FROM LANZAROTE TO MOROCCO: THE CAREER OF A DUTCH RENEGADE

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On 1 May 1618 a fleet of 38 Algerine vessels disembarked some 3000 soldiers and mariners on Lanzarote. The corsairs were commanded by Mustafa Rays and Soliman Rays. The first was a Turk and he commanded the land-forces. The ships and their crews stood under the orders of Soliman Rays, a Dutch renegade and former lieutenant of the redoutable Simon de Danser or Danseker, and at that very moment kapudan pasha, since he had been appointed admiral of the seas by the Ottoman sultan in September 1617.

THE ALGERINE «CAPTIVE»

During the raid the Algerines took 900 Christian captives. Among them was a Dutch skipper called Jan Jansz. from Haarlem. It is, however, quite possible that Jan Jansz. accompanied the privateers out of his own free will, since Soliman Rays, or de Veenboer — «the Peat-digger» as he was called by the Dutch, manned his ships mainly with fellow-countrymen. Moreover the situation of Jan Jansz. on the Canaries was at least ambiguous, or even perilous. On Lanzarote he posed as a Catholic, though he began his career by serving the States General of the Dutch Republic as a privateer. His letter of marque allowed him to attack the Dunkirkers. This was probably not what Jan Jansz. understood to be easy money and he soon transgressed the modifications of his letter of marque, whereafter he was obliged to take refuge in La Rochelle. There he fitted out a small vessel for freebooting which was wrecked near Lanzarote. Thus the coming of the Algerines might well have meant a solution for some nasty problems of the Dutch corsair. Any-
way, after several weeks of plundering and looting—the corsairs even kidnapped the statues of saints—the Algerine squadron split up and sailed home. One convoy, consisting in 10 sails, was on 2 July sighted off Gibraltar. The Spanish admiral Miguel de Vidazaabal who had 9 ships under his command agreed with the Dutch commodore Lambrecht Hendrickxsz.—also called Moyen Lambert, i.e. Lambert the Handsome—who was sailing in the Straits, to intercept the convoy. Lambrecht Hendrickxsz. was in command of 9 ships. After a fierce battle the Dutch-Spanish fleet captured nine Algerines, the tenth was set ablaze during the fight and sank that same night. The prizes were taken to Gibraltar where the allies learnt that they were the advance guard of a larger squadron which would sail through the Straits at any moment. In great haste de Vidazaabal fitted out six of the prize vessels with soldiers and gunners. The next day the augmented Spanish fleet, accompanied by 4 Dutch vessels, set sail and managed to capture or sink several Algerines more. Finally only about 17 sails reached Algiers safely.

Apparently Jan Jansz. felt like a fish in water in the notorious and occasionally anarchistic Algerine society. The very least one can say about him is that he was a decided man, who had not the slightest problem of assimilation and who must have had the career-mindedness of a post-modern yuppie. As early as 20 November 1618 Wynant de Keyser van Bollandt, consul of the United Provinces in Algiers, wrote to the States General that he was convinced that «Soliman Rays would from now on stay ashore and promote his steersman to captain». This steersman, of course, was «a certain Jan Janssen from Haerlem who has turned Turk». Whereas most Christian captives hesitated for years before converting to Islam.—although they were often physically and morally brutalized—it was a matter of days for Jan Jansz., who henceforth took the name Murad Rays.

As a matter of fact the Dutch consul did not misjudge the situation. Soliman Rays indeed stayed on shore for over a year, leaving the work to be done to his new lieutenant. Meanwhile Soliman Rays tried to gain a new respectability as a businessman, for he had long cherished the ideal of being a well-respected merchant trading with the United Provinces. This Soliman Rays probably lived in Algiers since 1607 and even as a privateer he had always made some efforts to be on good terms with the States General. So it was common knowledge that the renegade never hindered Dutch ships and even redeemed Dutch captives, be it that his conduct was very often slightly ambiguous. It happened more than once that if his squadron came upon a Dutch cargo, he kept his own ship aloof while less scrupulous associates plundered the unfortunate Dutch.
From Lanzarote to Morocco: The career of a Dutch renegade man. Though unwilling to give a helping hand by cleaning out his fellow-countrymen, Soliman Rays nevertheless claimed his part of the booty. After a quarrel with Wynant de Keyser in July 1617 he even dispatched a letter to the States General proposing to appoint him consul since he was far better placed to help «our Dutch nation» on land and on sea alike, whereas Wynant de Keyser merely had his private profits in mind. In September 1617 a certain Joris van Cats who, according to the rumours, was entrusted by the States General to negotiate secretly with the renegade did indeed arrive. These negotiations probably led nowhere and in 1618 war broke out between the United Provinces and Algiers that lasted until 1622. Lambrecht Hendricxsz. was sent to the Mediterranean «to seek the sea-rovers in unremitting campaigns, to destroy them completely or to spread such fear among them that they will abandon the seas». As we have seen, Lambert the Handsome was doing a good job indeed.

Perhaps due to the outbreak of this war Murad Rays proved in these early years of his career to be a rather unusual type of corsair. Unlike his patron and most other renegade privateers —and even pirates—who often spared vessels sailing under the flag of their native country, thereby hoping to be pardoned once they had chosen to retire, Murad Rays considered every ship to be fair game. During the next few years Jan Jansz. was quite often mentioned in the correspondence of Wynant de Keyser, and his reputation consequently went from bad to worse. On 21 September 1619 the consul informed the States General that Captain Jan had taken a «Hollander whom he had deprived of his guns, victuals, sails and hawsers». Moreover «he tortured a member of the crew to death in order to get money and he was planning to sell in Salé all valuables on which he could lay his hands».

