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Truths from Morocco: Knowledge Production and Danish-Moroccan Encounters in the Eighteenth Century

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Abstract

In the 1750s the Danish kingdom and the Moroccan Empire came into contact, and concluded a bilateral treaty. As part of the accord, a Danish chartered company was established. The company was short-lived and the “special relationship” between the two powers soon withered. A result of this episode was a handful of texts that sought to describe Morocco to a Danish audience—an adventure tale, a captive narrative, an orientalist chorography, and a biography of the emperor—which sought to produce truths about the Danish encounters with Morocco, but also truths about the place and the peoples of Morocco. The article discusses these texts, where they originated, to whom they circulated, and what they had to tell about Morocco.

Keywords: Denmark; Morocco; knowledge production; slavery; historiography

In June 1753, Frederik V of Denmark and Norway signed a treaty with the regent of Marrakech, Sidi Muhammad b. Abd Allah. The treaty promised the Danes protection from the threat of corsairs operating out of Moroccan ports, and it demanded trade in Morocco as a concession and an obligation from the Danes. It also led to the establishment of a chartered Danish company for conducting trade with Morocco, and the appointment of a Danish consul to reside in Morocco. The Danish African Company operated in Morocco for fifteen years before it was dissolved in 1768, after a renegotiation of the bilateral treaty.¹

The Danish encounters with Morocco, which multiplied in these years, resulted in a number of texts in a variety of genres, written in Danish about Morocco by authors who had spent time in the Alawi Empire. They shaped the narrative of the Danish encounter with Morocco for posterity, but they also shaped the Danish perception of the land of the Alawi emperor. Whether written by sea captains (Hynnemør and Diderich), clerks (Ravn), or scholars (Høst), as narrative poems, slave narratives, histories, or topographies, these texts purported to offer truths about Morocco to a Danish readership and beyond. They and the knowledge they purveyed is the subject matter of this article. I am interested in what they say about Morocco, a largely unknown part of the world for eighteenth-

¹ The history of the Danish African Company is narrated in J. L. Rasmussen, *Det under kong Frederik den femte oprettede Danske Afrikanske Kompagnies historie* (Kjøbenhavn: Andreas Seidelin, 1818). This company should not be confused with the Danish Africa Company that was established in 1659, and merged with the Danish West India Company in 1671.

century Danes, but also in what they say about the Danish encounters with Morocco in the late eighteenth century. Why were they written, for whom were they written, and what rhetorical moves did these authors make in order for their texts to be read as true?

The Danish texts on Morocco originate in a very specific political situation, which is defined by the bilateral treaty and the establishment of the company. But they also belong to a wider cultural world: that of European interest in the east in the Age of Enlightenment.² The concern with truthfulness that several of these authors demonstrate is related to a much more general “demand of verisimilitude” in the second half of the eighteenth century, directed towards descriptions of nature as well as of people and places. The descriptions of far-away lands, as Jurgen Osterhammel describes it, at this time “fell under the imperative of empiricism.”³ To a certain degree it replaced a previous concern with the “wonders” of foreign worlds. This world has in the last decades been explored by a number of historians of knowledge, in books about German orientalism, Enlightenment cultural science, and ethnography.⁴ It has also been explored in studies of the early modern experiences of slavery or captivity, as expressed in the practices of corsairs both north and south of the Mediterranean, and of the texts that these experiences produced.⁵ The texts that I will discuss here belong to either of these fields of knowledge. For example, Georg Høst’s *Efterretninger om Marokos og Fes* was intended as a contribution to academic knowledge of Morocco, whereas Diderich’s *Truthful Narrative* is a captivity narrative in the European tradition, though with quite a few idiosyncrasies. As descriptions of the region commonly referred to at the time as Barbary, these texts were by no means exceptional in Europe.⁶ The European archive of descriptions of Morocco was steadily growing during the eighteenth century, despite the many obstacles to producing truthful descriptions, so that an English consul in 1809 could state that “there are more books written on Barbary than on any other country, and yet there is no country with which we are so little acquainted.”⁷

Some of the authors discussed in this article were from Norway, but as Norwegians were often referred to as Danes in the eighteenth century, I will also do so. Their sovereign was the king of Denmark and Norway. In the time of the Danish African Company, Frederik V (1746–66) was king, and according to the constitution a very autocratic one. In reality, he was little involved in politics. Foreign affairs were taken care of by the Hamburg-born Count Johan Hartwig Ernst von Bernstorff, who by all accounts was personally much involved in the Danish adventures in North Africa, the region that was customarily referred to as Barbary. The western part of that region, ruled by the monarch of the Alawi dynasty, was consistently referred to as an empire in European sources. Though historical literature refers to the monarch as the sultan, I will here stay with the language of my sources and refer to him as the emperor. “Morocco” at the time most often referred

² Jürgen Osterhammel, *Unfabling the East: The Enlightenment’s Encounter with Asia* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018), 5.

³ Osterhammel, *Unfabling the East*, 171.

⁴ Suzanne L. Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire: Religion, Race, and Scholarship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Michael C. Carhart, *The Science of Culture in Enlightenment Germany* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007); Han F. Vermeulen, *Before Boas: The Genesis of Ethnography and Ethnology in the German Enlightenment* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015).

⁵ E.g., Mario Klarer, *Piracy and Captivity in the Mediterranean: 1550–1810* (London: Routledge, 2019); Mario Klarer, *Mediterranean Slavery and World Literature: Captivity Genres from Cervantes to Rousseau* (Milton: Routledge, 2020); Linda Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World, 1600–1850* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2002); Gillian Lee Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs: France and Slavery in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2011); Salvatore Bono, *Lumi e corsari. Europa e Maghreb nel Settecento* (Perugia: Morlacchi Editore, 2005).

⁶ Ann Thomson, *Barbary and Enlightenment: European Attitudes Towards the Maghreb in the 18th Century*, Brill’s Studies in Intellectual History (Leiden: Brill, 1987).

⁷ James Grey Jackson, *An Account of the Empire of Morocco and the District of Suse* (London: W. Bulmer & Co., 1809), v.

to the city of Marrakech and, by extension, to the southern parts of the Alawi Empire. In the latter half of the eighteenth century, it became more customary in Europe to use Morocco as a term referring to the entire empire. I will for simplicity use Morocco as a term for the country, and Moroccans for the inhabitants, even though that is strictly speaking an anachronism.

In the 1740s the Moroccan Empire emerged from a long period of political instability, a period that a later French historian has referred to as the *trente années d'anarchie* (thirty years of anarchy).⁸ From 1750 Sidi Muhammad b. Abd Allah, son of the emperor, resided in Marrakech. In this capacity he seems to have conducted an independent foreign policy, concluding a series of bilateral treaties with European powers, comparable to the Ottoman “capitulations.”⁹ They imposed on the Europeans the payment of tributes to the emperor, in exchange for protection from corsairs. For the Moroccans they provided new sources of revenue from taxes, weapons, material for the equipment of ships, and various luxury goods. Sidi Muhammad succeeded his father as emperor in 1757.

