Small Worlds

Method, Meaning, and Narrative in Microhistory

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may also account for the fact that there is no evidence that the privy was ever cleaned out. This is not wholly unexpected, for on farms it was often the practice to relocate the privy when the old one became unusable; cleaning privies out produced only minimal amounts of manure compared to the tons of dung contributed by livestock. The majority of artifacts at the base of the privy were deposited intentionally to provide drainage (compare Roberts and Barrett 1984), but a good many items (for example, chamber pots, coins, and buttons) found their way into the privy while it was in use.

15. Pennyroyal is a "species of mint (*Mentha Pulegium*) with small leaves and of prostrate habit; formerly much cultivated and esteemed for its supposed medicinal virtues" (Oxford English Dictionary 1971:2122).

16. The minimum number of vessels is 272.

17. These were 102 in number.

18. For discussions of the concept of "active voice" analysis of material culture, see Beaudry 1996 and Beaudry, Cook, and Mrozowski 1991.

19. See Shackel 1993 for an archaeologically oriented example, albeit one with different emphases and different conclusions than those presented here.

20. Wolf's (1966:7–10) concept of funds is interpreted by historical anthropologists Villamarin and Villamarin (1982:144) as constituting "the purposeful setting aside or apart of personnel and quantities of material or other resources for their accumulation, from which present and future generations might draw rewards to maintain or increase their wealth and highly valued, culturally sanctioned style of life." Wolf distinguished four types of funds: one for wealth accumulation; a social fund; a religious fund; and a political fund.

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What Influences Official Information?

Exploring Aggregate Microhistories of the Catasto of 1427

Rebecca Jean Emigh

The "micro" part of microhistory can be a liability. Scholarship in this tradition may be too narrow to attend to macro-level social processes. Or it can focus on a population or geographical area that is too small to be of more general interest. One possible solution to this problem is to develop "aggregate microhistories" that combine individual microhistories to increase their scope and to create links to larger processes and issues. In this chapter, I take this approach. I combine three microhistories about patterns of information gathering in the Catasto of 1427, a set of fiscal documents collected in Tuscany for the purposes of collecting government revenue, with Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber's findings (1985) from their more general but less detailed examination of this Catasto. These individual microhistories either focused on small areas in Tuscany or used some particular feature of the documents (Emigh 1996, 1999b, 2002). While these features made it possible to make strong conclusions about a specific aspect of information gathering, combining these insights will make it possible to draw broader conclusions about it.

CAPTURING THE EVERYDAY LIVES OF ORDINARY INDIVIDUALS

One of the hallmarks of microhistory is its focus on ordinary individuals and the meaningful interpretation of their lives (Ginzburg and Poni

1991:3–4). When enough information can be gathered, the in-depth examination of single individuals or families, often using a biographical method, can be very revealing. For example, subjects who are still alive can be observed or interviewed (see Maddox, Gordon, Blee, this volume). For some historical subjects, there is a substantial amount of documentary or archival material (for example, Davis 1983). Microhistory based on archival documents has an august Italian tradition, which includes the tales of the exorcist from Piedmont, Giovan Battista Chiesa (Levi 1988), and the heretical Friulian miller Menocchio (Ginzburg 1980b). Several works entail Tuscans, including the history of a family of sharecroppers, the Del Massarizia (Balestracci 1984); the love story of Giovanni and Lusanna (Brucker 1986); and the life of the lesbian nun Benedetta Carlini (J. Brown 1986). Indeed, the richness of the Italian archives allows microhistory to flourish there because it is possible to locate enough documentation to tell the story of individuals' lives (Ginzburg and Poni 1991:2; Muir 1991:ix).[1]

Yet microhistories often focus on individuals who are not particularly ordinary (Lepore 2001:131–32; Muir 1991:xv), including "normal exceptions" (Grendi 1977:512). Although such cases may be especially revealing precisely because they are exceptional (Ginzburg and Poni 1991:7–8), they may not directly illuminate everyday life. One of the primary obstacles to studying ordinary people, especially those who lived in the distant past, is the relatively little documentary material available for any given individual or family.[2] Thus, instead of a biographical focus on individuals or families, another method is needed to explore ordinary historic lives. In this volume, for example, DeCorse, Beaudry, and Lightfoot turn to historical archaeology. While an archaeological method may not provide the richness about any particular individual that a biographical method does, it can provide evidence about ordinary individuals lost from the written record, as well as microhistories of locations.

In fifteenth-century Tuscany, there is a considerable written record for individuals in the form of fiscal records and legal (notarial) documents. However, for most ordinary rural inhabitants, the available documentary evidence is fragmentary; relatively little of it exists for any given individual or family (for an exception, see Balestracci [1984]). It is therefore quite difficult to use this evidence, especially biographically. On the one hand, there are vast amounts of it to sift though. On the other hand, it often consists of discrete pieces that do not easily combine into a coherent whole (Emigh 2005).

Despite these limitations, it is possible to create microhistories of rural inhabitants and their families (although they are much less detailed and

shorter than the ones in the classic Italian tradition). I have done so to illustrate how property devolution among rural smallholders is linked to markets (Emigh 2003) and to show how sharecroppers had long-term associations with their landlords (Emigh 1999a). These microhistories were created by matching different documents that related to the same individual or family, either across different types of sources (legal and fiscal documents [Emigh 2003]) or across time (fiscal documents [Emigh 1999a]). I have also created microhistories of geographical locations by combining documentary and visual evidence to illustrate how the growth of urban markets paradoxically eroded rural market institutions (Emigh 2005).

The microhistories I present here, however, take a different approach. My intention is to discover how ordinary rural Tuscans used numerical information. Yet I have never encountered a single document in which such an individual provided direct evidence—such as a reflection or discussion about numeracy—that would allow me to examine this topic through a biographical or narrative method. Thus the microhistories presented here, and the aggregate microhistory that they lead to, are not in-depth narratives or stories of particular individuals, families, or locations, because these sorts of microhistories would require different methods (see Emigh 1999a, 2003, 2005). Instead, in each of the three individual microhistories, I focus on how an event—a death, the payment of rent, or the provision of a loan or livestock to a sharecropped farm—was recorded in the Catasto. Each event can be viewed from two different perspectives: I compare deaths recorded in the Catasto to mortality patterns that might be expected in a preindustrial population; I compare how landlords and tenants recorded rents, loans, and livestock. The comparisons of the two different perspectives can then be aggregated to illuminate patterns in information reporting. In turn, these patterns can be interpreted to suggest how individuals used numerical information in meaningful ways. These comparisons do not necessarily reveal who actually died, how large of a loan or how much livestock was actually provided, or how much rent was actually paid. However, as I show below, they will provide a considerable amount of otherwise inaccessible information about how and why numeracy was important in everyday life in rural Tuscany.