In 1620 Murad Rays took, amongst others, several Dutch prizes in the Mediterranean as well as in the Atlantic, but from now on he treated his fellow-countrymen better. He brought some of them to Algiers, while releasing others immediately. Such was the case with the crew of a Dutch ship loaded with sugar. He transferred the men onto a Hanseatic ship he took shortly afterwards so that they could sail home. The German skipper, Hans Plagge from Hamburg, was less lucky. Murad Rays sold him in Salé while his crew eventually turned up on the slavemarket of Algiers.

Meanwhile his patron Soliman Rays, alias the Peatdigger, had returned to sea where he proved to be far less fortunate than his lieutenant. In November 1619 he was hunted down the Atlantic coast of Morocco by a Dutch-Spanish squadron. He barely escaped and lost 2 ships.
in the operation. Almost a year later, in October 1620, he met a violent death in a ferocious battle off the Spanish coast near Cartagena, fighting with a squadron consisting of 2 English, 2 French and 1 Dutch vessel. It almost seems to be the irony of fate that the freighters merely carried fish.

CORSAIR IN SALÉ

Shortly after these events Jan Jansz. left the Mediterranean, probably once and for all, and settled in Salé on the Atlantic coast of Morocco. In this period the political situation in Morocco was rather confused. After the death of the great sultan al-Mansur (1578-1603), internecine strife for his succession broke out between his heirs. The conflict deteriorated into a genuine civil war, that would last for half a century bringing the country to the brink of ruin. Perhaps there is no need to say that during this period, commonly known as the fitna, more or less explicit independence movements appeared all over Morocco. This was exactly what was happening in Salé when Jan Jansz. arrived there. Though nominally subject to Mawlay Zaydan, the Saleians embarked on their own course quite literally.

In the sixteenth century the city of Salé already had a modest reputation of being a nest of corsairs, but during the first decade and a half of the seventeenth century things changed rapidly. In this period of internal political disorder, the Moroccan Atlantic ports became a meeting place for Mediterranean corsairs and European pirates—most of them former privateers—while the towns got an influx of often vengeful refugees who were expelled from their homes. The moriscos who settled in Salé originated from Hornachos and had, while still in Spain, cultivated a more than lifelong tradition of resistance against the authorities. They stuck to this tradition and from at least 1617 Salétian corsair raiding was a joint venture of renegades and moriscos.

On the other hand the United Provinces tried to establish diplomatic contacts with the Moroccan sultan. The overtures dated from the days of al-Mansur when the Dutch tried to form an alliance with the sultan against Spain. Things came to a conclusion with the 1610 treaty between the Dutch republic and Mawlay Zaydan (1603-1627). The treaty mainly focused on trading problems—as the Twelve Years’ Truce had been concluded between the United Provinces and Spain in 1609 it was safer not to emphasize the military implications—but the Dutch were nevertheless hoping that Mawlay Zaydan could reconquer the Spanish pos-
sessions on the coast (such as Larache and al-Mamura) and that they would obtain a fortress themselves. Circa 1620 it had become quite clear that the sultan would never succeed in restoring the territorial integrity of his country nor hand over a harbour to the Dutch or even allow them to construct one on his territory. Official Dutch expectations were reduced to more modest proportions: they hoped Mawlay Zaydan would restore law and order, prevent the Moroccan corsairs from attacking Dutch ships, or, if the worst came to worst, release privateered vessels, goods and captives, more or less in this order. But even there the sultan’s authority often turned out to be deficient.

In the summer of 1621 —the year in which the Twelve Years’ Truce expired— the States General received a letter from Mawlay Zaydan. He requested help with his plans to construct a new harbour in the bay of Aler, some 55 kilometres north of Safi, by that time the only port he effectively held. After deliberations that lasted until autumn 1622 the United Provinces sent two ships, an engineer, some stonedressers and experienced gunners. The mission was led by Albert Ruyl.

Meanwhile Jan Jansz. had become a man of importance in what was often styled the «sea-rovers republic» of Salé. According to the testimony of the Spanish renegade Juan Rodelgas, alias Mostafa, made before the Holy Office on 14 October 1622 in Las Palmas, Murad Rays was one of the leading captains of the Saletian fleet. He was always accompanied by at least 8 «Flemish» renegades. Juan Rodelgas, who served under Jan Jansz., told his interrogators how the Dutch renegade captured a «Flemish» vessel loaded with cod off the Spanish coast. He embargoed the freight, weapons and munition but —and this becomes a quite classical statement concerning Murad Rays— he released the crew. It seems rather obvious that Murad Rays attempted to lose his awful reputation of ruthless pirate. Instead he posed as the defender and protector of the Dutch sailors. This was the impression Albert Ruyl got on his arrival in Salé in December 1622 anyway. According to his log the Saletians were not very eager to set the Dutch captives free without any pecuniary accommodation, since they did not hold the sultan and his treaties in high esteem. When Murad Rays put into the harbour ten days later, Albert Ruyl expressed the hope that he would be able to free «our people with his help». The very next day a small Saletian vessel indeed accosted the Dutch. Aboard were «renegades who were all under the command of Jan Jansz. who had promised to hand over our people... and Captain Jan did board our ship and gave us every Dutchman who wanted to be free. So we got there 13 men and 2 boys, together with some English, and many attest the aforesaid Jan Jansz. does a lot of good
for the Dutch, Murad Rays continued these policies. In a letter of a member of the widely dispersed Pallache family, dated 13 April 1623, he is mentioned as having obtained from the qaid the liberation of Dutch sailors taken captive by Saletian corsairs raiding several Dutchmen, though the Scottish seamen remained in bondage. On the other hand Murad Rays barely paid any attention to the «free ship, free goods» principle so dear to the Dutch authorities. In July 1623 the States General sent a request to the qaid of Salé for restoring «La Bonne Aventure» to her legal owners. The ship was caught by «capitaine Jan Jansz. van Haerlem, renegado soubz le commandement du roy de Marocos... le detenant pour bonne prinse et les Franchois pour esclaves, nonobstant leur pasport quiz avoient du prince d’Oranges...».

