

# EMMANUEL LE ROY LADURIE'S APPROACH TO HISTORY

## Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie'nin Tarih Yaklaşımı

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Emmanuel  
Le Roy  
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### ÖZ

**Araştırmanın Temelleri:** Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie'nin farklı dönemlerde kaleme aldığı iki tarih çalışması.

**Araştırmanın Amacı:** Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie'nin tarihe yaklaşımını irdelemek ve tarihçinin Peasants of Languedoc ve Montaillou adlı eserlerinden yola çıkarak kaynak kullanımı ile çeşitlenen tarih yaklaşımını incelemek.

**Veri Kaynakları:** Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie'nin Peasants of Languedoc ve Montaillou adlı eserleri.

**Ana Tartışma:** Kullandığı kaynak bir tarihçinin tarih yazımını nasıl etkilemektedir?

**Sonuçlar:** Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie'nin farklı dönemlerde kaleme aldığı Peasants of Languedoc ve Montaillou adlı eserlerinde görüldüğü üzere bir tarihçinin kullandığı kaynaklar onun tarih yazımını da etkilemektedir. Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, Peasants of Languedoc'ta istatistiksel veriler gibi sayıları kullanarak Languedoc köylülerinin yaşamlarına ışık tutarken, Montaillou adlı eserinde mahkeme kayıtlarının detaylarından yola çıkarak nasıl bir mikro tarih yazılacağını göstermektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, tarihçi, Annales okulu, kantitatif tarih, mikro tarih.

### ABSTRACT

**Bases of Research:** Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie's historical studies that the author has written in different periods in a different manner.

**Purpose of Research:** The purpose of our study is to understand historical approach of Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie and to investigate different approaches to history by using different sources as in the example of Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie's Works- Peasants of Languedoc an Montaillou.

**Resources of Data:** Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie's Works- Peasants of Languedoc and Montaillou.

**Main Discussion:** How do an historian's sources affect his history writing?

**Conclusions:** As in the examples of Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie's Works- Peasants of Languedoc an Montaillou, an historian's sources affect and shape his history writing. Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie used quantitative sources-statistics to write peasants history of Languedoc but later in his life he indicated how court records can be used as a source to make history of men as he did in Montaillou.

**Key Words:** Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, historian, Annales school, quantitative history, micro history.

### INTRODUCTION

In this work, with brief life story of Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, his two famous and important studies "*The Peasants of Languedoc*" (1966) and "*Montaillou: Cathars and Catholics in a French*" are taken into consideration in the historical context of "*Annales*" third generation. With "*The Peasants of*

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*Languedoc*”, the concepts of quantitative history, of *longue dureé*, of total history in the context of local history, and importance of demography will be analyzed. The essays in “*Territory of The Historian*”— range from a study of military recruits in the 19th century, to the history of rain and tine weather, and to a discussion of attitudes toward death became the main source for the explanations of these terms. Some references and explanations will be made on chronological form of organization and “Neo- Malthusian” model. In the example of “*Times of Feast and Times of Famines*”, the question of what is the history of climate will be answered under the light of the author’s explanations. Around “*Montaillou: Cathars and Catholics in a French village 1294-1324*”, ethnographic style, micro-history, novelistic realism in a historical study with the contribution of anthropology to history are to be considered. Along with the historiographical schemes of these studies, the contents also became part of this work for the closer understanding of the historical methods used by Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie.

### LIFE STORY OF EMMANUEL LE ROY LADURIE

Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie is one of the most important French historians and one of the members of “*Annales*” third generation. He was born in 19 July 1929 and he is still alive. He is a northerner (Norman) but loves the south too much. He is sometimes referred as the “Dauphin”, that is, Braudel’s heir to the kingdom of *Annales*. He has taken an active part in several important positions concerning history and historical studies. He was director of Études Ecole Pratique Des Hautes Études in 1965. He has been an editor of the journal “*Annales*” since 1967; he has been the professor of the history of modern civilization at College de France since 1973; general administrator of Bibliothèque Nationale (1987-94); president of Scientific Council since 1994. He taught at Lyceé de Montpellier (1955-57), C.S.R.S (1957-60), Faculté de Montpellier (1960-63), the Sorbonne (1970-71), University of Paris(1971-73), University of Princeton and University of Michigan. He has several publications, and most of them were translated into English.<sup>1</sup>

Le Roy Ladurie is the most brilliant of Braudel's students and resembled to him in a number of respects; imaginative power, wide ranging curiosity, a multi disciplinary approach, a concern with *longue dureé* and certain ambivalence towards Marxism.

### THE PEASANTS OF LANGUEDOC

“*The Peasants of Languedoc*” is Le Roy Ladurie's Phd dissertation, written in 1966 as an example of "total history" of peasant society in the ancient French province of Languedoc between the Middle Age and the Enlightenment. It combines the elements of historical geography, demography, and sociology; of economic history; and of psychohistory in a single construction, baptized “a great agrarian cycle”. These different structures are studied in their reciprocal relations as component parts of a whole.

It is understood from Braudel's experience that the ideal of “total history” cannot be realized on so vast stage as the Mediterranean. It is not more practicable for a single country. If all sources are to be mastered and a full integration of theme to be achieved, the geographical limits of the enquiry must be drastically narrowed down. Therefore, “total history” turns out in practise to “local history”. The third generation of “*Annales*” historians professionally is among the first to practice the new kind of local history. (Tosh, 1989: 90) According to Le Roy Ladurie, in the

<sup>1</sup> “The Peasants of Languedoc” (1966), “Times of Feast and Times Famine” (1967), “The Territory of Historian”(1973), “Montaillou: Cathars and Catholics in a French village” (1978), “Carnival: A People’s Uprising at Romans” (1979), “The French Peasantry 1450-1680”, (1987), “Monarchies” (1987), “The Royal French State 1460-1610” (1994).

instance of Huguenot Languedoc in past centuries (where research is favored by the wealth of documents) knowledge of the demography of the region has made it possible to move towards total history. It seems that Le Roy Ladurie believed that in pre industrial societies which lived so much closer to the margin of subsistence, the demography was the determinant of social and economic history.