In this sense, my microhistories are of events, not persons. Event analysis also has a microhistorical tradition but often focuses on the unraveling of a single event (Eiss, this volume; Ladurie 1979; compare incident analysis, which Darnton [2004] contrasts to microhistory). Like Eiss (in this volume), I take advantage of the recording of events as text. Eiss draws meaning and interpretation from an inscription that occurred during a single event and is able to narrate a history of a rebellion through this event. I also rely on this movement from event to text; but in my case, I look at records that reflect multiple, often mundane events to discover what the patterning of the records of such events suggests about individuals' intentions in creating the records. Like Eiss's study, the context for my study is one in which knowledge of the practice of writing and the power that it held was widespread, even among the formally illiterate (Emigh 2002). Rural Tuscans used numerical information for a wide variety of purposes, including property devolution and participation in local markets, which helped coordinate household provisioning and agricultural production (Emigh 2002). Thus both Eiss and I show how ordinary individuals harness writing for their own purposes in a historical context in which the written word had a long history.

My microhistories rely on quantitative analysis—sometimes simple, sometimes more complex. This approach may be somewhat surprising, because microhistory as the study of individual lives, along with the cultural turn and the return to narrative, were historiographical movements that reacted against the use of quantitative methods (Brucker 1986:viii; Ginzburg and Poni 1991:2–3; Stone 1979:4–6). Such methods have been sharply critiqued for their lack of transparency, their obfuscation of reality, their overly technical nature, and their reliance on a hierarchical team of researchers because of the vast scale of research (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992:20–22; Ginzburg and Poni 1991:2–3; Stone 1979:4–6). At the extremes, quantitative history and microhistory can certainly look quite different —when the former presents final analyses several levels of abstraction away from individuals' actions (compare Abbott 1992:56), and the latter concerns the intimate details of an individual's life that tell a story through narrative. In my work, however, through an imaginative and somewhat unconventional use of quantitative methods, they find a rapprochement.

In this chapter, I do not use quantitative methods to make a claim for the power of "scientific history."[3] Instead, I use them in an interpretive way, to illuminate patterns that suggest how individuals meaningfully and intentionally engage in social interaction through numeracy. Thus I do not use quantitative methods in a positivist sense, to test directly a theory with evidence (indeed, as I note above, I am not even particularly concerned with whether the events I compare actually occurred or not), but in the historical ethnographic and microhistorical sense that a thorough and detailed understanding of particulars (here, events) creates the possibility of understanding the subjective orientation of historical actors.[4] By understanding these subjective orientations, it is possible to explain the causes and consequences of social action (M. Weber 1978:4). I find this quantitative approach necessary to understand some aspects of social reality—here, the examination of numeracy, to which I next turn. Sometimes all that exists of ordinary people and their everyday lives are the traces they leave in documents; these must be collated, the aggregate patterns presented using quantitative methods, and these patterns must be interpreted, or there will be no story to be told.

STATES, SOCIETIES, AND INFORMATION GATHERING

Which social actors influence patterns of enumeration? States' demands for information can shape the categories of thought that individuals use to process and deploy information (Emigh 2002:654). At the same time, the level of knowledge available in societies at large influences how governmental bureaucracies can collect information (Emigh 2002:659). After all, highly detailed and accurate written information cannot be obtained through coercion in a population that is not literate and numerate (to give an extreme example). Thus the process of enumeration is influenced by states and societies, but different aspects of information may be influenced by different actors. Furthermore, how do states and societies exert influence? The methods used to collect information may influence their results (Starr 1987:8). Furthermore, states' demands for revenue may produce certain types of reporting or patterns of information as individuals respond to financial incentives. However, individuals' own economic incentives may be more important than tax incentives in shaping information. Finally, both states and individuals may draw on broad cultural patterns that shape information in diffuse but important ways. Here, I look specifically at these influences by considering the relative influence of states and societies on patterns of information and by considering the type of influence (economic incentives, cultural patterns, and methodological practices).

Examining the influences on information gathering in the regions that are now Italy is important, because society's influence on information gathering was strong there vis-à-vis the state's influence (for example, in Tuscany; Emigh 2002:689). A comparison to England makes this point clearer. In England the growth of the national state was tied tightly to the growth of official information gathering because much information gathering was conducted explicitly for the purposes of this state (Starr 1987: 15–16). In contrast, in the Italian city-states, merchant activities stimulated widespread numeracy and accounting practices upon which states could then capitalize. In rural regions, smallholders' agricultural production was intertwined with partible inheritance and local markets, both of which necessitated extensive record keeping (Emigh 2002). These practices produced widespread and diverse local—not national—practices of official record keeping. A national census was introduced very late in Italy and did not replace local records for many practical purposes. Since England is often taken as the prototypical case of the development of record keeping, it is important to examine other cases with different relative influences of the state and society. Tuscany provides an important Italian case. Not only is it the site of the Catasto of 1427, one of the first systematic and comprehensive European cadastral surveys, it is also worth remembering that fifteenth-century Tuscany was the birthplace of the Renaissance, one of the key historical periods for subsequent developments. Here, I focus mostly on the rural population, which was the vast majority of the population during this period, even in relatively urbanized Tuscany.

THE SEX RATIO AND AGE ROUNDING IN THE CATASTO OF 1427

In 1427 the Florentine government overhauled the system of direct taxation and forced loans. The previous system had been based on distributing a tax burden in rough proportion to ability to pay (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:3–4, 6–7). In contrast, the Catasto of 1427 was based on lists of households' actual members, assets, and debts. Households were required to submit their *portate*, or original declarations, to tax officials, who then recopied this information into official versions called *campioni*. Taxation was based on capitalized income from assets and the number of household members. Households were allowed to deduct certain expenses and debts from their total assets. As a consequence, the Catasto contains a relatively complete list of Tuscans' assets (including real estate, cash, other movable property, credits in various public funds and debts, and investments in commercial ventures) and debts (including commercial loans) and an enumeration of the Tuscan population.