A Patriotic Mayor and an Adventurous Captain

The first known Danish narrative from Morocco tells the story of Captain Hynnemør from Bergen, Norway, who made a voyage to Salé in 1747, a few years before the treaty negotiations. It is recorded in the undated handwritten manuscript “Hynnemør’s Two Voyages to Salé and Smyrna in the Years 1747 and 1756,” which was written sometime between 1756 and 1778.¹⁰ It actually narrates two voyages to the Mediterranean, one to the western and one to the eastern part. A shared feature was that they took the captain to places where merchants from Denmark and Norway did not traditionally trade, but where the Danish state subsequently signed treaties. They allow the scribe to portray the protagonist as a paragon of patriotism, carrying the Danish flag, symbol of the king in Copenhagen, thus opening new trade routes. They are evidently not told to teach the reader much about these places in themselves. Rather they are moral tales about a protagonist who goes through various dangers and thereby proves his admirable character.

The manuscript is filed among the collected papers of Hilbrandt Meyer (1722–85), a merchant and a civil servant in Bergen. In the 1770s Meyer filled three volumes with handwritten texts on trade, written with the explicit aim of inspiring the merchant class of Bergen to establish an academy of trade. In this collection he included the adventures of his friend Hynnemør, so that his readers might take inspiration from it, and maybe themselves take the Danish flag (and Bergen ships) to distant shores and open new markets.¹¹ The academy never materialised, but Meyer’s manuscripts found a readership by being circulated among the merchants of Bergen. The two stories of Hynnemør were told to Meyer by the protagonist, and written down by Meyer. There is no way to know the degree of interference by the scribe into the narrative.

The text tells how Hynnemør and his ship *Ebenezer* sailed to the Mediterranean, first to Genoa, and then, as the city was being bombarded by the Austrians, to Livorno. Livorno was then a free port under the duke of Tuscany, and an important hub for Mediterranean

⁸ Roger Le Tourneau, “Le Maroc sous le règne de Sidi Mohammed Ben Abdallah (1757–1790),” *Revue de l’Occident musulman et de la Méditerranée* 1:1 (1966), 188.

⁹ James A. O. C. Brown, *Crossing the Strait: Morocco, Gibraltar and Great Britain in the 18th and 19th Centuries*, Brill eBook Titles, (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 43.

¹⁰ J. Hynnemørs *tvende reiser udi aarene 1747 og 1756 til Salee og Smyrna*. (Manuscript transcribed by Kåre Ritland at the municipal archives of Bergen; both the transcription and a scan of the handwritten original is available online. I follow the pagination of the original, not of the transcribed version.) <https://media.digitalarkivet.no/view/137227/1>

¹¹ B. E. Bendixen, “Skipper Joachim Hynnemørs reiser,” *Bergen historiske forenings skrifter* 3 (1897), 9.

trade. There, Hynnemør met a merchant from Tripoli who convinced him to take on goods to sail to the port city of Salé on the Atlantic coast. The Tripolitan brought his own entourage, consisting of a handful of “Turks,” a secretary, who was Jewish and a native of Salé, and a servant who was “a Negro.”

Arriving in Salé in April 1747, the story goes, Hynnemør finds the people of the city involved in fighting an armed uprising inland. Word of the rebellion eventually reaches the captain, but he never sees any fighting himself. Upon the ship’s arrival in the harbour, no one on the mainland responds to the ship, so the Tripolitan goes ashore, where he seems to disappear, and a “thick and dark cloud,” like a fog, descends on the ship, as a meteorological metaphor for the captain’s lack of knowledge of the land, the city, the politics, and current affairs. In the temporary absence of his interlocutor, Hynnemør is practically blind, and in this situation the moral courage of his crew wavers. As the fog evaporates, the danger is quickly resolved, and the protagonist is cordially welcomed into the city by a “prince” who has residence there and serves as its governor. The prince speaks with more “attentiveness and zest” than the Dano-Norwegian captain expected from a “Moorish prince.”¹²

The word “prince” in the Danish original refers to a male member of the royal family, unlike the broader English meaning. Whether Hynnemør really met a son of the ruling emperor in Fez, however, is far from clear. Abd Allah did have two sons.¹³ But the prince is not named in this story, nor is the ruling emperor. This omission is in line with its fairy-tale quality—it portrays the place as a semi-fictional setting. Furthermore, the author does not pay attention to details like the population, the customs, or the religion of the region he visits. He arrives in the fog and leaves without having learned much.

On the other hand, there are some details that underscore that this is to be read as a true story: The narrative contains a number of dates and place names, both in Europe and in Morocco (Tetouan, Larache, Salé, Fez). They mark the events as an actual historical event and not a fairy tale. Maybe we can see in these details that even the captain and the mayor of Bergen were writing under a new “imperative of empiricism.”¹⁴ What is nevertheless most striking are the omissions of the narrative. Even though Salé was well known at this time in Europe as a home port for corsairs, Meyer/Hynnemør only indirectly refers to the danger of captivity. He also omits any description of the community of Christian merchants living in the country at the time. Furthermore, this narrative has no ethnographic, and only minimal geographic information.¹⁵ Lastly, the narrative is entirely secular—neither Islam nor Christendom is referred to at all, and the moral it conveys is the moral obligation to be a loyal subject to the king in Copenhagen.

A History of a Peace Treaty

Hynnemør’s adventure in Meyer’s manuscript is followed by a text, “Relations about the Negotiations that Have Taken Place between Denmark and Morocco in the Years 1751–1753,” which is a text of a very different genre.¹⁶ It is a report of current affairs,

¹² “Herover ytrede Printsen sig med saa megen Bevaagenhed og Velbehag, som man av en morisk Prints ikke kunde vente.” Hynnemørs tvende reiser, 35.

¹³ Abū al-Qāsim b. Aḥmad al-Zayyānī, *Le Maroc de 1631 à 1812*, trans. O. Houdas, Publications de l’École des langues orientales vivantes (Paris: E. Leroux, 1886).

¹⁴ Osterhammel, *Unfabling the East*, 171.

¹⁵ Daniel Vitkus, “Unkind Dealings: English Captivity Narratives, Commercial Transformation, and the Economy of Unfree Labor in the Early Modern Period,” in *Piracy and Captivity in the Mediterranean: 1550–1810*, ed. Mario Klarer (London: Routledge, 2019), 56–75, 68.

¹⁶ “Efterretning om de underhandling som haver været i mellem Danmark og Marokko udi aarene 1751–1753,” 63–79.

relating the negotiations between Denmark and Morocco that resulted in the treaty. The source is not identified, but we learn that it had been published in Copenhagen on 17 September 1753, evidently by someone well informed about the events in Morocco. Meyer hints that there was a causal link between these events and Hynnemør's travel, in that the latter had, so to say, opened up Morocco for Danish merchants. Meyer's motive for including it in his compilation is to "shed light on" Hynnemør's claim to be the first to fly the Danish flag on the Moroccan coast, and to insinuate that he was the one who opened the way for the treaty negotiations that followed.

