jewelry”, 516) he has given Glykera¹¹⁵. For him, it represents his generosity and love; for her, it is simply an unwanted tie which she rejects when she leaves it behind.

Attempts by the victim to leave are frequently the greatest point of risk in a violent relationship. Separation-instigated violence, aimed at preventing the victim from leaving, is often marked by escalation, as perpetrators, motivated by jealousy and fear of abandonment, feel that they have no choice but to take more extreme actions¹¹⁶. Polemon’s decision to use violence outside his own house would be considered a significant escalation in the modern world, and he is frank about his motivation when he later calls himself a “a jealous man” (ζηλότυπος ἄνθρωπος, 987). His possessiveness is also typical, evident from his exaggerated notion of his rights over Glykera, whom he cannot, as Pataikos explains, reclaim by force¹¹⁷. In literary terms, violent outbursts are not unheard of from comic *adulescentes amantes* (“young lovers”) and lyric lovers, who also share Polemon’s emotionally needy behavior, even contemplating suicide and other forms of emotional blackmail. However, it is also true that contemporary women leave emotionally needy and dependent abusers at a fairly high rate: 27 % divorce them, vs. 0 % for much more dangerous antisocial and substance dependent types¹¹⁸. In our world, not just in New Comedy, Polemon is the type of abuser who would be issued divorce papers.

114 — Motz (2014) 37. Frequent checking on the partner can also be a sign of domestic violence (Daly (2019) 69).

115 — For example, “Stalking is two or more acts directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for her, his, or others’ safety, or to suffer substantial emotional distress, and includes, but is not limited to, following, monitoring, surveilling, or threatening a person” (<https://wecare.illinois.edu/policies/terms/#stalking>). See also Daly (2019) 19.

116 — Motz (2014) 35, Nason-Clark and Fisher-Townsend (2015) 8. Daly (2019) 75 notes that 75 % of victims who are killed by abusers are killed after they have left the relationship. The term “separation-instigated violence” was coined by Kelly and Johnson (2008), cited by Javier and Herron (2018) 7.

117 — Motz (2014) 30. Daly (2019) 2, 8 “acting with extreme jealousy and possessiveness” is a sign of domestic violence.

118 — Devaney and Lazenbatt (2016) 55.

In addition to stalking, jealousy, and possessiveness, Polemon exemplifies other traits familiar in modern perpetrators. One is a tendency to neutralize or rationalize the violent behavior, typically by blaming the victim for “deserving” it or failing to fulfill her obligations as a wife¹¹⁹. Polemon betrays a hint of this attitude when he claims that Glykera was “seduced”, although he focuses on Moschion’s role in an attempt to justify attacking the house: “So a guy who prostitutes her/while I’m away is not committing an offense against me?” (ὁ δὲ διεφθαρκῶς ἐμοῦ/ἀπόντος αὐτὴν οὐκ ἀδικεῖ με, 499-500). This kind of victimization thinking is common in modern perpetrators of IPV, particularly when they are first confronted with the legal system, which is effectively what happens when Pataikos explains that Polemon’s plan is against the law¹²⁰. Polemon continues to insist on his supposed victimization by Moschion for several lines and is still convinced of it even after Pataikos explains that no “legal penalty” (τιμωρία, 503) is available to him. In disbelief, Polemon demands, “Not even now?” (οὐδ’ ἄρα νῦν, 504), and echoes Pataikos’ words in shock, “[Did] not [treat her] properly?! With this,/you’ve hurt me the most, out of everything you’ve said” (οὐ κατὰ τρόπον; τουτί με τῶν/πάντων λελύπηκας μάλιστ’ εἰπῶν, 493-4). Polemon has not, until this point, viewed himself as the aggressor.

Polemon’s attitude is not, unfortunately, unusual. A recent study noted of one perpetrator that “the erroneous belief that his needs were all that mattered kept [him] behaving in ways that brought pain and angst to those who loved him”¹²¹. Victimization thinking, particularly when coupled with trauma, can cloud the ability to see oneself as violent. This same study observed, of a group in treatment, that “it took many weeks before they were willing even to entertain that they were, or had been, violent”¹²². It may be an exaggeration to describe Polemon’s experience of the break up as trauma, but the play does foreground his sorrow and distress and he talks of suicide. Emotional and psychological trauma symptoms can include shock, denial, and disbelief, anger, irritability, and mood swings, and feeling sad or hopeless (including a desire to self-harm, with PTSD) – most of which describe Polemon¹²³. Trauma can also

119 — Nason-Clark and Fisher-Townsend (2015) 8.

