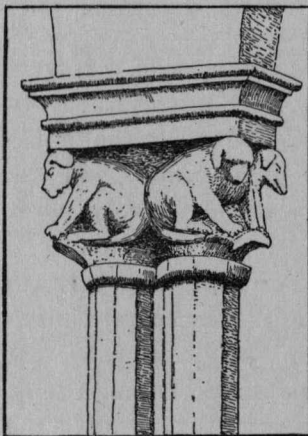


the model of the town in the hands of the silver statuette of San Biagio. According to local tradition, it was erected through the munificence of Richard Cœur-de-Lion, King of England, who on returning from the Holy Land encountered a terrible storm off Corfu, and made a vow that he would build a church to the Virgin on the spot



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where he should first touch land in safety. After being tossed about for several days he was able to land on the island of Lacroma, near Ragusa. In fulfilment of his vow he built the church, at the request of the citizens, in Ragusa itself, as well as a small chapel on the island. There is, however, no evidence of the truth of this story, and none of the contemporary accounts of Richard's peregrinations even mention Ragusa, while the entries in

the Ragusan archives state that the church was built with the contributions of the nobles. According to De Diversis, it was the most beautiful church in Dalmatia. It consisted of a nave and side aisles separated by great columns; and from the above-mentioned model of the city we see that it had a cupola mounted on a drum pierced with windows and a clerestory. De Diversis also speaks of a curious ambulatory formed by small columns outside the church, the walls of which were ornamented with figures of animals. In the choir was the high altar,