The text does, however, unequivocally state that the treaty was the result of a visit to Copenhagen by a mysterious unnamed person. Several later sources identify this person as Josef Buzaglo de Paz, a Jew from Morocco.¹⁷ In this text de Paz only plays a role as the trigger of the events. His arrival in Copenhagen led to some Danish merchants, with little or no previous knowledge of the Moroccan Empire, sending ships to Safi and St. Croix (Agadir). After an initial successful voyage, in 1751 the royal court in Copenhagen sent a fleet of four ships to Safi to negotiate a treaty under the leadership of one Jean-Baptiste des Carrières de Longueville, an officer in the king's navy. It is suggested that Longueville lacked much-needed knowledge of Morocco. He negotiated a treaty, we learn from this text, that gave Danes a monopoly on trade and the right to tax farming in the ports in the southern part of the empire. The monopoly was, however, more than he had been authorised to negotiate.¹⁸

The terms of the treaty led to reactions from European merchants of different nationalities who were already trading in these ports. According to this report, they convinced Sidi Muhammad that the Danes had military ambitions in Morocco, an idea that does not seem completely implausible. Yet, for the narrator of this history, "nothing makes less sense" than this suspicion of military ambitions. Longueville may have been "careless," but he was never one for intrigues and ruses, we learn.¹⁹ As a result of these disagreements, the Danish officer was taken in captivity with some twenty of his men and led inland to Marrakech. Further developments involved both diplomacy and gunboats: Sidi Muhammad sent an envoy, Samuel Sumbel, to Copenhagen. King Frederik sent four frigates to Morocco to work for the release of the prisoners. As a result, a new treaty was signed (18 June 1753), according to which a Danish chartered company was to be established, the Danes were to do tax farming in Safi and St. Croix but were not accorded any monopoly, and the Danish government were to pay an annual tribute to the emperor of Morocco.

This second history of Danes in Morocco has the same patriotic élan as the adventures of Hynnemør, praising the wisdom, virtues, and benevolence of the king in Copenhagen. King Frederik appears ready to support his subjects and show his "eager love" (*ivrige kjærlighed*) towards his people, whose happiness (*lykksalighed*) he wants to encourage.²⁰ These are all pure literary conventions. The figure of Sidi Muhammad is even less clearly drawn. No information about the way of life, religion, or customs in the empire of Morocco is related here. Its author seems somewhat more knowledgeable about the political situation in Morocco compared to what we have seen in Hynnemør's adventures. It introduces Sidi Muhammad by name, and refers to him as the son of the emperor. The

¹⁷ For more information on Buzaglo de Paz see Cecil Roth, "The Amazing Clan of Buzaglo," *Transactions and Miscellanies (Jewish Historical Society of England)* 23 (1969); H. de Castries, "Le Danemark et le Maroc, 1750–1767," *Hesperis* 6 (1926), 330. On the role of Jewish Moroccans as intermediaries between Morocco and European powers, see Daniel J. Schroeter, *The Sultan's Jew: Morocco and the Sephardi World* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2002).

¹⁸ *Hynnemørs tvende reiser*, 66.

¹⁹ *Hynnemørs tvende reiser*, 68.

²⁰ *Hynnemørs tvende reiser*, 64.

emperor on the other hand is not named. This history also maps more of the Moroccan geography as it takes place on southern Moroccan terrain (introducing Marrakech, as well as the cities St. Croix and Safi).

It is not surprising that none of these narratives have much to say about the Moroccan motives for this rapprochement. But the information about the mysterious man who came to Morocco does suggest that this was a part of a deliberate initiative from Morocco. The Danish ships sailed to Safi, which was in the part of the country that was controlled by Sidi Muhammad (as opposed to Salé, where Hynnemør sailed). A later historian has claimed that Buzaglo de Paz was “behind” Sidi Muhammad b. Abd Allah’s new foreign policy of rapprochement with the north European powers, in order to gain resources to build a Moroccan navy.²¹ This does not seem to be corroborated by these Danish sources from the eighteenth century.

A Poem about Diplomacy and Captivity

One year after the original publication of the text that Meyer reproduced in 1753, another account of the same events was published in Copenhagen. It was written by Wilh. Ravn, who had been the cashier for the Danish diplomatic mission of 1751, and one of the captives in Marrakech with Longueville. His text, published in Copenhagen, is structured as a journal with daily entries, presumably based on notes taken during his captivity, and it is written in verse form. A version of it, in German and in prose, was published the same year in Leipzig. Here the author states that his intention is to “spread the truth and refute all false rumours.”²² This second version would facilitate the circulation of this text outside Denmark, but German was also the dominant language among the foreign policy elite in Copenhagen, not all of whom read Danish (for example, the man responsible for foreign affairs, the count J. H. E. Bernstorff). Like Hynnemør/Meyer, Ravn celebrates the symbolic virtues of the Danish flag and the benign nature of the king in Copenhagen. But unlike Meyer, Ravn draws a contrast between the Danish king and the capricious ruler in Marrakech. He also gives the most detailed account existing of the events surrounding the first Dano-Moroccan peace treaty, mostly as a firsthand account, and a rather critical explanation of the role of Buzaglo de Paz in this history.

Ravn tells how, after the conclusion of the original treaty in Marrakech, Longueville moved south to search for a suitable place to set up the trading post that the treaty allowed for. He brought ninety soldiers. The Christian merchants in St. Croix managed to use this military presence as a pretext to enrage the “common man.” The local people then started to behave threateningly. The officials offered insufficient protection. The tension led to Longueville sending away his armed men, but the word travelled to Marrakech, and the prince called upon the Danish officer. Longueville was arrested, and so was Ravn and twenty-four of his companions. They travelled overland to Marrakech, where they would remain as captives for two years.

De Paz is here named as the initiator of the whole project and described as a maker of intrigues.²³ Also, a brother of his was allegedly involved in the affair, in the capacity of interpreter. Ravn indicates that de Paz, whom he claims was born in Salé, tried to take control over the whole operation but was then taken as a captive to Marrakech with

²¹ Castries, “Le Danemark et le Maroc,” 330.

²² Wilh. Ravn, *Zuverlässiger Bericht von dem was während seiner Gefangenschaft in Marocko vorgefallen* (Leipzig and Copenhagen: Johann Benjamin Ackermann, 1754), 110. <https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/en/view/bsb00002308?page=1>

²³ Wilh. Fr. Ravn, *Kort underretning om det Maroccanske slaverie i aarene 1751, 1752 og 1753, dagviis forfattet paa værs* (København, 1754), 9. <http://www5.kb.dk/books/kubsam/2011/sep/00005> Ravn uses the name de Paz, not Buzaglo.

the Danes. The brothers seemed not to be well connected in Marrakech. Their Jewishness is a prominent part of Ravn's story, and the source of much depreciation.²⁴ Ravn describes the Moroccan Jews as both dirty and dishonest.²⁵ The Moroccans treated these Moroccan Jews worse than they did the Christians, according to Ravn.²⁶ The two brothers were taken to Marrakech with the Danes and their captors attempted to forcibly convert them to Islam. None of the Danes were subject to such treatment.