120 — Nason-Clark and Fisher-Townsend (2015) 5.

121 — Nason-Clark and Fisher-Townsend (2015) 133.

122 — Nason-Clark and Fisher-Townsend (2015) 6. Daly (2019) 36 notes “most perpetrators do not see their behaviors as acts of domestic violence” because they “consider their controlling behaviors to be right – and even necessary – to ensure that others fulfill their expectations”. Denial of responsibility, feelings of self-pity (*idem*, 40), and attempting to depict the victim as the aggressor (81-2) are common.

123 — *Help Guide: Emotional and Psychological Trauma* (<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/ptsd-trauma/coping-with-emotional-and-psychological-trauma.htm>) and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs National Center for PTSD, Trauma Symptom Checklist (<https://www.ptsd.va.gov/>)

disturb one's "normal capacity to perceive and process information, particularly motivation from others"¹²⁴. Admittedly, a good mistaken identity comedy needs a little obtuseness to keep the plot going, but Polemon has a particularly hard time with the idea that Glykera is not his wife and that his behavior is what drove her away. At no point before the denouement does he consider events from her point of view; he has difficulty enough understanding Pataikos' perspective. The perspective he does consider, namely Sosias', is a (typically) wrong one: perpetrators tend to measure themselves against *more* violent people and thus regularly underestimate the damage they are doing¹²⁵. In the attack on the house, Polemon backs Sosias' hyperaggressive plan; it is not his own initiative. The audience probably did not see the actual haircut, but the reactions of Agnoia, Sosias, Doris and Glykera herself all point to a certain level of violence, and it seems clear from the visual depictions that Sosias instigated it by accusing Glykera of infidelity and (likely, given his character elsewhere) by advocating for an extreme response¹²⁶. It is possible that the haircut was already a mitigation of Sosias' advice and/or Polemon's initial intentions. It is hard to imagine that an impulsive, jealous, angry soldier really lifted his sword against his faithless "wife" with no other intention than to cut her hair.

On the other hand, there are factors that bode well for Polemon's rehabilitation. Despite Glykera's conviction that he will treat "another woman" (restored, 722) exactly as he has treated her, his behavior does not really form a pattern, and repeated behavior is what characterizes most intimate partner violence¹²⁷. Polemon calls off the attack on the house and the prologue would have us believe that he is "not the sort/naturally" (οὐ φύσει/τοιοῦτον ὄντα, 164-5) to be a repeat offender. It is also common for different kinds of abuse to co-occur – emotional, financial, physical, sexual¹²⁸. But Polemon says nothing negative about Glykera in the preserved scenes (although presumably he did so in the first act). Until now, he has lavished expensive gifts on her and provided a comfortable home, and he has not, apart from the haircut, coerced her in any other way. He does drink during the play, and alcohol and intimate partner violence frequently go hand in hand. In one modern study, 45 % of the perpetrators were diagnosed with a current substance abuse disorder and 61 %

professional/assessment/adult-sr/tsc-40.asp).

124 — Javier and Herron (2018) 9.

125 — Nason-Clark and Fisher-Townsend (2014) 5.

126 — This is a widely accepted reconstruction, but there are arguments against it (e.g., Mastromarco 1986, though this pre-dates discovery of the Antioch mosaic).

127 — Although single actions can count as domestic violence, a pattern of controlling behaviors is more typical (Daly (2019) 5, 9).

128 — Daly (2019) 20.

underwent substance abuse treatment during their lifetime¹²⁹. Polemon spends some time drowning his sorrows but he also denies the accusation of being drunk (“Less [drunk]? Me? Who drank maybe/a glass?”, ἦτον; ὅς πέπωκ’ ἴσως/κοτύλην, 471-2) and sobers up enough to listen to legal advice. There is nothing in the preserved sections to imply habitual drunkenness, though being drunk at all is, as Rosivach notes, a taboo in New Comedy¹³⁰.

