

to Ragusa, which he reached on December 21. He was honourably and hospitably received by the Rector and Councillors, who offered him the keys of the town. He spent nine days there, being entertained together with his suite at the expense of the Republic, and he received in addition a present of 2000 ducats and two years' tribute in advance. As a reward he granted the Republic the right to strike silver coinage.<sup>1</sup> On December 30 he departed on board a Ragusan galley for Spalato. He took the four sons of the ship's chief officer into his service, and subsequently through his favour many Ragusans rose to high positions in Hungary.

Every day fresh batches of refugees fled into Ragusan territory before the advancing Ottoman hordes, who even threatened the Bocche di Cattaro. George Balša himself began to fear for his own safety, and requested that Ragusa should give shelter to his wife and family. The Republic placed a palace at his disposal, and also allowed him to purchase arms and ammunition in the town and have his old weapons repaired there. But even this had to be done secretly, lest Sandalj, who was an enemy of the Balšas and a friend of the Turks, should retaliate on the Ragusans. We find an interesting entry in this connection by Andrea da Bologna, the Chancellor of the Republic, in the *Reformationes* for 1398: "Die . . . (blank space) Januarii (1398) Filius Pasayt (Bayazet) cum magna quantitate Turchorum et Sclavorum intravit Bossinam, et fuit depredatus ipsam. In reversione major pars ipsorum propter immensum frigus decesserunt."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hitherto it had only struck copper coins, using foreign silver and gold. Gold coins were never struck at Ragusa.

<sup>2</sup> Gelcich, *Balša*, 200-201.