Ravn billed this as a history of "Moroccan slavery," though the German translation uses the term captivity (*Gefangenschaft*). The experience is explicitly likened to that endured by the people of Israel in Egypt in ancient times. "Oh God, bend this Pharaoh and redeem us from his hand," writes Ravn.²⁷ Nabil Matar has argued that one dominant idea in the Christian slave narratives is that the sufferings of the captives were portrayed as a mirror of the sufferings of Christ, making the sufferer "Christ-like."²⁸ Ravn's dramatic poem, however, indicates that the Old Testament is a more important ground for resonance: the description of the slaves mirror the Chosen People. This version of the Christian imagery, admittedly, is complicated by the fact that two Jewish brothers do play an important role in Ravn's poem. The de Paz brothers' sufferings are painted as harsher than the Danes, without this being invested with any transcendental meaning.

Ravn's years in Marrakech were spent doing manual work, but also with relative freedom to move around in the city. Scattered through the poem are observations of Morocco and the Moroccans. The inhabitants are referred to as "Moors" or "barbarians." They are not described with hostility—when they turn on the Danes it is because they are misled by the Christian merchants. He does, however, find them "credulous and cheap," and at one point claims that they are devoted to sodomy.²⁹ This characterisation occurs with no context, and no examples, as if repeating a well-known old trope. And indeed, it will later reappear in both Diderich's and Høst's texts.

The publication of Ravn's account was not devoid of a personal agenda. He mentions that he was meant to have been part of a "secret council" governing the mission in Morocco. But he regrets that the council was never convened and that his advice was never sought.³⁰ It is implied here that de Paz, the intermediary, who took on the role of "director" for trade, was the one who did not seek council. The German version of the text ends with the author declaring that his intention with this account has been to "refute false rumours," which must refer to a certain blame game going on in Copenhagen in the aftermath of the expedition.³¹ The remarks indicate that the government circles in Copenhagen were an intended reader of the text.

A Moral Dialogue on Captivity

As a European slave narrative, Ravn's poem is quite unusual in that the alleged slaves were not taken captive by corsairs on sea, but as members of a diplomatic trade mission.³² But

²⁴ See, e.g., Ravn, *Det Maroccanske slaverie*, 12.

²⁵ Ravn, *Det Maroccanske slaverie*, 12.

²⁶ Ravn, *Det Maroccanske slaverie*, 53.

²⁷ "Bøyd denne Pharao og frels os af hans Haand," Ravn, *Det Maroccanske slaverie*, 69.

²⁸ Nabil Matar, "Two Arabic Accounts of Captivity in Malta: Texts and Contexts," in *Piracy and Captivity in the Mediterranean: 1550–1810*, ed. Mario Klarer (Routledge, 2019), 261.

²⁹ "Til sodomiterie de er afskyelig hengiven, at man maa derover skrække sig," Ravn, *Det Maroccanske slaverie* 16.

³⁰ Ravn, *Det Maroccanske slaverie*, 11.

³¹ Ravn, *Zuverlässiger Bericht*, 110.

³² Compare with the standard captivity narratives as described by Östlund, in Joachim Östlund, "Dygdens prövning. Europeiska slaverättelser om livet i marockansk ofrihet," in *Dygder och laster: Förmoderne perspektiv på tillvaron*, ed. Catharina Stenqvist and Marie Lindstedt Cronberg (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2010).

while the Danes were captives in Marrakech, another group of Danes were kept captives in Fez. A group of sailors, led by their captain, L. Diderich, had been taken by corsairs off the coast of Portugal and brought to Fez via Tetouan, two years after Hynnemør had supposedly safely opened up Morocco for the Danes. They spent five years as the emperor Abd Allah's slaves before they eventually were ransomed by the Danish government.

The narrative of Diderich's captivity was first published in Copenhagen in 1756, about a year after his return, under two alternative titles. The first title page declares this to be a "truthful narrative" about the "pitiful slavery of the Christians in Barbary." A second title page promises a "short description of some noteworthy things in Barbary."³³ This double billing corresponds to the double nature of the text: on the one hand full of pathos and told for edification of the reader; on the other hand, a collection of plain information about slavery, government, and population in Barbary. Thus, the text promises two kinds of truths: transcendental truths and secular truths, truths about the experience of slavery and truths about Barbary. This combination of captive narrative and ethnographic details was quite conventional in the European captivity narratives of the eighteenth century.

The first title page furthermore describes the text as an "edifying mirror" (*et opbyggeligt spejl*). The metaphor has religious connotations. It refers to the practice of looking for the sake of learning about oneself, and had previously been used in 1727 in the book title *A Mirror for Faith* by Erik Pontoppidan, bishop of Diderich's hometown of Bergen and a leading Danish pietist theologian. Diderich's narrative is composed as a dialogue between two fictionalised characters, whose names also have Christian connotations. Theophilus (friend of God) recounts his personal experiences as a slave, and Timoteus (God's honour) offers his spiritual reflections in return. The book must have met with a certain success with readers, because it was reprinted in Bergen nearly twenty years later (1774) by a print shop run by the Lutheran priest and pietist Hans Mossin. The second edition has a short *appendix* which elaborates on the life at the court in Fez, further emphasising the cruel rule of the emperor. Here the author includes a reference to a Swedish narrative of Moroccan captivity, published in 1757 by another sea captain, Marcus Berg.³⁴ Passages from this Swedish narrative are copied into Diderich's text as additional substantiation of the latter's truthfulness. Though their slavery in Fez did not overlap in time, it appears that the two corresponded after the first publication of Diderich's narrative.³⁵

As to the description of Barbary, Diderich paints a sinister portrait of the emperor, with whom the author claims to have had many encounters, being a slave at his palace outside Fez. The emperor is portrayed as an unpredictable despot, cruel to both men, women, and animals—and his city was "bigger than any" he had ever seen in Europe.³⁶ Most of the details about his cruelty are, however, based on hearsay among the Christian slaves, and not on Diderich's personal observations. This fact does not provoke any reservations on the author's behalf about the "truthfulness" of the account. On the other hand, the author paints a rather positive image of the people of Barbary, whom

³³ First edition: [Diderich], *Sandfærdig fortællelse om de christnes ynkværdig slaverie udi Barbariet*. (København, 1756) Second Edition: [Diderich], *Sandfærdig fortællelse om de christnes ynkværdig slaverie udi Barbariet* (Bergen: H. Mossins bogtrykkerie, 1774. Further references goes to the second, enlarged, edition.