Even more unusual in perpetrators of domestic violence is Polemon’s basic respect for the law and community norms. Doris may call him παράνομος (“felon”), but this is only in a general sense (as noted above, actual laws about hair cutting are rare). Modern perpetrators are usually angry when external parties intervene, but Polemon does not resent Pataikos’ interference on the side of the law¹³¹. In fact, as soon as the soldier stops listening to Sosias, he becomes both contrite and law-abiding. It is Sosias, rather, who shows the classic PTSD symptoms of hyper arousal, hyper alertness, persistent expectation of betrayal (implicit in his remark, “they’re living the good life from what I can see,/these women” (ζῶσιν τρόπον τιν’, ὡς ἐμοὶ καταφαίνεται,/αὐται, 183-4), and what has been called “persistent mobilization of the body and the mind for lethal danger”¹³², expressed through his aggression toward nearly everyone: Pataikos is a sell-out (“He’s coming... and he’s taken a bribe”, ἦκει χρήματ’ εἰληφώς, 467), Moschion, an “adulterer” (μοιχός, 370, 389), Daos, contemptible (they trade insults and threats, 366-97), Habrotonon, a “cocksucker” (λαϊκάστρια, 485), and Doris, a traitor who deserves a beating (“if you get near me, Doris, I’ll give you some/massive damage”, [σὺ] μὲν εἰ πρό[σει] μοι, Δωρί, μέγα τί σοι κακὸν/[δ]ώσω, 398-9). The more aggressive elements of the soldier type have been displaced onto Sosias, who does show signs of combat trauma, notably difficulty demobilizing and possibly even traumatic brain injury, which is associated with belligerence and lack of empathy¹³³.

Perikeiromene is of course about rehabilitating Polemon, not Sosias, and some of what helps the soldier here also works in modern treatment programs, which frequently emphasize the need for community involvement. Javier and Herron explain that “the solution [to IPV] requires a

129 — Marshall *et al.* (2005) 868-9. Daly (2019) 91 cites studies that put the rate of problem drinking variously at 25 % (or 80 %, in one) among perpetrators, while emphasizing that it is not per se a cause of domestic violence.

130 — Mature males in the genre are almost never drunk (Rosivach (1988) 54).

131 — Nason-Clark and Fisher-Townsend (2015) 132.

132 — Shay (1995) xx.

133 — Rao *et al.* (2009) (increased aggression, especially verbal, which is what Sosias demonstrates here), De Sousa *et al.* 2011 (lack of empathy). Thorpe (2014) *passim* includes an excellent case study of the effects of TBI. On the displacement of traditional braggart soldier’s traits, see Goldberg (1980) 49-50, Lamagna (1994) 46-4, 62 (onto Sosias) and 63 (onto Moschion).

comprehensive model including external factors, sociohistorical, sociopolitical, sociocultural, socioeconomic... legal... the individual's psychology... biological and evolutionary factors"¹³⁴. Clearly, not all of these factors are addressed in the play, but some certainly are. In sociohistorical terms, Polemon's service was the sort with a definite end point: mercenaries worked until they had plundered enough to quit, or they died fighting. Thus, Polemon has reached a degree of economic stability that is rare among perpetrators in our own world. By retiring to his native city, he made a politically safe move and, with Pataikos' help, he comes to understand and comply with the laws of Corinth. It is not uncommon for real, meaningful change to be prompted by a critical event that the perpetrator recognizes as a "turning point" – in this case, Glykera's departure¹³⁵. Likewise, men who take responsibility for past abusive and violent acts are more likely to complete intervention programs successfully¹³⁶. Polemon is not at his most coherent when he admits culpability, but he is clearly beginning to do so when he pleads, "if I ever really did anything wrong –/if I don't keep doing my utmost in everything" (ἐγὼ γὰρ εἴ τι πώποτ' ἠδίκηχ' ὄλωσ –/εἰ μὴ διατελῶ πάντα φιλοτιμούμενος, 514-5). By the fifth act, his remorse is explicit (986-9):

ὁ δ' ἀλάστωρ ἐγὼ
καὶ ζηλότυπος ἄνθρωπος ἀ[δικεῖσθαι δοκῶν]
εὐθύς ἐπαρώνουν. τοιγαροῦ[ν ἀπηγχόμην]
καλῶς ποῶν

"A wicked man,
a jealous man – [I thought myself injured]
and turned straight to drunken violence. That's why [I was going to
strangle myself]
and do the decent thing".

At this point, Polemon has progressed considerably from blaming Moschion for "seducing" Glykera (499).

There are also sociocultural factors in successful rehabilitation. Some contemporary treatment programs emphasize accountability to a facilitator or monitor¹³⁷. Pataikos functions in this role, inasmuch as he has an ongoing relationship of trust with Polemon and is ready to label the undesirable behavior as such, particularly in the final scene. This close relationship will be reinforced through marriage: Pataikos, who recognizes

134 — Javier and Herron (2018) 15-6.

135 — Devaney and Lazenblatt (2016) 76-7.