*The Peasants of Languedoc* is a study of long term lasting from the late 15th to the early 18th, from Louis XI to Louis XIV. Like other Annales historians-Fevbre, Bloch, Braudel, Chaunu, Goubert-, Le Roy Ladurie is concerned with social history, interested in structural factors, the constants (at least relatively constant) in history, he is also interested in patterns of change especially over the long term. He believes that in order to escape from any attempt at analysis lacking in sufficient historical depth, it is necessary to use the event-structure mode. (Le Roy Ladurie, 1979: 132) Therefore, he did not regard, for example, Reformation, Camisard insurrection as unique events but he tried to digest them in total history. (Le Roy Ladurie, 1979: 113)

Le Roy Ladurie used the quantitative disciplines of demography to develop a kind of total history examining material culture and everyday life of the masses. He is not alone in the use of quantitative method to write total history in the context of local history. For instance, Pierre Goubert, in "Beauvais et le Beauvaisis au XVIIe siècle", started from an idea that one could apply the quantitative method not merely to prices, but to a different source of documents, parish registers. Pierre Chaunu has reconstructed the entire movements of Spanish shipping in the Atlantic between 1500-1650 and in the Pacific as well, by using the archives in Seville. Pierre Vilar's major work "La Catalogne dans l'Espagne moderne" uses quantitative method at several different levels including wage series. The combined effect of this total investigation is extremely striking. (Le Roy Ladurie, 1979: 24) These studies which are not so much copies from a model as individual variations on a group theme were the most impressive achievement of *Annales* movement in 1960s. All of these combined Braudelian structure, Labrousseau's conjuncture<sup>2</sup> and new historical demography.

The new quantitative history thought in causal terms. Numbers were to be used in the comparison of differing variable. To make comparison, long quantitative series reconstructed from the sources. (Iggers, 1984: 60) The attraction of this kind of enquiry is that it uncovers patterns which relate to the whole of the society, rather than just segment of it illuminated by literary sources. The isolation and comparison of selected variables, which is considered basic to the society, would permit the construction of a total picture of a period in a specific geographical-historical region. Le Roy Ladurie claims that the image of a society of country people remaining stable over the very long term in spite of some violent temporary upheavals seems to me to be one of the fundamental results to emerge from the works of quantitative history. (Le Roy Ladurie, 1979: 25) So, in "*The Peasants of Languedoc*", he took the mental life of the age into consideration.

In his book, Le Roy Ladurie heavily relied on homogenous data which can be arranged in long term series. His two key statistical sources are land tax registers-or *compoix*, for shifting patterns of landownership and *tithe* - a one-tenth part of something could be paid in kind, such as agricultural products as a tax or levy-accounts for the evolution of the gross agricultural product. The phases of the long term movement he has studied are analyzed in terms of more familiar kinds of quantitative data: hearth lists, list of prices, wages (including wages in kind), land

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<sup>2</sup> To study the conjuncture of a period means more than simply taking a few indicators; it requires the historian to compare the various trends discernible in the different variables (population, production, prices and wages) and on this basis to construct a dynamic model.

rent, interest rates and profits. For him the ecclesiastical records, thanks to their continuity, still constitute the fundamental source. (Le Roy Ladurie, 1969: 115) In addition to parish registers including a number of local curves, he used cadastres and the books of *taille* - a direct land tax on the French peasantry and non-nobles in Ancien Régime France- as they help to enlarge and develop the conclusions that emerge from purely demographic studies.

“*The Peasants of Languedoc*” is a rural history and author mentions the life of the peasants. There is a difficulty of obtaining exact information about villagers because certain villages are missing from the list of statistical documents. Moreover, the world of peasants was mostly beyond the pale of the written world and they were mostly illiterate, so they have left almost no traces in the archives of the period. The bishops, in their annual rounds, visited only a portion of their parishes. Therefore, the chronological cross-sections are never complete. It must be forgotten about absolute totals and it must be limited to isolating the trend by calculating indices and averages. One problem is what year is to assign, the index 100. (Le Roy Ladurie, 1969: 240)

At the beginning of his study, Le Roy Ladurie first turned to the land tax registers of rural Languedoc with a view documenting the birth of capitalism in that region; he found himself instead in investigating the social structure in the broadest sense, and in particular the impact of demographic change. He confessed that

“...Mine was the classical misadventure; I had wanted to master a source in order to confirm my youthful convictions, but it was finally the source that mastered me by imposing its own rhythms, its own chronology and its own particular truth...” (Le Roy Ladurie, 1969: 4)

Le Roy Ladurie proceeded with a “Malthusian model” governed by a demographic structure in which biological factors were still determining and productive capacities remained limited but in which a market economy already existed so that the movement of the prices and population increase led to pauperization and intensified class conflict. He regarded the Malthusian model as a working approach to the empirical data, not as ready made theory to be imposed upon history.<sup>3</sup>

