

“which the captain gave us for the road. The horse and everything else I left for the captain: he asked me whether I wanted money for the journey. I thanked him: he displayed a great deal of greed in wanting to see what I was leaving and in having it kept in his tent: I told him that I was not carrying money because I should find Franks in Baghdad who would supply me with what was needed.

“He then summoned the Darwish in question, an old man, and said to him: ‘You have to conduct this Frank darwish to Baghdad: take whatever money you may need’. The Darwish made excuses saying that he would not undertake it, that we should be killed, etc., etc., to which the captain said that he had got to go, and, should anyone on the road enquire who I were, that he should answer that I was a Frank ‘darwish’ who had been looted by the Persians, and that I was going to Baghdad to find the other Franks there. One hour before daybreak the captain went off towards his land, the old man and I on our journey: the old man was carrying a skin of water,<sup>1</sup> I the knapsack on our shoulders. We did not venture to pass by the neighbouring town of Mandali, but crossed some mountains and marched the whole day in the open country, avoiding the road in order not to be seen. In the evening we drew near the road again, in order not to lose it, but in the morning kept it at a distance. We walked on for two days very successfully till we got beyond the frontier zone: when we descried anyone from afar off, we threw ourselves down on the ground in the grass, or in the corn. The third day we set out along the road, met some men, who at once came at me with sticks. When they saw that in the knapsack there were books and I was in rags and feeble, and the Darwish told them that I had been looted by the Persians, they allowed us to go on. I was afraid they would take away from me the few tatters I wore, and leave me naked, as some of their men were: so, when I used to see men afar off I would rip up and tear the drawers and shirt still more, so much so that, when I reached Baghdad, I had my flesh everywhere exposed to the daylight. Those men told us that a mile farther on there were more Arabs on the road who would allow no one to pass without first stopping him. I commended myself to the Lord. I had a belt with 150 sequins, and two of the gold medals, given us by Pope Clement VIII which I was taking with me. I made two pieces of the belt so as to tie it to my legs. Suddenly 15 soldiers came on me: when I saw them I threw down on the ground a piece of the belt which I had in my hands, and in which were 50 sequins and the two gold medals, and put my foot on it. One of them saw it, and took it and made a sign to me with his finger to say nothing. The others looked into the knapsack, saying that I was a Persian and they would do this and that to me. The Darwish told them that they had looted me: the man who had taken the belt also added that they had better go, afraid (no doubt) lest I should reveal this and he should be obliged to share it with his companions. They went off, and greatly relieved we continued our journey. A little after we reached a place where there were Arabs, who charged at us with staves, as if we had been bears. Seeing us poor, and that in the knapsack there were only books, they left us alone. On the fourth day the same thing happened: from hour to hour we came across men who stopped us. At 22 o’clock<sup>2</sup> we reached a hamlet called Baris [*? sic*] on the bank of a large river. There they gave us a little barley bread by way of charity, and it seemed to us that we had reached Paradise, because we had as much water” (as we wanted). “All these four days we had marched well, eating bread and drinking a little water, because the vessel we carried was small. During the daytime tried by the heat, at night by the cold, sleeping under the open sky on the ground, although but little because of the fright lest someone should come. With so much walking my feet were swollen, and the guide had a knee which stopped him. In order to get away from the Arabs we crossed the river by boat that night and slept in the open on the other bank. In the morning my Darwish could not walk and I, in addition to the ill condition of my feet and my feebleness, felt feverish: we had nothing to eat except a little badly baked

<sup>1</sup> This may be the *mashk*—the small sheep- or goat-skin which wayfarers in dry districts take with them: the Italian word is *corozza*.

<sup>2</sup> Presumably about 4 in the afternoon.