136 — Scott and Wolfe (2003), cited in Devaney and Lazenblatt (2016) 77. See also Daly (2019) 42 on the importance of accepting responsibility in order to change.

137 — Nason-Clark and Fisher-Townsend (2015) 172.

that violent behavior is unacceptable, will exert a continuing influence over Polemon to comply with community norms. Most important, the soldier shows himself willing to think and act differently – an essential step towards behavioral change¹³⁸. He accepts Pataikos’ blunt order to put his reckless behavior behind him with exaggerated compliance (1020-2):

Ἄπολλον, ὃς καὶ νῦν ἀπόλωλα πα[ρ]’ ὀλίγον,
 πάλιν τι πράξω προπετές; οὐδὲ μ[έ]μψομαι
 Γλυκέραι

Apollo! When I nearly died just now,
 I’m going to do something thoughtless again?! And [I won’t blame]
 Glykera.

Rare indeed is this hint of empathy for the victim. As Nason-Clark and Fisher-Townsend note, plenty of perpetrators angrily protest, “I *said* I was sorry”; few tell their victims, “I understand why you were frightened of me”. Polemon is the type who might really change¹³⁹.

Glykera’s behavior also, perhaps paradoxically, bodes well for a healthy marriage. She is an atypical IPV survivor who refuses to act like a victim. It is common for victims to regard acts of violence as aberrant events and feel social pressures to forgive the perpetrator¹⁴⁰. Glykera, however, ignores pressure from Pataikos to stop “this foolishness” (τοῦτο <τὸ> γελοῖον, 748) and return to Polemon. Instead, she makes the realistic point – from a modern perspective – that he is likely to re-offend (722-3). Glykera is able to recognize and reject what we now know as a familiar cycle of tension, violence, apology/reconnection, and new, often increased, violence¹⁴¹. In labeling Polemon’s behavior hubris, she attempts to make the event a community concern. For her, the haircut was also a turning point, the kind of incident which modern studies often find “associated with help-seeking or empowerment behaviors” and she follows it up by leaving him, disregarding factors that normally trap victims in the modern world, such as logistical difficulties or fear of retaliation¹⁴². Commentators have pointed out how impractical her decision is, observing that her “strength” (the freedom to leave) is also her weakness, as she has no “real” (i.e. citizen

138 — Nason-Clark and Fisher-Townsend (2015) 132.

139 — Nason-Clark and Fisher-Townsend (2015) 9.

140 — Motz (2014) 38. Daly (2019) 71 notes that victims often want to please their partner, defend them, and go along with everything they say or do – none of which applies to Glykera. Llewellyn-Jones 2020 396 speculates, on the basis of cross-cultural evidence, that Greek women may have “accepted violence unconditionally”. Glykera is a strong counterexample.

141 — Daly (2019) 31-2, though the “apology” stage can disappear with time and the pattern has low predictive value in practice (47-9).

142 — Chang *et al.* (2010) 252, cited in Devaney and Lazenblatt (2016) 76.

male) protector, no resources and no permanent home¹⁴³. She does have Myrrhine, however, an indirect benefit of her citizen birth, and even now, female networks are often the first point of refuge for women fleeing abusive homes¹⁴⁴.

Fear is understandably the most common immediate response from victims and Glykera runs to the neighboring house in fear, as we hear in Myrrhine's own angry words to Daos: "Did you blab... how she fled here/[to us] for refuge, in fear? (ἦ σὺ λελάληκας... ὅτι φοβηθεῖς ἐνθάδε/[κα]ταπέφυγ' αὐτὴ [πρὸς ἡμᾶς;], 320-1)¹⁴⁵. What is surprising, however, is how self-confident and possessed Glykera is when she insists on retrieving her birth token from Polemon's house. She shows nothing of the helplessness or despair of victims who, after years of abuse, "take on the roles... assigned by the perpetrator as objects to be controlled and manipulated"¹⁴⁶. Nor does she view Polemon as a rescuer or a sanctuary, another belief common to modern victims, even though this was in fact the only arrangement the Old Woman could make, on her deathbed, to protect Glykera¹⁴⁷. Self-sacrifice and self-respect co-exist, both sprung from consciousness of her birth connections. *Perikeiromene* thus reflects certain transhistorical commonalities in domestic violence and its effects on victims and perpetrators, and yet offers a positive resolution. Perhaps some of its popularity was due to the message of hope it offered for resolving a real social problem in the aftermath of Alexander's death.

