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8 Encountering Mid-Eighteenth Century Morocco from Below: Slavery, Race, and Religion in two Scandinavian Captivity Narratives

> I nevertheless want to comment on that which I can recollect from my own experience and that which I managed to write down in some spare moment of my enslavement.[1]

> It would be much too circumstantial to add pious comments to all these [ethnographical, geographical, and historical] matters.[2]

Introduction

Lars Diderich left Norway on Good Friday – 21 March – in 1749 as the captain of the vessel *Anne Christine*, bound for Marseille. The voyage was the beginning of six years of imprisonment as the personal property of a foreign despot. As *Anne Christine* passed by the Cape of St. Vincent on Portugal's southern coast on 30 March, it was approached by a xebec from Tétouan, flying the colours of Algiers in an attempt to trick *Anne Christine* into allowing them aboard. Diderich and his crew of nine men were fooled and captured by the corsairs, who set a

1 M. Berg, *Beskrifning öfwer barbariska slafweriet uti kejsaredömet Fez och Marocco i korthet författad af Marcus Berg, som tillika med många andra christna detsamma utstådt tvenne år och siu dagar, och derifrån blifwit utlöst tillika med åtta stycken andra swenska den 30 augusti 1756* [Description of the Barbary slavery in the Empire of Fez and Morocco, briefly written by Marcus Berg, who with many other Christians endured it for two years and seven days, and who was freed from thence with eight other Swedes on 30 August 1756], Stockholm: Berg, 1757, p. 94.

2 L. Diderich, *Sandfærdig Fortællelse om De Christnes ynkværdige Slaverie udi Barbariet, i sær hos den Maroccanske Kayser, med noget angaaende Folkets Religion, Regierings-Form, Skikke og Leve-Maade, ec. Forfattet for enhver Christen, som Et opbyggeligt Speyl, Ved En Samtale Imellem Theophilu Og Timotheum, Hvorudi den første fremstiller den Historiske Sandhed, hvilken Timotheus bruger til Gudfrygtighedens Opbyggelse. Til Trykken befordret af den, som selv ved Sex Aars Tiid har erfaret Slaveriets Bitterhed* [Truthful account of the miserable slavery in Barbary, particularly under the Moroccan emperor, with notes on the religion, government, customs, and way of life of the people, etc. Written for every Christian as an educational play, as a dialogue between Theophilos and Timotheus, of which the former presents the historical truth, which Timotheus uses for the improvement of piety. Promoted for print by one who himself for six years experienced the bitterness of slavery], Copenhagen: Diderich, 1756, p. 105.

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course for Morocco with the Norwegian vessel in tow. When Diderich and his men arrived in Tétouan, they experienced a shocking transition from their previous life as free men to subjugated captives. Soon the ten were sent inland to Fez, the seat of power of the sultan of Morocco, where they were put to hard labour as slaves. This captivity lasted until August 1754, when successful ransom negotiations led to the surviving three men – Diderich, his first officer, and one of the able seamen from *Anne Christine* – being transported to Gibraltar on an English vessel.[3]

On 4 May 1754, sea captain Marcus Berg set sail from Stockholm on the hooker-yacht *Mercurius* en route to Dublin with a cargo of iron.[4] Berg arrived in Dublin on 25 June, unloaded his cargo and accepted a new freight, 3,000 hides, to be taken to Naples. Berg and his crew on *Mercurius* were captured by Moroccan corsairs in the Alboran Sea on 23 August (Figure 1), while Diderich was still at Gibraltar waiting for his passage home. Like Diderich and his

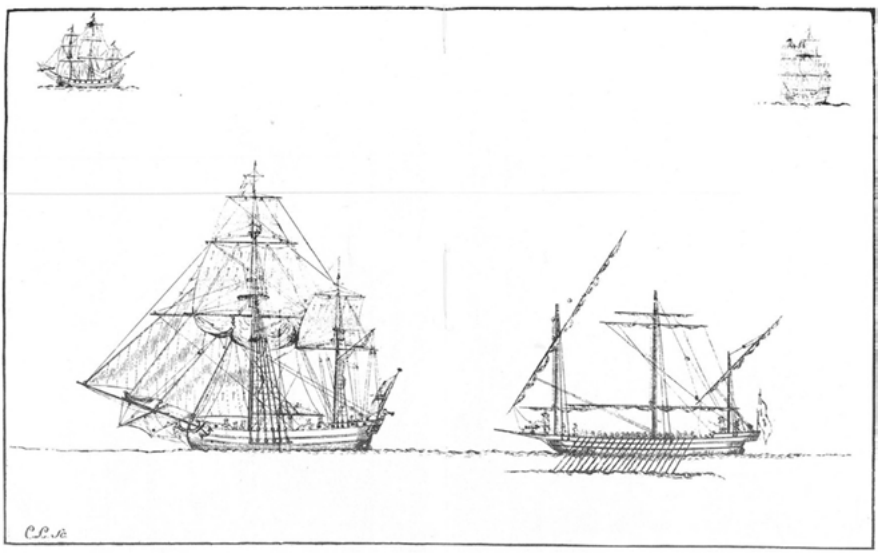

Figure 1: Berg's vessel *Mercurius* is captured by a "Moorish galley".
Original chalcograph from Berg, *Beskrifning*. The vessels typically employed by North African corsairs relied on the speed and manoeuvrability afforded by several pairs of oars to overtake sailing ships.

3 Diderich, *Sandfærdig Fortællelse*, pp. 64–69.

4 For more on the export of Swedish iron to Britain, see Ch. Evans and G. Rydén, *Baltic Iron in the Atlantic World in the Eighteenth Century*, Leiden: Brill, 2007.

crew, Berg and his shipmates were brought to Tétouan before they were transported to Fez and the sultan's castle together with other Christian captives. There they were confronted by the sultan and forced to kowtow before him as he inspected the latest capture of the corsairs. The captives were then moved to the prison for Christian captives, "The Corner" as Berg called it, where Berg learned of the fate of Diderich and his crew.[5]

This chapter locates the global in the local space of enslavement in the Moroccan city of Fez between 1748 and 1756, when two Scandinavian captives, sea captains Lars Diderich and Marcus Berg, inhabited this spatial nexus of proto-globalization and used it as vantage point to observe captivity as well as Moroccan society. The captivity narratives, or travelogues, of Berg and Diderich, offer specifics of unique past experiences of enslavement, intercultural encounters, and entanglements in the multicultural milieu of mid-eighteenth-century Morocco. The testimonies of Berg and Diderich, who were transported to and from Morocco by the expansion of Scandinavian economic and political interests in a global market, are also seemingly small stories that reveal the scope and consequences of eighteenth-century globalization on a personal level. This chapter analyses Berg's and Diderich's experiences and observations of three overlapping spaces, beginning with a section on the circumstances of captivity and the parameters of imprisonment, which dovetails into the space of the sultan. This section follows Berg and Diderich into the space of the court and considers the position and rule of the potentate as perceived by his two Scandinavian slaves. The last section considers Berg's and Diderich's encounter with Moroccan society at large, focusing on their reflections on religious and racial diversity.

