

The above-mentioned writer, Benedetto Ramberti, gives a curious description of Ragusa as it appeared to him in 1533. Being a Venetian his account is somewhat contemptuous and not altogether flattering. "It is well populated," he writes, "and in a beautiful situation by the sea, on the Dalmatian mainland. It possesses a small harbour and a very small mole. . . . It is exposed to winds and earthquakes, and is exceedingly cold in winter. The women are not very handsome, and dress very badly, or rather they wear clothes which suit them ill. They have on their heads a long linen covering, which in the case of noblewomen is of white silk and shaped like a pyramid, and thin stockings turned down to their shins. They rarely leave the house, but are much at the window. The young girls are never seen. The women nearly all use the Slavonic language, but the men speak Italian as well.¹ In the city are many fountains of excellent water brought from the hills. About a mile from the gates is a spot called Gravosa, which is a row of houses a mile in length, well built and attractive, with gardens full of oranges, lemons, citrons, and fruit-trees of various kinds, beautifully adorned with fountains fed by aqueducts. . . . The sea here forms a pleasant harbour large enough to contain a hundred galleys with ease. The Ragusans are usually rich and avaricious, like most merchant folk. They all buy wine in retail, and timber according to certain ordinances of their own. Friends and relations seldom if ever dine together. They think only of

¹ This is the case at Ragusa to this day. In other Dalmatian towns, where the men are bilingual, the women often speak only Italian.