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Before Stockholm: Emotions and Victimhood in Mediterranean Kidnapping Narratives, 1866–1921

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Abstract

Fifty years ago, the infamous bank robbery and ensuing hostage crisis that took place in a Stockholm bank gave rise to the so-called ‘Stockholm syndrome’. Though never recognized as a valid medical diagnosis, the (allegedly) pathological relationship between kidnapper and hostage has become an omnipresent media phenomenon that inspires movies and television series to this day. However, this forced bond was not always seen as problematic. The years between 1860 and 1910 witnessed the rise of kidnappings in the Mediterranean world (Southern Italy, Greece, the Ottoman Balkan region, and Morocco) involving English, American, and European hostages. Today, we know about these incidents from autobiographical narratives by the former captives. They painted a surprisingly favourable picture of their captors – and found enthusiastic audiences for their stories. Looking at the interplay of feelings, coercion, and empowerment, the article opens up a new perspective on the history of emotions that brings both victims and perpetrators into the picture.

In May 1904, Greek–American expatriate Ion Perdicaris was kidnapped from his summer residence near Tangier by tribal chief Mulai Ahmed el-Raisuli. Raisuli asked for a ransom of 70,000 dollars, but more than money he wanted to end his own persecution by the sultan of Morocco Abd al-Aziz bin Hassan and to generally undermine the ruler’s power. His further sweeping demands thus ranged from the withdrawal of the state troops chasing him, to the release of his imprisoned followers, and to two areas outside Tangier being placed under Raisuli’s own rule.¹ President Theodore Roosevelt and the US State Department reacted to the abduction exactly as Raisuli had hoped they would: by sending seven warships to Tangier to pressure the sultan to comply with Raisuli’s demands. After six weeks of joint diplomatic interventions by

¹ Ion Perdicaris, ‘Morocco, the land of the extreme West and the story of my captivity’, *National Geographic Magazine*, 17 (1906), pp. 117–57, at p. 150.

American, British, and French legates, Abd al-Aziz gave way and Perdicaris was set free.²

While still in captivity, Perdicaris began working on a narrative of his experiences for *Leslie's Monthly Magazine* that was published in September 1904, followed by another account for the *National Geographic Magazine* in March 1906.³ In both articles, Perdicaris painted a surprisingly favourable picture of his violent capture as well as of his kidnapper, stating:

I felt grateful to Providence that since such a misfortune had overtaken me, I had at least fallen into the power of the most kindly and gentle of brigands imaginable...In fact I discovered to my consternation that I was beginning to like the man in spite of my natural resentment. I found myself unconsciously accepting his contention that he was not a mere brigand or cattle-lifter, but a patriot struggling to rescue his Berber followers.⁴

Indeed, at the time Perdicaris's positive evaluation of his kidnapping was no exception. The years between 1860 and 1910 witnessed the rise of abduction cases for ransom by so-called brigands in the Mediterranean world – in Southern Italy, Greece, the Ottoman Balkan region, and Morocco – involving British, American, and European tourists and businessmen.⁵ Despite the hostages experiencing a rough treatment and spending up to six months in captivity, most of them survived physically unharmed. Today, we know about these events not only from state records but also from autobiographical narratives by the former captives. In his published account *Vier Monate unter den Briganten in den Abruzzen* (*Four months among the brigands in the Abruzzi*), Johann Jakob Lichtensteiger, an accountant at a Swiss paper mill in Salerno who had fallen into the hands of Gaetano Manzo in 1866 with three of his colleagues, described a touching farewell scene during which Manzo gave the four Swiss men some money, explaining:

'You should be able to travel like distinguished gentlemen and also have a cup of coffee'...Then he gave each of us a gold ring, and now several brigands came and surprised us with similar souvenirs...The Italian is not satisfied with the German handshake. We wandered from arm to arm and received tender farewell kisses.⁶

² Barbara W. Tuchman, 'Perdicaris alive or Raisuli dead', *American Heritage*, 10 (1959), pp. 18–21, 98–101; Paul Baepler, 'Rewriting the barbary captivity narrative: the Perdicaris affair and the last barbary pirate', *Prospects*, 24 (1999), pp. 177–221.

³ Ion Perdicaris, 'In Raisuli's hands: the story of my captivity and deliverance May 18 to June 26, 1904', *Leslie's Monthly Magazine*, 58 (1904), pp. 510–22; idem, 'Morocco'.

⁴ Idem, 'Morocco', p. 152.

⁵ See, in particular, Martin Blinkhorn, 'Liability, responsibility and blame: British ransom victims in the Mediterranean periphery, 1860–1881', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 46 (2000), pp. 336–56; idem, 'Avoiding the ultimate act of violence: Mediterranean bandits and kidnapping for ransom, 1815–1914', in Stuart Carroll, ed., *Cultures of violence: interpersonal violence in historical perspective* (Basingstoke and New York, NY, 2007), pp. 192–211.

⁶ Johann Jakob Lichtensteiger, *Vier Monate unter den Briganten in den Abruzzen* (Zurich, 1910), pp. 65–7 (my translation).

Both quotes hint at a condition which psychologists, psychiatrists, and police profilers of the 1970s would come to see as pathological and term ‘Stockholm syndrome’: ‘a positive bond between hostage and captor’, the ‘focus on the captor’s kindness, and not his acts of brutality’, and sometimes even the ‘[i]ntellectual appreciation’ of his cause.⁷ The term refers to the infamous failed bank raid and ensuing hostage situation in a Stockholm bank in 1973, where two robbers took one male and three female employees hostage. Allegedly, the women displayed exceptionally hostile behaviour when contacted by the police, apparently believing that the kidnappers were there to protect them. Even after their liberation, all captives retained their positive attitude towards their captors.⁸ The media immediately jumped at the story and spread false rumours of unfolding sexual relationships between the women and the kidnappers, while the scientific experts too conceptualized the bond between hostage and kidnapper above all as a gender-specific problem. Being more likely to have ‘hysterical personalities’,⁹ women were believed to be more vulnerable to fall under their (male) kidnappers’ spell. Even though Stockholm syndrome is no longer seen as a valid diagnosis within the field of psychiatry today, this sexualized image continues to be omnipresent in movies and TV series.¹⁰

Authors from various academic fields have drawn a connection between the early cases and the 1970s, comparing Perdicaris to infamous Patty Hearst and describing the incidents of the nineteenth century as ‘emitt[ing] pre-echoes’ of the Stockholm syndrome.¹¹ Stockholm syndrome, however, is clearly a child of the 1970s. It reflected Cold War angst of communist ‘brain washing’, the new threat of international terrorism, and the challenge posed by the women’s liberation movement that was seemingly directed against institutions such as the nuclear family, marriage, and the state. Nineteenth-century contemporaries were unaware of these fears and consequentially did not see Perdicaris’s or Lichtensteiger’s stories as problematic. Moreover, the victims of kidnapping in the nineteenth century were predominantly male. Hence, looking at the Mediterranean kidnappings from the vantage point of the 1970s should not tempt us to project late-modern medical concepts on the second half of the nineteenth century; we should rather turn our attention to ambivalences and contingencies. For neither victimhood nor emotions are transhistorical phenomena.