Not surprisingly, the resultant information contained in the Catasto was shaped by many factors, including the level of knowledge of assets, debts, and demographic information among the general populace, the methods used by tax officials to collect the information, and widespread Tuscan cultural categories. Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber investigated several influences on the demographic information in the Catasto, including age and sex. The government's practice of collecting information about age in the tax records influenced the population's record keeping with respect to this information. Over time, as additional tax surveys were collected, more and more Tuscans recorded their biological ages. For example, in a survey

of 1371, about 44 percent of the population of the villages around Prato and about 12.5 percent of the population in the town of Prato declared no age at all. In contrast, in 1427 only about 1.6 percent of the Tuscan population declared no age. Similarly, over the course of the fifteenth century, with the subsequent collection of *catasti*, the degree of age rounding (the preference for reporting ages ending in a 0 and to a lesser extent in a 5) declined, resulting in a lower proportion of ages ending in a 0 as the century progressed (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:164). Furthermore, in 1427 the regions in which the Florentines had previously collected taxes that required individuals to report age information showed less age rounding than regions in which such information had not been collected (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:181). Thus, where Tuscans were required to report such information, they became used to doing so. In addition, tax officials' practices helped Tuscans do so. Tax officials compared, where possible, current declarations to previous ones. The information given in the Catasto of 1427 could be compared to the previous tax survey, the Estimo of 1422 (where it had been assessed); households had to report the tax from this Estimo on their 1427 declarations (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:7; see Emigh 2000:39–40). Catasto officials attempted to check fraudulent ages and correct errors (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:165).

In the Catasto, the sex ratio, the ratio of reported males to females, was influenced by cultural expectations about the appropriate marriage age for women. Females tended to cluster around age eighteen, the typical age of marriage for Tuscan women (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:141). In fact, heads of Florentine households lowered the ages of their unmarried daughters to improve their marriage chances (Molho 1988:194). In comparison to ages calculated on the basis of the Dowry Fund (Monte delle doti), the ages of unmarried females in the Catasto are lower (Molho 1988:201). This pattern of age reporting was influenced by notions of honor and by widespread cultural expectations, especially among wealthy families, that women should be married soon after sexual maturity (Molho 1988:194). Delay threatened the reputation of the entire household (Molho 1988:209). To make time for the lengthy negotiations that marriages and dowries generally entailed, fathers lowered their daughters' ages (Molho 1988:211–12).

The sex ratio and ages in the Catasto were also shaped by tax incentives. Florentine and Pisan males between the ages of eighteen and sixty and male residents of the *contado* (the rural regions closest to Florence and tied most tightly to its jurisdiction) between the ages of fifteen and seventy were subject to a head tax. The depressed sex ratio just after the ages of the imposition of the head tax illustrates that household heads tried to avoid paying this tax by reporting males to be females or by lowering the ages of their male children nearing the age of eligibility for the head tax (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:138–42). Similarly, men had incentives to reach the age of exemption from the head tax. Thus the male population increased relative to females at older ages (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:143).

Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber's analysis of the Catasto of 1427 thus points to the ways in which methodologies of enumeration, cultural practices, and economic incentives influenced official statistics. While invaluable, their summaries do not necessarily provide information about the relative influence of the state and society on these factors or the differential impact of these factors on different types of information (assets as opposed to demographic information). Most of their evidence, however, suggests that the state had a larger influence on information than society did, by spreading numeracy through repeated requests for information or through tax incentives that gave individuals financial rewards for keeping records. The overall thrust of their argument also suggests that one reason the state had such a strong role was that rural inhabitants, who were the majority of the Tuscan population and were generally poor, had little exposure to numeracy except where they were subject to Florentine taxation through the Catasto (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:164, 182). They show that urban residents, men, and the wealthy reported their ages more accurately than rural residents, women, and the poor (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:179–82). The former, of course, were the Florentine elite—male merchants and officials who would have learned numeracy through their occupations or formal schooling (Emigh 2002:664–65) and were steeped in the humanist culture of literacy (Graff 1987:76–90).

Do Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber's findings suggest that rural inhabitants had no use for numerical information, were not culturally sophisticated enough to use it, and learned it only when forced to do so by the urban elite, and, as a consequence, that numerical information played little role in their everyday lives? Cohn's (1996:156) finding that some rural residents living farther from Florence reported their ages more accurately than those living closer to the city suggests a different pattern and points to the need for more investigation. Thus, to consider the possible uses of numeracy in everyday life, as well as to provide more detailed and specific information about the influences on numeracy (for example, the relative weight of states and societies, the relative role of economic incentives, cultural patterns, and methodological practices), I needed much more microhistorical information about specific individuals' patterns of reporting

information. I found such information embedded within three of my studies of Tuscany that focused on different locations, using somewhat different information and sometimes oriented toward somewhat different debates (Emigh 1996, 1999b, 2002). Each study considers a different pattern of reporting. By here considering these three studies together, the influences on official information can be understood more thoroughly.

DEATH AND TAXES

The Catasto of 1427 was collected between 1427 and 1430. After the redaction of the initial declarations, there was a period of time, about three years in the contado, during which households were allowed to make corrections and additions to their declarations, including reporting the deaths of household members. Reporting the deaths of males eligible for the head tax in the contado unambiguously lowered households' tax liabilities (unlike in Florence, where deaths had mixed effects because each household member received a sizable tax deduction, and in the district [the rural regions beyond the contado], where the head tax was not always imposed) (Conti 1966:76; Emigh 1999b:184; Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:18–19, 257–58). The number of reported deaths, however, is quite small. Based on this number, the death rate would have been about 4.4 per 1,000 persons (about half the death rate in modern, developed countries) (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:258).

Thus, although there were financial incentives to report deaths, only some households did so. Their reasons are not transparent. Households may have been unclear about the regulations; tax officials may have implemented them unevenly; or reporting a death may not have been worth the trouble of returning to the tax officials. Although the tax incentives did not induce a complete reporting of deaths, they did influence the information that was reported. The deaths of males eligible for the head tax were much more likely to be reported than other deaths.

Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber (1985:257–60) noted the influence of tax incentives on this overall pattern, but they did not analyze other possible influences. They did not account for underlying differences in age at death; nor did they explore the possible influence of tax officials' use of heads of households as a methodological device for collecting and organizing information. This methodological device was based on a widespread cultural pattern of patriarchy, the authority of the eldest male head of the household, and the relatively high frequency of large, extended households that included the parental couple, adult married offspring, and their married siblings. Formal and informal authority was generally transferred to the eldest coresident male when the head of the household died (Emigh 2003:391).

