



Anthropology of the Middle East

Call for Papers

Food and Cooking
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Editorial Team:

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Journal Overview

Recent political events have shown an alarming lack of awareness in western countries of life in the Middle East. Anthropologists, trained in analysing local discourses and social actions and their socio-political and historical contexts, play an important role in making social and cultural developments in the Middle East more comprehensible to a wider world.

This peer-reviewed journal provides a forum for scholarly exchange between anthropologists and other social scientists working in and on the Middle East. The journal's aim is to disseminate, on the basis of informed analysis and insight, a better understanding of Middle Eastern cultures and thereby to achieve a greater appreciation of Middle Eastern contributions to our culturally diverse world.

Anthropology of the Middle East (AME) is published twice a year, in the spring and autumn. Issues are often themed and on occasion guest edited. Each issue contains articles on specific research projects and outcomes on Middle Eastern topics. A section titled "Notes from the Field" features research in progress. Book reviews and shorter reports on books, films and conferences are also included.

Upcoming issue

On this subject, particularly rich and revealing the specificities of Middle Eastern societies, the contributions will deal with one or more of the following themes:

- **Food choices and prohibitions:** How is the edible world defined in the society studied? Is there a gradation of prohibitions (like haram, makruh and munkar in Islam) and disgust? What are the taboo differences with neighbouring societies (considering the differences e.g. between Sunni and Shi'ism and between different theological schools)?
- **Culinary techniques:** Cuisine is a chain of technical operations which involves the implementation of mechanical processes such as cutting, chopping, grinding, mixing and stuffing and bio-chemical processes such as smoking, salting, drying, fermentation and cooking, with its different modalities: boiling, roasting, grilling, simmering, steaming. Cooking also needs a space, utensils, body skills, gestures and specific knacks. The chain of operations can be simple (in the case of daily cooking) or complex (if it is a festive cuisine or prepared for guests). On this basis, we can contrast the endo-cuisine and exo-cuisine (Lévi-Strauss) and study the links between social stratification and the diversity of culinary preparations (see J. Goody, *Cooking, Cuisine and Class*). Cooking also reveals the distribution of sexual roles; while feminine for daily cuisine and simmered recipes, cooking becomes masculine for grilled preparations and when it is a professional activity.
- **Table manners:** Daily and seasonal rhythm of meals, the taste order of dishes (tastes and dishes in succession or associated and served simultaneously, a syntagmatic or paradigmatic cuisine, according to Lévi-Strauss), the distribution of the commensals around the table or the tablecloth, conversations or silence during meals, etc.

- **Culinary pleasure and anxiety:** Cuisine is simultaneously an object of pleasure and of anxiety, even of anguish. It is a sensorial celebration, a source of tasting pleasure, of course, but also of visual pleasure, through the play of forms and colours, a source of olfactory and tactile pleasure (unctuous, cracking, etc.), of culinary emotion due to a particular preparation. It is an object of pleasure because it brings together the commensals around the same meal, and sharing food signals relationships of familiarity, connivance or friendship – reconciliation or attempted seduction. It is the pleasure of satiety sensation after the meal but also a source of anguish, that of the cook who is anxious to disappoint her guests and to infringe the honour of her house; a source of anxiety in terms of well-being and health: fat and sweet, sources of tasting pleasure, are now generally fought for health reasons. Faced with these risks, societies have introduced precautions and remedies, and established food and culinary preparations classification systems aimed at achieving a nutritional balance according to the seasons, ages of life and circumstances (pregnancy, breastfeeding, rituals): the hot and cold system, inherited from Hippocratic medicine, for example.
- **Cooking, symbols and rituals:** Special dishes are associated with rites of passage, seasonal rituals and religious or civic commemorations. The symbolic meanings of foods and culinary preparations involved in these rituals should be analysed, as should who and how many are the commensals on these occasions. It should also be noted which are the institutions and who are the leaders organising and offering these ritual meals, sometimes votive meals.
- **Cooking and identity:** With language, cooking (which, like language, is maternal) is undoubtedly the strongest symbol of national, regional and ethnic identity, which still remains with its specific smells and tastes rooted in childhood, when all other things have disappeared. Nowadays, local cuisines are affected with a double effect: McDonaldisation (burgers and fast food) and a re-traditionalisation (the opening of restaurants with neo-traditional menus and decoration, and the flowering of cookbooks that include traditional recipes). The place of cooking in identity feelings and movements deserves to be analysed.

We invite articles, reports from the field and reviews (books, films, conferences and exhibitions) that deal with the above, and more.

Submission

Please send the title and possibly a short abstract of your paper as soon as possible.

Deadline for submitting articles: July 2019

Please send your text to one the following editors:

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