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***Gesellschaft und Ernährung um 1000: Eine Archäologie des Essens***

Rippmann, Dorothee, and Brigitta Neumeister-Taroni, eds.

Rippmann, Dorothee, and Brigitta Neumeister-Taroni, eds. *Gesellschaft und Ernährung um 1000: Eine Archäologie des Essens* [Society and Diet Circa 1000: An Archaeology of Food]. Vevey, Switzerland: Fondation Alimentarium, 2000. *Gesellschaft und Ernährung* is a lavishly illustrated catalog of an exhibition on the history of food that ran at the Food Museum in Vevey, Switzerland, in 2000. Demonstrating the potential of interdisciplinary work, the catalog features essays by archaeologists, historians, linguists, and several others in the archaeo-natural sciences. The main message of the book comes across easily: food is not just nutritional facts. It is a vector of social coherence, a representation of status, and power. Food cannot be understood without its social dimension. But while social dimensions are usually researched by studying texts, charters, wills, annals, and the like, the tenth century cannot be researched in this way. Around the first millennium, continental Europeans did not write very much and a considerable proportion of their writing has vanished. Archaeology is therefore the main source of information about food at this time. The main achievement of the volume is the methodically innovative and well-informed use of non-textual sources to study the social makeup of society. In many instances, the book corrects common misconceptions of the monotonous diet of the Middle Ages, arguing convincingly that even peasants in the early Middle Ages, prior to the great increase in population we find after 1200, had access to a balanced diet comprising meat. (Text adapted from an [H-Net review by Verena Winiwarter](#) .)

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