As slave labourers for the sultan of Morocco, Berg and Diderich learned about the social and political life of Fez and Morocco in a very different manner from that of free travellers, such as official envoys or travelling scholars – rather than from outside, they learned about it from below. Berg and Diderich experienced Moroccan society as slaves, that is to say as involuntary members of that society, not as educated sightseers: these, as Åsa Karlsson emphasizes in her analysis of eighteenth-century Swedish travellers in the Ottoman Empire, met the Orient with preconceived notions derived from their readings of ancient literature, the Bible, and contemporary travel writing. Such erudite Swedish travellers were also mostly in the company of other learned Europeans when visiting the Orient, reproducing shared European conceptions as well as biases.[6]

5 Berg, *Beskrifning*, p. 22.

6 Å. Karlsson, "Den kända och okända Orienten: Svenska resenärer i Osmanska riket under 1700-talet" [The known and the unknown Orient: Swedish travellers in the Ottoman Empire

In comparison with these voluntary and well-educated travellers, as involuntary visitors Berg and Diderich were able to observe the culture and politics of mid-eighteenth-century Morocco from within, thus becoming privy to the workings of Moroccan society in a unique way. While Berg and Diderich were limited to a restricted and socially subordinated space as Christian captives, their status as the sultan's slaves placed them in the vicinity of the court – in Diderich's case also in the court – and thus in one of the defining spaces of power in Morocco of the 1750s. Berg and Diderich horizontally occupied an outsider/insider position as perceptive and note-taking Scandinavians, and this position in turn overlapped with their vertical below/above position as slaves of the court. Berg and Diderich found themselves immersed in local space that we, through the contextual study of their first-hand observation of it, can unveil as a site of the global in the past as well as a vantage point for scrutinizing a historical glocality.

Berg's and Diderich's Narratives as Primary Sources and Travelogues

Both Berg's and Diderich's accounts of their captivity in Morocco were published shortly after they returned home, and their authenticity as historical documents is unquestionable.[7] In the following, we will show that the accounts are not only genuine, but also reliable narrative sources, that is to say testimonial tracts composed with the intention of accurately informing contemporaries not only of what had transpired in regard to Berg and Diderich and their crews, but also about Moroccan society. As trustworthy testimonies, the tracts of Berg and Diderich provide us with information about what happened in Morocco during the years they lived there, how and in what circumstances events took place, and even why these events occurred.

during the 18th century], in: H. Hodacs and Å. Karlsson (eds.), *Från Karakorum till Siljan. Resor under sju sekler*, Lund: Historiska Media, 1999, pp. 221–222.

7 J. Östlund, *Saltets pris: Svenska slavar i Nordafrika och handeln i Medelhavet 1650–1770* [The price of salt. Swedish slaves in North Africa and the trade in the Mediterranean 1650–1770], Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2014, pp. 297–299; E. Gøbel, "De algierske søfartsprotokoller, en kilde til langfarten 1747–1840" [The Algerian sea passes, a source regarding foreign shipping 1747–1840], *Arkiv. Tidsskrift for arkivforskning* 9 (1982), pp. 65–108. Both, Berg and Diderich, are also included in the online directory of captivity narrators and narratives of the CORSO project at the Paris-Sorbonne University, *Répertoire Nominatif des Récits de Captivité en Méditerranée (XVIe–XVIIIe)*, http://www.oroc-crlc.paris-sorbonne.fr/index.php?/visiteur/Projet-CORSO/Ressources/R.N.R.C (accessed 5 June 2017).

Berg's *Beskrifning öfwer barbariska slafweriet uti kejsaredömet Fez och Marocco* (Description of Barbary slavery in the Empire of Fez and Morocco) was published a year after his homecoming, and Diderich's *Sandfærdig Fortællelse om De Christnes ynkværdige Slaverie udi Barbariet* (Truthful account of the miserable slavery of the Christians in Barbary) two years after his return. Both books were therefore written on the basis of Berg's and Diderich's recent experiences and observations and not recalled after a long interval. Moreover, both Berg and Diderich kept some sort of journals during their captivity and were able to draw from their notes when writing their accounts. This is evidenced by Berg's consistent and correct dating of Ramadan, various Muslim and Christian holidays, as well as other events described in his narrative, most notably the Great Lisbon Earthquake of 1755 and its aftershocks.[8]

The corroborative evidence for the accuracy of Berg's and Diderich's statements is in general robust. The authenticity and originality of the documents has been established in previous research, and the authorial authority of Berg and Diderich is generally sound. The distinction between first-hand observations and information derived from others is usually apparent in both narratives. The distinction between observation and interpretation – that is to say, the understanding of what was observed, which range from remarks to explanations – is also mainly clear-cut. The recollections are undeniably interspersed with expressions of piety and sentiments brought about by the torment of slavery in a strange land. However, with the exception of Berg's conspicuous aversion to the sultan, these personally mediated reflections, focusing on the Christian personhood of Berg and Diderich, are largely divorced from the descriptions of various incidents and phenomena in Fez and Moroccan society in general.

The accounts of Berg and Diderich are, of course, not completely free from religious prejudice – in this case Lutheran – or from Euro- and Scandocentrism. They are, however, products of a time before the imperialism, scientific racism, and Orientalism of the nineteenth century. The apparent decline of the Ottoman Empire and the arising of the age of European imperialism in North Africa, with a concomitant mental subjugation of "the East", did not pick up speed until the end of the eighteenth century. Before this development, the European conception of Muslims was far more multifaceted.[9] Consequently, Edward Said dates the beginning of Orientalism – the Western practice of producing and reproducing

8 Berg, *Beskrifning*, pp. 45–47.

9 J. G. Harper, "Introduction", in: J. G. Harper (ed.), *The Turk and Islam in the Western Eye, 1450–1750: Visual Imagery before Orientalism*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2011, pp. 1–2.

denigrating representations of the so-called Orient – to the late eighteenth century.[10] The racial and supremacist prejudices that would imbue later European accounts of subjugated states and peoples in North Africa are absent in Berg's and Diderich's narratives. Even the pervasive European anti-Semitism, which, for example, is evident in the captivity narrative of Thomas Phelps, an English captive in Morocco in the 1680s,[11] is non-existent. As Matthew Day points out, European visitors, both willing and unwilling, had exhibited a great degree of fascination with North Africa and the Middle East since the early seventeenth century, producing narratives that were not solely sensationalistic or propagandistic.[12]

In discussing the genre-transcending nature of different descriptions of journeys and travels, Jan Borm defines a "travel book" as follows:

> Any narrative characterized by a non-fiction dominant that relates (almost always) in the first person a journey or journeys that the reader supposes to have taken place in reality while assuming or presupposing that author, narrator, and principal character are but one or identical.[13]

Borm goes on to note that there is reason to differentiate between "travel books" or "travelogues" as works that presuppose a degree of factuality, while "travel writing" or "travel literature" denotes the entirety of literature characterized by the theme of travel.[14] Descriptions of involuntary travel through captivity or shipwrecks can be approached as a particular subgenre of travel writing, present in the corpus of European literature since the sixteenth century.[15] The veracity of specific instances of travel writing has been debated by contemporary readers

10 E. Said, *Orientalism*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1979, p. 3.

11 Th. Phelps, *A True Account of the Captivity of Thomas Phelps at Machaness in Barbary: And of His Strange Escape in Company of Edmund Baxter and Others, as also of the Burning Two of the Greatest Pirat-Ships belonging to that Kingdom in the River of Mamora Upon the Thirteenth Day of June 1685*, London: Joseph Hindmarsh, 1685.

12 M. Day, "Western Travel Writing, 1450–1750", in: C. Thompson (ed.), *The Routledge Companion to Travel Writing*, London: Routledge, 2016, pp. 168–169.

13 J. Borm, "Defining Travel: On the Travel Book, Travel Writing and Terminology", in: G. Hooper and T. Youngs (eds.), *Perspectives on Travel Writing*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2004, p. 17.

14 Ibid., pp. 18–19.

15 W. M. Sherman, "Stirrings and Searchings (1500–1700)", in: P. Hulme and T. Youngs (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 27.

since the event of the genre, both with regard to the truthfulness of the authors and to the reliability of their sources.[16]

As Linda Colley demonstrates, captivity narratives were not mere reflections of European prejudice: being the products of a varied group of authors with individual worldviews, they present a colourful and varied – though strongly biased and generally intertextual – first-hand view of foreign lands and cultures.[17] *Beskrifning* and *Sandfærdig Fortællelse* can, like the narratives Colley has analysed with great success, also be studied as original primary sources. As travelogues, they yield new and supplementary information on the history of captivity as well as Moroccan society.