In November 1623 this request unchained an authentic row among the «noble, valiant and highly discreet gentlemen» of the States General. As a matter of fact a tempest obliged a «Turkish» ship from Salé to shelter in the harbour of Veere. Shortly afterwards the Saletian sailed to Flushing where the ship had to be repaired before she could set on her long voyage home. Jan Jansz. landed no goods, «save some Christian slaves, French as well as English, who returned immediately to their countries». At first the States General decided the «Turk» had to be helped since his sole intention was to liberate the slaves. Moreover they thought it wise not to provoke complaints of «those of Algiers and the king of Morocco» about infringements of the capitulations. Diplomatic protest of the French ambassador later that month caused some concern and the States General resolved that the ship should leave the port as soon as possible. A Dutch squadron would protect the «Turk» from French or English attacks. But on 15 December 1623 the admiralty of Zealand announced that 2 more rovers from Algiers had put in. Thus the States General asked the admiralty to guarantee that all «Turkish» ships would disappear «in order to avoid scandal to the neighbouring princes». Furthermore the States General decided, inter alia, that, although renegades ought to be punished severely, such a step would not be expedient as most agents of Muslim rulers were renegades themselves. Finally they did not think it appropriate that the «Turks» be escorted as far as the «Spanish Sea». For one thing this would stop the «Turks» from privateering. On the other hand, potential French or English aggressors would hardly appreciate the presence of Dutch men-of-war. In January 1624 the French tried to embargo one of the ships but the rovers left Zealand just in time. Their home voyage stirred a not wholly undeserved storm of protest from the French as the «Turks» took at least 15 French vessels during this lap. To make things even worse several
Dutch skippers joined the Barbary corsairs. They enthusiastically helped to clean out the French ships and, acting on their own initiative, sold the crews as slaves to the corsairs. Thus it is quite understandable that the Dutch authorities were not exactly straining at the leash to welcome further visits from Barbary.

ADIMIRAL OF THE SULTAN

These exploits certainly must have increased the prestige Jan Jansz. already enjoyed among the Saletians. Shortly after his return he is mentioned as «amiral Morat Raïx», though it seems that his function had a rather unofficial character at that time. This can be gathered from a letter dated 30 May 1624. Murad Raïs and the qaid placed an order for an enormous amount of arms and ammunition in the United Provinces. The order was carried out but provoked protests from the sultan’s ambassador. According to the latter munitions could only be delivered at the sultan’s request. This seems to indicate that the position held by Jan Jansz. was not recognised by Mawlay Zaydan and was at the best an unofficial one.

In August the news of the renegade’s new status was confirmed by Moïse Pallache, who sojourned at the court of the sultan. It is most likely that Jan Jansz. had by now become enembroiled in high politics: «il est venu an ceste court le capitaine Morato Arai de Salé, nomé autrement Jan Jansz., van Harlem, et Sa Royalle Magesté luy a acordé la generalité de Salé pour la navigation. Et despuis, il m’a donné entendre le gran tort que ceux de Salé fesoint au sujets de V.A., et qu’il voulloit avoir du Roy letre patente en ces meins pour la liberté de tels affaires, à sçavoir afin que persone ne puisse pas tenir esclave ny prendre les sujets de V.A. ny les biens. Pour quoy il a donné à entendre a Sa Magesté forses raisons, tellement que Sa Magesté, considran la affaire, et ausy la gran afection qu’il porte aux affaires de V.A., luy a acordé a dit capitaine Morato Araïs una patente, laquelle est entre ses meins, afin que personne ne puisse prendre ny faire esclave les biens ny sujets de V.A., à grandes amandes; de fason que je espere que, de ore en avant, il n’y aura quelque mescontentement entre les sujets de V.A. et les sujets du Roy à Salé, puisque l’affaire est recommandé audict Morato Raïs, que, selon qu’il m’a dict, il a grand désir de doner en tout contentement à V.A.» It seems obvious that Mawlay Zaydan was regularising an existing state of affairs.

Meanwhile the ill-fated mission of Albert Ruyl had left Morocco on 1 June. Ruyl had not been able to achieve anything due to numerous
misunderstandings, sabotage by the Pallache family and the untimely actions of some Dutch corsairs in Moroccan waters. The main objective, the building of a new port and castle on the bay of Aïer proved to be unattainable. Nevertheless Mawlay Zaydan remained convinced that he needed an operating base on the Atlantic which could serve as a home port for an official Moroccan navy. During his stay at the sultan’s court Jan Jansz. pointed out that it was equally possible to create a new harbour at Azemmour, just by constructing a mole. His proposal was opposed by Antoine de Sallettes, sieur de Saint-Mandrier. This Provençal gentleman-adventurer had lived in Morocco since 1614 and being «extremement addroit en toute sorte d’exercice militaire et tres-scavant au sciences mathematiques», he became a favourite of Mawlay Zaydan. Jan Jansz. roundly accused Saint-Mandrier of being an Spanish agent. If this was mere guess-work, it was rather good, for the Spaniards, alarmed by the plans of the renegade, had indeed made contact with the Provençal. Saint-Mandrier had often expressed his desire to return to France because «cette demeure dans les terres infidelles ne luy agréoit pas». But as he was wanted for murder in his home country, Philip III engaged himself to acquire a pardon from the French king for Saint-Mandrier, and the restitution of his properties. Saint-Mandrier succeeded in convincing the sultan that the renegade’s plans were unworkable. Nevertheless Mawlay Zaydan had lost his faith in his favourite and after Saint-Mandrier had tried to escape on a French vessel in 1625, the sultan had him imprisoned. He was beheaded on the orders of Mawlay Zaydan on 14 April 1626.