⁷ One of the first attempts to define Stockholm syndrome was made at the international conference ‘Dimensions of victimization in the context of terroristic acts’, held in Evian, France, from 3 to 5 June 1977. Quotes from Frank Ochberg, ‘The victim of terrorism – psychiatric considerations’, in Ronald D. Creslinsten, ed., *Final report on ‘dimensions of victimization in the context of terroristic acts’* (Montreal, 1977), pp. 13–35, at pp. 21, 28.

⁸ Daniel Lang, ‘A reporter at large: the bank drama’, *New Yorker*, 25 (1974), pp. 56–126.

⁹ Jared R. Tinklenberg, Peggy Murphy, and Patricia Murphy, ‘Adaptive behavior of victims of terrorism’, in Creslinsten, ed., *Final report*, pp. 93–107, at p. 99.

¹⁰ Celia Jameson, ‘The “short step” from love to hypnosis: a reconsideration of the Stockholm syndrome’, *Journal for Cultural Research*, 14 (2010), pp. 337–55, at p. 343.

¹¹ Susan L. Carruthers, *Cold War captives: imprisonment, escape, and brainwashing* (Berkeley, CA, Los Angeles, CA, and London, 2009), p. 153; Dennis A. Pluchinsky, *Anti-American terrorism: from Eisenhower to Trump: a chronicle of the threat and response* (2 vols., London, 2020), I, p. 198. Quote from Blinkhorn, ‘Ultimate act’, p. 200.

The definition of 'victim', Petra Terhoeven points out, has never been self-evident or stable. Victims 'are being defined in a complex and collective process in which degrees of belonging are also negotiated'.¹² Unsurprisingly, a presumed intimate connection between victim and perpetrator might complicate this process.¹³ Similarly, historians of emotions such as Carol and Peter Stearns, Joanna Bourke, or Ute Frevert have shown that feelings are not a universal human condition or purely the biochemical outcome of brain activity.¹⁴ How they are experienced, their facial and bodily expressions, and their written, auditive, or visual narrations depend on the historical context and change over time. Analysing emotions thus provides insights into social norms, values, and mentalities.

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the contested notions of victimhood and the question of who could express certain feelings in specific ways have been inextricably intertwined with gender roles (as well as with class, race, or age). Perdicaris described feeling gratefulness and appreciation; Lichtensteiger and his captors exchanged keepsakes and kisses. Establishing an emotional connection to kidnappers has primarily been interpreted as a survival strategy.¹⁵ More than that, however, I suggest that retrospectively recounting emotions served for the hostages as a means to reconfigure this highly asymmetrical relationship and to regain their agency. Because emotions, Joanna Bourke emphasizes, are always 'about power relations. [They] lead to a negotiation of the boundaries between self and other or one community and another'.¹⁶ Stockholm syndrome has narrowed our focus on the victims' perspective, but the nineteenth-century kidnappers often felt the need to publicly express feelings for their captives and to create a sense of community.

This article, then, opens up a new perspective on the history of emotions, in a twofold way: first, by examining the coercive dimension of fondness, friendship, and love – feelings which are usually associated with voluntariness – and second, by bringing the perpetrators back into the picture.¹⁷ To make sense of the testimonies of Perdicaris, Lichtensteiger, and their fellow sufferers, we need to understand the geographical and political context of their kidnappings

¹² Petra Terhoeven, 'Victimhood and acknowledgment: the other side of terrorism', *European History Yearbook*, 19 (2018), pp. 1–17, at p. 4; see also Cheryl Lawther, 'The construction and politicization of victimhood', in Orla Lynch and Javier Argomaniz, eds., *Victims of terrorism: a comparative and interdisciplinary study* (London, 2014), pp. 10–30, esp. pp. 10–16.

¹³ On the history of intimacy, see George Morris, 'Historiographical review of intimacy in modern British history', *Historical Journal*, 64 (2021), pp. 796–811.

¹⁴ See Peter N. Stearns and Carol Z. Stearns, 'Emotionology: clarifying the history of emotions and emotional standards', *American Historical Review*, 90 (1985), pp. 813–36; Joanna Bourke, 'Fear and anxiety: writing about emotion in modern history', *History Workshop Journal*, 55 (2003), pp. 111–33; idem, 'Pain: metaphor, body, and culture in Anglo-American societies between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries', *Rethinking History*, 18 (2014), pp. 475–98; Ute Frevert, *Mächtige Gefühle: Von A wie Angst bis Z wie Zuneigung – Deutsche Geschichte seit 1900* (Frankfurt am Main, 2020).

¹⁵ Thomas Strentz, 'Law enforcement policy and ego defenses of the hostage', *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, 48 (1979), pp. 2–12, at pp. 11–12.

¹⁶ Bourke, 'Fear', p. 52.

¹⁷ On trust as a voluntary and reciprocal emotion, see Ute Frevert, *The moral economy of trust: modern trajectories* (London, 2014).

as well as the genre of the kidnapping memoir. Against this background, we can ask how kidnapping experiences could be narrated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. How did the former captives approach showcasing affection and fear in a manner that preserved their masculinity? Were these narrative strategies also available to female hostages? And how did the captors and media professionals influence the public perception of the relationship between kidnappers and kidnapped?¹⁸ Their bond was highly personal, but it was also shaped by the mass media from the very beginning. Publishers and newspaper editors encouraged the hostages and their families to keep them updated while the events were still unfolding. Most of the captives knew of their predecessors' fates and Raisuli probably even drew his inspiration to abduct an American from the newspaper coverage about a similar crime in the Ottoman empire.¹⁹ Articles and book reviews translated the stories and spread them in Europe, Africa, and the United States. At the dawn of the age of global mass media, newspapers and publishers made the Mediterranean kidnapping narratives into a distinct genre and Southern Europe and North Africa into a connected space.²⁰

I

From about 1860 to 1910, so-called brigands seized foreign residents and tourists in Southern Italy, Greece, the Ottoman Balkans, and Morocco. As Martin Blinkhorn points out, these regions witnessed political and social upheavals, even military conflicts, over state- and nation-building that fundamentally transformed their societies.²¹ The fairly young Kingdom of Greece had undergone a revolution and a change of monarchs in the 1860s. Still striving for further expansion into Turkey, hostilities with the Ottoman empire continued, while the Greek ruling elite often supported bands of veterans turned outlaws or petty thieves to protect their own local interests.²² The Ottoman empire, in turn, was already in political and economic decline. Since the Russo-Ottoman War (1877–8) had ended with devastating territorial losses, inner tensions increased and ethnic groups in the Balkan region which aspired independence gained momentum.²³ In Italy, also a newly founded nation-state in 1861, the young Piedmontese government encountered resistance from the inhabitants

¹⁸ On publishers' impact on memoirs, see Joanna Bourke, 'Bodily pain, combat, and the politics of memoirs: between the American Civil War and the war in Vietnam', *Histoire sociale / Social History*, 46 (2013), pp. 43–61, at p. 44.

