

Women, Family, and Ritual in Renaissance Italy

Christiane Klapisch-Zuber



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Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, a brilliant historian of the Annales school, skillfully uncovers the lives of ordinary Italians of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Tuscans in particular, young and old, rich, middleclass, and poor. From the extraordinarily detailed records kept by Florentine tax collectors and the equally precise *ricordanze* (household accounts with notations of events great and small), Klapisch-Zuber draws a living picture of the Tuscan household. We learn, for example, how children were named, how wet nurses were engaged, how marriages were negotiated and celebrated. A wealth of other sources are tapped—including city statutes, private letters, philosophical works on marriage, paintings—to determine the social status of women. Klapisch-Zuber reveals how women, in their roles as daughters, wives, sisters, and mothers, were largely subject to a family system that needed them but valued them little.

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