Though Bookin-Weiners statement as if «Mawlay Zaydan lost whatever residual control he may have had over the corsairs» when he named Murad Rays admiral of the fleet, might be a slight exaggeration, he is certainly on the mark when saying that on Salé became «a more active corsair center». The favourite hunting grounds of the privateers now even included the banks of Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. The situation of the Newfoundland fleet, «being about two hundred and fiftye sayle of shippes and barques of noe defence haveing some fower or five thousand men», was so much endangered —as the mayor of Poole wrote on 8 August 1625 to the Privy Council— that if no measures were taken one should not be surprised if the fleet of Salé «will not leave his most excellent Majesty saylors to man his fleets». The mayor of Plymouth complained on 12 August 1625 there were «general fears for the ships from Virginia and Newfoundland. The Turkish pirates had taken in ten dayes ships and 200 persons».

Moreover the corsairs cruised in the Channel, used Torbay as a refuge, ambushed near the Scilly Islands and the coast of Cornwall, while
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In 1626 they were prominently present on the Welsh coast where they caught several ships. The only counter-action the British authorities took was their decision to extinguish the Lizard light because «it guided the pirates» 27. The French also noticed that more than ever vessels and seamen were taken by Saletians. The Spanish coasts and ships were quasi permanently endangered and even the *carrera de las Indias* suffered losses.

Murad Rays, on the other hand, remained loyal to the stipulations of the treaty concluded between Mawlay Zaydan and the United Provinces. Dutch vessels experienced hardly any hinder from the Saletians and if any Dutchman was brought in, Jan Jansz. took appropriate steps, though some episodes remain far from clear. In September 1624 the States General wrote to Mawlay Zaydan requesting him to intervene on behalf of the shipowners of the *Vliegende Hert* which was abandoned in Salé by her skipper after he had fraudulently sold the cargo. In the summer of 1625 the sultan answered that the qaid of Salé had maintained the ship for a while. Finally he confined her to the admiral. Jan Jansz. had the ship repaired and provisioned and put out to sea in her. But not without leaving a quite detailed bill of the expenses he had incurred. The owners could recover their ship if they would be so kind as to settle the costs. This idea must have been unbearable to the merchants—they thought the expense claim utterly unacceptable and requested a commission of reprisal, which was not granted them 28.

Yet Murad Rays did his best to take the Republic’s interests to heart. When the ambassador Cornelis Pijnacker was sent to the Regencies in 1625 it was part of his assignement to insist on the liberation of the French sailors who were taken after the visit of the Barbary corsairs during the winter of 1623-1624. These captives were held partly in Algiers, partly in Salé. As the negotiations—or rather the bartering—in Algiers was sufficiently difficult, Pijnacker contacted a certain Regeb Rays, a renegade captain born in The Hague, who had sent a messenger to Murad Rays, where-upon the French captives in Salé were promptly released 29.

Early in 1626 Jan Jansz. was in the Republic again. As the information about this visit is scarce—as always—and ultimately contradictory, it is very difficult to reconstruct the actual state of affairs. In any case, in February two «Turkish» corsairs reached Rotterdam by sailing down the Maas. On their trip to the United Provinces they had plundered a French freighter loaded with tobacco. In the Channel they had been attacked by a Dunkirkker who had severely damaged one of the ships, which may have been the reason the corsairs put into the «be-
Recalling their experiences in the winter of 1623-1624, the States General were quite upset by the news. Obviously panic-stricken, they ordered the admiralty of Rotterdam to take off all renegades, free the slaves, make the corsairs leave the harbour as soon as possible and accompany them to the open sea. Meanwhile, the French envoy firmly protested and tried to embargo the tobacco. The corsair to whom the tobacco now belonged, Haggy Mamy Rays — formerly known as Pieter Janssen, born in Ackerloot and at that time stationed in Algiers, was not in the least impressed by the Dutch authorities. The plea that the Ottoman sultan had prohibited raiding English and French vessels even provoked menaces: Mamy Rays would bomb the town if anyone dared to touch his tobacco. The States General were unable to reinforce their orders. Finally, they decided that the French envoy should be indemnified by a third party, so that he would waive his claim. Yet the States General were deeply concerned that this third party had no demonstrable relations to them as they did not want the French envoy to find out that they were settling the bill. At any rate, the corsairs even succeeded in selling one of their ships. They left Dutch waters unharmed at the end of April 1626. Haggy Mamy Rays must have accompanied Jan Jansz to Salé, which he henceforth used as his home port. The colourful career of this rénie flamand, habitué à Salé ended in July 1636 when he was overtaken by a French squadron.  

