

we find the round arch of Romanesque art. But Ragusan builders did not follow any very distinct system. The various styles were no more than tapped by them. None were fully developed; and in every building, from whichever point of view we regard it, we find many deviations from strict orthodoxy. Some of the Ragusan architects and master-masons had been educated in Italy, others perhaps at Constantinople, but no part of their work shows an absolute grasp over any definite style. Nevertheless it is extremely interesting, and proves them by no means deficient in artistic sense. Many of the buildings of this little Republic are of great beauty, and the whole *ensemble* of edifices compares favourably with many a more famous Italian town.

The principal buildings erected or completed between 1200 and 1350 are the following: The cathedral church of Santa Maria (1206-1250), San Biagio (1348), the church and monastery of the Franciscans (begun 1319), the Dominican church and monastery (1254-1306), the *Castello* (1350, on the site of an earlier building), and the *Sponza* or custom house, begun early in the fourteenth century. The cathedral was destroyed by the earthquake of 1667, San Biagio by fire in 1706, the *Castello* supplanted by another building in 1388. The Franciscan and Dominican churches were almost entirely rebuilt in later times, but of their monasteries much remains, and the cloisters are in their original state. The *Sponza*, too, survives, although the top story, the façade, and the portico were added subsequently.

What the Duomo was like we can only discover from the somewhat confused account of De Diversis, and from