Entering Enslavement and Navigating Captivity

When Berg and Diderich entered the power space of the sultan in Fez, they became the personal property of the sultan, that is to say slaves. They were, however, not slaves in the same sense as the black Africans that were enslaved and transported to the New World as a part of the transatlantic slave trade or the black slaves of Morocco enslaved as a part of the trans-Saharan slave trade.[18] There were gateways to freedom in the captives' space of enslavement. Firstly, as Christian captives, Berg and Diderich could be ransomed or exchanged as commodities in the ransom economy of the Mediterranean.[19] As Scandinavian captives, Berg and Diderich linked the commodity chain of the mainly Mediterranean ransom economy from Morocco to the kingdoms of Sweden and Denmark-Norway. Scandinavian trade in the Mediterranean not only connected the Nordic states to an expanding global trade network, it also provided the Barbary corsairs with the opportunity to acquire new human goods that could be sold to new buyers – the sovereigns, colleagues, or family of the captives – in the North. Secondly, they could also be freed from their enslavement through conversion to Islam, becoming renegades in the eyes of Christendom.

16 D. Carey, "Truth, Lies and Travel Writing", in: Thompson (ed.), *The Routledge Companion to Travel Writing*, London: Routledge, 2016, pp. 3–4.

17 L. Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World 1600–1850*, London: Jonathan Cape, 2002, pp. 12–16.

18 G. Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs: France and Slavery in the Early Modern Mediterranean*, Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2011; Ch. El Hamel, *Black Morocco: A History of Slavery, Race and Islam*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

19 J. Clancy-Smith, "Introduction", in: J. Clancy-Smith (ed.), *North Africa, Islam and the Mediterranean World: From the Almoravids to the Algerian War*, London: Frank Cass, 2001, p. 6.

While they were captives held for ransom, they could also have easily died as slaves in this contingently enclosed space of enslavement.

The first Moroccan city that Berg and Diderich experienced, Tétouan, had a history as a hub of the Mediterranean ransom economy stretching back to the sixteenth century. Tétouan was one of the key ports for Moroccan corsair activity, and European captives were ubiquitous and widely utilized as galley slaves, labourers, and domestic servants.[20] By the time of Diderich's capture, the Alawi sultans of Morocco were powerful enough to enforce their claim to one-fifth of the spoils of jihad decreed by sharia.[21] In addition to this, since the reign of Mouley Ismail (1680–1727) all slaves taken by Moroccan corsairs were the property of the sultan[22]: this was also the fate of Diderich and Berg. Diderich describes his arrival in Tétouan as a harrowing and violent experience:

> We were soon taken from the prison and walked, anxious and tortured by the violence and abuse; for they drove us with guns and spears, with drums and pipes, they played, they shot, they waved their banners over our heads, everyone insulted us, many spat in our faces, struck us in the side with staves and asked; where is the one you worship now, so that he could help you.[23]

Diderich and his crew were not the only captives in the courtyard where they were imprisoned: four Catalonian fishermen were also present. Diderich describes the conditions as exceedingly uncomfortable and difficult: "The hard soil was our bed and mattress, the dark and cold air our blanket under the open sky, the stones of the walls our pillows and the venomous animals our company."[24]

Berg and his crew entered Tétouan in a similar fashion to that of Diderich and his party. They were marched to Tétouan in front of the corsairs that had captured them, who in turn were accompanied by the governor of Tétouan – who Berg calls Muhammed Lucas[25] – and the governor's men, who shouted

20 M. El Jetti, "Tétouan, place de rachat des captifs aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles" [Tétouan, place of redemption of captives in the 16th and 17th centuries], *Cahiers de la Méditerranée* 87 (2013), p. 4.
21 D. J. Schroeter, "Royal Power and the Economy in Precolonial Morocco: Jews and the Legitimation of Foreign Trade", in: R. Bourqia and S. Gilson Miller (eds.), *In the Shadow of the Sultan: Culture, Power, and Politics in Morocco*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999, pp. 77–78.
22 Colley, *Captives*, p. 52.
23 Diderich, *Sandfærdig Fortællelse*, p. 13.
24 Ibid., pp. 14–17.
25 Most likely the same person that Adam Elliot calls "Hamed Lucas" is his own captivity narrative (published in 1770). Quoted in R. C. Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters. White Slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast, and Italy*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, p. 94.

vociferously. The townspeople, who had gathered in large crowds, also shouted at the Swedes as they made their way into the city. In the captive quarters, Berg met another Swedish captain, Hugo Weili, and his crew of 11 men, as well as 30 Spaniards. A few days later, the crew and passengers of a French ship were added to the captives. Most of the captives, with the notable exception of Weili, who had convinced his captors that he was a useful carpenter, were marched off to Fez. This group consisted of 34 Spaniards, including 2 women and a five-year-old child, 13 Swedes, 9 Frenchmen, and 1 Portuguese Jew.[26]

Diderich describes the journey to Fez as exhausting.[27] Similarly, Berg also describes his five-day trail to Fez as "more hard and excruciating than one could imagine". On top of the hardships of the road, Berg was also robbed of the seven guineas he had managed to conceal.[28] When Berg and his companions arrived in Fez, 57 captives were added to the current prison population of 47 captives: 20 Frenchmen, 11 Portuguese, 6 Englishmen, 6 Port Mahonese, and 4 Spaniards. According to Berg, every nation had their own separate rooms in the prison, with the exception of the Swedes and the Danes (including the Norwegians), due to the fact that the only Scandinavian vessel that had previously been captured by the Moroccans was Diderich's *Anne Christine*.[29] The arrival of Diderich five years earlier has not been any easier, though he does mention the presence of a few Danish and Norwegian captives who had been serving on foreign vessels. Through some of these, Diderich and his crew managed to find lodgings for the beginning of their stay, and with time, he pooled resources with his crew to arrange lodgings for themselves within the prison.[30]

Scandinavians, who had not sailed the Mediterranean to any great extent before the mid-eighteenth century,[31] were an unusual catch for the Moroccan corsairs. Scandinavia was a new market in the ransom economy of Morocco, the markets of which were institutionally manifested in the physical division of the space of the captives in the slave prison of Fez. When Diderich and his men told the sultan that they were subjects of the king of Denmark, the sultan stated that he had never heard of such a kingdom.[32] The influx of Scandinavian

26 Berg, *Beskrifning*, p. 16–20. Weili was ransomed as late as 1764, as part of the peace accord between Sweden and Morocco that same year (Östlund, *Saltets pris*, p. 137).

27 Diderich, *Sandfærdig Fortællelse*, p. 20.

28 Berg, *Beskrifning*, pp. 20–21.

29 Ibid., p. 22.

30 Diderich, *Sandfærdig Fortællelse*, pp. 20–21.

31 See D. H. Andersen, *The Danish Flag in the Mediterranean Shipping and Trade, 1747–1807*, Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen, 2001; Östlund, *Saltets pris*.