Thus the category "head of household" was a widespread cultural concept that tax officials used to organize the registers. The household, or coresidential group, was the unit upon which the Catasto was based and around which the physical registers were organized, at the level of each household's campione and portata and at the level of the summary registers. The tax officials required that all heads of households in the Estimo of 1422 submit Catasto declarations. The physical records of the Catasto of 1427 began with the name of the head (or heads) of household (along with the assessed tax in 1422) (Emigh 1999b:186).

Because the tax officials compared the newly submitted Catasto declarations to the previously recorded Estimo declarations, and the subsequently submitted catasti declarations throughout the fifteenth century to the ones from 1427, they may have been more likely to notice and record the deaths of heads of households than those of other household members (Emigh 1999b:186; see Emigh 1999a:367, 369 for examples of comparisons among later catasti). This conjecture would help explain why Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber (1985:258) found that the deaths of seventy-year-old males were reported more thoroughly: older males were more likely to have been heads of households and thus perhaps more likely to have been noticed by tax officials. Thus, if heads of households were canceled more often than other household members, this pattern may stem from the effects of the methodology used to redact the Catasto of 1427—namely, its organization on the basis of household head, which in turn reflected the widespread use of this cultural pattern to organize social life.

To investigate this possibility, I used Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber's machine-readable data set (1981) to locate the cancellations of males in the contado, the group of individuals for whom the tax incentives would have been strongest and most unambiguous. Then I coded some information from the campioni that was not in Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber's data, including the amount of the head tax. In addition, I used Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber's data to select a matched sample of males who had not been canceled to compare them to those who had been canceled. I used a statistical technique called logistic regression, which makes it possible to consider the impact of different factors—here, headship status, eligibility for the head tax, whether the individual was actually charged for the head tax, and the age-specific probability of dying, on the likelihood that an individual was canceled from the declaration because of death (for additional methodological details, see Emigh 1999b:186–94).

The results show that net of the underlying probability of dying, heads of households were more likely than other household members to have been canceled. Thus the methodology of the Catasto of 1427 had an influence on the resulting information. Those eligible for the head tax were more likely to have been canceled than those who were not eligible for the head tax. However, this effect was not simply a matter of avoiding payment assessed by tax officials. Net of the effects of the probability of dying, headship status, and eligibility, those who had been charged the head tax were less likely to have been canceled than males who had not been charged the head tax. This finding is contrary to the tax incentives, which suggest that those households that had been charged the tax would be the most likely to take advantage of the tax relief offered by the death of the male charged for the tax. Thus the results suggest that Tuscans' knowledge of whether their household members fell into the category of being eligible for the head tax was more important than whether this person had been charged the tax. The tax incentive was important, but at the level of eligibility, not actual payment. A sizable proportion of households (about 30 percent of the cancellations) seemed to have anticipated that the death would affect their tax calculations and reported the death prior to the tax collectors' assessments. Thus these Tuscans were not merely responding to tax officials' requests for information and improving their reporting on that basis but were anticipating demands for information that they already had available. However, among those who had actually been charged the head tax, the size of the payment did affect cancellation status: cancellations were more frequent among males who had been charged a higher payment than among those with smaller payments (Emigh 1999b:192–94).

These results extend Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber's findings by examining a set of declarations in more detail than they did. These results show that financial incentives and the methods used to collect information simultaneously affected Tuscans' reporting patterns. Deaths of heads of households were more likely to be reported than those of other members, in part because the Catasto itself was organized around the names of heads of households. This methodological device was in turn based on widespread cultural practices associated with Tuscan household formation and the household head's formal and informal authority. The death of the household head would have held considerable importance for the household itself.

Tax incentives also affected the reports of deaths, although in complicated ways. First of all, such incentives were not sufficient to induce most Tuscans to report deaths. In fact, the reported deaths often emerged from households with a relatively thorough knowledge of the tax implications and whose members reported deaths even before tax officials calculated their taxes. They may have been the best informed households and most sensitive to tax regulations. Financial incentives were important in a more specific way. Among those households that were charged the head tax, those with the largest assessments were more likely to report deaths.

COMPARING RENTS DECLARED BY LANDLORDS AND TENANTS

The previous sections focused on influences on demographic information, including deaths, sex ratios, and age distributions. The Catasto, however, contains much more information about assets, and in particular agricultural properties, than about demographic factors, since assets were the primary basis for taxation. This and the following section, then, consider some of the influences on reports of agricultural income and assets. This section considers the influence of different types of economic incentives on patterns of reports of rural rents, namely whether tax incentives or individuals' other economic incentives had more influence.

Here, I use the declarations from Montecatini, a small town in the Valdinievole, northwest of Florence. The Valdinievole was one of the more urbanized and prosperous regions of rural Tuscany (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:350–51). Montecatini was part of the Florentine district and had been under Florentine control since 1339, after a series of wars with Lucca (J. Brown 1982:14–21; Repetti [1839] 1969:354–56). The Catasto declarations indicate that most individuals were smallholders who worked their own plots of land. Rural inhabitants often leased small plots of land from their neighbors (Emigh 2002:672).

Tuscans were required to report the rental income from any real estate holding they owned. Thus landlords of rented houses were required to give the amount of the rent, usually a fixed rent in cash. Similarly, landlords of sharecropped tenancies were required to list the rent, usually their portion (generally half) of the harvest from the property. Fixed-term landlords were required to report the amount of the rent, either in cash or kind. Thus Catasto declarations throughout Tuscany provide information about rents for houses and agricultural properties. In addition, households living in rented houses were allowed to deduct the rent, capitalized at 7 percent, from their total taxable wealth. Thus the Catasto also contains information about households that rented their dwellings (Emigh 2002:678–79).

However, the Catasto declarations from Montecatini (and throughout the Valdinievole) exhibit an unusual feature. Tenants often listed the

amount they paid in rent in the section in which the debts (*incharichi*) were listed, although this was not required by the tax regulations (and was not common elsewhere). There was obviously some systematic confusion about tax procedures in this region. Perhaps tenants hoped that tax officials would lower their assessments on the basis of these amounts. However, since the landlords were required to list their rents, the tenants' practice of listing the rents makes it possible to compare the amounts declared by the landlords to the amounts declared by the tenants. This comparison can be used to consider different influences on the information in the Catasto (Emigh 2002:678–79).