³⁴ [Diderich], *Sandfærdig fortællelse*, 145. On these two narratives, see also Emil Kaukonen and Mats Wickström, Encountering mid-eighteenth century Morocco from below: Slavery, race, and religion in two Scandinavian captivity narratives," in *Locating the global: Spaces, networks and interactions from the seventeenth to the twentieth century*, ed. Holger Weiss (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020)

³⁵ Joachim Östlund has discussed both these narratives, without pointing out that the authors read each other. Östlund, "Dygdens prövning." See also Joachim Östlund, "Swedish Barbary Captivity Tales: From Letters to Literature, 1650–1770," in *Mediterranean Slavery and World Literature*, ed. Mario Klarer (New York: Routledge, 2019).

³⁶ [Diderich], *Sandfærdig fortællelse*, 133.

he interchangeably refers to as “Moors,” “barbarians,” or even “Turks.” He claims to have found many “decent, honest” people (*skikkelige, ærlige Folk*), who have treated him with “honesty and accommodation” (*redelighed og retfærdighed*).³⁷ He claims that the emperor did encourage the slaves to convert upon arrival in Fez, and he admits that the slaves were living under harsh conditions and put to hard manual labour. But he also describes how the slaves were given a daily allowance, were allowed to celebrate Christmas and Easter, and permitted to circulate in town to do shopping and such. They also were allowed to write letters: Diderich claims to have written several hundred letters during his captivity, among others to the British consul in Tangiers and to Longueville, the Danish emissary in Marrakech. This correspondence was of course in the interest of the captors since a lively communication would improve the possibility of being ransomed.

Diderich offers detailed descriptions of the government and the customs of the empire, its fauna, geography, and the goods that were produced and traded. Gifts and tributes played a crucial role for this government, a fact that Diderich, from his position as a slave, seems to have a good understanding of.³⁸ He gives values and descriptions for the various gifts that people from different regions offered the emperor. Though he seems to intuit some system to this government, his conclusion is nevertheless that it is “strange, disordered and changeable” (*uordentlig, underlig og foranderlig*) and a marked contrast to the clemency and order of the Danish government.³⁹

Like Ravn, Diderich claims that the Moors are devoted to sodomy, though he does not cite any specific examples or stories.⁴⁰ Religion is approached as a set of practices, discussing prayers, ablution, and hajj, and not as a set of doctrines.

The description of Barbary blends with the language of pietism to produce a transcendental truthfulness. Pietism was a form of Protestantism emphasising the emotional aspects of religion, and the individual’s responsibility for their own salvation. It became the officially sanctioned form of religion in Denmark in 1730 when Christian VI took the throne.⁴¹ Rhetorically, pietism found resources in the language of the Bible to stimulate a concern with blood, salvation, redemption, and punishment.⁴² This language seems to resonate particularly well with the experiences of the slaves in Barbary. The redemption through the blood of Christ finds a counterpoint in redemption from the miseries of life in the slave pen in Fez. It is as if Diderich had the chance of visiting a biblical past, where clothes, buildings, and even the animals (lions, wild and in captivity) resembled the world known from the Bible. The captivity in Africa serves as a reminder that only God can make man free, and the Moroccans are seen as tools of the Christian God, to remind man of his lack of freedom.

In assimilating Barbary with the biblical land, there is a tendency here to perceive Barbary as a timeless place. But Diderich’s narrative is also anchored in historical time by the dates he gives for his captivity and his release. At some point it also comes to be tangent to the history of Longueville and the Danes in Marrakech: Diderich learns about their arrival in Morocco, which at first ignites a hope for his own redemption. Then he learns about their captivity through correspondence with Longueville. Diderich claims that Sidi Muhammad consulted with his father about how to deal with

³⁷ [Diderich], *Sandfærdig fortællelse*, 135.

³⁸ [Diderich], *Sandfærdig fortællelse*, 124–6.

³⁹ [Diderich], *Sandfærdig fortællelse*, 126, 128.

⁴⁰ [Diderich], *Sandfærdig fortællelse*, 129.

⁴¹ Aina Nøding, *Claus Fasting : dikter, journalist og opplysningspioner* (Oslo: Scandinavian Academic Press, 2018), 30.

⁴² Thomas Ewen Daltveit Slettebø, “In Memory of Divine Providence: A Study of Centennial Commemoration in Eighteenth-Century Denmark-Norway (1717–1760),” (PhD diss., University of Bergen, 2016), 115; Nils Gilje, *Tankeliv i den lutherske stat* (Oslo: Aschehoug, 2002), 301.

this issue, but the father responded by literally quoting Pontius Pilate: “I do wash my hands as I do not know the Danish nation” (*jeg vasker mine Hænder rene og kiender ikke den Danske Nation*).⁴³ More than anything, this seems to be a rhetorical devise to associate the two narratives, and, yet again, to associate the experiences of the captives with the biblical world. Later it is with despair that Diderich learns about the return of his compatriots to Denmark. He never met any of these Danes while in Morocco.

Høst's Moroccan Histories

The treaty of 1753 led to a more permanent Danish presence in Morocco in the following years. This presence was organised by the newly established Danish African Company. It had investors and a board in Copenhagen and *factories* (trading stations) in the Moroccan port cities of Safi, St. Croix (Agadir), and Salé. These were run by *factors*, for the most part not of Danish nationality. There were also a number of lower-ranking employees (*komisser*) at the *factories*. In addition, a Danish consul was appointed, who was an appointee and emissary of the king in Copenhagen, and not of the company. The consul held residence in Safi, and later in the newly founded port city of Essaouira (established in 1765 as an important element in Sidi Mohammad's new foreign trade policy). He formed a direct link between the royal courts in Copenhagen and Marrakech. At the same time, he was expected to serve the interests of the Danish merchants, and the Moroccan government seems to have related to the consul as a middleman between itself and the Danish *factors*, who, as merchants, often had their own interests to watch.⁴⁴

In 1760 the young Georg Høst arrived in Morocco to work for the company as a *komiss*. He was the son of a protestant minister of “modest means,” and he had studied at the University of Copenhagen to become a minister himself, before entering the service of the Danish African Company. In Morocco, he learned to read and speak Arabic, which seems to have been uncommon, as the foreign merchants and consuls in Morocco relied on translators, often from the local Jewish community.⁴⁵ Høst gradually took on additional duties as an interpreter for the consul. This gave him frequent access to the court in Marrakech.⁴⁶ Allegedly, it was on explicit demands from the emperor that Høst was for a short time given the title of vice-consul. When the company was dissolved in 1768, Høst returned to Copenhagen, only to take a new position as a civil servant in the Danish colonies in the West Indies. He returned to Denmark for good in 1776 and was then awarded the honorary title *etatsraad*. Back in Denmark, Høst devoted himself to literary pursuits and published two books on Morocco, as well as one book on the island St. Thomas (1791). He also wrote a history of Mulay Yazid, Muhammad b. Abd Allah's successor, that actually went to print, but all the printed copies were accidentally destroyed in a fire. A history of Algiers was left unfinished at his death.⁴⁷

⁴³ [Diderich], *Sandfærdig fortællelse*, 44.

⁴⁴ Halvard Leira and Iver B. Neumann, “Fremmede konsulere i Norge ca. 1660–1905,” *Historisk tidsskrift (København)* 106:2 (2006); Knud J. V. Jespersen and Ole Feldbæk, *Revanche og neutralitet : 1648–1814* (København: Gyldendal, 2002), 251.