32 Diderich, *Sandfærdig Fortællelse*, pp. 19–21.

captives was not great during the following years, either: after Berg had been released in 1756, with no new Swedes added to the rolling contingent of captives in Fez, the Swedish quarters the Swedes had established were turned into the sultan's dog pen.[33]

Berg writes that he and his fellow captives worked as wall builders at the palace from the break of dawn until a flag was raised in the city, usually around 4 pm. Then they walked back to Fez and bought food with the money they received for that purpose (one blanquin for a hard day's work). Berg laments the lack of time for recuperation after the taxing work in the heat, but his description of a typical day in the life of a captive shows that the captives had a kind of spare time and some leeway in arranging their personal upkeep. They could interact with the surrounding society without supervision and learn about the societal context of their confinement. The fact that the slaves were expected to purchase their own food and necessities from the market – and the relative autonomy of movement that this required – is exemplified in an anecdote by Diderich. A slave clandestinely fetched lime from one of the sultan's lime kilns in order to sell it and purchase a pair of shoes, food, and alcohol.[34]

In comparison to Berg, who toiled in and around the palace, Diderich's tasks were more varied. In addition to working in the sultan's fields, Diderich and his crew were soon tasked with duties related to the sultan's hens and horses as well as the seraglio, the part of the sultan's palace in which the wives and concubines were secluded. Diderich was, on separate occasions, responsible for the care and feeding of several exotic animals, such as two leopards and "a very large English dog, which was very ferocious and dangerous".[35] Diderich was also a part of the slave detail assigned to watch and tend to the sultan's 16 horses, each of which was a holy animal by virtue of being a steed of the sultan.[36] On occasion, Diderich was even ordered to serve as one of the sultan's enforcers.[37] These types of tasks indicate that Diderich must have risen to a certain level of appreciation at the court, though unlike Berg he makes no mention of any personal interactions with the sultan. However, the fact that Diderich was one of only three survivors from *Anne Christine* suggests that he was able to manoeuvre himself into positions of lowered risk within the space of enslavement.

33 Berg, *Beskrifning*, p. 76. Berg refers to a letter sent to him from his former cabin boy Hans Lund, who the Sultan forced to stay in Morocco (see Berg, *Beskrifning*, p. 23).
34 Diderich, *Sandfærdig Fortællelse*, pp. 120–121.
35 Ibid., p. 28.
36 Ibid., pp. 28–30.
37 Ibid., p. 33.

The Sultan's Space

The Christian captives in Fez were the personal possessions of the sultan of Morocco, who, in the years studied here, was 'Abu Abbas Mulay 'Abdu'llah bin Ismail as-Samin, henceforth Mulay Abdallah for the sake of brevity. The first decades after the death of the previous sultan, Mulay Ismail, had been turbulent, with Mulay Abdallah losing the sultanate four times, and his reign was never unquestioned or fully sovereign.[38] From their first days in Fez, Berg and Diderich came into close contact with the sultan and his court. A running theme in Berg's narrative is the wanton tyranny of the old and moody Mulay Abdallah.[39] Berg even argues that the sultan's own people would have murdered him a long time ago were it not for his divine status.[40] He witnessed several of the sultan's acts of cruelty himself, for example the ordered fights between his own officers, in which the officers fought naked with the command to bite one another and "tore large pieces from each other's bodies".[41] Another incident involved punishment by tossing, which turned into an execution by beating after the tossed party broke wind in the direction of the sultan while getting up.[42]

According to Berg, the court of Mulay Abdallah generally bore the brunt of the sultan's mood swings and violent outbursts. In the beginning of April 1755, during the first two weeks of Ramadan, the sultan had most of his finest officers murdered.[43] Berg also heard that Mulay Abdallah had two of his wives beaten to death for baking bread that was not to his taste.[44] Even the sultan's act of generosity could have violent consequences. Berg recollects an incident when the sultan had given the captives pomegranates, which the Moors then tried to

38 C. R. Pennell, *Morocco: From Empire to Independence*, Oxford: Oneworld, 2003, pp. 107–108; J. M. Abun-Nasr, *A History of the Maghrib in the Islamic Period*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, pp. 238–239.

39 Berg estimates that Abdallah was close to 80 years old, though the commonly estimated birth year of Abdallah (1694) would make the Sultan roughly 60 years old at the time of Berg's captivity.

40 Berg, *Beskrifning*, pp. 94–95.

41 Ibid., pp. 30–31.

42 Ibid., p. 64. In his account of his stay at the court of Morocco as doctor to the women of the harem, the British physician William Lempriere categorizes tossing as one of the modes of punishment practiced in Morocco under the rule of Mohammed Ben Abdallah al-Khatib, the son of Abdallah (W. Lempriere, *A Tour from Gibraltar to Tangier, Sallee, Mogodore, Santa Cruz, and Tarudant; and thence over Mount Atlas to Morocco*, London: Lempriere, 1791, p. 185).

43 Berg, *Beskrifning*, p. 32.

44 Ibid., p. 96.

steal. The outcome of the attempted theft was that one of the Moors was dragged into the slave prison and beaten badly by the captives, as the Moors were not to touch the sultan's Christian slaves without permission.[45]

One explanation for the erratic and unpredictable nature of the sultan's use of authority and violence can be traced back to the late seventeenth century and the first generations of Alawi rule. Due to a chronic lack of resources, the material wealth of the ruler was replaced with a majesty seated in authoritarian actions. Historian Patricia Mercer writes of the father of Mulay Abdallah, Sultan Mulay Ismail:

> His style of government demanded that he act out a pageant of authoritarianism and terror that implied sweeping political power and yet cost little in terms of worldly goods. [. . .] His pomp lay in grisly ceremonial: the ritual abasement of his attendant subjects. Great officers walked shabby, barefoot, and deeply obeisant in their master's presence, and attendants contorted their bodies in accordance with his physical movements.[46]

The precarious political position that characterized the reign of Mulay Abdallah would only have added to the need for such an effect, as his authority as both earthly ruler and religious authority was periodically in question.

The pivotal significance of the sultan in and for the lives of Berg and Diderich made him the key figure in their narratives, not only as their master but also as the (formal) ruler of Morocco. A statement related to the political history of Morocco is Berg's assertion regarding the governance of the sultanate, which according to Berg was not in the hands of the old sultan. The de facto head of the government of Morocco was the son of Mulay Abdallah, Prince Sidi Muhammad, the governor of Marrakesh.[47] Berg even witnessed the power dynamics between the sultan and the prince when Mulay Abdallah received a letter on 10 June 1756 from his son in the presence of the Christian slaves, in which the prince requested that all of the Portuguese captives in Fez be released. According to Berg, the sultan at first invoked his father – who had never ransomed a Portuguese, who had to convert or "lose their head" – but then the sultan rescinded and stated that "whatever nation his son requested freedom for, he shall have at once".[48] This first-hand observation of the authority of the prince over the sultan is supported by the historian Abun-Nasr's argument that

45 Ibid., p. 54.

46 P. Mercer, "Palace and Jihād in the Early Alawī State in Morocco", *The Journal of African History* 18 (1977) 4, p. 540.

47 Berg, *Beskrifning*, p. 67. Prince Sidi Muhammad was appointed governor of Marrakesh in 1746 (A. Boum and Th. K. Park, *Historical Dictionary of Morocco*, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016, p. 335).

48 Berg, *Beskrifning*, p. 63.

after 1749, when he lost the support of his Berber allies, Mulay Abdallah remained as sultan due to the refusal of Prince Sidi Muhammad to accept the Black Army's (see below) recognition of him as sultan.[49]

During Diderich's and Berg's captivity, the authority that the sultan exerted over the Berber peoples of the mountainous regions was strongly connected to interpersonal ties and – when these failed or were broken – to military expeditions with the aim of enforcing taxation.[50] Berg comments on the tangled relationship between the Berbers and the sultan several times, most notably when he witnessed a dramatic altercation between Mulay Abdallah and a band of Berbers outside the palace in the summer of 1755. The sultan and the Berbers exchanged words on either side of the pit the captives were working in. The Berbers grew angry with the sultan's answer, shouted words of abuse, and began to approach the sultan, who rode back to the palace with "a speed none of those that had been enslaved for many years had ever seen the sultan ride".[51] On 22 December 1755, Berg beheld a "great battle" between the Berbers and the army of the sultan near the palace. In the eyes of Berg, the battle was "very confusing" as all combatants were mounted and rode against each other in disarray. According to Berg, the Berbers lost the battle, losing many men and 6,000 of their various animals.[52]

Meeting Multicultural Morocco

Berg and Diderich lived as slaves in a multiethnic and religiously diverse society very different from the Scandinavian cities from which they had embarked. The multicultural milieu Berg and Diderich encountered in Fez is an important element in their narratives, both as a backdrop to their personal stories of slavery and salvation and, more importantly for our purposes, as one of the main subjects of the historical and naturalist parts of their narratives.