Unlike Braudelian structure-conjuncture model, he adopted chronological form of organization. He organizes his book around economic and social change, on a great agrarian cycle including successive phases of growth and decline, rise and fall in chronological sequence. He has four phases but he mentions about first phase as an introduction to his three main phases. In the first phase, called the low water mark, covering from 11th to 15th century, the preconditions of growth were prepared ( low rent rate, more plentiful food).The second phase is the advance-from late 15th to 1600. First and second parts of the book cover this period which is A-phase in Simiand's term, periods of expansion. The third phase is maturity from 1600 to 1650 or 1680. He studied this phase in third part of the book, called

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<sup>3</sup> Malthus believed that population tends to increase up to the limits of “the means of subsistence”. There are two kinds of checks that prevent population from increasing beyond food supply. "Positive checks" show up in death rate such as war, famine and pestilence; “preventive checks” show up in the birth rate such as abortion, infanticide and birth control. Both checks are the consequences of lack of food, which may be regarded as the ultimate check on population growth that is always in operation. Unless an increase of population is checked by prudential restraint, poverty is impossible. Malthus' influence on public opinion lasted until last decades of 19th century. By that time, the record of sustained economic growth, the rise in the standard of living, and the decline in fertility lessened its influence. In 1920s with Keynesian model of under-population, Malthus lost its prestige. In the period of World War II, the problem of over population in under developed countries brought Malthus into favor. In this sense, while Le Roy Ladurie is looking at economic social conditions of 16th and 17th centuries, he makes too much references and comparisons with today's under developed countries.

“rent offensive” which is very briefly summarized in English version. The fourth phase “the long period of recession” in forth part of the book called depression. The characteristics of this last part are paralleled with Simiand's B-phase, periods of contraction. These phases imply a unity and serve to see a major organized secular rural fluctuation, lasting from the end of 15th to the beginning of 18th century.

By each chronological section, he discussed cultural developments such as the rise of Protestantism and literacy, and he also described reactions of the ordinary people of his region to the economic trends they experienced in their everyday lives. In order to write this “history from below” he drew heavily on the evidence of revolts. (Le Roy Ladurie, 1969: 63) By this, Le Roy Ladurie adds “events” to Braudelian “structure- conjuncture” model. For Braudel, events emerge from the changes in deep structures and they have no effects on them. The revolts which are the typical examples of social movements took great place in “*The Peasants of Languedoc*”. However, also for Le Roy Ladurie, events could not change the structures, they only reflect structures. ( Burke, 1990: 158)

The first part of the book concerns with A phase, as he called “Malthusian Renaissance” due to the population explosion in his book, a period of economic expansion fuelled by dramatic rise in the population of the region. Due to more plentiful food, people were better nourished, healthier and less vulnerable to the plaque microbe after a good hundred years of selective slaughter (He means the later Middle Ages). (Le Roy Ladurie, 1969: 55) Within the population explosion, marginal lands were recovered, mixed cultivation was advanced and land was exploited more intensively. The peasant holdings were divided smaller and smaller, the rural wage laborers became poorer and poorer. Only the landowners who managed their own estates themselves, profited from change.

Le Roy Ladurie studied each one of these changes in detail, with using several statistical evidences, explaining graphics and so on. For example, according to Le Roy Ladurie, the agricultural *renaissance* was characterized, first of all, by a cycle of olive cultivation. He tells just like the history of olive tree, the advantages of olive production, its position in local and foreign market by explaining the meaning of several production curves, *tithe* accounts and also he make comparisons with the olive cultivation, for instance, in Andulisia, Tunisia and so on. For him, economic and social factors intervene between consumption and production. To give the general picture of availability of the nourishment of farm workers, he gives statistically an individual diet as a concrete example and made comparison with today's underdeveloped countries. From the graph of daily wages, he draws a rudimentary picture of old sociology of the working class and makes the categories of urban workers.

In Le Roy Ladurie's model, within the ecology and demography, there is a place also for the effect of culture like custom of inheritance. As the villagers of Languedoc were dividing their property among children, the growth of population was accelerating to break the possession gradually. According to him, the crisis of 1526 was an event of growth but of unhealthy growth and it affected every aspect of life from biological foundation to its psychological superstructure.

This densely quantitative history, as though essential, is not enough and he moves on to discuss social history, distinguishing two cultures (one-rural, Catholic, illiterate and poor; the other- urban, Calvinist, literate and prosperous) and describing peasant resentments and social conflicts. Even if all shortcomings of unequal development of 16th century, Le Roy Ladurie asserts that it was a creative change, it brought in its wake new states of consciousness, social struggles and

conflicts over land; it engendered wars and revolutions. It was attended by a deep and sometimes lasting permutation in peasant mentality. According to him, two revolutions in mental attitude, two currents of cultural change arose in Mediterranean France in 16th century. These were linguistic revolution and Reformation. The linguistic revolution within its geographical distinctions is represented by the earliest diffusion of French language. By using the shapes of signatures, he evaluates the level of literacy. Reformation without geographical originality went deeper than linguistic revolution, penetrating into the level of the popular and peasant conscience but it remained circumscribed to the urban and artisan class, it did not spill over into the peasant masses that remained steadfast in their Catholic beliefs. Briefly, he saw 16th century as “enlightenment” with respect to linguistic knowledge and religious innovations. (Le Roy Ladurie, 1969: 152)

He returns the question of capitalism and concludes his economic and social explanation that the regional economy remained incapable of secreting capitalistic social system- capitalism is not built on poverty. He claimed that “*our 'microscopic' research concerning farming units and land structures serves to demonstrate the pauperization of the 16th century. At the same time, a macroscopic study of the behavior of the public authorities and the popular masses confirms the general advent of pauperism with the crisis of the 1530's.*” (Le Roy Ladurie, 1969: 138) From the point of mentality, Le Roy Ladurie is making reference to the assertion of Max Weber, which capitalism and Protestantism are dependent reciprocally.

