

THE STRUCTURE OF
THE HOUSEHOLDS IN EUROPE
DURING THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD:

A Review of Three Works

no - you would be safer with
something like this: "Flemish Anneliste."

But you are getting there!

(B+A)

(borderline grade)

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The purpose of this paper is to compare three scholarly *if should not be the purpose*
works which examine the an area of mutual interest - the
structure of the family in Europe during the early modern
period. The three scholarly works that will be compared
are: "'A uno pane e uno vino:' The Rural Tuscan Family
at the Beginning of the Fifteenth Century," by Christiane
Klapisch and Michel Demonet; "The Scattered Family:
Another Aspect of Seventeenth-Century Demography" by
Micheline Baulant, and Families in Former Times: Kinship,
Household and Sexuality by Jean-Louis Flandrin. The first
two works appear in Family and Society: Selections from the
Annales edited by Robert Forster and Orest Ranum.

Before making any further reference to Flandrin's
book, both essays which appear in the Annales need to be
reviewed in order to make any comparisons with Flandrin's
book more meaningful. The Klapisch/Demonet essay deals
with a structure of the family in a specific region, *only 1 small district* Tuscany, *in Tuscany*
during a specific period of time, 1427-30. The information
cited in this essay comes from a population survey, called
the Catasto, from which certain conclusions are drawn.
The authors found the Catasto to be "especially interesting"
because instead of being a sampling taken from groups which
have already been studied, i.e., urban groups and the
upper levels of society, the Catasto provides information
concerning approximately 37,000 households which were rural.
Not only did this represent a large sampling (some 175,000

persons)² but it produced new information concerning a group which previously had been a mystery. And the Catasto is even more significant because it provides specific demographic information concerning the "characteristics of the rural family group in Tuscany," compensating for the absence of other sources, such as "literary works, journals, genealogies, and parish registers, which might have shed light on the structure of the medieval peasant family...."³ In short, the Catasto could be viewed as a great discovery which sheds much light on an area of great sociological and anthropological interest which heretofore had been unknown and was merely a topic for speculation. Now Klapisch and Demonet offer hard data upon which to base their findings.

And what were their findings? Based upon the information from the Catasto, Klapisch and Demonet develop tables and graphs which provide a demographical overview of the structure of the rural family in Tuscany. The findings are interesting. Klapisch and Demonet found that "a little more than a third of all households [belonged]... to the category of 'extended families,' which were composed of several nuclear families..." a rate which approximated that found for Eastern Europe in the nineteenth century, when anthropologists thought they recognized "the archetype of the archaic European family community."⁴ In addition, it was found that a large percentage of households consisted of three or more generations,^{4a} and that the extended families