49 Abun-Nasr, *A History of the Maghrib*, p. 239.

50 I. M. Lapidus, *Islamic Societies to the Nineteenth Century: A Global History*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012, p. 423.

51 Berg, *Beskrifning*, p. 37.

52 Ibid., p. 49.

Islam

The outer manifestations of Islam in the public sphere made an impression upon Berg, who informs his readers that the mosques in Morocco were not only manifold but also large and beautiful. Berg pays attention to the Muslim week, noting that "their Sundays fall on Fridays" and that no Christians or Jews are allowed on the street during Friday prayer at noon. The regularity of the call to prayer and the uneventfulness of the Muslim week were, by Berg, juxtaposed with the chaos of the Muslim holidays, when the Muslims rode around like lunatics, shouting, screaming, and shooting their guns with "inhuman commotion".[53] According to Berg, the sacrifice of the Eid al-Adha, which he correctly dated for 1756, had originally been ordained by Muhammad to be a human sacrifice, more precisely a Jewish one:

> It is said that Mohammed in the beginning had ordered that each Muslim should sacrifice a Jew on this day, but as his wife shall have been a Jewess, this severe law was modified in such a way that one may slaughter and sacrifice a sheep instead of a Jew.[54]

This reiteration of hearsay underscores the prevalent Western prejudice of Islam as not only heretical but profoundly barbarous at its core.[55] Berg is also keen to point out that as a first-hand observer he soon learned enough of Islam to "condemn it as terrible delusion", the main elements of which "mostly consisted of certain strained imaginaries of the brain".[56] He even scrutinizes one of these supposed concoctions not from a Christian, theological perspective, but from a social basis. The Muslims believe, according to Berg, that Mohammed would provide them with four beautiful and white maidens as wives when entering heaven. This is deemed silly by Berg on account that not nearly enough of the world's white women died as virgins to cover the need of the Muslim men in the afterlife.[57]

Diderich gives a significantly less critical description of the Muslim religious practices he observes. He notes, similarly to Berg, that the Muslims sanctify Friday rather than Sunday and that there are regular times for prayer, observed three to five times per day depending on the individual. However,

53 Ibid., p. 100.
54 Ibid., p. 101. Safiyya bint Huyayy, one of the wives of Muhammad, was Jewish (see B. F. Stowasser, *Women in the Qur'an, Traditions, and Interpretation*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 87).
55 See Thomson, *Barbary and Enlightenment*, pp. 18–20.
56 Berg, *Beskrifning*, p. 102.
57 Ibid.

Diderich does not emphasize the chaotic and violent aspects of the annual celebrations, noting only that thrice annually crowds of "several thousands of people" gathered outside the city walls and organized games and amusements of different kinds. During this time, the Muslims also abstain from work and commerce for one to six days, depending on the means they have at their disposal. He further describes the practice of fasting during Ramadan in some detail, noting as an aside that the sultan, fasting for three full months to show the extent of his piety compared to the common person, tended to become very irritable and bloodthirsty during this time.[58] Berg also remarks on the extreme moodiness of the sultan during Ramadan.[59]

Diderich seems to have some insight into the religious and political system with regard to the pilgrimages to Mecca and the status of the sultan as *sharif*, which the Alawi sultans used to great effect.[60] He notes that pilgrims, returning after two years or so and bearing "sundry goods from the East Indies", would offer some of their goods and a number of mules as gifts to the sultan, who would in turn kiss the holy flags and banners that the pilgrims brought from Mecca. Diderich is also aware of the existing culture of gift giving and tribute, noting that anyone who wished to gain the favour of an audience with the sultan – a highly venerated spiritual advisor and judge due to his direct link to divinity – had to be prepared to pay the officials of the court.[61] At least since the reign of Mulay Abdallah's father, Mulay Ismail, the favour of the sultan was expressed through benefits and privileges rather than through regular gifts or payments. This in turn allowed the sultan to delegate tasks and expenses.[62]

Black Moroccans

Berg divides the inhabitants of Morocco into three peoples – blacks, whites, and browns – and designates the browns, or the Moors, as the "true people" of the land.[63] The blacks had been brought as slaves to Morocco from Guinea,[64]

58 Diderich, *Sandfærdig Fortællelse*, pp. 96–97.

59 Berg, *Beskrifning*, p. 32.

60 S. Cory, "Breaking the Khaldunian Cycle? The Rise of Sharifianism as the Basis for Political Legitimacy in Early Modern Morocco", *The Journal of North African Studies* 13 (2008) 3, pp. 377–394; Pennell, *Morocco*, pp. 107–108; Abun-Nasr, *A History of the Maghrib*, pp. 236–237.

61 Diderich, *Sandfærdig Fortællelse*, pp. 97–98.

62 Mercer, "Palace and Jihād in the Early Alawī State in Morocco", p. 537.

63 Berg, *Beskrifning*, p. 99.

64 The contemporary European name of the west coast of Africa that extended from Sierra Leone to Benin.

had subsequently converted to Islam, and had been freed to such an extent that there were now "large families" of free blacks in Morocco, with rights equal to those of the Moors. A part of the black population was still enslaved by the Moors, who, according to Berg, could do as they pleased with their black slaves, as they could with their own wives. Berg also points out that all of the sultan's soldiers were black slaves, bound to his service.[65]

'Abid al Bukhari, or the Black Army, was established by Mulay Ismail with the aim of creating an army loyal only to him. The Black Army was formed partially by enslaving freed black Moroccans, an act that racialized slavery in Morocco and led to severe criticism from contemporary Moroccan religious scholars.[66] Berg writes that the main contingent of the Black Army is stationed at Meknes, and on 12 September 1755 all of the 8,000 soldiers of the Black Army of Meknes came riding to Fez to claim pay from the sultan. According to Berg, they receive 50,000 "pieces of eight"[67] – that is to say, 50,000 reales de a ocho (Spanish silver coins worth eight Spanish reales a piece).[68] Berg estimates that black soldiers stationed in Fez numbered 1,500.[69] These numbers differ slightly from those given by Diderich some years previous: he claims the size of the sultan's forces at Meknes to be around 20,000 cavalrymen, but he also explains that they are "called Negroes, even though some of them are White, some mulattoes and some Black".[70] This difference of racial demarcation is the most likely reason for the dramatically different number of soldiers in Meknes given by Berg and Diderich.

Although free blacks enjoyed, in principle, the same rights as Moors, Moroccan society was far from colour-blind. This is evident in a description, given by Diderich, of a legal feud between a Moor and black. A free black man was engaged to wed a Moorish woman and had already paid her family the requested bride price – 100 ducats – when the brother of the bride-to-be protested against the engagement and wanted it annulled. Though there was no legal issue with the marriage, the brother could not accept it on racial grounds:

65 Berg, *Beskrifning*, pp. 112–113.

66 A. R. Meyers, "Slave Soldiers and State Politics in Early 'Alawi Morocco, 1668–1727", *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 16 (1983) 1, pp. 39–48; El Hamel, *Black Morocco*, pp. 155–184; J. Hunwick, "Islamic Law and Polemics over Race and Slavery in North and West Africa (16th–19th Century)", in: Sh. E. Marmon (ed.), *Slavery in the Islamic Middle East*, Princeton: Markus Wiener, 2014, pp. 56–59.