Comparing the rents required that I find the pieces of rental property in both the landlords' and tenants' declarations with reasonable certainty. I used all the declarations from Montecatini (Emigh 2002:672). I matched pieces of land for which both the tenant and the landlord gave the name of the other party and that seemed identical. I also matched pieces of land for which one of the parties gave the name of the other party and that I could identify on the other party's declaration with a reasonable degree of certainty. In matching the pieces of land, I relied primarily on the campioni. Although I might have obtained more matches with the portate, the information might have been inconsistent. There were two sets of portate for the Valdinievole (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:22–23), making it difficult to determine, for any pair of landlord and tenant, which, if either, set of declarations matched. Thus the campioni yielded more consistent information. However, when the campione was ambiguous, I did refer to the portata, making sure to use the one that matched the campione (Emigh 2002:679).

This process yielded sixty-two matches for which the same piece of land could be found in the landlord's and the tenant's declarations and for which there was enough information to compare the landlord's and tenant's declarations of the rent. Of these sixty-two cases, six were rentals of houses and fifty-six were rentals of agricultural holdings. The six cases representing the rental of houses corresponded to the tax regulations for both landlords and tenants, since such information was pertinent to the tax officials' calculations. However, in the other fifty-six cases, although the landlords' information was pertinent to the tax calculation, the tenants' information was not. Thus these tenants were not just responding to information requested by the tax collectors but had the information already available for some other purpose (Emigh 2002:679).

The rents from these properties could be declared in fixed or share terms, in money or kind. To compare the rents from these pieces of land, I converted all the rents in kind into monetary values by assigning to the rent in kind, generally reported as amounts of crops, the standard prices used by Catasto officials (Emigh 2002:680).

There were three possible patterns of reporting rents. In the first pattern, the one corresponding to tax incentives, landlords might have declared a lower rental income in hopes of lowering their tax assessment based on income, while tenants might have declared a higher rent, hoping that tax collectors would interpret the rent as commercial debt and give them a tax deduction for it, even though this type of rent was not an allowable deduction. In the second pattern, one corresponding to the short-run income incentives of the landlord and tenant, the landlord might have declared a higher rent, hoping to extract more income from the tenant, while the tenant might declare a lower rent, hoping to lower the eventual amount of payment. Finally, in the third pattern, one corresponding to long-run incentives of landlord and tenant, the amounts declared by them would have matched. In the long run, it may have been important to establish a reputation as an honest, reliable landlord or tenant, who declared obligations fully and met them responsibly, in a way that agreed with the other party's assessment of the obligation. This reputation may have been especially important in regions such as the Valdinievole, in which landlords and tenants did not form distinct agrarian classes. Instead, they engaged in reciprocal leasing with their neighbors, depending on their income needs and stages of their life cycles. As a consequence, they could anticipate being both landlords and tenants (sometimes simultaneously on different properties).

The majority of the matches followed the third pattern. In thirty-seven of the sixty-two cases (almost 60 percent), the amount declared by the landlord matched the amount declared by the tenant. For example, Nanni di Mazzeo Barruci was a smallholder in Montecatini and owned about ten pieces of land, some of which he worked himself and some of which he leased to others. He also leased several pieces of land, one of which was owned by another inhabitant of Montecatini, Antonio di Guasppare. Both declarations gave an annual fixed rent of two *staia* of grain. Thus the monetary value of the rent would have been twenty-eight *soldi*, using the standard price of fourteen soldi per staia that Catasto officials used for grain in the region (Emigh 2002:680).

In a minority of cases, eighteen of the sixty-two (about 29 percent), however, the rent declared by the landlord and tenant did not match. Of these, eleven of the sixty-two cases (about 18 percent) followed the second pattern corresponding to the short-term income incentives of landlords

and tenants. In these cases, the amount of rent declared by the landlord was larger than the amount declared by the tenant. For example, Giovanni di Antonio declared that he rented a piece of land from the works of San Michele for an annual rent of .5 staia of grain. Giovanni was listed as a tenant in the declaration of the religious institution, but the rent was given as 1.5 staia of grain each year (Emigh 2002:684–85). Finally, in the smallest category of cases, the pattern of reporting corresponded to the tax incentives. In seven of the sixty-two cases (about 11 percent), the landlord declared less rent than the tenant did. For example, Meo di Agostino declared that he rented a piece of land from Papo di Benintendi for an annual rent of seven staia of grain. Papo declared Meo di Agostino to be one of his tenants, who paid an annual rent of one staia of grain (Emigh 2002:682).

Thus these patterns suggest that overall, individuals' own economic incentives were more important than those of the tax officials. Although there were clearly cases in which the rents did not match (although some of these mismatches may have been affected by different redaction dates of the Catasto; see Emigh 2002:683–84), even in these cases, more of them corresponded to the rental contract incentives than to the tax incentives.

Of course, individuals did respond to tax incentives. As Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber showed, Tuscans did falsify their Catasto returns to lighten their tax burdens. However, more detailed analyses show that tax incentives were not necessarily paramount in declaring income. The tax incentives may have been relatively unimportant with respect to the landlord's interest in receiving the entire rent from the tenant; after all, the amount saved by lowering the amount of tax would not, in most cases, have made up for the loss of income, because households were taxed at a relatively small percentage of the total amount of their taxable wealth. Thus, if there were any chance the other party in the contract would discover the discrepancy, there was relatively little reason for a tenant to overreport or a landlord to underreport the amount of rent. If tenants declared a larger rent to try to lower their tax burdens, and landlords discovered these reports, landlords might demand the higher rents. Furthermore, the loss of reputation as a reliable contractual partner might be more damaging than paying taxes on the entire income (Emigh 2002:684).

COMPARING LOANS AND LIVESTOCK DECLARED BY LANDLORDS AND TENANTS

In this section, I examine another dimension of agricultural production, the provisioning of share tenancies. Sharecropping was a common form of rental contract in rural Tuscany; landlords leased properties to tenants for a share of the harvest (commonly one-half). In some locations in rural Tuscany (in contrast to the Valdinievole), landlords and tenants of sharecropped properties formed different classes. Landlords tended to be Florentine urban merchants who owned consolidated farms leased to rural inhabitants, who owned little land of their own. Where these arrangements prevailed, landlords commonly provided loans to their tenants for capital for working the land and provided livestock, oxen, and sometimes other animals for the properties (see review in Emigh 1996:707–8). Written leases preserved as notarial documents suggest that landlords provided inputs on nearly 86 percent of sharecropped tenancies (Emigh 1998:362).