⁴⁵ Simon Mills has sought to identify Arabic-speaking Englishmen in North Africa in early modern times, and found very few documented examples. Simon Mills, “Learning Arabic in the Overseas Factories: The Case of the English,” in *The Teaching and Learning of Arabic in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Jan Loop, Alastair Hamilton, and Charles Burnett (Brill, 2017), 383–4.

⁴⁶ Georg Høst, *Efterretninger om Marokos og Fes, samlede der i landene fra 1760 til 1768* (Kjøbenhavn: N. Møller, 1779), 93, fn. Høst states that when he first came to the country, he did not yet understand the language. See also Jens Kragh Høst, “Georg Høst,” *Clio* 1:1–3 (1821).

⁴⁷ Jens Kragh Høst, “Georg Høst,” 147.

Høst's two surviving published texts on Morocco, *Efterretninger om Marokos og Fes* and *The history of the Moroccan emperor Muhammad ben Abdallah*, are of a very different kind than the histories of Hynnemør, Ravn, and Diderich. The first is a geographical, antiquarian, ethnographical, political, historical, and pictorial description of the Alawi Empire. It can be classified as a chorography, as this early modern genre is described by Barbara Shapiro.⁴⁸ The second book, published a decade after the first, was a strictly chronological history of Muhammad b. Abd Allah, the ruler of the country during Høst's time there and a crucial actor in the history of the Danes in Morocco in the late eighteenth century.⁴⁹ Hynnemør, Ravn, and Diderich wrote about their experiences, being themselves the protagonists of narratives that also included some material that served to anchor the narrative in a world that was both strange and familiar for readers of the Bible. In Høst's two books, this material takes centre stage, and his personal narrative is moved to the margins. He seems to aspire to become an orientalist in a new meaning, as an expert on the Orient.⁵⁰ And his footnotes indicate that he had the literary resources available in Copenhagen to become so. By occasionally suggesting alternative transcriptions of Moroccan names and words (such as Merakch for Morocco [the city]), by commenting on other published texts, and by his practice of including certain words in Arabic script, Høst inscribed himself in the community of oriental experts.

The former clerk's way into oriental scholarship seems to have been encouraged by another traveller and orientalist living in Denmark at the time, Carsten Niebuhr. Niebuhr had in the 1770s quite a reputation as an orientalist, due to being the sole survivor of a famous Danish expedition to Yemen in the 1760s, at the time when Høst was in Morocco.⁵¹ The initiator of that expedition had been David Michaelis, a renowned biblical scholar who was later recognised as a pioneer orientalist.⁵² Michaelis had persuaded Count Bernstorff, the strongman in Danish foreign policy who had also been much involved in the establishment of the Danish Africa Company, to support a research mission to Yemen. Upon his return to Denmark, Niebuhr devoted his time to writing. He published the first volume of *Beschreibung von Arabien* in 1772, and in 1774 the accompanying travel journals (*Reisebeschreibung*), according to Lawrence Baack "the most comprehensive, accurate and unbiased available [on the Middle East] in that era."⁵³

When Høst returned to Denmark from the West Indies in 1776, Niebuhr was living in Copenhagen and still working on the remaining volumes of his *Beschreibung*. The two shared both linguistic knowledge and a broad interest in the Muslim world. They also both received the honorary title of *etatsraad*, and accordingly held the same social rank. According to Georg Høst and his son Jens Kragh Høst, who later wrote a short biography of his father, Niebuhr urged Høst to have his relations from Morocco and Fez published.⁵⁴

⁴⁸ On chorographies, see Barbara J. Shapiro, *A Culture of Facts: England, 1550-1720* (London: Cornell University Press, 2000), 65-70.

⁴⁹ The first book has previously been discussed in Gina Dahl, *Libraries and Enlightenment: Eighteenth-Century Norway and the Outer World* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2014); Eirik Lie Reikerås, "Maghreb i opplysningstidens Danmark-Norge," (Master's thesis, University of Bergen, 2019); P. K. Rasmussen, "Morocco, Mawlay Muhammad and Georg Høst: Four Scandinavian Accounts on Morocco in the Reign of Sultan Muhammad III, c. 1750-1790," (Master's thesis, University of Bergen, 1989). The second of Høst's books has not been the subject of any academic discussions.

⁵⁰ Osterhammel, *Unfabling the East*, 288.

⁵¹ The most complete historical study of the expedition is Lawrence J. Baack, *Undying Curiosity: Carsten Niebuhr and the Royal Danish Expedition to Arabia 1761-1767* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2014). It is also discussed in Vermeulen, *Before Boas*, 219 - 267; Carhart, *The Science of Culture in Enlightenment Germany*.

⁵² Marchand, *German Orientalism*, 41

⁵³ Baack, *Undying Curiosity*, 17.

⁵⁴ Jens Kragh Høst, "Georg Høst," 143.

The expedition to Arabia had been motivated by Michaelis's scholarly programme of Bible studies. This branch of studies was philological and empirical, assuming that a more profound understanding of the language of the Bible would be gained by a more detailed knowledge about the nature and customs in the part of the world where the Bible originated. It was a way of knowing that had very little in common with Timotheus's eagerness to read a transcendental religious meaning into the experiences in Morocco, as expressed in Diderich's dialogue. Michaelis's religious curiosity was historical and scholarly. Georg Høst, the former *komiss*, was, it seems, not a stranger to this programme.

Høst, like his predecessors, was interested in the Danish adventures in Morocco, which are described in both books. The second book even triggered a printed response from A. Æreboe, the first Danish consul in Morocco, who felt that he was not given due credit for the treaty negotiations in the 1750s.⁵⁵ But in contrast to Meyer's, Ravn's, and Diderich's texts, *Efterretninger* and *History of the Moroccan Emperor* are both ostensibly scholarly books, informed by other scholarly work. They are both footnoted, but more often than not the author indicates other texts only for the purpose of repudiating specific claims, not to document his information.⁵⁶ Their epistemic authority comes from the fact of his having been there, but also from exploring the archives in Copenhagen (for *History of the Moroccan Emperor*).

Efterretninger aspires to exhaustivity in its information, far from Diderich's more modest "brief description of Barbary." Høst discusses government, religion, and customs as well as population and nature. He shows an interest in presenting useful information for the statesman and the merchant, information on goods that are produced and consumed as well as on the fortifications of cities. But statesmen or merchants would probably not know how to make use of the instructions on how to produce and consume couscous. And they might not be interested in which route to take when travelling from Fez to Meknes, or the Berber vocabulary that is also included. Yet it all falls into the scope of Høst's broad empirical curiosity.