Apart from his corsairing activities, Jan Jansz. earned quite a living by acting as the agent and protector of the pirate Claes Gerritz. Compaen. He was a genuine Hollander, born in Oostzaan in 1587. He started his career as a merchant-venturer to the Guineacoast, albeit not very successfully. Later, he got involved in the often semi-official cat-and-mouse games between Spaniards, Dunkirkers, Ostenders and the spiritual heirs of the Sea-Beggars. By 1624 he finally obtained a letter of marque from the States General. But he had barely left the port of Hoorn when he took his first prize: a herring boat from Egmond. During the summer of 1624 Claes Compaen established a solid reputation as an unfindable and invincible pirate. Many years later, when he lived quietly in Zaandam, he claimed to have caught in those more turbulent days more than 350 ships. Claes Compaen mainly cruised between southern Ireland, where he enjoyed the friendship of the earl of Strafford, and his favourite Moroccan ports of call, Safi and Salé. As early as November 1624 the States General begged the sultan to have Compaen arrested if he turned up in any Moroccan harbour. But Mawlay Zaydan did not make a move. According to some he called the pirate friend and even honoured him with the rather pompous title Lord of the Sea, of which
Compaen was extremely proud. The States General, being at a complete loss, in the end decided to offer the pirate a pardon. But as the pirate remained at sea, they had to prolong the period during which Compaen could take advantage of the offer. The news of the prolongation was brought to Salé by Hein Aertz, half-brother of Compaen. Hein Aertsz stayed at the house of Jan Jansz. for quite a while. When Claes Compaen finally turned up in March 1627, he courteously refused a pardon granted to him by the English crown, decided to accept the Dutch offer and sailed home.

THE RAID ON ICELAND: AN ALGERINE VENTURE

This same year 1627 was startled by what has been called «the boldest venture» of the Barbary corsairs: their raid on Iceland and the so-called sack of Reykjavik. Most historians who have published on the Barbary corsairs, or even on piracy in general, have ascribed the «sack of Reykjavik» to a Saletian squadron under the command of Jan Jansz. From Icelandic accounts of the attack a entirely different emerges. The raid started on 20 June 1627, the last corsair sailed off on 16 July —after firing nine salutes and enriching the Icelandic liturgy with a prayer for protection against «the cunning of the Pope and the terror of the Turk»— and on 17 August the corsairs gained Algiers. The Icelanders identified the sea-rovers with certainly as Algerines—all of the several hundreds of captives landed anyway on the bedesten of Algiers— and the leader of the expedition seems indeed to have been a Murad Rays, who was variously described as a German or a Dutch renegade. There is no need to retell here the adventures of the Barbary corsairs in Iceland, although one fact should be noted: the «sack of Reykjavik» never occurred. This popular canard originates in some confused and incomplete details on the Iceland raid given by some minor Dutch historiographers and chroniclers. On the basis of these particulars L.C. Vrijman, and with him the most influential historian on piracy, Ph. Gosse, identified this Murad Rays as Jan Jansz. and the Barbary corsairs therefore as Saletians.

Nevertheless, for long though the only well-known source for the raid was a short remark in the work of P. Dan. In his Histoire de Barbarie et de ses corsaires, printed in Paris in 1637 he relates how «en 1627 trois vaisseaux d’Alger, conduits par un Renegat Allemand, nommé Come Murat, furent si hardis que d’aller jusques en Dannemarc, ou prenant terre en l’Isle d’Island, ils enlevèrent plusieurs mesnages
escartes l’un de l’autre, & firent esclaves quatre cens personnes qu’ils emmenèrent». In the Dutch translation of his work the commander was characterized as «High German renegade, called Kure Morat» and in the next pages P. Dan states quite rightly «Kure Morat, that means, Morat the Cross-eyed» 33. These details make it possible to identify the commander of the Iceland-raid as an Algerine corsair captain who roamed the seas in this period. The above-mentioned Cornelis Pijnacker compiled a list of the most valiant and therefore most feared Algerine privateers during his stay in the Regency. Among the captains cited by Pijnacker —they truly constitute a pick of renegades— figures a «Murat the Cross-eyed from Hamburg». And Pijnacker adds «as he is cross-eyed, he is called this both by the Turks and the Dutch» 34.

AN ADMIRAL FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

In the meantime the relations between de Saletians and Mawlay Zaydan perceptibly deteriorated. When the Saletians, and more in particular the Hornacheros who lived in the qasbah, ousted the Spanish renegade qaid of the sultan in the spring of 1627, the last formal ties between the moriscos and the sultan were broken. Mawlay Zaydan died shortly afterwards and from then on the Saletians established an independent government which lasted until 1641. This period of the town’s history is characterized by internal strife between its different population groups: the Hornacheros in the qasbah, the moriscos who settled afterwards in what is currently called Rabat (Sla al-Djedid or New Salé) and the original inhabitants of the city who mainly lived in Salé proper (Sla al-Bali or Old Salé). In these years of discordance the various factions did not hesitate to take up arms one against the other for political and economic preponderance 35.

In this turmoil Jan Jansz. managed in one way or another to maintain his position, though he must have been anxious about the future since on 12 August 1627 he wrote to the States General that as long as he remained in charge, he would take care that «the treaty and alliance concluded between the States General and his Royal Highness Mole Sydan would not be violated» and that he himself would favour his fatherland until his death. «But I can not do more than I have done, because these people here rose up against the King. What will be the end, God alone knows» 36.

Though the renegade’s fears may have had good grounds, he still must have been held in high regard by the Saletians. During the next
few years he played an important role on the political scene and in 1626 he had already become close friends with the experienced English envoy in Morocco. This John Harrison called Jan Jansz. «Captain John» and styled him «a great frend to our nation». John Harrison, who had tried to form an alliance between the Moroccan moriscos and Charles I, may have had good reasons to do so since on his home voyage he had escaped from being chased by three Spanish men-of-war, thanks to the protection and intervention of Jan Jansz. Yet it seems that Jan Jansz. for some time acted —on his own account— as a defender of the English. In previous years he had freed several English captives. Harrison relates how on this same trip he had indeed «taken two Hamburgers comming from Mallaga and fyve of our English merchants in them homeward bound, whom he releassed and gave freellie to me, as he hath ever donn Englishmen, never doing hurt to any, but good to maine (sic)».