¹⁹ Baepler, 'Rewriting', p. 181.

²⁰ Manuel Borutta and Sakis Gekas, 'A colonial sea: the Mediterranean, 1798–1956', *European Review of History*, 19 (2012), pp. 1–13.

²¹ On Southern Europe, see Blinkhorn, 'Liability', pp. 339–40; on Morocco, see Baepler, 'Rewriting', pp. 179–82.

²² Rondanthi Tzanelli, 'Haunted by the "enemy" within: brigandage, Vlachian/Albanian Greekness, Turkish "contamination", and narratives of Greek nationhood in the Dilessi/Marathon affair (1870)', *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, 20 (2002), pp. 47–74, at p. 49; Romilly Jenkins, *The Dilessi murders: Greek brigands and English hostages* (London, 1961), pp. 1–21.

²³ See Marco Dogo and Guido Franzinetti, eds., *Disrupting and reshaping: early stages of nation-building in the Balkans* (Ravenna, 2002).

of the country's Southern parts, the former Bourbon Kingdom of the Two Sicilies.²⁴ In Morocco, Britain, France, and Spain attempted to establish colonial influence throughout the nineteenth century and by the early twentieth century the German empire also began asserting its claims to the region. In this situation, rebellious ethnic groups continually challenged the weak Sultan Abd al-Aziz.²⁵

In these volatile settings, a phenomenon called 'brigandage' arose in mountainous and inaccessible areas such as the Campania and Abruzzo, Andalusia, the Chalkidiki peninsula, or the Rif Mountains.²⁶ The brigands, mostly men, were usually organized in bands of ten to twenty individuals with a single leader. Following a similar strategy of robbing and kidnapping for ransom, their crimes were primarily directed against locals. Foreign hostages, however, promised more money and with the increase of global mobility since the 1860s, the opportunity to catch a foreigner presented itself more regularly.²⁷ Eric Hobsbawm famously investigated this phenomenon in his pioneering studies and promoted a somewhat romanticized picture of the brigands as class conscious rebels.²⁸ While some indeed pursued political goals of ethnic or national independence, others were 'inveterate outlaws who found it convenient to wrap their criminal activities in the shroud of political or religious legitimacy'.²⁹

There are about twenty cases that turned into transnational media events and sparked diplomatic crises between the governments of the countries where the kidnappings had happened and the governments of the hostages' home countries. The majority of the kidnapped came from England, but Germans, Americans, and Swiss were also among the unfortunate.³⁰ They were mostly adult men, for the brigands thought women and children were too weak to endure the hardship of being kidnapped. Captivity usually lasted from one to four months. Organizing large sums of ransom money and interventions by the respective diplomatic missions on site took some time, but delivering the money was a rather delicate matter too. The brigands hid in remote areas that were hard to reach with heavy bags full of coins and it was often forbidden by law to pay the ransom. Indeed, the ex-hostages or their governments came to hold the Italian, Greek, Spanish, Turkish, or Moroccan states liable in the aftermath and demanded excessive reimbursements which made the kidnappings into tense diplomatic affairs.³¹ Military

²⁴ Salvatore DiMaria, *Towards a unified Italy: historical, cultural, and literary perspectives on the southern question* (Cham, 2018).

²⁵ Richard Pennell, *Morocco since 1830: a history* (London, 2000), pp. 121–36.

²⁶ On earlier forms of brigandage in the area, see Michael Broers, *Napoleon's other war: bandits, rebels and their pursuers in the age of revolutions* (Oxford, 2018).

²⁷ Blinkhorn, 'Liability', p. 339.

²⁸ Eric Hobsbawm, *Primitive rebels: studies in archaic forms of social movement in the 19th and 20th centuries* (Manchester, 1959); idem, *Bandits* (London, 1961).

²⁹ DiMaria, *Italy*, p. 61. This holds true for the Mediterranean world in general.

³⁰ On the English cases, see Blinkhorn, 'Liability'; on the American hostages, see Russell D. Buhite, *Lives at risk: hostages and victims in American foreign policy* (Wilmington, DE, 1995), pp. 72–83; the Swiss and German cases have not been researched in depth so far.

³¹ See, in particular, Blinkhorn, 'Liability'.

forces therefore examined potential ransom carriers and did their best to capture the brigands first – not always attaching importance to whether the kidnapped would survive these mostly violent encounters.³² The disdain of law enforcement, a ‘typical’ feature of Stockholm syndrome, is easily explained in the nineteenth as well as in the twentieth century by the fact that becoming a casualty of rigorous prosecution was a real threat.³³ Life in captivity usually meant being constantly on the run in mountainous areas to the point of complete exhaustion, sometimes enduring snow and extreme cold, not being able to wash or change clothes, and fearing the brigands as well as the soldiers in pursuit. But while the kidnappings of locals were even more violent and often deadly, most of the foreign hostages survived.³⁴

William Moens for example, an English stockbroker, seized in May 1865 by Gaetano Manzo near Paestum after having visited the famous ruins, was forced to spend three months with Manzo and his band. He later published two volumes about his experiences called *English travellers and Italian brigands: a narrative of capture and captivity*.³⁵ Moens’s wife Anne also contributed to the books with her diary entries which she had written while staying in Naples and awaiting her husband’s liberation. Only two months later, Johann Jakob Lichtensteiger and his Swiss colleagues Friedrich Wenner, Rudolf Gubler, and Isaak Friedli fell into Manzo’s hands and remained there for four months. Besides Lichtensteiger, Friedli also wrote a memoir about this episode that he titled similarly to Lichtensteiger *Vier Monate unter den Briganten in Süditalien (Four months among the brigands in Southern Italy)*.³⁶ English journalist Walter B. Harris became Raisuli’s target in Morocco in 1903, one year before Perdicaris did so too, and dedicated a chapter in his 1921 memoir *Morocco that was to his three weeks as a hostage*.³⁷ The German geographer Edwart Richter had the misfortune of meeting a band of Greek brigands when exploring Mount Olympus in 1911 and was held for two months, as he later recounted in his book *Meine Erlebnisse in der Gefangenschaft am Olymp (My experiences during my captivity at Mount Olympus)*.³⁸ In light of these predominantly male voices, the case of the American missionary Ellen Stone and her Bulgarian companion Katerina Tsilka (or Cilka) is particularly interesting.³⁹

³² On the tragic death of three English hostages and one Italian hostage in Greece in 1870, see Jenkins, *Dilessi murders*.

³³ See W. J. C. Moens, *English travellers and Italian brigands: a narrative of capture and captivity* (2 vols., London, 1866), I, pp. 223–4; Perdicaris, ‘Morocco’, p. 135.

³⁴ See Moens, *Travellers*, I, p. 224, who notes that local hostages usually did not publish their kidnapping experiences since they feared the brigands’ vengeance, should they divulge any information. Moreover, because handing over the ransom to brigands was prohibited in many Mediterranean countries, admitting to having done just that in a memoir would have led to state persecution.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Lichtensteiger, *Vier Monate*; Isaak Friedli, *Vier Monate unter den Briganten in Süditalien* (Zurich, 1910).

