

privileges. Some contained special clauses exempting the citizens of the contracting cities from certain taxes and customs dues.

Traffic with the Slavonic states also began early, but the great trade highways from the coast to the interior were not fully developed until the next century.

Artistic and intellectual development, in which Byzantine influence is conspicuous, was still in its infancy, and of the few buildings of this period with any architectural pretensions only the smallest traces remain. The town was built chiefly of wood, save for the walls and a couple of small churches. The oldest edifice of which anything remains is the Church of San Stefano, mentioned by Constantine Porphyrogenitus as the most important in the town. Four ruined walls in a court near the diocesan seminary are believed to have belonged to this very ancient building. The tradition is that it was erected by Stephen, Banus of Bosnia, or by his widow. Gelcich suggestively describes what the building must have been like: "In the church of St. Stephen at Ragusa we must picture to ourselves not a work of art, but a chapel capable of containing few beyond the ministers at the altar; low-vaulted, decorated internally, and perhaps externally, with frescoes; an apse just large enough for the altar, lit by such few rays of sunlight as could penetrate by an irregular number of holes piercing the stone slab which closed the single-arched window placed over the altar."¹ On the outside wall there is a fragment of bas-relief of two arches, each containing a cross on a design of foliage. Close by is the area of a larger

¹ Gelcich, *op. cit.*, pp. 13, 14.