On the other hand it is not unlikely that at that moment Jan Jansz. was mainly concerned with creating an atmosphere of goodwill since the envoy was supposed to deliver arms and ammunition in return for the liberation of the English captives in Salé. In 1629 and 1630 Jan Jansz. —Murad Rays took part in the negotiations between the French admiral Isaac de Razilly and the Saletian divan. In 1629 de Razilly was instructed to obtain the release of all French captives. When he learned that the Saletian divan claimed a present of 100 guns and 1.000.000 livres, de Razilly proved to be an ardent supporter of what has been called gunboat diplomacy. The French squadron promptly blockaded the harbour and on 6 August shots were fired between the French and «l'admiral de Sallé, du port de trois cens thonneaux, armé de vingt pieces de canon et esquipé de cent quatre-vingtz hommes, avecq son vis-admiral presque aussy grand». This admiral has not been positively identified yet, but he might well have been Jan Jansz. Anyway, the «vis-admiral de Sallé... autant qu'il estoit fort bon voillier... gaigna à la mer» whereupon the five French men-of-war attacked the admiral of Salé: «le vaisseau ennemy aperceust notre admir... perdit courage, qui le fit s'eschover à terre, et se jettourent tous à la nage pour se sauver, abandonnant leur navire, où tous nos vaisseaux recommencèrent à tirer force cannonades qui en tuerent grand nombre, et force autres qui furent noyez, et, dès le soir, on mist le feu dedans et feust du tout bruslé, sans qu'il en feust rien sauvé».

If the admiral was Jan Jansz., he nevertheless survived this unfortunate encounter. For when on 23 April 1630 the Dutch envoy Jan Wendelsz. entreated the divan to release «the poor Dutch captives, if
there were any» they «answered and declared that they had no Dutchmen, and if any were brought in, and they declared to be Dutchmen before their admiral Morato Reys, they were released immediately» 39.

The interference of de Razilly in 1629 had caused serious troubles between the different factions in Salé. In the spring of 1630 this led to a new paroxysm of violence. The English envoy John Harrison made an attempt to arrange a settlement but «the cyvill dissencions» lasted until «arrived Captaine John from Tunys, Admirall of Salley, bringing with him an other Sainct, the Sainct of Shelley, nere adjoyning to Sallye, who had ben at Mecha in pilgrimage to visite Mahomets tombe, and divers other Mores with him, by whose mediacion, after his new arrivall and so seasonable, upon their Pasqua of Romedan, presentlie a preace was concluded» 40.

In the summer of the same year Jan Jansz. had more peaceful contacts with de Razilly who came to Salé in order to renew the treaty he had concluded on 2 October 1629. On 2 August 1630 «Morat Rays, admiral de leurs vaisseaux, & plusieurs capitaines de la ville, ayans obtenu toutes les asseurances qu’il demanderent pour venir saluer monsieur le commandeur de Razilly, se firent porter dans nos vaisseaux, oü ils furent receus honnorablement. Apres les compliments receus de part & d’autre, ils protesterent au nom de leurs gouverneurs qu’ils n’avoient pas de plus grand desir que de rendre des tesmoignages d’affection à Sa Majesté Très-Chrestienne, avec laquelle ils seroient tres-aises de vivre en bonne paix & amitie... Après ces protestations, Morat Rays supplia monsieur de Razilly de lui expedier un passeport pour faire sortir en mer un de ses vaisseaux, qu’il ne feroit aucunes courses sur les François & n’attaqueroit leurs vaisseaux, ny mesmes ceux des allités de la Couronne à dix lieues près des costes de France, ains plustost les protegeroit contre tous pirates turcs ou autres, indifferemment & sans exception; ce qui lui fut octroyé soubs ses conditions» 41.

The continuous violence and civil strife must have provoked a great deal of uncertainty among the Saletians. In that same year 1630 John Harrison, never at a loss for a good plan, even proposed that Charles I should «draw... Sallie... under Your Majesties government» as the Saletians «having taken Your Majesty alreadie for their chieffe protector». According to the envoy, parts of the local population would certainly support such a project and, Harrison continued, «Captayn John, Admirall of Sallie, a Flemish renegade but a great frend to our nation, said to me that he hoped in the end it should so come to passe, both he and manie others, especiallie these Moriscoes, longing sore to be under Christian government againe». At that very moment Jan Jansz. must have
got really tired of his new fatherland and compatriots since he asked Harrison «to give him advertisement beforehand if Your Majesty purposed to doe any thing on that coast, he would adventure his lyfe in Your Majesties service; yf not, to procure him leave from Your Majesty to come for England, which he purposeth with the first opportunitie, yf he can get out to sea agayne and light of a good prize, Spaniard or Portuguese, for he professeth himself still a Christian in heart, howsoever in his younger years of infirmity forced to turne at Argier, taken at Lanzerot, being a prisoner there with the Spaniards, and of a prisoner made a slave by the Turks when they tooke that iland, and after worse, a Turk».

The daring proposals of the English envoy were never carried out and this may explain why Jan Jansz. stayed on «the high coasts of Barbary» for the rest of his life. But he certainly left Salé in 1631. He is mentioned for the last time residing in the still autonomous city-state end of September 1631. As al-Ayyashi besieged the Hornacheros in the qasbah from July onwards and with his guns controlling the harbour, the position of the privateers soon became untenable. The siege, though it ended without yielding any important results, lasted for almost a year. An immediate consequence of these military actions was however the decline of the Saletian corsairing activities during this period. So it is quite obvious most privateers left Salé and swarmed out to less turbulent ports.