³⁷ Walter B. Harris, *Morocco that was* (Edinburgh and London 1921), pp. 182–98.

³⁸ Edwart Richter, *Meine Erlebnisse in der Gefangenschaft am Olymp* (Leipzig, 1911).

³⁹ Laura Beth Sherman, *Fires on the mountain: the Macedonian revolutionary movement and the kidnapping of Ellen Stone* (New York, NY, 1980).

Both women were kidnapped in 1901 on their way from Bansko, Bulgaria, to Thessalonica, then in the Ottoman empire, by the members of a Macedonian revolutionary group, the *Watreschna Makedonska Rewoljuzionna Organisationszija*, and spent six months in the mountains. Stone later told this story for *McClure's Magazine* in the five-part series 'Six months among brigands'.⁴⁰ Even though the Mediterranean kidnapping narratives are remarkable primary sources that build on each other and form a unique body of texts, historians have only rarely worked with them. A political history of the cases rather follows the state records than these highly personal accounts. Besides Paul Baepler, who has analysed Perdicaris's articles together with other American captivity narratives, the Mediterranean kidnapping memoirs have primarily been used to reconstruct the course of the events.⁴¹

The former captives, however, were acutely aware of their respective writings and liked to reference one another. Perdicaris had read about Stone and Harris in the papers, as had the four Swiss men about Moens. Moens mentioned his successors with Manzo in his book, and Friedli in turn referred to Moens in his.⁴² They also chose very similar titles for their narratives and composed them in a similar fashion, starting with the seizure, concentrating on captivity, and ending with a brief episode about the release. In this respect, they established a different plot line than the Barbary and Indian captivity narratives which were immensely popular from the early modern period well into the nineteenth century.⁴³ These earlier accounts usually stressed a 'religiously coded antagonism' between Christian civilization and a Muslim or savage 'other' and dealt with fears of conversion and martyrlike resistance.⁴⁴ Consequently, especially the Barbary captivity memoirs focused on the escape.⁴⁵

Another common feature of the brigand genre is the short time between the liberation of the hostages and the publication of their stories. The majority of the books and articles were released within a year after the incident had happened, when potential readers still remembered the details from newspaper coverage and publishers could hope for large sales. *Leslie's* even approached Perdicaris while he was still captured by Raisuli. Being one of the later kidnappings, this shows the great public interest in these narratives and the

⁴⁰ Ellen Stone, 'Six months among brigands', *McClure's Magazine*, 19 (May, June, July, Sept., Oct. 1902), pp. 2–14, 99–109, 222–32, 464–71, 562–70.

⁴¹ Paul Baepler, *White slaves, African masters: an anthology of American barbary captivity narratives* (Chicago, IL, and London, 1999); idem, 'Captivity'; Sherman, *Fires*, used Stone's articles to collect 'facts' about the case.

⁴² Perdicaris, 'Raissuli's hands', pp. 514–15; Moens, *Travellers*, II, p. 276; Friedli, *Vier Monate*, p. 81.

⁴³ Linda Colley, *Capitves. Britain, empire and the world, 1600–1850* (London, 2003); Baepler, *Slaves*.

⁴⁴ Mario Klarer, 'Before barbary captivity narratives: slavery, ransom, and the economy of Christian virtue in *The Good Gerhard* (c. 1220) by Rudolf von Ems', in idem, ed., *Mediterranean slavery and world literature: captivity genres from Cervantes to Rousseau* (New York, NY, 2019), pp. 25–46, at p. 25; on Indian captivity, see Michelle Burnham, *Captivity & sentiment: cultural exchange in American literature, 1682–1861* (Hanover, NH, and London, 1997).

⁴⁵ Marcus Hartner, 'Toward a new literary history of captivity: adventure and generic hybridity in the late sixteenth century', in Klarer, ed., *Mediterranean slavery*, pp. 47–68, at p. 47.

eagerness of the magazine to get even more immediate and ‘authentic’ depictions of life in captivity and the relationship between hostage and kidnapper. To substantiate their claim, the editors informed their audience: ‘The following article was mainly written in captivity, as the first letters from the Editors of Leslie’s Monthly Magazine reached him by Arab couriers. No other article purporting to be written by Mr Perdicaris is authentic.’⁴⁶ Moens’s two-volume narrative, moreover, proved to be such a success that a second edition was quickly reprinted in England and taken up by the American publisher Harper and Brothers who spread his story in the United States. The linguistic qualities of these texts, finally, vary considerably. As a professional writer, Harris presented an elaborate account of his experiences, fashioning himself as the hero of his narrative. Friedli’s language, in contrast, is somewhat clumsy. Richter and Moens apologized to their readers for their books being overtly factual and of little literary value, even though both were well educated and able to write in a sophisticated manner.⁴⁷ Hence, this disclaimer should rather be understood as a deliberate strategy of staging authenticity.

Memoirs, however, teach us less about the past – let alone objective facts – nor do they offer purely personal insights. Instead, they tell us something about the present in which they were written and about the prevailing social norms and values of that time. Memory itself, Maurice Halbwachs and subsequent generations of historians remind us, is a collective and ongoing process which ‘reflects a shared identity that unites a social group, be it a family or a nation’.⁴⁸ At the same time, the act of remembering also creates and structures personal and group identities.⁴⁹ A memoir represents a specific mode of remembering, a ‘public form of recollecting the past’ in which authors fashion themselves in relation to their contemporaries.⁵⁰ This was especially true for the kidnapped but the kidnappers too pursued their own agenda of retrospectively establishing (emotional) connections and thereby legitimizing their actions.

II

On the one hand, all authors had their favourites among the brigands who allegedly were caring, protective, and respectful towards them. Almost lovingly Friedli, for instance, remembered Manzo:

Standing there with his right hand raised, he made a truly theatrical figure in the already picturesque costume and with his proud posture, which would have been worthy of being painted by an artist...He is of medium,

⁴⁶ Editor’s note, *Leslie’s Monthly Magazine*, 58 (1904), p. 510.

⁴⁷ See Moens, *Travellers*, II, p. vi; Richter, *Erlebnisse*, p. 4.

⁴⁸ Quote by Alon Confino, ‘Memory and the history of mentalities’, in Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning, eds., *Cultural memory studies: an international and interdisciplinary handbook* (Berlin 2008), pp. 77–84, at p. 81. See the seminal work of Maurice Halbwachs, *The collective memory* (New York, NY, 1980).

⁴⁹ Confino, ‘Memory’, p. 81.