What affected how landlords' inputs were recorded on the Catasto declarations? As Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber (1985:119) noted, sharecroppers' own declarations mention oxen in a minority of cases. In nearly 65 percent of the cases, sharecroppers' declarations did not mention oxen. In about 14.5 percent of the cases, their declarations indicate that sharecroppers leased oxen; in nearly 21 percent of the cases, sharecroppers owned oxen. From the perspective of the tax regulations, this pattern is not surprising. The Catasto regulations stated that livestock and loans on all farms were supposed to be declared (although certain categories of them were exempt) (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:13–14, 118–19; Karmin 1906: 21–22). However, it is not clear whether both the landlords and the tenants were supposed to declare the values (see Karmin 1906:21–22). Landlords were taxed on the livestock on their farms but were allowed to subtract a one-florin tax credit for each team of oxen (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985: 14). Livestock held by rural inhabitants was taxable, but oxen used for cultivation were tax exempt. However, the tax officials were not consistent about recording this deduction (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:119). Loans contracted between landlords and tenants were not considered to be commercial debts, and tenants were not given a tax deduction for them (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:17, 119). In addition, these loans were not always considered commercial assets, so landlords were not always taxed for them. Given that these loans and livestock, then, were relatively unimportant from the point of view of tax regulations and incentives (that is, they were mostly tax exempt) and in any event that these regulations were enforced irregularly, do the declarations exhibit any consistent pattern? If they do, it may suggest that landlords' and tenants' own incentives were motivating such a pattern, since tax regulations and incentives were not paramount.

To investigate this question, I used the same strategy as above. I

focused on a relatively small region, in which it would be possible to match landlords' and tenants' records. I focused on two small rural parishes, San Piero a Sieve and Santa Maria a Spugnole, in the Mugello, north of Florence. These parishes provide examples of sharecropping communities in which wealthy Florentines leased land to local residents. The region was prosperous and the soil fertile (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:51). Landlords in these parishes were involved in their tenancies, and sharecropping was a productive form of agricultural production, at the leading edges of a capitalist agricultural transformation (Emigh 2000:43). Thus it is quite likely that tenants in these parishes had access to landlords' inputs in the form of loans and livestock.

Here, I used both the campioni and portate, which were similar but not identical. The portate contained some information about loans and livestock that the tax officials did not bother to recopy to the campioni, probably because it was irrelevant to tax calculations. To match landlords to tenants, I first looked through all the Catasto declarations in these parishes for possible landlords named on tenants' declarations as debtors, landlords, or owners of properties listed in the boundaries of tenants' own properties. I then used Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber's data (1981) to search for the landlords' declarations, which were generally among the Florentine registers. When I identified a landlord, I searched through his or her portata and campione for the property worked by the rural resident. In some cases, this search was relatively straightforward, because the landlord's declaration provided the name of the tenant or a household member of the tenant. In other cases, the worker's name was not given, but the property was in the appropriate parish and the match seemed unambiguous. Once a landlord was located, I also looked through his or her entire declaration for other pieces of land in these parishes and for possible landlords' names among the boundaries of property. Certainly, some farms remained unmatched to their tenants, but this strategy provided a reasonably exhaustive way to match tenants to farms. I matched forty-six landlords' holdings to tenants in these two parishes. Then, on the basis of this match, I coded any information about loans and livestock from both the tenants' and the landlords' declarations (Emigh 1996:710–11).

There was considerable agreement between landlords and tenants with respect to loans. For these forty-six holdings, the mean value of loans declared by landlords was 19.27 florins, while the mean value declared by tenants was 12.73 florins. In half the cases (twenty-three of forty-six), the landlords and tenants declared an identical amount. In twelve cases, both landlord and tenant declared the identical nonzero amount. In another eleven cases, neither landlord nor tenant declared any loan. In another ten of the forty-six cases, the discrepancy between the landlord's and tenant's declaration was relatively small, less than five florins (Emigh 1996:711). In thirty-three of the forty-six cases, then, the landlords' and tenants' declarations were identical or similar.

In contrast, in eleven of the forty-six cases, there was a large discrepancy between the landlord's and tenant's declarations. In seven of these discrepant cases, one of the two parties declared no debt at all (in six cases, the tenants declared no debt; in one case, the owner declared no debt). In these cases, it is not clear whether landlords and tenants disagreed about the amount of the debt or whether one party, generally the tenant, simply did not bother to list the loan. In the other four discrepant cases, landlords' and tenants' declarations greatly diverged (by more than five florins). However, one of these large discrepancies, and several of the others, may stem from the different redaction dates of landlords' and tenants' declarations. (In the remaining two cases, the amount of the loan could not be determined.) If so, then the number of discrepant cases may be even smaller (Emigh 1996:711–12).

In sharp contrast, landlords' and tenants' listings of livestock diverged widely. The mean value of livestock declared by landlords was 18.34 florins; that of tenants, only 2.49 florins. In contrast to the loans, where the declarations were similar in thirty-three cases, the listings of livestock were similar in only seventeen of the forty-six cases. The value of the livestock declared by landlords and tenants matched exactly in only one case. In another thirteen cases, the declarations matched because neither landlord nor tenant declared any livestock. In another three cases, the landlords and tenants declared amounts that differed by only five florins. In the majority of the cases, however, twenty-five of forty-six (about 54 percent), the landlords, but not the tenants, declared a value for livestock. In another four cases, the landlords declared livestock, but the value cannot be determined (the livestock was not listed on the tenants' declarations). Although it cannot be determined for sure whether landlords and tenants disagreed about the value of the livestock or whether or not it was provided, it seems more likely that tenants simply did not bother to list the livestock (Emigh 1996:714).

These data suggest that the usual practice in these parishes was for landlords to provide either loans or livestock, or both, for their sharecropped tenancies. In thirty-eight of the forty-six tenancies, about 83 percent, either the tenant's or the landlord's declaration indicated that a loan or livestock had been provided. This is approximately the same percentage

given by an analysis of notarial documents, suggesting that 86 percent of landlords provided inputs for their share tenancies (Emigh 1998:362). These data make it possible to draw different conclusions than those based on Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber's figures based on only tenants' declarations, which suggested that sharecroppers did not have access to livestock. However, a careful analysis shows that the analyses are providing complementary information. The data from these parishes show that in twenty-nine of the forty-six cases, about 63 percent, tenants did not list livestock on their declarations. This is just about the same as the percentage (about 65) of sharecroppers throughout all of rural Tuscany who did not mention livestock, according to Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber (1985:119). These comparisons also suggest that landlords' practices in these parishes were similar to those in Tuscany more generally.