By giving exact date and place, he tells the general climate of human attitudes, religious and daily life of a town from curious eyes of an attentive young visitor. In his picture, there are description of innocent gaiety, cruel pleasures, money, sadism and luxury, ordinary daily activities including diet of town dwelling peasants and so on. By making imaginary visit to the home of a merchant and of a peasant, he mentions everything like green woolen carpet, painted glass bowl, in their houses; he compares these two men, products of the same milieu, who were separated by their way of life. According to Le Roy Ladurie, they are representatives of two different life styles, two societies, the antimony that opposed bourgeoisie and peasant, town and country and maybe barbarism and civilization. He firstly gives the differences in social hierarchy, and then questioned their attitudes to the same event, I mean, Calvinist Revolution.

Prior to the 1550, peasant uprisings were limited in character, often little more than tax riots. The strike against the *tithe*, in the form of sabotage or open resistance, was raging in Languedoc in 1563-67. Le Roy Ladurie notes that in about 1580, peasant revolts in Languedoc became more radical and more violent than before. It was ignited by hardship and misery and the price of bread. The episode began as a popular revolution; it ended as an Elizabethan tragedy arrayed in the bright colors of the Renaissance.

In the course of a discussion of the polarization of rural society in the later 16th century into prosperous landowners and poor wage-workers, Le Roy Ladurie introduced a mini narrative of a single episode of social conflict, in the town of Romans. During the Carnival of 1580, artisans and peasants took the advantage of the masquerades to proclaim that “the rich of their own had grown wealthy at the expense of the poor”, and that before long “Christian flesh will be selling at six pence the pound”. Le Roy Ladurie used this dramatic event of Carnival in Romans as a focus for his micro-historical work in 1979. After the narrative of Carnival in Romans, Le Roy Ladurie briefly mentions from witches' Sabbath, its origin and its history. He claims that after 1560, civil wars aggravated the situation of abandonment. Some priests were massacred and clerical organizations became

inadequate to make its tasks. Far from their priests, the peasants found themselves alone with their anxieties and their primordial fears and they abandon themselves to Satan. For him, there was a certain deep seated kinship between witches' Sabbath and popular revolts at the level of mental structures and the unconscious psyche. He concluded that the increase in the population was not attended by a harmonious growth of wealth and this social failure had its equivalent at the level of peasant consciousness, agrarian struggle and unconscious impulse. (Le Roy Ladurie, 1969: 210)

The third phase of Le Roy Ladurie is "maturity" from 1600 to 1650 or 1680 is discussed in third part of the book called "rent offensive". This part is very briefly summarized in English version, so I cannot make comment in detail. In this phase, so-called in agrarian development, which proceeded with a certain decline, differs from the phase of the same name described by theoreticians of modern economic growth. There are some violent short lived crisis around 1620 and demographic slowdown. The boom in the land rent was very remarkable characteristic of this phase. So, until 1650 or even 1680, population continued to expand, at a slower rate and landowners to profit. At this point, however, what Simiand called a "B-phase" of depression occurred and the whole enormous movement went into reverse. The fundamental reason for this reversal was the decline in the productivity of agriculture. Declining population, lost villages, the reconstitution of fragmented holdings and a drop in prices, in food production and in profits were signs of this phase. As in his words, "it looks very much as if population was adjusting painfully to the conditions of a contracting economy." (Le Roy Ladurie, 1969: 243) Le Roy Ladurie stresses the long term factors in the decline of population as joblessness and poverty; chronic undernourishment, low standard of living which favored the spread of epidemics, the primitive sanitary conditions of poor, emigration, late marriages and even little birth control.

In "B-phase", Le Roy Ladurie firstly discusses the revolt of Vivarias in 1670 as atypical of a certain mass psychology and of a mere instinctive than rational reaction to the rural crisis. This was made against the royal financiers and tax farmers with the slogan of "long live with the king, fie on the elect". In the context of day to day agitation, the rebels of Vivarias remained prudent, royalist and strictly anti-tax.

In "B-phase", after 1680, peasant revolts take place in Protestant areas, not in Catholic ones, especially in Cevennes. They were a response to Louis XIV's campaign against the Huguenots, especially response to The Revocation of The Edict of Nantes. Le Roy Ladurie claims that the Revocation was the attempt to uproot Protestantism entirely- its preaching, its psalms, its Bibles- amounted to force "deculturation". The uprising of Huguenots was against this deculturation. This kind of revolt in 1690s culminated with the Camisards who were the Protestant highlanders of Cevennes. Le Roy Ladurie noted that the leaders of the revolt, who were young girls, were frequently seized with the shaking in which they had visions of heaven and hell, Second coming and prophesied the events to come. With the help of psychologist Georges Demereux, Le Roy Ladurie offers an interpretation of the revolt of the Camisards, in particular, with its prophetesses and convulsionaries, in terms of hysteria. The Camisards themselves noted that young prophetesses lost their inspiration with their virginity. The implication seems to be that even prophesying is part of phase B; declining food production leads to later marriage, later marriage to pre-marital sexual frustration, sexual frustration to hysteria, and hysteria to prophetic convulsions. (Burke, 1972: 7)

The decline in population intensified the economic depression, which reached its bottom in early 18th century, at the close of the reign of Louis XIV. After he

called Malthus a clear headed theoretician of traditional societies, a prophet of the past, he concluded that “*the Malthusian curse had fallen on Languedoc in the 16th and 17th centuries, in the sense that the growth of population, wiped out every increase in prosperity, just as it has fallen in very different circumstances on certain people of today's third world.*” (Le Roy Ladurie, 1969: 311)The combined results of Le Roy Ladurie's calculations serve to illustrate the book's central theme- the Malthusian dilemma of a traditional agrarian society incapable, in long run, of preserving a balance between population and food production. Le Roy Ladurie's “demographic model” of change in Languedoc has been attacked especially by Marxists because of being too simply Malthusian and ignorance of class structure. To this, Le Roy Ladurie has replied that his model is not simple but complex, “neo-Malthusian”, and that it incorporates the class structure. In this context, we have two rival models of social change: a demographic model which incorporates class and a class model which incorporates demography.