⁵⁰ Bourke, ‘Bodily pain’, p. 44.

almost small stature, slim, but with a broad, fully developed chest...his head is of an almost Greek profile, though the fine-cut, but strong nose is somewhat curved...the strong eyebrows are arched; the beautiful brown eyes, with their piercing gaze have probably lost their noble calmness as a result of his life as a robber; the nobly cut mouth and the rather strong chin are surrounded by a splendid moderately long blond beard... His posture and gait are proud, noble even...We never had to endure any rudeness or rough treatment from him.⁵¹

According to Perdicaris, Raisuli considered him and his son-in-law, who had also been taken, 'more like honored guests rather than like prisoners' and gave a lengthy report of Raisuli's sufferings under the Moroccan rulers which justified his own kidnapping as an acceptable response. Parting from his captor, Perdicaris even described feeling sadness: 'shall I confess it? – Yes! I was actually sorry to leave one of the most interesting and attractive personalities I have ever encountered, and so, grieved yet rejoicing, I rode off.'⁵² Harris too seemed captivated by Raisuli, writing: 'I confess that his personality was almost fascinating. Tall, remarkably handsome, with the whitest of skins, a short dark beard and moustache, and black eyes, with profile Greek rather than Semitic.'⁵³ While Perdicaris compared Raisuli to Robin Hood, Richter recognized Andreas Hofer, the Tyrolean leader of the rebellion against Napoleonic rule, in one of the Greek band leaders.⁵⁴ And Ellen Stone told the heartrending story of one of her captors catching a turkey for her to celebrate Thanksgiving.⁵⁵ On the other hand, there always seem to have been a couple of villains who stole the captives' food, hurt, or threatened to kill them. Moens complained about a man called Scope whose 'nature was most brutal...He was a tall, spare man...with a long thin face, with large nose and large eyes. His eyes...were constantly fixed on the ground.'⁵⁶ Harris portrayed a gruesome incident when some of the tribesmen showed him a badly mutilated corpse presaging the same fate to him should Raisuli's demands not be met, and Stone repeatedly wrote about a particularly menacing individual whom she simply called 'The Bad Man.'⁵⁷ Moreover, according to the authors, the general demeanour of these brigands was rather barbarian. They liked to eat raw meat, to gamble, to drink heavily, and to ridiculously embellish themselves with ostrich feathers and so many golden rings that they could hardly move their fingers.⁵⁸

Doubtlessly, after many months in captivity, bonds as well as animosities were formed between the hostages and their kidnappers. But above all, identifying 'good' and 'bad' kidnappers served two specific narrative purposes.

⁵¹ Friedli, *Vier Monate*, p. 24 (my translation).

⁵² Perdicaris, 'Raissuli's hands', pp. 518–19, 522, quotes: pp. 519, 520.

⁵³ Harris, *Morocco*, p. 181.

⁵⁴ Perdicaris, 'Raissuli's hands', p. 522; Richter, *Erlebnisse*, p. 37.

⁵⁵ Stone, 'Six months', June, p. 106.

⁵⁶ Moens, *Travellers*, I, p. 219.

⁵⁷ Stone, 'Six months', May, p. 14.

⁵⁸ Moens, *Travellers*, I, p. 157; Richter, *Erlebnisse*, p. 30; Friedli, *Vier Monate*, p. 23.

First, by highlighting the mutual affection between captors and captives, the hostages had found a way of presenting themselves favourably and, more importantly, with a certain amount of agency. Even deprived of liberty and dependent on the kidnappers, they were apparently likeable and clever enough to spark feelings of respect and fondness, thus refusing to depict themselves solely as victims. Interestingly, the characterizations of the brigands followed the physiognomic and phrenological ideas of the time that facial features and body shape were a manifestation of character. As George L. Mosse has so elaborately shown, these beliefs were inextricably linked to the emergence of modern masculinity and its embodiment of ancient Greece. For it was thought to be the Greeks who were the standard for judging people's appearances and who 'exemplified the ideal of human beauty, and such beauty, in turn, symbolized the proper moral posture'.⁵⁹ While the 'bad' brigands were often described as wild and savage looking or in Scope's case minging and greedy, Manzo and Raisuli were classified as 'almost Greek' which meant of noble mind. In this context, Friedli's focus on Manzo's nose is characteristic of an obsession with noses in nineteenth-century Europe and the United States, which were seen as a particularly telling signifier of the soul.⁶⁰ In the kidnapping narratives, physiognomic discourses merged with northern European and American enthusiasm for the classical period and nineteenth-century pictorial traditions of national myths.

Portraying the gang leaders as outstanding figures and stressing their affection for the kidnapped provided the ex-hostages with a special opportunity of presenting themselves in a positive light. But at the same time, this created a dilemma because it downplayed the danger they were in as well as their bravery in enduring it. Hence, secondly, the stories about the violent brigands and their threats to hurt or kill functioned as a rhetorical strategy to counterbalance with the sections about the 'good' ones. This reveals yet another dimension of the construction of modern masculinity which Joanna Bourke refers to in her studies on pain: 'The ability not only to bear pain, but to be seen to bear it, was explicitly coded adult-male.'⁶¹ In the kidnapping context, this meant walking a thin line: in order to conform to dominant ideas of masculinity, the former hostages had to contradict others and present themselves as victims who were humiliated and abused.

What can be observed here is different competing masculinities converging and the narrative attempt to reconcile them.⁶² Physically, the brigands represented a superior version of masculinity, being strong and tenacious in rough terrain, surviving on little food, and enduring severe injuries. Richter, in contrast, once fainted from the intense heat; Moens was constantly exhausted

⁵⁹ George L. Mosse, *The image of man: the creation of modern masculinity* (New York, NY, 1998), p. 25.

⁶⁰ Sander S. Gilman, *Making the body beautiful: a cultural history of aesthetic surgery* (Princeton, NJ, and Oxford, 1999), esp. ch. 3: 'The racial nose'.

⁶¹ Bourke, 'Bodily pain', p. 49.

⁶² See esp. Raewyn Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, 'Hegemonic masculinity: rethinking the concept', *Gender & Society*, 19 (2005), pp. 829–59; John Tosh, *Manliness and masculinities in nineteenth-century Britain: essays on gender, family and empire* (Harlow, 2005).

from the climbs; and the Swiss men developed bloody blisters on their feet from walking.⁶³ Moens, Friedli, and the others had to measure themselves against their captors but at the same time they had to keep their distance, for instance by fashioning the brigands as uncivilized Mediterranean ‘others’ and their love for ornament as effeminate. Remembering the bond between kidnappers and kidnapped in this specific way, therefore, was not only part of negotiating the personal identities of the hostages. It also created a group identity between them and tied in with larger discourses of ‘civilized’ northern Europeans and Anglo-Americans versus ‘barbarian’ southerners. Remarkably, Stone too conformed to the narrative of the ‘good’ and the ‘bad’ brigands, associating herself with the community of mainly kidnapped men. Her being one of the later cases demonstrates how effectively this male interpretation had been established from the 1860s onward.⁶⁴ Furthermore, the construction of ‘advanced’ versus ‘backward’ societies worked outside the context of competing masculinities. Finally, Stone’s articles show that negotiating victimhood between empowerment and disempowerment was not an exclusively male problem. Against this backdrop, how did the kidnapped express fear, desperation, and bodily pain, and what role did gender play in this context?