Conclusion

The play had a lively reception in antiquity, in both art and literature¹⁴⁸. The central motif may ultimately derive from myth via tragedy, but Menander embedded it into a genre concerned with ordinary people that purported to depict real life. His version of the trope became the defining one, as later classical literary and artistic sources invoke this play to treat punitive haircuts. The trope abounds in post-classical literature as well: Gilbert Murray's English title for the play, "The Rape of the Locks" alludes to the poem by Alexander Pope (based on a real life incident);

143 — Furley (2015) 11 and n. 40 citing Gärtner. See also Konstan (1995) 112.

144 — Dossey (2008) 32. Plut. *Quaest. Rom.* 108 speculates that Romans avoiding marrying kin to prevent wives from turning to them for help if mistreated. See also Fitzgerald (2009) 120.

145 — Nason-Clark and Fisher-Townsend (2015) 7.

146 — Motz (2014) 37.

147 — Sanderson (2008) 181. See also Motz (2014) 43-4 (an example of an abuser perceived as rescuer).

148 — E.g., the Antioch mosaic and the Ephesus wall painting, one or both probably deriving ultimately from an early Hellenistic painting (Gutzwiller and Çelik (2012) 579, Nervegna (2013) 158-9). Literary reception includes the Greek Anthology (5.218, see Furley (2015) 14), Lucian (see n. 15 above), and Philostratus (see n. 14).

there is also Maria's punishment in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, the white men who shave a group of black men in *Things Fall Apart*, and many examples of extreme haircuts undergone voluntarily: Fantine, in *Les Misérables*, Anne (of Green Gables), Della in "The Gift of the Magi", Wang Lung, in *The Good Earth*, and the title character in Disney's *Mulan*. The central trope, first attested in Menander, was never lost and some credit is due to the playwright for reworking the distant mythological examples that lay behind it. Indeed, a collection of roughly 385 examples of "The Traumatic Hair Cut" may be found on the "TV Tropes" Wiki, a fan-contributed site, spanning the well-known (Rapunzel, the Little Mermaid, the Seven Samurai) to the very obscure (most of the "Fan Fiction" examples)¹⁴⁹. Although these instances show nearly infinite variation in context and meaning, the general preface outlines common elements with remarkable affinities to Menander's original treatment of the trope:

"Jewelry? Vast wardrobes? Footwear? Cosmetics? For some weird reason, none of them are the most prized possessions for some societies and individuals; instead, it's... hair. Whether it's good or evil, a person's hair comes to symbolize honor, social status, and otherwise serves as a human peacock tail, representing a life rather than a fashion statement. Thusly, having it forcibly cut off isn't just a minor fashion faux pas, but akin to rape; and is likened to having your life stolen from you"¹⁵⁰.

Perikeiromene anticipates this to a surprising degree, detaching the Traumatic Haircut from myth and folklore and translating it to the ordinary world. Glykera is indifferent to the rich wardrobe and jewelry that she leaves behind without a second thought. The haircut is far more significant to her, but not because of personal vanity: she does not breathe a word of complaint about the physical disfigurement. Rather it is the symbolic meaning; for her, honor and status are very much at play, as she reads loss of social standing into the act. If enslavement can be considered social death, Glykera very much clings to life in refusing to accept humiliating treatment or relinquish the birth tokens, the physical signs of her connection to freeborn status. In this, as noted above, she is not a typical victim of domestic violence, which has been described as a "psychic murder" where the victims "feel so helpless, and hopeless, that the possibility of changing their situation is beyond their conception"¹⁵¹. Because she

149 — <https://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/TraumaticHaircut>. Classicists have also identified parallels: examples from liberation France (*Hiroshima mon amour*), Ireland (*Ryan's Daughter*) (Blanchard (2013) 139 n. 1), and even a *Friends* episode (Season 3, episode 25, Furley (2015) 28 n. 104).

150 — <https://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/TraumaticHaircut>.

151 — Motz (2014) 36.

regards the haircut as a promise of things to come, Glykera chooses a life without violence, even if it is also without resources.