What explains this pattern of reporting? The tax regulations explain relatively little. Theoretically, landlords and tenants were supposed to declare all loans and livestock, but there were few reasons to do so. These loans were not considered commercial assets. Tenants were not given a tax deduction for them, and landlords often were not charged for them. Further, some livestock was either exempt or was subject to a deduction, and was generally irrelevant to tax calculations. Even further, these regulations were not applied consistently, suggesting that there was general confusion about them (Emigh 1996:717).

In these particular parishes, the reporting patterns do not seem to follow tax regulations, although the calculations were often ambiguous. It is often difficult to determine how the taxes were calculated on the loans and livestock, because these assets were sometimes recopied from the location on the document where the farm was given to the location where the credits were listed. Where the workers' names were not given, the loans and livestock from any particular farm cannot be matched easily to the names in the lists of credits. In other cases, it is difficult to determine exactly what had been taxed because lists of credits were summarized in the campione, and the workers' names had not been recopied from the portata. However, it appears that most landlords in these parishes were not assessed taxes on the value of the loan or the oxen but were assessed taxes on any other livestock. In other cases, landlords were assessed taxes on some but not all the loans and all the livestock except the oxen. Some landlords, however, were assessed taxes on the loans and the oxen. The tenants, however, were not subject to taxes on either the loans or the livestock, and such taxes were not generally assessed (Emigh 1996:717–18). Thus neither the tax regulations in the abstract nor their concrete application in these parishes explain why landlords and tenants generally reported loans but only landlords generally reported livestock.

The tax incentives do not explain this pattern either. The specific incentives for loans and livestock are quite unclear. If the landlord's loan was to be considered an asset, and taxed as such, then landlords would have had incentives to omit them. However, loans to tenants were not always considered assets. Furthermore, even if oxen were considered assets and taxed as such, landlords were supposed to receive a deduction for them. But given the value of oxen, it is unlikely that this deduction was an incentive to list them, because the remainder of their value was taxable. Tenants had no incentives to list livestock or loans, since they received no deductions for them. Thus the tax incentives also provided little motivation for landlords and tenants both listing loans but only landlords listing livestock.

Given the general level of confusion about how these assets would be taxed, it is possible that Tuscans followed more general tax incentives: underplay assets; accentuate liabilities (allowable or not). However, these general incentives also explain little. The mean value of loans and livestock reported by landlords (assets) was considerably higher than the mean value of loans and livestock reported by tenants (debts or liabilities). Thus landlords and tenants in these Mugellan parishes, like the landlords and tenants in Montecatini, do not seem to be following a general pattern of hiding assets and declaring debts.

Instead, like the landlords and tenants in Montecatini, they seem to be recording financial assets and debts to keep records of their obligations and interests. The amounts of the loans between landlords and tenants frequently matched; obviously, both landlords and tenants felt that the debts were genuine ones, for which tenants were obligated. However, since tenants did not generally record livestock, it is quite possible that they did not consider themselves to be obligated or responsible for the monetary value of these animals in the same way as they were for loans. Thus, although it is impossible to determine for certain, the most consistent interpretation of these documents is that landlords were declaring these animals as their own assets while tenants felt relatively little financial obligation for them. Perhaps landlords and tenants considered livestock to be similar to other fixed capital assets on the farm (the house, the outbuildings) that were listed on the landlord's declarations for the tenant's use. While the tenants had to care for these assets, they may not have been financially responsible for them as they were for loans. This explanation is consistent with the interpretation of the pattern of reporting rents in Montecatini. The Catasto was a public document in which individuals were careful to record

their major assets and debts to preserve their interests or to limit their liabilities, regardless of tax incentives (Emigh 1996:718). Failure to declare an asset might call into question its ownership (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber [1985:18] give the example of land, although this was likely to be true of all assets). Thus landlords and tenants were careful to record loans, for which they both felt responsible, but only landlords recorded livestock, as it was generally the landlord's asset, not the tenant's asset or liability.

ASSESSING THE RELATIVE INFLUENCES ON THE CATASTO OF 1427

I assessed three sets of influences on the Catasto of 1427: economic incentives, cultural patterns, and methodological practices. To do so, I combined information from three microhistorical studies. These microhistories examined in detail a relatively small number of documents that were restricted either topically (for example, only death records of males) or regionally (for example, only for a few small towns). These microhistories make it possible to examine specific patterns of influences on the Catasto that were not apparent in Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber's more summary research on the Catasto as a whole (although the microhistories would not have been possible without their pathbreaking work).

The microhistories show that economic incentives were important but that individuals' own financial incentives were generally more important than tax incentives, when the two conflicted. Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber (1985:138–42) showed that Tuscans responded to tax incentives, which affected the age and sex distribution in the Catasto. However, the microhistories show that when some other financial interest was at stake, it generally trumped the tax incentives. I illustrated this by comparing rents declared by landlords and tenants in Montecatini and loans and livestock declared by landlords and tenants in San Piero a Sieve and Santa Maria a Spugnole. The patterns based on these comparisons did not generally conform to what would be expected on the basis of tax incentives, which should have induced Tuscans to underreport their assets and overreport their debts. Instead, the most common pattern—matching records of landlords and tenants—suggested that the more powerful influence on the information in the Catasto was individuals' interests in maintaining records of their assets and debts to preserve their interests or limit their liabilities. Thus, while tax incentives were important, they were not paramount, especially with respect to assets and debts. It is possible that the tax incentives had more influence on age reporting than on asset and debt reporting, precisely because this information had relatively few other financial implications that might have produced conflicting incentives with respect to reporting in the Catasto.

The examination of death records also showed that while Tuscans paid attention to tax incentives, they were not necessarily paramount. Although reporting deaths of adult males eligible for the head tax would have reduced Tuscans' taxes, most deaths went unreported (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:258). Furthermore, the analyses show that whether the tax had been paid or not was not the most important influence affecting reports of deaths. Householders' knowledge of eligibility for the tax and tax officials' methodological practices of using the names of heads of households as an organizing principle were more important than whether the deceased male had been charged the tax. Thus it appears that Tuscans who reported deaths were anticipating payment, not responding to whether the payment had been made or not. Although the tax incentive certainly shaped individuals' actions through eligibility for the tax, the results suggest that individuals were not responding to immediate taxation so much as anticipating possible payments.