Of particular interest in *Efterretninger* are the thirty-four unique copperplate illustrations. They include maps and city prospects, but there are also illustrations of Moroccan ships, local costumes, and a particularly noteworthy scene from an audience with the sultan Muhammad b. Abd Allah in Marrakech. A large map of the whole country with dozens of place names conveys geographical information on the parts of the country that were less visited by Europeans (though the area south of the Atlas was largely a blank space). This map was of the author's making, based on knowledge from the field rather than accurate measurements. The copperplate prints were made in Copenhagen, and some of them, if not all, were based on sketches made in Morocco by Danish artisans.⁵⁷

As opposed to *Efterretninger*, *The history of the Moroccan emperor* was not primarily based on information collected in the field, but on documents that the author, by royal permission, dug out of the archive of the department for foreign affairs in Copenhagen.⁵⁸ The resulting "biography" has a clear point of view: the emperor is seen from Copenhagen. Høst's book primarily deals with the European politics of the emperor. In this respect

⁵⁵ [Æreboe], *Breve til en ven indeholdende oplysninger og berigtigelser til etatsråd G. Høsts skrift under titel: Den afdøde marokanske kaiser Mohamed Ben Abdallahs historie* (København: Zacharias Breum, 1793).

⁵⁶ This stands in contrast to the usage of footnotes of some of his contemporaries, such as William Robinson or Edward Gibbon. On the history of the footnote, see Anthony Grafton, *The Footnote: A Curious History* (London: Faber and Faber, 1997).

⁵⁷ The text identifies the Haas brothers, of a well-known family of engravers, as the engravers behind several of the illustrations. They were based on sketches made in Morocco by various Danes.

⁵⁸ Georg Høst, *Den Marokanske kaiser Mohamed Ben Abdallah's historie* (Kjøbenhavn: Nicolaus Møller og Søn, 1791), 23. I have in this essay used the now more common spelling of Muhammad b. Abd Allah.

it marks a sharp contrast with the almost contemporaneous work of Abu al-Qasim b. Ahmad al-Zayyani, whose Moroccan history shows hardly any interest in foreign affairs.⁵⁹

The Danish viewpoint does not mean that the emperor is without a voice in Høst's book. An important part of the material on which it is based consists of correspondence between Copenhagen and Marrakech, including correspondence coming from Marrakech that Høst translates and often renders at length. The book is a biography in the sense that the life-span of the emperor defines the timeline of the book. Thematically, this is a narrative of the *reign* of Sidi Mohammad, and not a book about his psychological development. But it does end with a brief written portrait of the emperor. The subject of this biography is, contrary to the topos of the cruel oriental ruler, described as a man with no lust for blood (he finds no pleasure in the shedding of blood, but only takes life in order to uphold justice or to consolidate his claim to the throne against powerful parties).⁶⁰

Regardless of the limitations of its source material, this book is a rarity, as possibly the only European book of the eighteenth century that is devoted to the life of a single Moroccan individual.

Høst does not emphasise the *truthfulness* of this account, as did Diderich in his account based on his experience as a slave, but its "authenticity." In this, we may read a shift from the author to his material as the genuine source of authority. Authenticity, Høst seem to claim, does not come from personal acquaintance with the subject, in the way that Diderich's truthfulness came from him having been there, but from the archival documents. This is significant as it signalled a new possibility for a historian to present a "true account."

The book on the Moroccan emperor is not a work of philosophical history, as it was understood in Europe at the time. But the preface poses explicitly a problem that in the eighteenth century may have been regarded as a philosophical question: Why do the subjects of the Moroccan despots so willingly allow themselves to be dispossessed, why do they embrace their servitude, why do they seemingly without grudges "kiss the chains that bind them"? These questions are not posed as a critique of the ruler, but in the name of an intellectual curiosity: by asking these questions, Høst constitutes the Moroccan as an "other" (why do they submit without opposition), someone to be understood and explained. At first sight his questions seem to echo Rousseau's famous observation that man is born free, but everywhere in chains.⁶¹ But Høst does not speak of the universalised "man," but of the particularised Moroccan subject. And he does not ask his questions rhetorically, but out of an interest in understanding the subjugation from the subject's point of view. The answers Høst gives are, on the one hand, unfavourable social conditions, such as poverty, ignorance, and poor education; and on the other hand slightly more culturally specific causes linked to his perception of Islam: belief in predestination and the general "enthusiasm" associated with a descendant of the prophet.

While the preface of the *Moroccan Emperor* talks about the inhabitants through the general category of "subjects," the author also has a more differentiated conception of the population of the country. In *Efterretninger*, he distinguished between the Moors, Berbers, and Arabs: the "Moors" being the urban population, the "Berbers" the population of the mountains, and the "Arabs" the rural seminomadic population. These categories

⁵⁹ Al-Zayyani, *Le Maroc de 1631 à 1812*. See also the preface by the translator, O. Houdas.

⁶⁰ Høst, *Efterretninger*, 61. In full: "Han er ikke grum og tyransk som hans forfædre, og finder ikke fornøielse i Blods Udgydelse, men straffer paa Livet alleneste for at haandhæve Retfærdighed eller for at befæste sig paa Tronen mod mægtige Partier, hvilket gemeenligt skeer paa en overlagt god Maneer, og under et Paaskud, som de ere nøde til at antage for gyldigt."

⁶¹ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Du contrat social* (Paris: Messidor 1987), 87.

are also employed in the *Moroccan Emperor*. The Berbers are alternatively referred to as the “Schila.”⁶² Whereas the Berbers were completely absent from the writings of Hynnemør, Ravn, and Diderich, Høst showed a considerable interest in them, and even included in his *Efterretninger* a short glossary of their language (which he also refers to as *tamazirgt*), with translations to Arabic and Danish, possibly the first printed in a European book.⁶³

Høst was not trained as an orientalist in the academic sense. But the fact that the material for the books was collected during his time there shows that he must have developed a scholarly interest in Morocco early on. This independently developed orientalist interest must then have intensified when he later returned to Denmark and established contact with other orientalist scholars, such as Niebuhr. It is therefore interesting to note that there are traces of Michaelis’s programme, which shaped Niebuhr’s travel to Arabia, also in Høst’s description of Morocco. He notes “the great similarity between the old Fathers and the customs of these people.”⁶⁴ And, just to mention one of many examples, on a single page of *Efterretninger* he points to no less than five different passages in the Bible which are more easily understood when one knows about the ways of constructing houses in Morocco.⁶⁵ The parallels that he draws indicate a connection between Høst and the more established orientalist circles in Europe. Knowledge of the Bible makes Morocco more familiar, and conversely, knowledge of Morocco makes the Bible more familiar.