### **MONTAILLOU: CATHARS AND CATHOLICS IN A FRENCH VILLAGE (1294-1324)**

In 1967 Le Roy Ladurie wrote “*Times of Feast and Times of Famine*” (Le Roy Ladurie, 1971: 7) as a remarkable comparative study of history of climate over the long term. Le Roy Ladurie believes that as climate is a function of time, it varies, it is subject to fluctuation, and it has a history. (Le Roy Ladurie, 1971: 2) As a source, he used the ancient plans, maps, and reports of early visitors to glaciers, examples of previous studies of both historians and glaciologists. At the end, he made comparison on all data with the results of observation on the spot.

“*The Territory of Historian*” is a collection of Le Roy Ladurie's several articles written over twenty years-in late 1960's and early 1970's. He explains his quantitative method of analyzing such diverse historical elements as demography, public health, literacy, climate, folklore and myth through a variety engrossing case studies. It is clear that the articles, for example, *Historian and Computer* (1968), *Quantitative Revolution* (1968), *Rural Civilization* in which he describes the complex rural hierarchy and the sources of rural tension and cohesion, linking population, literature to hard data on grain yields or death rates, are densely quantitative. Towards late 1970's, we can see his interest gradually goes through less quantitative subjects such as *The New History of Death* (1972), *The Case of Chuan Uprising* (1972).

As it is understood from his works, Le Roy Ladurie was firstly strongly in favor of quantitative method, believing in primacy of economic and demographic factors in history. This is related partly to his early, fairly short lived enthusiasm in Marxism. Le Roy Ladurie is one of the members of *Annales* third generation who desire to achieve certainty, to make too scientific especially with the use of computer. For him, history would be scientific history based at bottom relation of population and food system. Le Roy Ladurie went so far and claimed that history that is not quantifiable cannot claim to be scientific. (Le Roy Ladurie, 1979: 26) In order to understand the reason of his changing approach to the method on history, I think, we should consider the intellectual climate of decades he wrote. In 1950's and 1960's, like sociologists, social historians are also interested in the lives of millions of people and concentrated on the analysis of general tendencies by observing social life and used quantitative methods.

In 1970's by following social anthropologists, some historians gave importance to the thing recognized as “micro-history”. They have turned from telescope to microscope. Two famous studies became influential in bringing the micro-history into the scene, which are Le Roy Ladurie's *Montaillou* and Carlo

Ginzburg's *Cheese and Worms*. Unlike the anthropologist, the historian is, for the most part, thrown back on oblique evidence of what went on in the minds of ordinary people. One of the sources on which social historians of all kinds is so dependent -the records of legal proceedings. For the researcher prepared to work through enough of them, the cumulative effect of court records is to expose much of the popular attitude towards family and neighborhood relationships, sexual conduct, religion and many other topics. Le Roy Ladurie's *Montaillou: Cathars and Catholics in a French village (1294-1324)*, (1978) is a classic illustration of this point. (Stone, 1992: 90)

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Montaillou is a village in Ariège in south-west France, in which the Cathar heresy had considerable appeal at the beginning of 14th century. The heretics were pursued, interrogated and punished by local bishop, Jacques Fournier. In the Vatican library, the greater part of the register recording of this inquisition survives and it was published in 1965. Le Roy Ladurie noticed that twenty-five of 114 people accused of heresy came from Montaillou in which there were no more than 250 inhabitants. It was doubtless that Le Roy Ladurie's interest in social anthropology that allowed him to see the value of this source, not just for the study of Cathars but for French rural history. He rearranged the information given by the suspects to the inquisitors in the form of a community study of the kind anthropologists have so often written.

Le Roy Ladurie begins his book by saying that

*“Though there are extensive historical studies concerning peasant communities there is very little material available that can be considered the “direct testimony of peasants themselves”. It is for this reason that the Inquisition Register of Jacques Fournier, Bishop of Pamier in Ariège in the Comte de Foix from 1318 to 1325, is such exceptional interest”* (Le Roy Ladurie,1980: vii)

With these words, author implies that the meticulous records of Fournier are reliable for the reflection of all aspects of peasants' lives with their own words. This beginning makes clear that the reader will learn about the texture of 14th century peasant life. Le Roy Ladurie gives an impressive sketch of Jacques Fournier's career, from humble birth through positions as bishop and cardinal to his election in1334 as Benedict XII, pope at Avignon. Fournier in Le Roy Ladurie's account appears ambitious, industrious and talented.

