

# PREFACE

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Once again, members of the International Commission on the Anthropology of Food (ICAF) have brought together contributors from different subdisciplines within Anthropology and Nutrition to produce this volume in Berghahn's *The Anthropology of Food and Nutrition* series. In June 2005, at Oxford Brookes University, Dr Helen Macbeth, Professor Jeya Henry, Professor Jeremy MacClancy and Dr Paul Collinson, all from the UK section of ICAF, organised a highly successful conference, entitled *Non-Food as Food*. The title caused a considerable amount of email discussion from prospective contributors about what was expected, and it stimulated some interesting perspectives and papers. This volume arises from contributions to that conference.

The idea for the topic arose several years ago during a discussion between Henry and Macbeth about the frequency with which nutritionists neglected, in their intake records, the ingestion of substances which they did not recognise as 'food'. Two of Henry's research students had noticed that the local people they were studying snacked on caterpillars, but caterpillars did not exist in the nutrition composition tables. This led to further consideration of substances, consumed but not tabulated as 'food', and so the idea of including topics, such as geophagia, arose. When the topic was then raised with MacClancy, the basic concept was enriched with the insight from social anthropology on definitions and boundaries, and the conference was planned. However, we owe to the contributors the quality and the diversity of material that this subject stimulated, and we recognise how many other perspectives have been omitted.

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HMM, CJKH and JVM  
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