III

In line with Bourke’s finding on the performative connection of visibly enduring suffering with prevalent notions of manliness, it was common for the male hostages to stress their fearlessness throughout their texts. The example of Moens and his wife is particularly telling. In the two volumes, the chapters feature their alternating perspectives and offer distinctly gendered accounts on dealing with a wearying situation. Unsurprisingly, Moens liked to present himself not only as dauntless but in complete disdain of death. He explained: ‘I never allowed myself to show the slightest fear, and always told them [the brigands] that it was nothing to die, it was soon over, and that the next world was far better.’⁶⁵ According to Moens, the brigands were actually the fearful ones, as he made clear:

They all have the most abject fear of death, and I always tried to impress them with the idea that Englishmen never fear to die; and that if they wished it, they were perfectly welcome to take my life, as it would save me and my friends so much trouble.⁶⁶

Moens’s wife, in contrast, described herself as being in a constant state of anxiety and on the brink of a nervous breakdown. Remarks like ‘[h]ow desolate and wretched I was! What gnawing anxiety at my heart!’, ‘I cry day and night’, or, when strolling through Naples in the evening, ‘I weep as I walk...How few in that gay scene imagined there was one among them suffering as I was!’⁶⁷

⁶³ Richter, *Erlebnisse*, p. 39; Moens, *Travellers*, II, p. 221; Friedli, *Vier Monate*, p. 16.

⁶⁴ On male-coded pain language in female accounts, see Bourke, ‘Bodily pain’, p. 49.

⁶⁵ Moens, *Travellers*, I, p. 264.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 307, 302, 299.

While Moens emphasized his composed manner, his wife described her enactment of fear, desperation, and sadness at length, both conforming to gendered Victorian notions of women being controlled by excessive emotion and men, conversely, controlling their feelings.⁶⁸

Nonetheless, there were two narrative options of how to express fear and pain from a male point of view.⁶⁹ First by linking it to the family and therefore making fear into pity for loved ones. Once found crying, Manzo's band tried to console Moens. However, he informed them (and his readers) that his outburst 'was not fear but grief for what my wife was suffering on my account'.⁷⁰ Perdicaris too 'feared the effect of the awful anxiety upon my wife's health' and Friedli bravely explained: 'Our external sufferings did not break us, indeed, we could have endured even more. We were sad because of...our friends and relatives, who, as we knew, suffered like us or even more.'⁷¹ Stone, in contrast, was able to describe her and Tsilka's desperation openly, for example when she stated: 'The darkness settled into our very souls' or 'We were utterly crushed with the helplessness of the position in which they had put us.'⁷² Using notions of downward movement, oppression, and destruction, their fear was characterized as humiliation and weakness even more forcefully. But still, on several occasions Stone also framed these feelings as worrying about her family in the United States and she even highlighted her defiance of death when falling down a hill.⁷³ Again, this male-coded language was available to Stone because it was part of the dominant kidnapping narrative, while it was not to Moens's wife as she did not have first-hand insights of being a hostage. Evidentially, being kidnapped was thought of as a male experience and the respective language helped shaping it as such. This fact also illustrates that the romanticized idea of kidnapping as established throughout the nineteenth century in Greek mythology, opera, and fairy tales shifted towards a new rendering.

Second, the desperation of being at the brigands' mercy and the fear of suffering at their hands could be expressed implicitly by writing about the condition the hostages' bodies were in. Since they were exposed to heat and rain, walked excessively, slept in the open, and had no opportunity to wash or change their clothes, they were in a rather filthy state (as were the brigands). Moens described his body in detail adopting an emotive language that usually would have been linked to emotional distress:

I had become the dwelling-place of dozens of those disgusting little insects whose very name makes one shudder in my own cleanly land,... the brigands are always full of them, on account of their filthy habit of

⁶⁸ See Carolyn Burdett, 'Emotions', in Juliet John, ed., *The Oxford handbook of Victorian literary culture* (Oxford, 2014), pp. 580–97, at p. 582.

⁶⁹ On narrating male anxiety in nineteenth-century England, see Henry French and Mark Rothery, 'Male anxiety among younger sons of the English landed gentry', *Historical Journal*, 62 (2019), pp. 967–95.

⁷⁰ Moens, *Travellers*, I, p. 140.

⁷¹ Perdicaris, 'Raissuli's hands', p. 514; Friedli, *Vier Monate*, p. 69 (my translation).

⁷² Stone, 'Six months', May, p. 13.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 16; *ibid.*, June, p. 102.

not washing, and the difficulty of obtaining clean clothing. Everything belonging to them is infested with these insects...I had never even seen one of my new persecutors before, and I was truly horrified when I discovered that I was covered with them...In a very short time my whole body was covered with bites, and my skin presented the same appearance as if I had the scarlet fever. Fearful was the irritation[.]⁷⁴

Moens's body did not simply feel uncomfortable, he shuddered, was horrified, and fearful. Moreover, by evoking notions of infestation and persecution with respect to the insects, he emphasized the forceful and violent nature of this plague. His body provided a vehicle to voice his fright and the feeling of being powerless in a deeply sensual way that again hinted at the idea of civilized England and a 'barbarian' South, of 'us' and 'them'. Similarly, Harris drew a connection between severe suffering and his body that was not the result of injuries but of dirt: 'I suffered very considerable hardship. Though never actually roughly handled...my discomfort was extreme. During those nine days I was never able to wash; I never took my clothes off, with the result that I was smothered with vermin.'⁷⁵ And for Friedli, not being able to wash was so painful that he could not even find the words to describe it: 'Once on us, these abominable vermin could no longer be exterminated...I would rather refrain from giving you a picture of our cleanliness; it would become too black.'⁷⁶

Indeed, nineteenth-century Europe and America saw bodily hygiene, bourgeois moral integrity, and notions of civilization merging into an expansive discourse of cleanliness.⁷⁷ Expressing fear within the context of cleanliness, thus, was acceptable for men and simultaneously made the all-encompassing distress of the situation evident. For Stone as a woman, however, the matter was different. Her captors did seek to provide her and her companion with new clothing but six months in the wilderness surely took their toll. Stone hinted at these difficulties, explaining: 'We had no soap or towels, comb or brush...We learned the value of a tooth-brush and of a button-hook through our deprivation of them.'⁷⁸ Instead of lamenting about the state of her body, though, she simply stated: 'We learned, too, with how few things one can manage to live when one must.'⁷⁹ More than heartfelt humility, it was rather inappropriate for women to write in the same fashion as the captured men about dirty bodies – let alone use metaphors of infestation or encroachment. After all, cleanliness was also about purity.⁸⁰ The Macedonian kidnappers must have been aware of the delicate situation of protecting a female hostage's

⁷⁴ Moens, *Travellers*, II, pp. 14–16.

⁷⁵ Harris, *Morocco*, pp. 188–9.

⁷⁶ Friedli, *Vier Monate*, p. 23 (my translation).

⁷⁷ Virginia Smith, *Clean: a history of personal hygiene and purity* (Oxford and New York, NY, 2007), pp. 284–5; Anne McClintock, *Imperial leather: race, gender, and sexuality in the colonial conquest* (New York, NY, 1995), p. 208.

