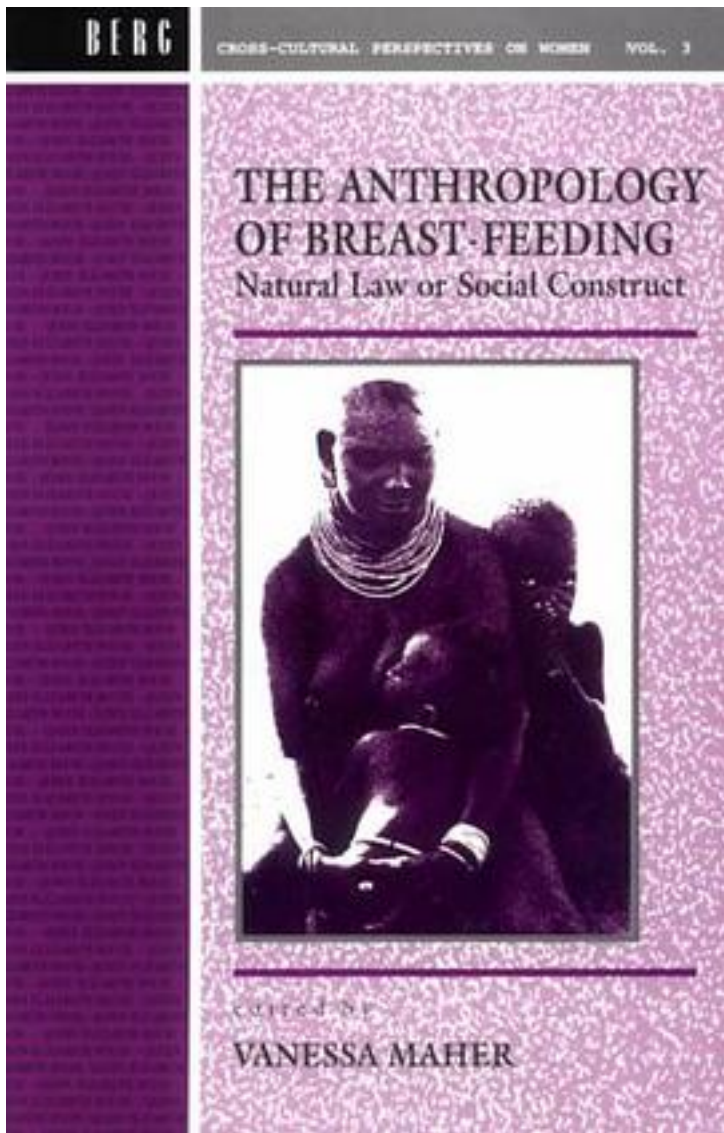


The Anthropology of Breast-feeding



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On the whole, the debates surrounding the issues of breast-feeding - often reflecting ethnographic and ill-informed medical and demographic approaches - have failed to treat the deeper issues. The significance of breast-feeding reaches far beyond its biological function; in fact, the authors of this volume argue, there is nothing 'natural' about breast-feeding itself. On the contrary, attitudes and practices are socially determined, and breast-feeding has to be seen as an essential element in the cultural construction of sexuality. This volume offers an 'ethnography' of breast-feeding by examining cultural norms and practices in a number of European and non-European societies, thus presenting valuable and often astonishing empirical material that is not otherwise readily available. The highly original focus of this volume therefore throws new light on gender and on social relationships in general.

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