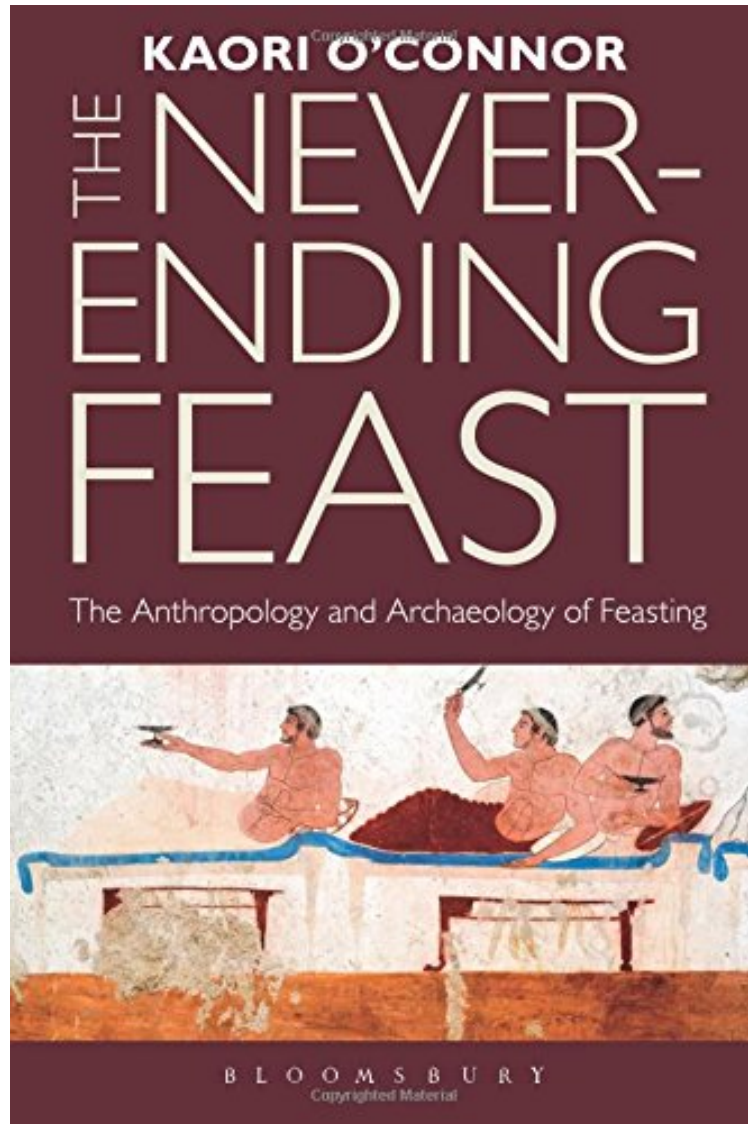


[Free] The Never-ending Feast: The Anthropology and Archaeology of Feasting

The Never-ending Feast: The Anthropology and Archaeology of Feasting

Kaori O'Connor

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Kaori O'Connor : The Never-ending Feast: The Anthropology and Archaeology of Feasting before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Never-ending Feast: The Anthropology and Archaeology of Feasting:

Feast! Throughout human history, and in all parts of the world, feasts have been at the heart of life. The great museums of the world are full of the remains of countless ghostly feasts dishes that once bore rich meats, pitchers used to pour choice wines, tall jars that held beer sipped through long straws of gold and lapis, immense cauldrons from which hundreds of people could be served. Why were feasts so important, and is there more to feasting than abundance and enjoyment? The Never-Ending Feast is a pioneering work that draws on anthropology, archaeology and history to look at the dynamics of feasting among the great societies of antiquity renowned for their magnificence and might. Reflecting new directions in academic study, the focus shifts beyond the medieval and early modern periods in Western Europe, eastwards to Mesopotamia, Assyria and Achaemenid Persia, early Greece, the Mongol Empire, Shang China and Heian Japan. The past speaks through texts and artefacts. We see how feasts were the primary arena for displays of hierarchy, status and power; a stage upon which loyalties and alliances were negotiated; the occasion for the mobilization and distribution of resources, a means of pleasing the gods, and the place where identities were created, consolidated and destroyed. The Never-Ending Feast transforms our understanding of feasting past and present, revitalising the fields of anthropology, archaeology, history, museum studies, material culture and food studies, for all of which it is essential reading.

It's not a light read, but covers an important subject: how feasting is at the heart of human identity. Feasts were what gave meaning to an otherwise dull existence. Communities have been held together by the foods they celebrated with, from the beer and bread of Mesopotamia to the wedding meat-banquets of east Africa. The Telegraph Feasting, anthropologist O'Connor (Univ. College London) argues, has received less attention but is an ideal and universal phenomenon that reflects key elements of social life: issues of power, status, and competition; celebrations of the sacred and secular, place and time; mobilization of people and natural resources; and much more. The author draws on textual and museum sources to write an anthropology of history that focuses on sumptuous meals, their participants, and the historical context. Six core chapters cover feasting practices from ancient to early modern times practiced by Mesopotamians, Assyrians and Achaemenid Persians, Greeks, Mongols, Chinese, and Japanese. Each case study presents detailed snapshots of historical moments illuminated by feasts understood in cultural context. Readers are left with a clear idea of the importance of feasts in human history. Summing Up: Recommended. Most levels/libraries. - CHOICE Food is not only good to eat and, as Lvi-Strauss insisted, good to think with but also to paraphrase Clausewitz-the continuation of politics by other means ... It is also perhaps more true in the past, in the glory days of empires and emperors, than today, as illustrated in Kaori O'Connor's new survey of classical feast practices ... the book is interesting not only for what it teaches about the past but also what it suggests about the applicability of anthropology to the past and not only to sites where we can do ethnography. Jack David Eller, Anthropology Database The Never-Ending Feast provides a well-rounded and engaging introduction to food studies, the feasting practices of antiquity, and their social capital for undergraduates and scholars. The images throughout the book are well chosen and reproduced, and typographical errors are minimal. The range of sources used is extensive, and OConnors skillful contextualization of them and the associated religious and political ideologies demonstrates the potential these remains of ancient feasts have this text is an excellent introduction to anthropological approaches to food and ancient feasting. -Jessica M. Romney, University of Calgary, Bryn Mawr Classical Kaoris pioneering work draws on anthropology, archaeology, and history to look at the dynamics of feasting among the great societies of antiquity renowned for their magnificence and might. -Reed Magazine About the Author Kaori O'Connor is a Senior Research fellow in the Department of Anthropology at UCL, UK, author of The English Breakfast: The Biography of a National Meal (Bloomsbury, 2013) and winner of the Sophie Coe Prize for Food History (2009).