

In the first place, one Constantine Balša, a relative of George II., who had obtained a trade monopoly in the Zedda and inland as far as Prizren and Novobrdó, laid heavy impositions on Ragusan trade so as to exclude it from the country.¹ At the same time heavy rains flooded the city and its immediate neighbourhood, destroying all the crops, and on May 19 a severe earthquake—the first great shock felt in Dalmatia for many centuries—wrought great havoc.² During this period the Adriatic was infested by the pirate barques of Gabriele da Parma. There was another quarrel with George Balša on account of a certain monk named Marino of Dulcigno, who intrigued with the Slaves near Ragusa. However, this was soon settled to the satisfaction of all parties, the Albanian markets were re-opened, Constantine Balša recovered Scutari from the Turks for his kinsman, and declared himself despot of the town. In 1395 George visited Ragusa, where he was splendidly received as Prince of Albania.

Although the Ragusans were usually on bad terms with their immediate neighbours, they had been for some time good friends with the Bosnian magnate Vlatko Vuković. On his death in 1392 his estates descended to his nephew Sandalj Hranić, to whom Ragusa sent an embassy of homage in 1395. He was a true type of South Slavonic lordling of that time. His one object was to consolidate and enlarge his territories, so as to carve out a principality for himself and be independent of the King of Bosnia or the Despot of Servia. Like all his colleagues, he completely failed to appreciate the terrible significance of the Turkish danger, and while he began by "proclaiming

¹ *Ref.*, 1395-7, fol. 75, 78; *Gelcich, Balša*, 174. ² *Gelcich, Balša*, p. 175.