⁷⁸ Stone, 'Six months', May, p. 12.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ McClintock, *Imperial leather*, p. 212.

physical and sexual integrity for they not only supplied clothes but decided not to kidnap Stone alone, but to take a female married chaperone as well.⁸¹ By falling back on sympathy and cleanliness, the captives had found a way to carefully navigate fear and distress. But it was not entirely up to them to position themselves within the spectrum of victimhood.

IV

Whether the former hostages were seen as humiliated and powerless or as brave heroes and how the relationship with the kidnappers was judged depended particularly on mass media, as well as on the brigands who followed their own agenda. The authors and their publishers could try to establish a certain picture but eventually they had no control over the public perception. Moens, for instance, was quite effective in propagating his perspective. A review in *Chamber's Journal* approvingly stated: 'The relations of Mr Moens with his captors were of an exceedingly remarkable and amusing character... the conviction with which he inspired them, that by no possible contrivance could they make him afraid of them, was the sure path to their respect.'⁸² Even Charles Dickens wrote a piece about Moens's volumes, praising that 'Indeed, the self-possession of this Englishman, and his contempt of death and danger, stand out at all times', while *The Times* appreciated the ambivalent nuances of his account between braveness and fear: 'He tells his tale in a clear and simple style, and with that confident manliness which is not afraid to be natural – which is not afraid to confess to the infirmities of feeling that even strong men will yield when they are sore pressed.'⁸³ Moens's English publisher Hurst and Bleckett's must have been pleased about this review because they quoted it in an advertisement, though deciding to omit the part of confessing infirmities and yielding, only opting to include that 'He tells his tale in a clear and simple style, and with that confident manliness which is not afraid to be natural.'⁸⁴ Not jeopardizing Moens's masculinity seems to have been vital here, which again demonstrates how volatile the relation between masculinity and victimhood was.

Strikingly, none of the reviewers of Moens's books, nor of any of the other accounts, found the varying degrees of affection between the kidnappers and the kidnapped strange let alone pathological. One reason for this surely is that all of them accomplished portraying themselves in a positive light and within the approved emotional parameters. Second, in contrast to international terrorism in the 1970s, brigandage was a phenomenon that happened far away from England, Germany, Switzerland, or the United States and did not have the potential to destabilize whole societies. Third and most importantly, though, the kidnapping narratives were essentially seen as adventure stories. *The Times's* article about Moens was titled 'The adventures of Mr Moens',

⁸¹ Stone, 'Six months', June, p. 101.

⁸² *Chamber's Journal*, 3 Mar. 1866, p. 133.

⁸³ Charles Dickens, review of Moens, *Travellers*, in *All the Year Round*, 3 Feb. 1866, p. 92; *Times*, 6 Feb. 1866, p. 12.

⁸⁴ Advertisement for Moens, *Travellers*, in *Spectator*, 3 Mar. 1866, p. 256.

and an advertisement for Perdicaris's article in *Leslie's* promoted his story as 'amazing adventures'. Even Stone's experiences were frequently framed in this manner by the press.⁸⁵ Just writing about Stone's fate could be such a thrilling undertaking that it became an adventure in itself, as one journalist investigating in Thessalonica suggested in his headline 'Adventures of a writer for the *London Daily Graphic* among Balkan brigands'.⁸⁶ First and foremost, the reading of these books and articles was connected to excitement and pleasure – a correlation that was manifested further by Dickens's interest in Moens's books. As Graham Dawson notes, adventure fiction's '[n]arrative pleasure derives from the contrast between conversing familiarity of well established generic conventions made stable through endless repetition and offering the comfort of a known reading experience, and the stimulating and unsettling material that is the very stuff of formula stories'.⁸⁷ Indeed, recurring situations and characters that symbolized enduring and overcoming obstacles in a typical fashion for the nineteenth-century adventure genre can be found throughout the narratives such as the exhaustive hikes through the mountains, the dangerous encounters with the military forces in pursuit, and the 'good' and 'bad' brigands. Although studies on adventure fiction stress its importance in propelling myths of masculinity and nationalism, the accounts of Moens, Friedli, Stone, and others point to a more complex picture. Rather than being primarily committed to national identities (even though Moens made no secret of his superior Englishness), they were strongly shaped by notions of class and occidental civilization which were also able to transcend the bourgeois gender divide.

Finally, just like the mass media, the brigands themselves had their fair share in influencing the perceptions of their relationship with the hostages and their public image. Indeed, Manzo and Raisuli must have been aware of Moens and Perdicaris making notes while they were in captivity for the latter was approached by *Leslie's* through a messenger, and Manzo checked Moens's notebook before he set him free.⁸⁸ These two band leaders – like practically every other chief or captain in Italy, Greece, or the Ottoman empire – tried to impact how they would be depicted, especially in the way they parted with their hostages. For one, they made an effort to restore the appearances of their captives by making them wash, shaving them, and providing them with new clothes. Evidentially, the brigands wanted to avoid the impression of having mistreated their captives. Allegedly, Manzo even told the Swiss men to clean themselves thoroughly so they would 'not show him in a bad light'.⁸⁹ Moreover, it was a common farewell ritual to give the hostages keepsakes like rings or charms and to collect money for the return journey.

⁸⁵ Advertisement for Perdicaris, 'Raissuli's hands', in *Minneapolis Journal*, 23 Aug. 1904, p. 7; 'Miss Stone's release', *Age Herald*, 27 Feb. 1902; 'Fared hard, like Miss Stone', *Sun*, 20 Apr. 1902, p. 5.

⁸⁶ 'Correspondent's hunt for Miss Stone: adventures of a writer for the *London Daily Graphic* among Balkan brigands', *Republic*, 19 Jan. 1902, p. 8.

⁸⁷ Graham Dawson, *Soldier heroes, British adventure, empire and the imagining of masculinities* (London, 1994), p. 54.

⁸⁸ Moens, *Travellers*, I, pp. 271–2.

⁸⁹ Friedli, *Vier Monate*, p. 85 (my translation).

According to Perdicaris, Raisuli also made him a solemn promise which, considering the circumstance, was not without a certain irony: 'And I, on my part, will come with all my men to your rescue if you are ever attacked.'⁹⁰ The kidnapppers strove to forge a bond with their captives and to fashion themselves as honourable and respectable, committed to a moral code of reliability and loyalty, even though they stood outside society at large.