67 Berg, *Beskrifning*, pp. 40–41.

68 L. Allen, *The Encyclopedia of Money*, Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2009, p. 107.

69 Berg, *Beskrifning*, p. 33.

70 Diderich, *Sandfærdig Fortællelse*, p. 125.

> He was greatly angered and swore by his religion, and by the holy prophet Muhammad, that his sister would never take a Black man, since his whole family are all White [. . .] since there were no Blacks in his family from before, he considered the marriage unseemly.[71]

This objection highlights the way in which the racialized societal order affected social relations in Morocco. It is especially interesting that a Muslim man of means – as indicated by the substantial bride price – was still considered a lower class of person due to the colour of his skin. In Moroccan society, blackness was associated with slavery in a way that, although disagreeable to several contemporary Muslim scholars, had direct consequences for the free black population.[72] The elevation of the Maghrebi complexion above others as a marker of civilization and temperance had some historical precedent, not least in the writings of famed fourteenth-century scholar Ibn Khaldûn, who considers both very dark and very pale skin inferior to the "golden mean" of an intermediate skin shade.[73]

In contrast to Diderich, Berg is acutely interested in difference from the Moorish majority norm. Berg consequently categorizes persons and groups according to religion and nationality and especially according to what we can analytically call race, though Berg does not use this term. One could argue that Berg racializes those persons and groups he called black or Negro through his insistence on ascribing them this categorical characteristic, that is to say when emphasizing that chief Alcaid in Fez, "Bouscheven", was "of negro extraction",[74] and that the minister of the sultan, "Blemori", was "a half-negro".[75] However, Berg does not attribute any general or essentialist qualities to this category, not even with regard to the enslaved blacks. Berg's narrative is void of the kind of racialization that attributed negative characteristics to the category of "black", which, for instance, the preeminent naturalist of the eighteenth century (and Berg's contemporary compatriot), Carl von Linné, would express in the tenth edition of *Systema Naturae*, the first volume of which was published in 1758, a year after the publication of Berg's book.[76]

71 Ibid., pp. 99–100.

72 El Hamel, *Black Morocco*, pp. 182–184; Hunwick, "Islamic Law", pp. 59–63.

73 Ibn Khaldûn, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, F. Rosenthal (trans.), 2nd edn, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967, pp. 168–172.

74 Berg, *Beskrifning*, p. 24.

75 Ibid., p. 56.

76 See the two following descriptions: "The African: black, phlegmatic, relaxed; black, frizzled hair; silky skin, flat nose, tumid lips; females without shame; mammary glands give milk abundantly; crafty, sly, lazy, cunning, lustful, careless; anoints himself with grease; and governed by caprice" and "The European: white, sanguine, browny; with abundant, long hair;

There is, furthermore, no evidence of any inter-slave hostility between European (white) and African (black) slaves in the narratives of Berg and Diderich. This contradicts the thesis of English scholar Adam R. Beach that the slave masters in Morocco encouraged hostility between the "white" and "black" slaves.[77] In fact, one of the most conspicuous characteristics of the narratives of the two Scandinavians Berg and Diderich is the absence of prejudice towards blacks and, as we show next, Jews.

The Bounded Space of the Jews

The Jewish community of Morocco was, like other Jewish communities in the Islamic world, accorded the legal status Islamic law reserved for so-called "People of the Book". The Jews were tolerated as dhimmis, being granted cultural and administrative autonomy.[78] The visible presence of Jewish life in Morocco can be set against the situation in Berg's and Diderich's native Scandinavia. In Sweden, Jews were banned from settling and the Secret Committee of the Diet confirmed their deleteriousness to the realm in 1747.[79] Some Jews settled in the Kingdom of Denmark-Norway already in the 1620s. By the end of the seventeenth century, small Jewish communities had been established in Copenhagen and Fredericia. By the mid-eighteenth century, the only synagogue in Scandinavia was the one in the multicultural town of Fredericia.[80] As Moroccan captives in Fez, the two captains came into close contact with a large and well-established Jewish communal space and witnessed first-hand the vulnerable station of the Jews.

Fez was home to Morocco's first official segregated Jewish quarter, the original mellah.[81] Berg was well aware of the mellah in the old town of Fez, which he notes was a "closed" part of town.[82] Up to and during the eighteenth century, the Jewish merchant community played an increasingly integral part in

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blue eyes; gentle, acute, inventive; covered with close vestments; and governed by laws" (quoted in A. Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, London: Routledge, 1998, p. 115).

77 A. R. Beach, "African Slaves, English Slave Narratives, and Early Modern Morocco", *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 46 (2013) 3, pp. 333–348. Beach builds his argument on English slave narratives.

78 H. Zafrani, *Two Thousand Years of Jewish Life in Morocco*, New York: Sephardic House, 2005, pp. 120–121.

79 H. Valentin, *Judarna i Sverige* [The Jews in Sweden], Stockholm: Bonniers, 1964, pp. 42–43.

80 T. Liechtenstein, "Jews in Denmark", in: M. Ember et al. (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Diasporas: Immigrant and Refugee Cultures Around the World*, New York: Springer, 2005, pp. 934–935.

81 Arabic for "salt spring" or "salt marsh", the area of the first Jewish settlement in Fez.

82 Berg, *Beskrifning*, p. 27.

the upholding of the economic basis of the Moroccan state through their overseas connections.[83] However, during the eighteenth century the conditions of the common Jewish people of the country were significantly worsened by droughts, epidemics, and harsh treatment from the officials of the sultans, to the point where only one-tenth of the number of Jews present in the country in the seventeenth century remained by the last decades of the eighteenth century.[84]

According to Diderich, the Jews of Morocco are both numerous and universally reviled: they are not allowed to leave the country without assurances being made about their return.[85] Berg, on the other hand, accentuates the religious freedom of the Jews in Morocco and, correctly, notes that there are synagogues in almost all parts of Morocco. He states, furthermore, that the Jews are in charge of the mint and took a certain percentage of the minted coins as commission. Berg muses that the minting of coin for the sultan must be profitable, as the Jews endure "many pains" in Fez.[86] Berg and Diderich also give accounts of several imperious initiatives of the sultan that attest to how precarious the position of the Jewish community in Fez was within the immediate sphere of power of the sultan.

Diderich describes a typical levying of taxes on the Jewish population almost as a whim of the sultan, performed as a sort of joke at the expense of the wealthier amongst the Jews:

> They are to pay any amount of tax that the Emperor [the sultan] desires and he holds council with them in person when he desires money; he then orders the most prestigious of the Jews to come to him, and may then have a few empty containers that tea etc. has been stored in, or blue paper with thread that has been used to store sugar, and he says to the Jews: You are salesmen, You shall sell this for me and bring me 50 ducats for it.[87]

If the Jews – who were compelled to agree to this demand – could not sell the items for the demanded sum, the sultan would order the most prestigious of the Jews to travel the land and act as his tax collector amongst the Jews of Morocco. The tax collector was held accountable for any taxes he could not collect: "Then he will have the Jew put in chains, and he must sit in custody,

83 D. J. Schroeter, *The Sultan's Jew: Morocco and the Sephardi World*, Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2002, p. 3.

84 H. Z. Hirschberg, *A History of the Jews in North Africa*, Leiden: Brill, 1981, p. 292.

85 Diderich, *Sandfærdig Fortællelse*, p. 32.

86 Berg, *Beskrifning*, pp. 106, 122. These statements correspond with modern presentations on the history of the Jews in Morocco. See, e.g., Zafrani, *Two Thousand Years of Jewish Life in Morocco*.

87 Diderich, *Sandfærdig Fortællelse*, pp. 32–33.

subsisting on bread and water, until the Emperor is content."[88] Susan Gilson Miller, though arguing that there was a great degree of reciprocity in the taxation practices regarding Jews in precolonial Morocco, nevertheless gives credence to similar anecdotes from different parts of the country. She notes that the ceremony of paying the tax was "a theatrical performance filled with the rhetoric of power" that underscored Muslim predominance over the Jews.[89]

Berg writes that the sultan imposed an "unusual tax" on the Jews of Fez in the late fall of 1754: they were compelled to pay the sultan 11,000 pieces of gold, and the people of Fez 4,000 pieces of gold, in three days' time. The Jews pleaded with the sultan for mercy to no avail, and the people of Fez were ordered to enter the Jewish quarter and sequester the money by force. Those that resisted "were manhandled quite badly, as well as their wives and children, and there was dreadful screaming and lamentation among the Jews". After the plundering, some of the Jews fled Fez for Meknes.[90] What Berg observed was a pogrom, an organized and politically sanctioned attack on the Jewish community of Fez. The pogrom was one of the many violent plunders of the Jewish quarters of the Moroccan cities in the eighteenth century.[91] A year and a half later, Berg closely witnessed – and probably participated in – a similar event, albeit on much smaller scale.