*“Fournier was, a sort of compulsive Maigret, immune to both supplication and bribe, skillful at worming out the truth (at bringing the lambs forth, as his victims said), able in a few minutes to tell a heretic from a “proper” Catholic -a very devil of an inquisitor, according to the accused. He was fanatical about detail, and present in person at almost all the sittings of his own court. He wanted to do, or at least direct, everything himself. The whole Pamier Inquisition Register bears the brand of his constant intervention. This is one of the reasons why it is such an extraordinary document.”* (Le Roy Ladurie, 1980: xii)

In Le Roy Ladurie's picture, it seems that the inquisitor was an instrument for gathering information. For him, in the process of revealing their positions on official Catholicism, the peasants examined by Fournier have given an extraordinarily detailed and vivid picture of their everyday life. He claims that *“the study of Montaillou shows a minute scale what took place in the structure of society as a whole. Montaillou is only a drop in the ocean. Thanks to the microscope provided by the Fournier Register, we can see the protozoa swimming about in it.”* (Le Roy Ladurie, 1980: 276)

The inquisitor, central figure of introduction, does not again make a significant appearance in the rest of the book.

In introduction, he also gives general information about Catharism and explains some terms that Cathars used. He accepts and insists on that there is no doubt about Catharism<sup>4</sup> or Albigensianism as a being Christian heresy. Supporters of Catharism considered themselves as “true Christians” or “good Christians”, as distinct from official Catholic Church. By emphasizing the etymological explanation of the word “cathar”, Le Roy Ladurie tries to indicate the misuse of that word. According to Cathars, the insistence on purity is very important and so, they claimed Cathar derives from a Greek word meaning “pure”. Le Roy Ladurie asserts that the word of “cathar” comes from a German word the meaning of which nothing to do purity.<sup>5</sup> He follows the style of an ethnographic study in introduction part. Within the information about his sources, he does not return in his main text to the opening discussion about how his document was produced. (Rosaldo, 1986: 81)

Le Roy Ladurie divided his book in two parts. The first part, called “ecology of Montaillou, the house and the shepherd”, deals with the material culture of Montaillou. This part begins with the physical environment and structures of domination, moves on the household as the foundation of village life and concludes with an extended portrait of pastoralism. This part represents structures that remain unchanged over the long time span (*longue dureé*). He tells environment by making comparison with today's Montaillou to make it more visible for the readers.

The basic cell is the peasant family, called *ostal* in local language and *domus* in Latin. As people were converted into heresy house by house, rather than individual by individual, the *domus* acted as a kind of conservatory, a barricade limiting compromising contacts with houses which were not heretical. Cathars believed that the house had its “star”, its luck, in which the dead still had a share. Star and luck were protected by keeping in the house bits of fingernail and hair belonging to the deceased head of the family. Hair and nails, which went on growing after death, were regarded as bearers of especially intense vital energy. Within the general function and importance of *domus*, we see the description of marriage and business which are regarded as strategies of family. Le Roy Ladurie uses vendetta as an example for family solidarity and as a means of settling

<sup>4</sup> Catharism is a Christian heresy. There is not exact information but it can be said that Cathars were affected from Arianism in their denial of Divinity and from Bogomils. In 12th century they founded best support and freedom in south France. After the Albigensian Crusade (1208) by Pope Innocent III within the support of Simon de Montfort, it became an underground sect without any center. They accepted the existence of two opposite principles, if not of two deities, one of good and the other of devil. They believed that the evil one, Satan is the instigator of many of the events and doings recorded in the old Testament. This world is created by evil-minded being. Therefore, it is purgatory for some people and hell for somebody. Self detachment from the world, while engaging secular duties and pursuits appears to have been their dominant conception of religious life, all contact with the material involves a certain defilement. They believed the *metemphosis*, passing of the soul at death into another body. The next world is a hard and necessary stage of life on their way to their heavenly home where at last they would be freed from the body with its burden of ill and evil. In this sense, it is claimed that Cathars did not tell a lie as they did not fear from the death. Christ is new Adam, instrument of the Spirit. By being abstained from meat, milk, egg, butter and cheese which are sexually begotten and creation of spirit of evil; and abstaining from women sexually, men must become new creatures like Christ. They denied the efficacy of baptism, of Real Presence in the Eucharist. They denied to pray to the saints and the lawfulness and duty of marriage. The church is not a house of stone mortars, it is company of persons who live by Spirit. For this reason, the evening gatherings gained too much importance. There are two groups; large one is believers and the smaller *parfaits* who had received the gift of the Spirit, they are elect, the initiated, the consoled. *Parfaits* have ability to make *consolamentum* which is baptism by book and words- it is said "heretication" among ordinary people. Ordinary people receive *consolamentum* near to their death, so they can live fairly free life than *parfaits*. Once they were hereticated, they had to embark upon a state of *endura* or total suicidal fasting. They could touch neither women nor meat in the period until death supervened, either through natural cause or as a result of *endura*. There was no escape from this though they were sure to save their souls and expedite their passage into eternal felicity.

<sup>5</sup> However, in German dictionaries there is “catharism” meaning mental purification.

differences in the absence of social distinction. (Le Roy Ladurie, 1980: 51) The life and acts of Clerque family which has the dominant house bring us to some more general reflections on the nature and exercise of power in Montaillou. In his picture, in normal times, Montaillou is a mountain dwelling micro-society, whose people generally had little power, little prestige and little money.

Le Roy Ladurie identifies his pastoral figure, Pierre Maury and placed shepherd life ways on a continuum that derives from Neolithic, finds its fundamental forms long before the medieval period and in its household organization reaches into the 19th, as in the following:

*Though there is no need to talk of modernity we must not forget that this pastoral world derived from the early Neolithic age, its basic principles were laid down well before the 14th...." (Le Roy Ladurie, 1980: 124)*

He characterizes shepherds as proud, freedom-loving, as opposed to rapacious, oppressed peasants.