A sense of honor underlies her reaction: she abandons Polemon while professing a value code that obliges her to keep a promise of silence and rejecting both Pataikos' pragmatism and his belief that the haircut was a minor *faux pas* (merely "inappropriate", οὐ κατὰ τρόπον, 492), at least, for a fatherless woman at the bottom of the freeborn classes, something implicit in the rebuke, "[You're] not [the only one]/this awful thing has happened to" (οὐχὶ [σοὶ μόνον]/γέγρονε τὸ δεινόν, 728). For Sosias, it is a disgrace for a warrior to stoop to "not letting women have hair" (173), but not undeserved, given Glykera's supposed adultery. On the other hand, he accords her sufficient standing to hold her to higher standards than a hetaira, even one under contract (which she is not), and an ancient audience might have experienced a range of reactions. The prologue anticipates that some will read the haircut as dishonor, along with Glykera, rather than taking Pataikos' or Sosias' point of view. The play never likens the haircut to rape, but physical violation is a common experience of New Comic heroines and there are instances that link hair damage and rape, such as the *Eunuchus*, where Chaereas tears Philoumena's hair in the course of raping her (646), or the stock description of a rape victim in *Epitrepontes*, weeping, with torn clothing, and tearing her hair (488). As in rape plots, the physical violation of the heroine creates a crisis that will ultimately be resolved with marriage. Given the regularity with which young women in Menander are raped or threatened with rape, it is possible to see a structural analogy with the haircut in *Perikeiromene*. It is largely symbolic violence but taken no less seriously by its victim. This unusually victim-focused play allows greater expression of, and possible empathy for, the victim's perspective.

The tragic background offers a sympathetic model for Glykera's conduct in the heroic tradition of virgin self-sacrifice. Not everyone in an ancient audience would have been fully conversant with specific treatments of the motif, but the many tragic references in Menander suggests an implied spectator who knew enough to recognize paratragic elements in general – from tragic language and famous quotations, to character types, situations and plot elements. The tragic models help justify seemingly suspicious behavior and authorize a degree of independence neither expected nor desired of citizen daughters under normal circumstances. Glykera's story follows a familiar plot trajectory: when a god's plan is jeopardized by lack of volunteers, the daughter steps forward to protect family and community, acting from motives that cross gender boundaries, particularly the desire for personal glory. Yet her decision to self-sacrifice is challenged, and even undermined, by an underlying dramatic irony:

her heroic aspirations unfold in an uglier and often cynical space. Of course, tragedy included happy endings as well as grim ones, giving a few women (Helen, Iphigeneia in Tauris) the opportunity to put their natal family first and yet live to resume their former life. These models help to normalize the resolution of Glykera's story, which brings her back under the protection of male kin, eliminates conflict between her values and her actual status, provides stipulations that will control Polemon in the future, and eliminates the need for self-sacrifice, down the very last detail of terminating Moschion's freedom to pursue affairs.

To conclude with one last comparandum: plucky heroines in constant jeopardy are familiar figures in the later western tradition and Glykera's self-confident rejection of her abuser has an interesting parallel in Samuel Richardson's *Pamela or Virtue Rewarded*, an eighteenth-century story of a servant girl who defies her master's attempts to debauch her through ever more vicious schemes. Her disobedience of secular authority rests, like Glykera's, on a higher cause: here chastity, and ultimately the preservation of her soul; for Glykera, it is the rights of kin and ultimately, her moral fitness for the role of freeborn citizen and wife. Both young women are socially isolated, artificially silenced, and reprimanded for behavior at odds with their humble status: Pamela is effectively imprisoned in a country estate, forced to communicate through letters, and harassed continually for refusing to comply with her master's wishes. Glykera has no kin but Moschion and is prevented from acknowledging even him, while Pataikos upbraids her for abandoning the soldier. Both texts repeatedly exploit the paradox of appearing wrong while acting right: defying an illegitimate authority in favor of a legitimate one, speaking with self-confidence and strength, and behaving in ways that seem outrageous for their sex and status. The values that inform their actions are impractical, even dangerous, for a fatherless daughter and a maidservant, but appropriate to the very qualities of character that are so harshly tested, and both are ultimately rewarded with a social elevation that justifies their conduct and brings their values in harmony with their position. Pamela marries her repentant former master. Glykera marries an equally repentant Polemon. If anything, the Greek play is more conservative than the Christian novel, which was criticized for calling social and gender roles into question (although elevating a lower status woman is far less radical than it would be were the roles reversed). Menander offered his audience the reassurance that Glykera's elevation was merely a restoration of something she once had, not a worrisome example of upward social mobility. In both versions of the story, the dynamic of intimate partner violence is simplified: the perpetrator is all at fault; the victim is all innocent. But neither perpetrator is a career felon, either, and the kind of dominance held up as exemplary

is not maintained through violence but through reason and legitimate authority. *Perikeiromene* treats a taboo subject in Greek sources, in a way that includes realistic elements of domestic violence across cultures and contexts but also offers hope for a happy ending that can only happen in a comedy¹⁵².

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