In a similar fashion, Diderich participated in at least one instance of violence against Jews sanctioned by the sultan. On a visit to the sultan to deliver a few thousand Spanish pesos, a Jew was accused of stealing from the sultan, as the count was one peso short of the full sum. Though the accused pledged to repay the coin, as he was not allowed to deny his guilt, the sultan called on his slaves to punish him as a thief:

> The Emperor shouted for us slaves, and said that the Jew is a thief, and we must grab him and plunge him headfirst into a deep creek that ran close to the castle; we then took the Jew and held him by the feet and plunged him into the water three times, and we were made to hold him underwater until the Emperor commanded us to pull him up again; when he had received his punishment he was brought before the Emperor again, and fell to his knees, and kissed the ground, and promised to pay the following morning, although the Jew was quite innocent.[92]

88 Ibid., p. 33.

89 S. Gilson Miller, "*Dhimma* Reconsidered: Jews, Taxes, and Royal Authority in Nineteenth-Century Tangier", in: Bourqia and Gilson Miller (eds.), *In the Shadow of the Sultan*, p. 108.

90 Berg, *Beskrifning*, pp. 26–27.

91 Sh. Bar-Asher, "Antisemitism and Economic Influence: The Jews of Morocco (1672–1822)", in: Sh. Almog (ed.), *Antisemitism Through the Ages*, Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1988, p. 206.

92 Diderich, *Sandfærdig Fortællelse*, pp. 33–34.

In the beginning of 1756, Mulay Abdallah ordered Berg and the other captives to themselves collect their daily wage from the Jews. The captives beat and manhandled the Jews who would not pay up and forced them to the prison of the Christian captives. The Jewish men and the captives turned captors were followed through the streets of Fez by screaming and crying wives and children. The Jews were detained until they paid. Like the other captives, Berg had a pressing material interest in partaking in the extorted collection and therefore likely took part in the event rather than only being a witness to it. He expresses sympathy for "the poor Jews, who in this country are a free people, who had to endure being the prisoners of the Christians, who were slaves".[93]

The anti-Semitism of the sultan also played a key part in a decisive moment in the personal drama of Berg's captivity. On the eve of their eventual release, Berg and the other captives were taken to Mulay Abdallah. The captives were paraded before the sultan in groups according to nationality. When the sultan inspected the Swedes, he decided, on a whim, that the two youngest members of Berg's crew, Hans Lund and Marcus Österman, should remain as slaves at the palace. From a document in the Swedish national archives pertaining to the ransoming of Berg and his crew, we find the ages of these two individuals. Marcus Österman, employed as a ship's cook and hailing from Finland,[94] was 20 years of age when *Mercurius* set sail, while the cabin boy Hans Lund was 14 years old. In comparison, the oldest member of the crew (excluding Berg) was 53 years old.[95] Upon his return to Sweden, Berg attempted to convince the authorities to effect the release of the two crewmembers left behind, but he seems to have been unsuccessful in this endeavour.[96]

After his decision to keep the two younger men, the sultan looked at all of the captives that were to be released, remarked that he needed an old man to serve at a newly dug well, and pointed at Berg.[97] Berg was brought before the sultan, who then said that he did not like Berg because he "looked like a Jew" and chose one of the Spaniards instead.[98] In Berg's retelling of his final and critical encounter with the sultan, the "Jewishness" of Berg in the eyes of the

93 Berg, *Beskrifning*, p. 53.

94 Most likely somewhere in the modern region of south-western Finland.

95 *Följande Manskap har blifwit förhyrde att fara med Skepparen Marcus Berg, som förde Galassen Mercurius, destinerad till Dublin och widare efter ordres den 30 april 1754* [The following crewmen have been hired to go with the captain Marcus Berg, who commanded the galeas *Mercurius*, destined for Dublin and further by orders given 30 April 1754], nr. 33, vol. 6, Diverse handlingar, Diplomatica Maroccana, Marieberg, Riksarkivet.

96 Östlund, *Saltets pris*, pp. 303–304.

97 Berg, *Beskrifning*, p. 71.

98 Ibid., p. 72.

old anti-Semitic ruler saved him. Neither Berg nor Diderich hold a negative opinion of Moroccan Jews, seeing them rather as fellow victims of the sultan's tyranny.

Christians and Conversion

Berg believes that there were two or three Catholic priests – Franciscan friars – in all of the major cities of Morocco. He comments that the price for the freedom of the priests was a yearly tribute "of presents" presented to the sultan every Easter. Berg doubts that the Franciscans had any success in their proselytizing, and scoffs that they lost their "own sheep", that is to say captive Catholics, "to Muhammad" more often than not. Berg adds, derisively, that as far as he could tell, the priests are unbothered by this.[99] The friars were, however, always equipped with medicine, and Berg believes that they "understand several illnesses better than any quack".[100] Even the sultan was aware of their healing prowess: Berg recounts how the sultan, suffering from syphilitic boils, sent for the priests who treated him with good effect.[101]

While Berg emphatically names the Franciscans as Catholics, he uniformly categorizes the captives, the Swedes included, as Christians. Berg is highly conscious of the nationalities of his fellow captives in his writing, but he does not distinguish between Christian denominations. The hegemonic Muslim-Christian dichotomy made religious distinctions between captive Christians fluid for Berg and created a new, all-Christian collective category bound together by captivity and the undifferentiating gaze of the Muslim masters. Diderich's narrative is significantly more specific. In the land of Islam, both Protestant and Catholic suffer, but, according to Diderich, only the former do so with pious fortitude, whereas the latter have a tendency to not only lapse into sin but to also abandon Christianity altogether. Further, he describes attempts by the Catholics to proselytize amongst the Christian captives of other denominations through promises of "better company" amongst the Catholics and material gifts from the Franciscan friars.[102] Diderich also speculates that the Franciscans, in his understanding originally tasked with preaching to the local population, do

99 Ibid., p. 106.
100 Ibid., p. 51.
101 Ibid., p. 50.
102 Diderich, *Sandfærdig Fortællelse*, pp. 24, 38.

not dare risk the wrath of the sultan and so focus their efforts only on Protestant Christians.[103]

Almost all Barbary captivity narratives include the narrator's account of how the captive was urged to convert to Islam and thus become a renegade in the eyes of Christendom.[104] Renegades were Christian captives, escapees from European colonies, deserters, or simply "adventurers"/"migrants" who had converted to Islam and lived in the Maghreb or the Ottoman Empire.[105] The Swedish word for renegade, *renegat*, was adopted into Swedish by the late seventeenth century and specifically denoted Christian converts to Islam.[106] Conversion was a way to escape slavery and, as such, loomed over the lives of the captives as an exit option. In Diderich's narrative, he and his crew are offered this chance at immediate liberation as soon as they meet the sultan. He promises them freedom if they "cast away their Christian faith and become Moors", to which he receives the answer that Diderich and his crewmen "wish to live as Christians and die as Christians".[107]

According to Diderich, none of his fellow Lutherans converted, although several other Christians did. Diderich holds no high opinion of the majority of the captives held in Fez, describing them as "given to lying, thieving, drunkenness and other sinfulness".[108] Berg makes a similar observation when lamenting the lack of mutual trust and love between the Christian captives. He claims many followed their baser instincts without hesitation. From Berg's account, they also became spiteful towards those who, like Berg, tried to adhere to the word of God, going so far as to question the validity of Christian law in a land that had no law. Even some of the Swedes fell into "nasty behaviour" and ignored the exhortations of Berg, their pious captain.[109]

Diderich notes that the reasons for conversion could be manifold: some feared a life of hard work in slavery, some were merely opportunistic, and some

103 Ibid., p. 92.

104 G. M. Sayre, "Renegades from Barbary: The Transnational Turn in Captivity Studies", *Early American Literature* 45 (2010) 2, p. 330.

