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## BUCHBESPRECHUNGEN

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**Kenneth F. Kiple: A Movable Feast.  
Ten Millennia of Food Globalization,  
New York: Cambridge University  
Press, 2007, 368 S.**

Rezensiert von  
Jeffrey M. Pilcher, Minneapolis

Kenneth F. Kiple, Distinguished University Professor emeritus at Bowling Green State University, is one of the leading authorities on the social history of human nutrition. In three innovative monographs, published in the 1970s and 1980s, he laid out a „biological history” of African slaves in the Americas. Using archival materials from Brazil, the Caribbean, and the United States, he combined data on plantation rations and contemporary medical accounts of slave maladies with the findings of modern nutritional science to quantify the awful toll of malnutrition on slaves. Kiple followed this original research by organizing two invaluable, encyclopedic projects, „The Cambridge World History of Human Disease” (1993), and „The Cambridge World History of Food” (2000). The latter work was a monumental two-volume opus co-edited with Kriem-

hild C. Ornelas (and in the interests of full disclosure, this reviewer was one of forty members of the editorial board). The current book provides a brief narrative history based on its scholarly foundations, and thus reflects both the strengths and weaknesses of the larger project.

In both works, Kiple displays mastery of a tremendous volume of interdisciplinary scholarship, much of it originating in the 1920s. The most direct source for this synthesis is the *Annales* tradition of „total history,” which sought to represent the sum of human existence with painstaking attention to material conditions, particularly foods. This historical project, in turn, has benefited from the confluence of biological and archaeological research on the domestication and diffusion of plants and animals, a field pioneered by the Russian botanist Nikolai I. Vavilov, who is affectionately eulogized here. A third prominent lineage running through these pages is the work of social anthropologists offering nutritional and environmental explanations for cultural practices such as the alkali treatment of maize, which provided essential vitamin enrichment for diverse foods including tortillas, tamales, and hominy. Standing behind all of these intellectual traditions is the Reverend Thomas Malthus, whose shadow of generalized peasant malnutrition in the past and untold future famines

also haunts Kiple's book. – Globalization provides the very flexible framework for making sense of the incredible diversity of human eating habits developed over ten-thousand years of history. The first third of the book locates the origins of globalization with the invention of agriculture and the subsequent spread of a few select plants and animals outward from their hearths of domestication. Following the trend for food „biographies,” Kiple outlines the individual trajectories of species, punctuated by more general chapters about hunter-gatherers, agrarian empires, and food and religion. The Columbian Exchange beginning in 1492 marks a second age of globalization, in which the entire world finally becomes connected, in large part through the movement of foods. As in the work of Alfred Crosby, who coined the phrase, the emphasis is on merchant activities and demographic consequences. The final third of the book discusses the last two-hundred years, as globalization becomes a function of industrial homogenization and cultural „Americanization.” Kiple gives attention to fast food, migration, nutritional science, and agricultural modernization.

With such an ambitious agenda, much is inevitably left out of the narrative. Noticeably absent is any reference to the historiography of the last fifteen years, including a vast outpouring of research supplementing the quantitative „calorie counting” with more ethnographic attempts to understand the influence of culture, gender, and class on food selection. And like so much world history, the west dominates the analytical focus, while „the rest” provide only colorful examples, or in this case, additional foodstuffs. Thus, discussions

of agrarian empires emphasize ancient Greece and Rome and their medieval successors. Likewise, the chapter on religion elaborates on the feasts and fasts of Catholicism, describes crop diffusion in the medieval world of Islam, allots three paragraphs to Buddhist vegetarianism, and virtually ignores Hinduism. (The Cambridge History similarly combined the Middle East and South Asia in a chapter written by a specialist on Islam that devoted only two pages to the subcontinent.) Finally, the hundred pages on modern globalization focus almost entirely on the United States, except for one brief chapter on early industrialization and nineteenth-century colonialism. When foreigners do intrude, they appear as rather cardboard figures of migrants, fast food consumers, and GMO protesters. Here, in particular, Kiple could have benefited from a closer reading of recent scholarship.

