

Count, who represented Venetian authority, summoned the councils, and signed all public acts. No act was valid without his approval, but, on the other hand, he could not make decrees without the assistance and consent of the councils. Of these there were three—namely, the *Consilium Minus*, the *Consilium Majus*, and the *Rogati* or *Pregadi*.

The Minor Council, which had in all probability existed in a rudimentary form from the earliest times, had now developed into an important body. It acted as the Count's privy council, it arranged all official ceremonies, and gave audience to foreign ambassadors and envoys to Ragusa. It also acted as a sort of Court of Chancery, protected widows and orphans from injury, and watched over the morals of the citizens. It examined the deliberations of the other bodies on taxes, dues, and the rents, income, and real property of the State. On simpler matters it gave decisions, and others it referred to the Senate. It was an intermediary between private individuals and the State, and heard all complaints against the magistrates and other officials. It consisted of the Count and eleven members, of whom five formed the *Corte Maggiore*, or High Court of Justice, for all important cases.¹ The members were all men of mature age, and remained in office for a year only. Six made a quorum.

The Senate (*Rogati*) was the most influential of the three Councils, and transacted a great part of the business of the State. It imposed all taxes, tributes, and customs duties, decided how the money of the State

¹ The number of members varied at different times.