*"So far we have been dealing long -term tendencies, transhistorical trends, during which, from the 14th to the 19th century, the cabane (shepherd's hut) remained unmoved, a living institution." (Le Roy Ladurie, 1980: 110)*

The shepherd's figure grows so elevated, particularly in contrast to the peasants, that Le Roy Ladurie confidently asserts that for Pierre Maury, poverty was not only a frequent fact and a cheerfully accepted companion, but also an ideal and a system of values. It can be understood in the words of Le Roy Ladurie, the shepherd's democratic, freedom loving character derives from their belief. It seems that Le Roy Ladurie so idealizes his portrait of the poor and concluded that Pierre Maury was a happy shepherd. (Rosaldo, 1986: 135)

In the second part of the book called "archeology of Montaillou", Le Roy Ladurie concerned with the mentalities of villagers such as their body language, actual sexual life, the life cycle of childhood, marriage, death, God and nature. As I said before, Le Roy Ladurie saw the Inquisition Register of Fournier as a microscope which shows a minute scale what took place in the structure of society as a whole. Even if the source is very detailed and it has potential to show the social and cultural life of villagers, at the mind of Fournier as an inquisitor, there was the question of searching out any implications of heresy as a focal point. Therefore, in my opinion, it was inevitable for Le Roy Ladurie to look at villagers from the point of their beliefs. This does not mean that "*Montaillou*" is a book on catharism. In fact, the author examines Cathar beliefs with its reflections on everyday life. The following examples will become in this context.

Catharism was not anti-feminine religion and there were also women *parfaits*, Cathars did not treat women tolerantly. To be abstained from the sexual relation with women was very important for *parfaits*. It is remarkable the idea of one *parfaits* about women. He claims that the soul of a woman could not go into paradise after her death so she had to be reincarnated as a man. The respectability of women was changing according to the age. With the coming of the age, when women were no longer regarded as sexual objects, they acquired respectability. Old women became depository of religion. Moreover, the role of women in the spread of Catharism cannot be denied. In this context, Virgin Mary took her part in Catharism as a figure of little importance. They claimed that the mother of Christ was quite simply good will. Le Roy Ladurie pointed out that in Montaillou itself, the small local elite honored the Virgin, at least with the external signs of piety. With the exact names, it is seen that some of the peasants were praying to Virgin Mary and going to pilgrimage places. Even though there are no direct references in

the speeches of villagers, Le Roy Ladurie has no doubt that Virgin Mary existed as a cult of fertility.

As Cathars were opposed to official Catholic marriage especially due to unnecessary expenditures, they were very tolerant towards irregular unions, illegitimate sexual relations, concubinage was very widespread. Marriage was a difficult business because it might involve feelings of love on the part of men, and on the part of women it might involve some hopes of improving her fortunes. (Le Roy Ladurie, 1980: 171) Local endogamy was the rule, so marriage is preferred between Cathars or Cathar sympathizers. Le Roy Ladurie justifies this by an example of a disappointed Cathar man who was married with a Catholic girl deceitfully by her father. The relations between Cathars and Catholics do not take place largely. Since Catharism was an underground sect in that period and Cathars were faced with very serious inquisition, the fear of being denounced was very remarkable factor in the relations between Cathars and Catholics. As in the case of Catharism, Catholicism also went house by house but their numbers were few as compared with Cathars. In the picture of Montaillou, Cathars and Catholics were seen as separate groups. For instance, at the funeral of one woman two groups of women, Catholics on one side and Cathars on the other, watched and eavesdropped on one another. (Le Roy Ladurie, 1980: 257)

As a carrier of Catholic teaching, the position of the priest was very remarkable, there was a contradiction between the priest's theoretically Catholic teaching and the basic heterodox and cynicism of one who admitted that he only carried out his duties in order to receive income. (Le Roy Ladurie, 1980: 317) The priest was heretic but in good relations with the Catholic church, he played one side off against another in masterly manner. Le Roy Ladurie gives much more importance to the continuous struggle for local power rather than religious conflict on the issue of hostility between Azéma domus as Catholic and Clerques as Cathars. Le Roy Ladurie informs us about the attitudes of heretics to certain Catholic rituals while they were afraid of being denounced. For example, they usually participated in Sunday Mass, which was used as an opportunity to meet for heretics. In fact, they spread heresy not only against but also through the Mass. (Le Roy Ladurie, 1980: 265)

Among the heretics, the transmission of book including subjects of heresy was important because of the illiteracy. For a peasant, the distinction between Latin and vulgar tongue corresponded quite simply to the contrast between clerical and laymen. According to Le Roy Ladurie, in the absence of written records, the memory, both visual and auditory was highly developed among the people of the Montaillou. (Le Roy Ladurie, 1980: 240) By this claim, it can be regarded he justifies himself in the use of the speeches of accused people in front of the inquisition for his reconstruction of village life. In addition to this he also confessed the absence of time concept among villagers and they live in a kind of island in time, even more cut off from the past than from the future. Therefore, due to the absence of concepts of time and history, the author is faced with an ambiguous position in the construction of lie of "Montaillou".

It is interesting that in Montaillou people preferred "delousing" instead of bathing. Unwashed body was considered as a sign of personal virility. (Le Roy Ladurie, 1980: 142) Therefore, they also did not wash the corpse, but only sprinkled water to it. Delousing was carried by women and it seems an ingredient of friendship, whether heretical or purely social. From the point of heresy, the evening gatherings around fire was very important, for example it broke the differences in economic and social status. Le Roy Ladurie describes in a detail these chats were made in what kind of places, with whom, what they spoke and so on. Two most

important things -piety and charity- seem to influence Cathars' perspectives to the life. The parfaits always insisted on the connection between apostolic life and saving of the soul. Morality was only partly based on a deeply felt sin. This feeling did exist, sometimes in such extreme cases as that of the hypersensitive Audé Faure.