This book illustrates another common problem in writing world history, the difficulty of organizing vast amounts of material to make effective comparisons. Kiple's reliance on encyclopedia entries lends itself to lists of foodstuffs, enlivened by an interesting anecdote about each. For example, the discussion of livestock lumps together cattle, sheep, goats, and pigs, domesticated thousands of years ago, with reindeer, brought under human control a mere five centuries ago, in very different historical circumstances, with little attempt at analysis. Jarring chronological jumps are common in the text, along with some glaring mistakes, such as the claim that Roman navigators discovered the monsoon routes across the Indian Ocean. And although Cambridge University Press produced a very attractive and nicely illustrated vol-

ume, the actual editing was less effective. Repetitious arguments and retold stories abound, and the conqueror of Mexico's name, Hernando Cortés, is spelled in at least four different ways.

To be fair, this work is merely a popularized abridgement of a grand opus, and serious readers will want to consult the Cambridge History. In fact, they will have to consult it, because about half of the footnotes refer to articles from the larger collection. The most valuable contribution of this brief synthesis may be revisiting the scholarship in the original two volumes, of which perhaps only the co-editors have made it all the way through. This short book highlights important findings and fascinating tales that may have been overlooked by experts, while also making them accessible to a general audience. If Kiple does not incorporate the latest historiography, he does provide a fitting capstone not only to his own distinguished career, but to generations of social science research on the history of food and society.

**Daniel Maul: Menschenrechte, Sozialpolitik und Dekolonisation.**

**Die Internationale Arbeitsorganisation (IAO) 1940–1970, Essen: Klartext Verlag, 2007, 447 S.**

Rezensiert von  
Isabella Löhr, Heidelberg

Internationale Organisationen haben Konjunktur in der geschichtswissenschaftlichen Forschung. Studien, die sich mit sozialen, wirtschaftlichen, politischen oder

kulturellen Prozessen in globaler Perspektive auseinandersetzen, entdecken internationale Organisationen zunehmend als historische Triebkräfte, die entweder aktiv zur Gestaltung globaler Politikprozesse beitragen oder in deren institutionellen Rahmen die kontroverse Aushandlung von sozialen und politischen Normen, ihre Umsetzung in die politische Praxis sowie die daraus resultierende Verschiebung von Machtverhältnissen stattfand. Genau diesen Ansatz verfolgt Daniel Maul mit seiner Studie über die Internationale Arbeitsorganisation (IAO) und ihrer Rolle bei der Ausarbeitung und Durchsetzung menschenrechtlicher und entwicklungspolitischer Standards im Dekolonisationsprozess.

In drei Teilen analysiert Maul die wachsende Bedeutung der IAO beim Übergang von einer partikularistischen Kolonialpolitik zur Einführung universaler sozialer Rechte, die 1944 auf einer Konferenz der IAO in Philadelphia erstmals formuliert wurden. Die Aufmerksamkeit der Studie liegt auf der politischen Reichweite dieser Rechte und auf den Schwierigkeiten bei der Durchsetzung dieser Standards in den kolonialen bzw. ab 1945 so genannten ‚abhängigen Gebieten‘. Sehr detailliert beschreibt Maul den Weg aus der politischen Zwickmühle, in der die IAO sich in den ersten Nachkriegsjahren verstrickte. Auf der einen Seite vertrat sie die neue Norm universaler sozialer Rechte, die Vertreter der abhängigen und noch kolonialen Gebiete auf den Konferenzen der IAO in ungewöhnlicher Offenheit einzuklagen begannen. Auf der anderen Seite konnte vor allem das Internationale Arbeitsamt (IAA), das ständige Büro der IAO, nur insoweit eigenständig agieren und diese