105 E. Amster, "Rumor and Revolution: Medicine, Technology, and Popular Politics in Pre-protectorate Morocco, 1877–1912", in: D. Maghraoui (ed.), *Revisiting the Colonial Past in Morocco*, Oxford: Routledge, 2013, p. 89.

106 *Swedish Academy Dictionary*, http://www.saob.se/artikel/?seek=renegatandpz=1 (accessed 5 May 2017).

107 Diderich, *Sandfærdig Fortællelse*, p. 20.

108 Ibid., pp. 22–24.

109 Berg, *Beskrifning*, p. 51.

had lost all hope of ransom after languishing in captivity for years.[110] Berg, in turn, describes a typical conversion to Islam in the following way:

> When the Christians choose to convert to Islam, they let the Emperor [the sultan] know their thoughts, and after they have promised to recognize Muhammad as the highest prophet and pledged to constantly believe in him, in the meantime the Emperor, with few words, recites the content of their fate to the apostates. After that they are sent to their most dignified priests or holy men, who live in Fezvillie [Fez el Bali, Old Fez], who after asking them their business, circumcise them and let them thereafter go where they wish.[111]

Diderich gives a similar account of conversion to Islam, though his description is more detailed; for instance, he reports that the circumcision is done at the time of a new moon, and that the sultan presents all new converts with a full suit of new clothes and four ducats in coin when they return to him.[112] Berg had heard that the renegades were obliged to serve the sultan for about a month after their circumcision but that this rule was not followed strictly, as some of the renegades immediately left to find wives amongst the country folk or went somewhere else, as they found fit.[113] Both Diderich and Berg mention a town called Gorree, or Gorr, which was inhabited by married renegades and where around 10,000 people of a variety of nations were said to live.[114] In contrast to Diderich's account, there is no mention of anyone inviting Berg or any of the Swedes to convert in Berg's narrative. Berg does note, however, that during his stay in Fez 23 Spaniards and 1 captive from Maó-Mahón converted without gaining much esteem amongst the Muslims.[115]

Neither Berg nor Diderich mention any coercion to convert. Descriptions of forced conversion through beatings and torture are common in Barbary captivity narratives, although they would have made little economic or religious sense to the slave owners.[116] The eighteenth-century narratives of Thomas Pellow and Hark Olufs also show that there were clear material benefits to

110 Diderich, *Sandfærdig Fortællelse*, pp. 23–24.
111 Berg, *Beskrifning*, p. 106.
112 Diderich, *Sandfærdig Fortællelse*, pp. 23–24.
113 Berg, *Beskrifning*, p. 107.
114 Ibid., p. 110; Diderich, *Sandfærdig Fortællelse*, p. 24.
115 Berg, *Beskrifning*, p. 107.
116 C. Norton, "Lust, Greed, Torture, and Identity: Narrations of Conversions and the Creation of the Early Modern Renegade", *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 29 (2009) 2, pp. 261–264.

conversion and adaptation to the local culture, especially for those who were young.[117] In Diderich's and Berg's narratives, aimed at the society that they had returned to and wished to remain a part of, the captives who chose conversion are presented as faithless or broken men and in some instances even as entirely immoral hedonists. While Diderich clearly attains a level of the sultan's trust, both he and Berg strictly uphold their Christian virtues throughout their narratives.

Conclusions: The Glocality of "The Corner"

The voyages that Lars Diderich and Marcus Berg set out on – destined for Mediterranean ports, Marseilles and Naples – were endeavours prompted and enabled by the inclusion of Scandinavia in the expanding networks of trade in the age of proto-globalization. Sweden had already begun to encourage the import of salt directly from ports in the Mediterranean in the mid-seventeenth century,[118] while Denmark-Norway had been hesitant to pursue the same course of action before the signing of a peace treaty with the sultan of Morocco in 1753.[119] As the merchant navies of Denmark-Norway and Sweden entered the Mediterranean to avoid expensive intermediaries, they encountered an economic network that included captives amongst its articles of trade. In this new environment, Diderich and Berg experienced a violent transition from agents of commerce to human commodities, an experience that Scandinavian sailors had mostly been sheltered from before the extension of Scandinavian trade. Their sovereigns had not yet established a system of protection to safeguard their liberty and the commercial interests of their home nations, so when the Scandinavian seamen were caught in the corsairs' web, they were left to navigate the space of captivity as best they could.

Captivity in the multinational "Corner", the Christian slave prison in Fez, entailed complicity and collision between enslaved men of various origin and fluctuating mindsets and their slave drivers. Some of the latter were also former captives who had converted to Islam and become, from a Christian view,

117 L. Colley, "Going Native, Telling Tales: Captivity, Collaborations and Empire", *Past and Present* 168 (2000) 1, pp. 170–171; M. Rheinheimer, "From Amrum to Algiers and Back: The Reintegration of a Renegade in the Eighteenth Century", *Central European History* 36 (2003) 2, pp. 210–213.

118 Östlund, *Saltets pris*, pp. 46–47.

119 D. H. Andersen and H.-J. Voth, "The Grapes of War: Neutrality and Mediterranean Shipping under the Danish Flag, 1750–1807", *Discussion Papers in Economic and Social History* 18 (1997), p. 4.

renegades. Looming over them all was the shadow of the supreme slave master of Morocco, the sultan. The travelogues of Diderich and Berg illuminate aspects of Moroccan society in a period of change, between the militarily potent rule of Mulay Ismail and the religious power of later Alawi sultans. A striking aspect of both accounts is also the almost absolute power of the sultan within the space of the court and the pattern of violence that perpetuated the unstable rule of the sultan. Their potential commercial value provided the captives with some protection, but life in captivity was nonetheless a struggle for survival that, for many a captive, ended in death or developed into life as a renegade. Berg and Diderich were also induced to partake in the pervasive culture of violent coercion, most notably as perpetrators of violence against Jews. The Jews, while protected by their bound status as dhimmis and not enslaved as the Christian captives, were still vulnerable to the decisions of the sultan, which occasionally included compelling the Christian captives to collect their daily wages from the Jews with the use of force.

Particularly interesting are Berg's and Diderich's unprejudiced notes on Jews and blacks within Moroccan society. In contrast to the Orientalist attitudes that were materializing amongst the educated elites of the European powers, the travelogues of the two Scandinavian merchant skippers exhibit a striking lack of both racial prejudice and anti-Semitism. While they unquestionably make note of the racial and religious hierarchies that informed social practices in eighteenth-century Moroccan society to the disadvantage of both Jews and blacks, neither Berg nor Diderich chooses to ascribe these groups – or the Moors – any inherent characteristics. The negative descriptions found in their narratives are aimed either at the vices and failings of individuals or at the organization of power in the sultanate of Morocco and its underpinnings: the sovereign and his religious power. Both Berg and Diderich describe the acts of Sultan Mulay Abdallah with distaste and horror, with Berg especially giving many examples of violence on the sultan's part. Islam, though described quite accurately when it comes to the dating of holidays and the forms of religious practices outside the mosques, is discredited as a collection of fantastical beliefs and as clearly inferior to the authors' Lutheran faith.

Berg and Diderich not only endured their ordeal but returned home to testify to the nature and setting of it in two travelogues. Taken together, the two texts form an exceptional take on enslavement and the sultanate of Morocco around the 1750s. Through the forced travels and travails of the two Scandinavian survivors, a spot on the historical underbelly of the global is located and the vista from that corner uncovered.