Cultural influences were also apparent. The widespread cultural category of household head was deployed by tax officials as a methodological device, which in turn affected the results. Similarly, unmarried females were systematically reported to be younger in the Catasto to improve their marriage chances (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:141; Molho 1988:201). Such practices were based on cultural expectations about women's appropriate marriage age. Finally, the redaction of the Catasto was possible only because of widespread cultural practices of literacy and numeracy. The collection of information, given the level of detail, would have been impossible if Tuscans did not have specific knowledge of their assets, debts, and demographic information (Emigh 2002:666).

NUMERACY IN EVERYDAY LIFE

The level and detail of this information also illustrates that in the Tuscan case, the Florentine government had to be capitalizing to a large extent on information that Tuscans already knew (Emigh 2002:688–89). The microhistories comparing landlords' and tenants' declarations show that Tuscans generally had more information at their disposal than tax officials wanted them to report. In this respect, the microhistories again suggest that information about ages may have had different influences than information about assets. Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber's analysis (1985:164, 181) suggests that Tuscans learned to report their ages more accurately over time, in response to the need to provide this information to tax officials. While the state may have influenced age reporting, for assets and debts it seems that society, not the state, had the larger influence on the information in the Catasto. In fact, Tuscans' knowledge of their assets and debts overwhelmed the tax officials. It took much longer than officials expected to redact the Catasto of 1427. Some procedures were simplified as its collection progressed because they were simply too labor intensive, and the Florentines never again attempted to collect such a detailed survey (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985: 11, 26; Petralia 2000:68–69). While the Catasto of 1427 was certainly linked to state-building processes, the Florentine government was largely dependent upon information that its populace had already developed on the basis of engaging in financial transactions for its own purposes.

Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber's seminal work, although it pointed out the influence of methodologies of enumeration, cultural categories, and tax incentives, could not illustrate the relative importance of these influences. Furthermore, because they suggested that rural inhabitants, in particular, had little reason to be numerate except when information was requested by the government, their work can be interpreted as suggesting that the government's role in assessing and collecting taxes was the most important influence on numerical information. Indeed, given the deficiencies of the Catasto (for example, the scant recording of deaths and the multiple contradictions between the postings and the tax regulations), it is easy to assume that the inhabitants' numerical knowledge was deficient and that perhaps numerical knowledge was a part of elite culture that only slowly penetrated rural regions through repeated tax assessment and collection. Such a view might be consistent with Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber's findings (1985:164, 182) that numeracy spread from urban to rural areas, and Graff's argument (Graff 1987:76–90) that literacy flowered among Florentines, who had opportunities for education and exposure to a humanist culture. This view is also consistent with the more general argument that states are the prime reasons individuals learn to be numerate and that, as a result, tax incentives are the primary incentives for individuals' patterns of reporting and use of numerical information (see Emigh 2002:654).

In contrast, I argue here against this possible interpretation. By combining three detailed microhistories, I argue that rural individuals had their own reasons for using numerical information and when their own incentives conflicted with those of the tax system, their own incentives prevailed. Numeracy was part of everyday life in rural regions (Emigh 2002). The results presented here—based on the patterning of events reported in the Catasto—suggest that rural inhabitants had strong incentives to report transactions to preserve their interests and limit their liabilities, or to show more generally that they were honest and reliable parties in transactions. The results also show that rural inhabitants frequently had more numeric information at their disposal than the tax officials requested. More generally, rural inhabitants knew the value of their credits and assets (land, rents, livestock, loans) because of broader social practices of partible property devolution (including partible inheritance for men at a father's death and dowry payments for women at the time of marriage) and local markets for land, labor, and commodities. These social practices assured that rural inhabitants frequently exchanged assets and debts with each other through sale, gift, or deed and recorded their values to preserve their or their offspring's interests in them. These practices necessitated extensive knowledge of numerical information as well as careful recording of it (Emigh 2002, 2003, 2005).

I argued that a microhistorical comparison of records of events could illuminate how rural individuals used numerical information. The three microhistories, each based separately on sets of comparisons, although interesting, are much more powerful when combined. Alone, each one provides less information than the combination, because the findings of each one largely confirm the findings that tax incentives, while not disregarded, are not paramount. Thus the combination shows that each separate microhistorical analysis of some particular feature of a document (for example, how landlords and tenants recorded loans, livestock, and rents; or how rural inhabitants recorded deaths) or some particular small community (the two Mugellan parishes or Montecatini di Valdinievole) is not idiosyncratic. The particular details of each study illustrate more generally how rural inhabitants used numerical information for their own purposes.

Microhistorical studies of this genre will continue to be important in the historiography of late medieval and early modern Europe. Given the nature of the archival evidence (plentiful, but fragmentary), it is unlikely that the level of detail needed to draw conclusions about everyday rural life can be amassed for larger, comprehensive geographical units, such as all of Tuscany, or that biographical narratives can be constructed for many topics of substantive interest. The microhistorical methods presented here suggest some alternatives that can be used to explore the lives of everyday, ordinary individuals.

Notes

1. Therefore, several microhistorical sources were discovered while authors were looking for something else (J. Brown 1986:3; Brucker 1986:vii).

2. From Trouillot's (1995:26–27) perspective, the lack of source material creates historical silences that need to be deconstructed through a variety of methods.

3. Opponents of quantitative history argue that quantitative historians use quantification to argue for the scientific rigor and validity of their research (for example, Stone 1979:5–6); whether or not this is true is another issue.

4. Compare Eiss's discussion of microhistory, positivism, and interpretation in this volume and Magnússon's (2003:712–14) discussion of microhistory and social science methodology.

life unfolded for ordinary laborers and spouses undertaking daily ta domestic practices, social interactions, and family relationships. Rat than trying to use these rich texts to reconstruct specific historical ev or to date historical happenings in the Ross settlement, I believe they best employed to obtain a sense of what life was like for Native Californi as they encountered foreign people, alien foods, and new kinds of cultu practices and religious beliefs. Although oral traditions, archaeolog findings, and census documents represent different ways of knowing ab the past at Colony Ross, I found that they can relate to each other in a c plementary fashion. While the oral traditions and archaeological find elicit fresh insights about the daily practices of Indian people at Ross, census data provide the means of securing these happenings into a broa chronological framework. The rich trappings of daily life exposed by th diverse sources are the meat and potatoes of microhistory. In using th multiple sources of information, we obtain new insights about the com cated social interactions that took place within interethnic households well as the elaborate power structure that underpinned Colony Ross.

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