

Genoa, whose name and part in the history of his hero's book Ramusio so strangely ignores. Yet patriotic Genoese writers in our own times have striven to determine the identity of this their imaginary countryman!\*

39. Who, then, was Rusticiano, or, as the name actually is read in the oldest type of MS., "Messire Rusticians de Pise"?

Rusticiano;  
a person  
known from  
other  
sources. Our knowledge of him is but scanty. Still something is known of him besides the few words concluding his preamble to our Traveller's Book, which you may read at pp. 1-2 of the body of this volume.

In Sir Walter Scott's "Essay on Romance," when he speaks of the new mould in which the subjects of the old metrical stories were cast by the school of prose romancers which arose in the 13th century, we find the following words:—

"Whatever fragments or shadows of true history may yet remain hidden under the mass of accumulated fable which had been heaped upon them during successive ages, must undoubtedly be sought in the metrical romances . . . . But those prose authors who wrote under the imaginary names of RUSTICIEN DE PISE, Robert de Borron, and the like, usually seized upon the subject of some old minstrel; and recomposing the whole narrative after their own fashion, with additional character and adventure, totally obliterated in that operation any shades which remained of the original and probably authentic tradition," &c.†

Evidently, therefore, Sir Walter regarded Rustician of Pisa as a person belonging to the same ghostly company as his own Cleishbothams and Dryasdusts. But in this we see that he was wrong.

In the great Paris Library and elsewhere there are manuscript volumes containing the stories of the Round Table abridged and somewhat clumsily combined from the various Prose Romances of that cycle, such as *Sir Tristan, Lancelot, Palamedes, Giron le Courtois*, &c., which had been composed, it would seem, by various Anglo-French gentlemen at the court of Henry III., styled, or styling themselves, Gasses le Blunt, Lucas du Gast,

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\* The Abate Spotorno in his *Storia Letteraria della Liguria*, II. 219, fixes on a Genoese philosopher called Andalo del Negro, mentioned by Boccaccio.

† I quote from Galignani's ed. of *Prose Works*, v. 712. This has "Rusticien de Puisse." In this view of the fictitious character of the names of Rusticien and the rest, Sir Walter seems to have been following Ritson, as I gather from a quotation in Dunlop's *H. of Fiction*. (*Liebrecht's German Version*, p. 63.)