

country, with the exception of some of the coast settlements, unimpeded by the Greeks, who were then occupied with the Saracens. In 619 they destroyed Salona, whose inhabitants, or at least such of them as escaped from the fury of the barbarians, for the most part took refuge in the walls of Diocletian's palace at Spalato. But a few wandered southwards and established themselves on an island rock, where Ragusa now stands. About the year 656 the Avars swept down on Epidaurum and razed it to the ground, the surviving inhabitants flying to Ragusa. This year is generally accepted as the date of the city's birth. In all probability, however, it was not founded at any definite period, but arose gradually through the influx of refugees from all parts of Southern Dalmatia, from a fishing village into a town. The original settlers were nearly all Latins, and it was not until later that a certain number of Slaves were admitted.<sup>1</sup>

The traditional origin of the name Ragusa is connected with the situation of the town on a precipitous ridge. According to Porphyrogenitus, it is derived from *λαῦ*, a precipice, and was originally *Lausa*. The L changed to R, and it became Rausa or Rhausion.

<sup>1</sup> Constantine Porphyrogenitus says that the Slaves (whom he mixed up with the Avars) had destroyed τὸ κάστρον Πίταυρα, the inhabitants being mostly killed or captured. The survivors fled, and on an inaccessible rock founded the new city of 'Ραούσιον. In a Slavonic document quoted by Jireček (*op. cit.*, p. 9, note 20) there is a native account of the foundation of Ragusa. The ancient Ragusa, it says, stood *na Captate* (at Cavtat), and possessed the whole *župa* of Canali; when the city fell and was destroyed, "the lords of Chum and Rascia" occupied this *župa*, and the inhabitants of the city took refuge on a strong place, where they founded the modern Ragusa. These are other more or less legendary accounts.