Høst brought a Bible in Arabic with him to Morocco, apparently to be used as a tool for a religious dialogue. We get two short glimpses into this dialogue in a footnote in his chapter on religion, where he relates how a “reasonable Moor” once read in Høst’s Arabic Bible, and took issues with, the description in the Book of Genesis, of how God rested on the seventh day after creating the world. The Moor found it untenable to say that God needed rest, since God cannot possibly be tired, and he pointed to the literal meaning of the Arabic word that was used. In Høst’s rendition, the Moor has the last word, and the disputed word is included in the text.⁶⁶

This glimpse reveals that Høst was hardly a secular *person*, though he may come across as a secular *writer*. He discusses religion in Morocco in chapter 7 of *Efterretninger*, referring to adherents of the religion both as “Muslims” and as “Mohamedans.” He suggests that the religion should more correctly be referred to as “Elsalam.” For the doctrinal aspects of Islam, he seems to rely on George Sale, *Observations sur le mahometanisme*, but he also includes numerous references to specific chapters in the Quran, and sometimes direct quotes based on the translation of Du Ryer. Ann Thomson has suggested that secularism was an important part of eighteenth-century writings on Islam.⁶⁷ Høst’s writings, very much representing important trends in Enlightenment writings on Barbary, seem to nuance this view.

In the dedications of *Efterretninger*, Høst highlighted as specifically commendable that the book offered the first description of Morocco in the Danish language. But to reach the European community of orientalists it was crucial that the book was republished in a German translation in 1781. The German edition was published in Copenhagen, and the edition followed closely the Danish original, including the illustrations and dedications. This was not the case when a few years later, in 1783, a certain Schweighofer published

⁶² Høst, *Efterretninger*, 126. For a detailed discussion of the principles of classification of the population in Barbary in the eighteenth century, see Thomson, *Barbary and Enlightenment*, 75–86.

⁶³ The glossary was communicated to Høst by a Berber imam of Tamenart, and transcribed phonetically. Jackson also has glossaries of *shelluh*, translated to Arabic and English (Jackson, *The Empire of Morocco*, 220–1).

⁶⁴ “Den store lighed, som er imellem de gamle fædres og disse Folkes Lævemaade,” Høst, *Efterretninger*, 124.

⁶⁵ Høst, *Efterretninger*, 248.

⁶⁶ Høst, *Efterretninger*, 186.

⁶⁷ Thomson, *Barbary and Enlightenment*, 25.

Einleitung zur Kenntniss der Staatsverfassung beider vereinigten königreiche Maroko und Fes in Vienna. Despite the differences in title, subtly shifting emphasis towards constitutional aspects, the author made no big secret of the fact that the book was based on the German translation of Georg Høst's *Efterretninger*, to the degree that it reproduced his prints, one of which was displayed on the front page of the Viennese book.⁶⁸

At the date of its publication, Høst's *Efterretninger* was arguably the most detailed account of Morocco published in any European language. The book received praise from the well-respected orientalist David Michaelis, and from Johann Gottfried Herder.⁶⁹ This status was only challenged by the three-volume *Recherches historiques sur les Maures et histoire de l'Empire de Maroc*, published in Paris in 1787 by Louis de Chenier, whose period as French consul in Morocco partly overlapped with Høst's stay there. But as late as in 1899, the English writer Budgett Meakin wrote that "every subsequent writer has been indebted to the conscientious Høst."⁷⁰ This was much less the case for his book about the Moroccan emperor, which remained largely unknown and was only translated into French in 1998.

Though he was not an eyewitness to its beginning, Høst's account of the Danish experience in Morocco in the 1750s and 1760s very much shaped its perception as a historical event. Fifty years after the dissolution of the Danish African Company, it became the object of a historical study in Denmark: *Det danske afrikanske kompagnies historie*, written by J. L. Rasmussen, a professor of oriental languages in Copenhagen.⁷¹ The book narrates the birth, life, and demise of the company, conscientiously registering all the costs and expenses associated with it. Eventually, after the death of King Frederik and the demise of Count Bernstorff, the board asked for the company to be dissolved, thus triggering a renegotiation of the Danish-Moroccan treaty.

Rasmussen never, to our knowledge, visited the Orient. His linguistic capabilities made it possible for him to probe the archives of the Danish African Company, and boast on the title page that the study was based on archival documents, thus signalling an affiliation with new forms of historiography. But his formal position as an orientalist seemingly did not generate in him an interest in the Orient per se. According to the book's preface, written by Rasmussen's colleague Laurits Engelstoft, a professor of history, the intent in this history was to learn lessons relevant to political economy. The lesson he suggested was that the state should not interfere too much in economic affairs. Hence it was as a negative example of political economy that the orientalist wrote his history of Danes abroad. Suzanne Marchand has observed that the interest and curiosity about "modern Asia" vanished in Germany from the 1780s on.⁷² Maybe Rasmussen's book, and the contrast it offers with Høst's two, suggests that this was also the case in Denmark.

Conclusion

In the eighteenth century there were basically three ways of travelling to Morocco for a European: as a captive, as a merchant, or as a diplomatic envoy. The Danish texts that I have discussed here originate in all three travel practices. They belong to different textual genres, had different kinds of authors, probably reached different kinds of readers, and they followed different patterns of circulation.

⁶⁸ Johann Michael Schweighofer, *Einleitung zur Kenntniss der Staatsverfassung beider vereinigten königreiche Maroko und Fes* (Wien: Sebastian Hartl, 1783). A French translation of Høst's book was published in Fes as late as in 2002.

⁶⁹ Jens Kragh Høst, "Georg Høst," 143–4.

⁷⁰ Budgett Meakin, *The Moorish Empire: An Historical Epitome* (London, Sonnenschein, 1899), 482.

⁷¹ J. L. Rasmussen, *Det under kong Frederik den femte oprettede Danske Afrikanske Kompagnies Historie* (Kiøbenhavn: Andreas Seidelin, 1818).

⁷² Marchand, *German Orientalism*, 41.

Hynnemør/Meyer's text was written by a ship's captain, with the possible help of a ghost writer, for circulation as a manuscript among the burghers of Bergen. Diderich's text, firmly belonging to the genre of captivity narrative with respect to its content (despite its idiosyncratic form), had a similar genesis: it was written by a captain with help from a ghost writer to meet a demand in his immediate surroundings. His study also circulated before it was published, and then republished in an expanded edition. The publication greatly increased its reach. Ravn's text, written by a lower clerk seemingly to set the record of events straight, was also published in two editions, even in two languages. The author of the final two texts in our study was the clerk turned orientalist scholar Georg Høst, aiming at a broad and complex readership interested in military, economic, and political issues, but also in antiquarian, historical, and ethnographic issues regarding the lands of the Alawi emperor. His description of Marokos and Fez was also published in two languages, with an additional bootleg edition. The books made Høst into an orientalist, with all the ambiguities of the orientalist scholar, writing empirical works out of curiosity and an eye to military consequences.

There are, finally, different meanings of truthfulness at play in these texts. The earliest texts are concerned with presenting truths about the Danish adventures in Morocco, and to set the record straight. Diderich's captive narrative seeks to use the experience as an occasion to hold up a mirror and present transcendental truths. Høst is the one who most obeys the imperative of empiricism, letting loose his curiosity about all things Moroccan.

Høst marked the high point of the Danish interest in "modern" Morocco. When the stories of the Danes in Morocco were re-narrated in the early nineteenth century, it was not out of a visible interest in the land and the customs, but from an interest in domestic policies. There was, perhaps, no longer any demand for truths about Morocco.

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