

pane.”¹ As the constitution evolved, the *laudo populi* gradually dropped into disuse, and Ragusa finally developed into a purely aristocratic community on Venetian lines.

Next in authority to the head of the State was the bishop,² by whom the acts of the Government had to be countersigned. The question as to who should appoint this dignitary was frequently a subject of dispute between the Ragusans and the Venetians, on account of his political influence.

The Ragusans provided for the defence of their city by surrounding it with walls, “un muro di masiera e travi,”³ as Ragnina says, and these fortifications stood them in good stead by enabling them to hold out against the Saracens, who in 847–848 besieged Ragusa for fifteen months. The citizens implored help from the Emperor Basil the Macedonian, and he at once sent a fleet under Nicephorus, which relieved the beleaguered city from the raiders.⁴

The Greek Emperors wished to pursue the Saracens into Apulia, where they had established themselves, and the rendezvous for one part of the expedition was

¹ In the Italian city-republics, besides the head of the State, the Council of nobles, and the assembly of the people, there was also a minor or privy council of special advisers. It is very probable that there was something of the kind at Ragusa even at this time, as there was later.

² Afterwards the archbishop.

³ “A wall of rubble and beams.”

⁴ Const. Porph., cap. xxx. According to tradition, Ragusa had been delivered from the Saracens in 783 by Orlando, or Roland the Paladin. The legend probably has its origin in a confusion between Charlemagne’s suzerainty over Dalmatia and the Saracen siege of Ragusa in 847. The so called statue of Orlando at Ragusa is of the fifteenth century.