

XVI

RAGUSA

THE present city of Ragusa—we may call it a city, the only one in Dalmatia, for it was once the capital of an independent State—is not the ancient Ragusa, but a comparatively modern township, built as an asylum, when the Avars and the Slavs, about 639, sacked and destroyed Ragusa Vecchia, the Greek colony of Epidaurus (or Epidaurum), the Πίταυρα of Constantine, the home of Aesculapius, some miles down the coast. The inhabitants moved to the site of modern Ragusa, which offered them both a harbour and an Arx, two features always sought by Greek colonists, and reproducing, in a way, the character of their ruined home at Epidaurus. The new Ragusa underwent two sieges, in 847 and in 866, by the Saracens, commanded by Saba and Kalfun in the first case, and by Mufarig ibn Salima in the second. The city was relieved by Nicetas,