MEDITERRANEAN MISUNDERSTANDINGS

Until now it has been generally assumed that Jan Jansz. about 1630-1631 transferred his activities to the Mediterranean again. This conclusion was mainly founded on two statements made by P. Dan in his Histoire de Barbarie et de ses corsaires. P. Dan relates how in 1631 a certain «Morat Rays, a Flemish renegade» —whom L. C. Vrijman identified as J. Jansz.— «sailed to England and henceforth to Ireland. At Batimore —Baltimore— some 200 Barbary corsairs descended on the peaceful village and caught 237 men, women and children —even those in the cradle— who were sold in Algiers. It was a smarting event to see them being sold as men were separated from their spouses, and the infants from their fathers...».

This raid indeed occurred on 31 June 1631 but, though his information is as always quite exact, the good Father Dan could not resist the temptation of filling in the picture with melodrama and sentimentality. In fact Morat Rays brought in 20 men and 89 women and children, while the peaceful fishing village Baltimore
«crowned by the ruins of The O'Driscoll’s Castle» enjoyed the reputation of being one of the principal Irish pirate bases. It is furthermore important to notice that no mention whatsoever is made of the presence of Irish captives originating from Baltimore in Salé during the following years. The squadron despatched to Salé under William Rainbow in 1627 released 339 «men, woemen and boyes», and among them the Irish abound, but no former inhabitants of Baltimore are mentioned in the list of «the names of all those captives both English and others that were redeemed from Salley». So one might conclude that this raid was an Algerine venture as well.

In all probability it was the same «Morat, a Dutchman or Fleming and one of the most feared pirates ever in the Mediterranean» who was made prisoner by the Hospitallers in 1634. P. Dan states how «his ruses could not prevent him from being caught, shortly after he had moved from Algiers to Tripoli, the town where I stayed when the news of his capture got out. I there saw some hundred women paying a call of condolence to the renegade pirate’s wife. There was no lack for moaning and mourning; tears, feigned or honest, were bountiful shed, as they are used to on such sudden and ill-fated events».

The naval engagement between the Knights and the Tripolitan corsairs took place on 19 July 1634. Morat Rays, accompanied by two other Tripolitan privateers, had overpowered two French vessels, sailing home from Smyrna. Near Tripoli they were attacked by six Maltese galleys under the command of Carlo Valdina. The Knights took two corsairs, reconquered their prizes and sailed with 338 muslim slaves —the former privateers with Morat among them— back to Malta.

It is quite difficult to identify positively the protagonist of these accounts. It was not Jan Jansz. as well be shown below, and it is unlikely that this Morat was Kör Murad as P. Dan knew his nickname and does not mention it here. Moreover he described Kör Murad as a German, and here he says explicitly that Morat was a Fleming or a Dutchman. Therefore it is plausible that this Morat was «Murato Flamenco, born in Antwerp, renegade» who figures in the already cited list of corsairs drawn up by C. Pijnacker in 1625-1626 at Algiers, though it must be admitted that this identification must for now remain a guess.

QUIET YEARS

As for Jan Jansz. alias Murad Rays, he never moved to the Mediterranean but stayed in Morocco throughout these years. This is suggested
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anyway by a travel account written by an Englishman —probably a merchant— who met «Morat Ariaz, an Alcaid elshe» in 1638 in al-Walidiyya or «Welladee, tenn leagues to the north of Saffee». There is no doubt that Jan Jansz. and «Morat Ariaz» are one and the same person since she is a Fleming borne: his Christian name was John Barber and had been a merchant in Lancecott (sic), and was there made slave by the Argeir men that tooke the island about twenty and five years since; soone after his captivity, by renouncing his faith he obtained freedom and came to Sally, where, being entertained by those of the towne, he in short time grew in great esteeme among them by the many prizes he tooke, that in tyme they made him Admirall of their fleet, which charge he held a long tyme to their enriching and great detriment of Christian marchants». The Englishman relates how Jan Jansz. had moved from Salé to Safi seven years before —i.e. in 1631— during the reign of «Muley Looley» or Mawlay al-Walid (1631-1636). Once established in Safi, Jan Jansz. «was between request and command induced to serve him. The King honoured him with one of his women in marriage and bestowed on him a cast of Berbers to governe neere to Welladee». Al-Walidiyya was a newly created town —it took its name from the reigning sultan— in the bay of Aier, roughly situated on the spot Mawlay Zaydan had chosen to construct a new harbour in the early twenties. Though the Dutch engineers of the Ruyl-mission in 1623 found this anchorage ground unfit to construct a port of call for a regular Moroccan navy, Jan Jansz. «tooke speciall notice of this haven ... during his residence there... and... understanding it a place probably advantagious to the King, perswaded him to fortify it, who accordingly built there a castle and pacct therin Morat to commaund a garrison of souldiers, and thus hee continueth in the service and favour of Muley Mahamet Shecb.» for whom he commanded a small fleet of vessels that formed the sultan’s navy 31.