Yet Raisuli and Manzo did not stop there, they also attempted to directly shape their media representations. Manzo had his picture taken in a Salerno-based photo studio which shows him as downright bourgeois, wearing a double-breasted suit, hat, and with his right hand inserted into his waistcoat, obviously aiming to belie the stereotype of the uncivilized brigand.⁹¹ The daguerreotypist Raffaele del Pozzo printed the picture as a *carte de visite* for an international market that was as hungry for images of the brigands as it was for kidnapping narratives.⁹² In the early 1920s, Raisuli, in turn, gave the American journalist Rosita Forbes an interview in which he justified his actions. Forbes used a French interpreter and did not quote Raisuli directly but put his answers into her own words. Nevertheless, since testimonies of the kidnapppers are extremely rare, this is an extraordinary source.⁹³ As Perdicaris and Harris depicted their relationships with Raisuli to present themselves favourably, Raisuli seems to have followed the same strategy. Talking about Harris, he explained: 'At first there was talk of money, but I would not receive one douro for a friend' and in more detail he stated about Perdicaris:

I spoke to him as a brother, and I said this and this has the Sultan done to me. At the end of my speech, Perdicaris shook my hand and said, 'You have done right. Had I been in your place I would have acted in the same manner. From this moment I am no longer your prisoners, I am your advocate.'⁹⁴

Raisuli showcased the emotional bond to his captives to legitimize the violent act of kidnapping and using them to achieve his goals. Even more strikingly, however, the brigands publicly reversed the roles of perpetrators and victims by victimizing themselves. Raisuli took pains to portray his unfair treatment by the sultan of Morocco, whereas Manzo liked to stylize himself as unrightly conscripted into military services and thus on the run and ejected from society. And when asked by a journalist about the dangers of hiding in the mountains for six months, Khristo Chernopeev, 'The Bad Man' from Stone's story, decided to highlight a completely different risk instead, lamenting:

[H]ave you ever found yourself in a position of strong opposition to a middle-aged woman with a determined will, all her own?...Once she

⁹⁰ Perdicaris, 'Raissuli's hands', p. 522.

⁹¹ Archivio dello Stato di Salerno, Prefettura, Busta 59, Fascicolo 607.

⁹² Ugo Di Pace, 'Raffaele Del Pozzo: fotografo dei briganti', afterword to Johann Jakob Lichtensteiger, *Quattro mesi fra i briganti 1865/6*, ed. Ugo Di Pace (Avagliano, 1984), pp. 111–44.

⁹³ Baeppler, 'Captivity', p. 206.

⁹⁴ Rosita Forbes, *The sultan of the mountains: the life story of Raisuli* (New York, NY, 1924), p. 62.

made a sudden move with her umbrella – she always carried that umbrella – and her Bible and the old bonnet...I stumbled backward through the doorway of the hut, to save my dignity. But I didn't save much of it.⁹⁵

What sounds almost comical was a deliberate rendering of a violent situation as innocent by reversing the power relations and jokingly depicting Ellen Stone as a resolute spinster who controlled a frightened band of revolutionists with an odd weapon. Chernopeev, who had read Stone's articles and was aware of his nickname, did not say this thoughtlessly but with his audience in mind. Against this background, the brigands seem hardly like the anti-modernist rebels that Hobsbawm saw in them. They embraced modern mass media in pursuing their aims, clearly demonstrating that they were keeping up with their times.

As Cheryl Lawther rightly stresses: 'defining who are "victims" and who are "perpetrators" in the aftermath of violent conflict is inherently complex and subjective'.⁹⁶ From the brigands' perspective, victimhood was no longer about weakness and passivity, they claimed agency from their status as victims, believing themselves to be righteous. Remarkably, this strategy tied in with the positive accounts of the former captives and generally seemed to have worked rather well. Charles Dickens praised Manzo's good looks and generosity; a journalist from *Harper's Weekly* fashioned Raisuli as 'a patriot of the purest water, a transplanted Tell, an Andreas Hofer of Africa'; in an interview, even the first secretary of the United States legation in Constantinople called the Macedonian kidnappers patriots who 'desired to attract the attention of the world to their cause'.⁹⁷ In the end, the brigands' perspective did not contradict the narratives of the former hostages but complemented and reinforced these: appreciating the kidnappers' motives improved the significance of the abductees' experiences and emphatically bonding with the captives legitimized the kidnappers.

V

The rhetorical construction of mutual fondness between the captives and their captors should not lead to trivializing the violence and vulnerability that defined the kidnappings. After having been released, Perdicaris never returned to his villa in Tangier because the memories of his kidnapping were too painful.⁹⁸ The kisses and keepsakes did not stop Wenner, Lichtensteiger, Friedli, and Gubler from testifying as witnesses in the trial against Manzo and his band.⁹⁹ When Manzo fled from prison in 1871, the Wenner family even

⁹⁵ Albert Sonnichsen, *Confessions of a Macedonian bandit* (New York, NY, 1909), pp. 256, 261.

⁹⁶ Lawther, 'Construction', p. 16.

⁹⁷ See Dickens's review, p. 93; Stephen Bonsal, 'Raisuli the brigand who made himself king', *Harper's Weekly*, 2 Mar. 1907, p. 33; 'Spencer Eddy asserts that the brigands who kidnaped missionary are patriots', *Salt Lake Herald*, 24 Feb. 1902, p. 1.

⁹⁸ Perdicaris, 'Morocco', p. 142.

⁹⁹ State Archives St Gallen, Switzerland, W 54/78, 6.

requested protection from the Salerno municipal government for fear of further assaults.¹⁰⁰ And fashioning themselves as romantic rebels did not prevent Manzo and Chernopeev from dying in violent confrontations with law enforcement.

Nevertheless, retrospectively showcasing positive feelings served all actors a specific purpose. It enabled the kidnapped men to negotiate victimhood, to re-establish their masculinity, and to regain their agency. What at first glance seems like a strictly male-coded narrative had become so influential throughout the nineteenth century that Ellen Stone could largely apply it to her own experiences. In her case, indeed, it proved even more empowering, as it allowed her to overcome the typically female language of weakness and suffering of the time that Anne Moens employed in her account. But the kidnapers – or at least the band leaders – needed their captives’ ‘love’ as well. Because only the publicly expressed positive feelings towards the brigands legitimized their violence. Manzo’s, Raisuli’s, and Chernopeev’s interventions can therefore be seen as attempts to create a sense of togetherness between the kidnapers and kidnapped based on a shared language and shared emotions. While psychiatrists and police profilers of the 1970s concentrated on pathologizing the hostages, the Mediterranean kidnapping cases of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries reveal complex perceptions of emotional co-dependencies between kidnapers and captives.

Despite the fundamental differences between the 1860s and the 1970s, we ultimately find one common feature: The mass media were always the driving factor in shaping the kidnapping narratives and forging the individual cases into a consistent phenomenon. Moreover, the thirst of publishers and journalists for authentic stories pushed both the kidnapers and the kidnapped to focus on captivity and the emotions it triggered. The Mediterranean kidnapping narratives thus are not so much ‘pre-echoes’ of a notorious twentieth-century pathological condition. They are rather pre-echoes of the all-embracing mediatization of society in the twentieth century.

Acknowledgements. I would like to thank the anonymous reviewers and *The Historical Journal*’s editor Rachel Leow for their thoughtful and constructive suggestions.

Competing interests. The author declares none.

¹⁰⁰ Ministero dell’Interno, Segretario Generale to Sig. Prefetto di Salerno, Rome, 27 Dec. 1871, Archivio di Stato di Salerno, Busta 59, Fascicolo 607.

Cite this article: Hornung J (2024). Before Stockholm: Emotions and Victimhood in Mediterranean Kidnapping Narratives, 1866–1921. *The Historical Journal* 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X24000049>