Le Roy Ladurie suggest that the Catharism of Montaillou was first and foremost a story, a myth. It was told over and over again with variations around the fire.<sup>6</sup> The Cathar believers may have been doctrinally wrong but they were convinced in their hearths that they were good Christians. (Le Roy Ladurie, 1980: 325) In addition to social and cultural relationships among villagers of Montaillou, we learn that the heretics especially shepherds contacted with the Moors of Spain due to the exile and yearly migrations. Therefore, according to Le Roy Ladurie, France was present only through its money.

Le Roy Ladurie describes and analyzes a Mediterranean culture. He is very successful in using the strategy of novelistic realism. He gives exact names, provides titles, cites specific places and refers to exact dates. Throughout his book, he punctuates his text with italicized citations, the intentionally free speeches of the peasants. He reconstructed, revived daily life, mentality, manners, habits, thought of a 14th century community. As Le Roy Ladurie said that

*"It is the history of ordinary people...; it is breath of life restored through a repressive Latin register that is a movement of Occitan literature. Montaillou is the physical warmth of the ostal, together with the ever-recurring promise of peasant heaven. The one within the other, the one supporting the other."*  
(Le Roy Ladurie, 1980: 356)

The originality of Montaillou does not lie in the questions it addressed. Moreover, it was one of the first but not alone in using inquisition register for the reconstruction of everyday life. The novelty of his approach lies in his attempt to write a historical community studying the anthropological sense-not a history of a particular village but a portrait of the village, told in the words of the inhabitants themselves, and a portrait of a larger society, which the villagers represent. (Burke, 1984: 82)

Two important criticisms maybe made about Montaillou. Firstly the villagers replied the questions of inquisitor in their local tongue, Occitan language and answers were taken down in Latin. Le Roy Ladurie wrote in French (and I read it in English). The villagers are also replying questions under the threat of torture. Therefore, the speeches of the peasants about themselves are not regarded as unmediated testimony because of the intermediaries between historians and people the historian study. In Montaillou, Jacques Fournier can be evaluated as an intermediary between Le Roy Ladurie and villagers. However, when we consider the scarcity of evidences about behavior and attitudes of ordinary people and largely oral culture of that people, it is an unavoidable fact that the thoughts, the beliefs and the aspirations of ordinary people of the past reach us almost always through distorting view points and intermediaries. Therefore, there is no need to exaggerate too much when we talk about distortions because the fact that a source is not "objective" does not mean that it is useless.

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<sup>6</sup> At the begining of the story the spirits, seduced by the Evil one, fell straight through a hole in Heaven down to the earth. Around the fire the peasnts went over the details. At first God did not understand, finally he grew angry and hostiliy put his foot over the hole in Heaven. But it was late and many of the spirits had already fallen to the earth, where they became the victims of feminine wiles and tunics of human flesh prepared for them by the devil.

Secondly, the question is what the ability of representation of Montaignou as a Mediterranean or south French or middle age village. What larger unit does the village represent? What ocean is it a drop? In this context, Le Roy Ladurie fails to discuss the problem of method of "micro-history". Montaignou is an example of historical imagination, concerning the mentalité, showing the contribution of an anthropological perspective to history.

### CONCLUSION

Le Roy Ladurie's works from 1960's to 1970's and so on indicates the different approaches on the method of history. Within the interdisciplinary approach, his studies are very good examples to show which discipline or science has been affecting -to some extend- history. He also exemplified the general tendencies of Annales third generation. "*The Peasants of Languedoc*" which is the most typical example of the regional studies associated with Annales in 1960's, is a distinguished piece of geographical, economic and social history. It made considerable use of quantitative methods to study not only fluctuations in prices and in the rates of birth, marriage and death, but also trends in the distribution of property, in agricultural production and so on. Under his "neo-Malthusian" model, he combined meticulous, quantitative economic and social history with impressionistic political, religious and psychohistory. Under the chronological form of organization, within long durée and conjuncture, he did not ignore events and used them as reflections of structure.

Within Montaignou, he changed his perspective from telescopic vision to microscopic vision. He turned from statistics, graphs as a source, to the court records. He reconstructed a Mediterranean village life in a narrative sense. Maybe there is no strict contradiction between "*The Peasants of Languedoc*" and "*Montaignou*". There is nothing new in choosing to see the world via a microscope rather than a telescope because they study same cosmos. (Hobsbawm, 1998: 252) His both studies are "bottom-up" history which gives a voice to the ignored, illiterate and disempowered people. In both books, to use the source very cleverly and surely and an archeologist's reconstructive gift provide the attention of the readers. In this sense, Montaignou became the best seller book. Le Roy Ladurie's ability to be in contact with other disciplines and ability to use them perfectly are very striking in both works. For example, in the analysis of statistics, you can find just like a professional economist or while reading the symptoms of hysteria in the case of Camisard insurrection, you see just like a psychologist. In "*Montaignou*" you are faced with a very good story teller. While in "*The Peasants of Languedoc*" he is covering about three hundred years, in "*Montaignou*", he is focusing on thirty years but in long term structure in both; it seems that he is narrowing down his focal point but not losing a large historical perspective.

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İyi derecede Osmanlıca ve İngilizce bilen KAYA'nın, ikisi tercüme olmak üzere toplam yedi kitabı ve özellikle 18. yy Osmanlı dönemine ait birçok yayını bulunmaktadır. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı'na bağlı müfettişlere, sınıf öğretmenlerine ve sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerine, ders kitaplarını tanıtma konusunda seminerler de veren Miyase Koyuncu KAYA, evli ve bir çocuk annesidir.