Jan Jansz. is —as far as I know— mentioned for the last time by the artist Adriaen Matham who accompanied the Dutch ambassador Antonis de Liedekercke to the sultan of Morocco. This mission left the United Provinces on 1 September 1640. Among the travelers where Lijsbeth Jansz. and her brother-in-law Jacob Aertsen (or Jacob Ariss.). The «Gelderland» reached Salé on 11 December and Safi on Christmas Eve 1640. On 28 December a barque brought two letters from «Jans Jansz. van Haerlem, who was living at Muladie, six or seven miles from Safi». The first letter was addressed to the ambassador, the latter to his daughter, in which he invited her very warmly to visit him. He also warned his daughter that «it was a very hazardous journey inland, espe-
cially for the feminine sex» and thus it was decided that Lijsbeth would remain on board while Jacob Aertsen travelled to al-Walidiyya, «accompanied by the six or seven Moors his father-in-law had sent to protect his relatives during the trip». On 30 December «Jacob Ariss. and his father-in-law Jan Jansz. van Haerlem came, accompanied by 18 servants», on board of the Gelderland. «In the barque he was seated lordly on a carpet and satin cushions, his servants gathered around him. He was brought to the ambassador’s saloon, where his daughter was, and when she saw her father and he his daughter, they both began to weep». The next day Jacob Aertsen and Lijsbeth Jansz. went ashore to visit the renegade, who also paid for the victuals the Dutch ambassador had ordered, and «some sailors maintained they had noticed that Lijsbeth Jans already had her’s fill of the people and the country and that she wished to be back on board again». Nevertheless, she stayed in Safi and the very next day, on 1 January 1641, she left with her father for al-Walidiyya. On 22 August 1641, shortly before the mission left Morocco, Adriaen Matham was told by Jacob Aertsen who had returned that day from al-Walidiyya that Lijsbeth had decided to stay with her father. And this is —apart from a not wholly trustworthy remark of a certain School-master from Oost-Zanen— the last we hear of Jan Jansz.

CONCLUSION

It may be obvious that the reconstruction of the careers of individuals as Jan Jansz. —Murad Rays, John Ward— Yusuf Rays, Simon de Danser— Deli Rays, de Veenboer— Soliman Rays and so many others who moved in the twilight zone of history is both a time-consuming as gratifying pursuit. Time-consuming since facts and features have to be gathered from the most diverse sources written in the most various languages. Gratifying as a reconstruction enables us to finish with some persistent myths surrounding certain characters, that appeal to everyone’s imagination. In one way or another they even could be styled as «primitive rebels» or «social bandits», who have populated so much essays and studies in the seventies and the eighties.

Though the truth may be less spectacular than the myth —e.g. no sack of Reykjavik for Jan Jansz. and his Saletians while other horror stories should be taken with a pinch of salt— it certainly is far more complicated than assumed until now. Thus the career of Jan Jansz. shows clearly that adopting a new faith was for most renegades not an irre-
versible decision. Furthermore it is plain that quite a lot of these «cultural turncoats» remained loyal to their former country because they kept on looking after their former countries’ and compatriots’ interests. This casts at least some doubts on the representation of the vengeful and cruel renegade, whose most wanted victims were his fellow-countrymen.

Just as they played in those days an active role on the international political scene, the northern renegades acted as well as cultural intermediaries between the East and the West by familiarizing the Muslims with new techniques in matters of navigation, warfare and harbour construction. Therefore —though this may sound as an exaggeration since other developments have to be taken into account— their appearance helped to secure the territorial integrity and independence of the North-African states until the nineteenth century.
NOTES


5. G. HILLS, Rock of Contention. A History of Gibraltar. London, 1974. p. 120; R. E. J. WEBER, De heveiliging van de zee tegen Europeesche en Barbierij.zeerovers 1609-1621. Amsterdam, 1936, pp. 124-127; A. RUMEU DE ARMAS, o.c., III, p. 54. There has always been a great deal of uncertainty about the exact number of ships lost by the Algerines, Moyen Lambert estimated their loss at 11 or 12 sails; according to the Spaniards 19 ships were seized while 3 were destroyed.


7. Id., o.c., 1, pp. 721 and 746ff.

8. Id., o.c., 1, pp. 749 and 765.


10. R. E. J. WEBER, o.c., p. 129.

11. Id., o.c., p. 123.

12. E.g. the English pirate Henry Mainwaring reigned supreme in al-Mamura till 1614 but «it was part of [his] plan of campaign to do all in his power for the welfare of his own country, and his reverence for the English flag is shown in all his actions. While at Mamora... there were some thirty sail of pirate vessels using the port, but before he allowed any of them to sail, they had first to pledge their word not to molest English shipping». G. E. MANWARING, The Life and Works of Sir Henry Mainwaring. London, 1920, I, p. 12. Mainwaring received the royal pardon in 1616. Pirates who behaved worse could always receive their pardon from other princes. E.g. Peter Easton
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whose home port was al-Mamura form 1607 until 1613. He received his pardon from the duke of Savoia and died as a marquis. Cfr. C. M. SENIOR, A nation of pirates. English piracy in its heyday. London, 1976, pp. 68-72.


19. In the late sixteenth and the seventeenth century the term «Fleming» is almost exclusively used to designate the inhabitants of the —from the Spanish point of view— rebellious provinces in the Netherlands.


23. K. Heeringa, o.c., I, pp. 905-906 and 915-917; Resolutiën der Staten-Generaal 1623-1624. J. Roelevink (ed.) n.° 2274, 2313; 2315; 2340; 2396; 2433; 2708; 2724; 2785; 2859. A more or less romanticised account may be found in S. DE VRIES, Handelingen en geschiedenissen voorgevallen tusschen den Staat der Vereenigde Nederlanden en dien van de zeewervers in Barbaryen. Amsterdam, 1684, pp. 57-59.

31. L. C. Vrijman, «c.c.», 236-254; H. Dunlop. Hollandsche zeerovers in de 17e eeuw. Zutphen, 1938 is almost completely devoted to this intriguing pirate. A short account of his career may be found in S.I.H.M.P.B., III, 513-514.
38. S.I.H.M.F. III, pp. 219-221; different versions of the battle on p. 258 and 270.
42. S.I.H.M.A. III, pp. 127-128. The version given by Jan Jansz. of his earlier adventures might be slightly romanticised and embellished to please western ears, since renegades who had renounced God and their native country were not exactly welcome in Europe.
43. S.I.H.M.A. III, p. 159.
44. R. Coindreau, «c.c.», pp. 68-69.
50. C. Pijnacker, «o.c.», p. 87.