

Again and again P. offers a fresh reading of familiar texts in the gospel, providing new insights that deserve to be taken seriously, even if one does not always agree with his conclusions. The great thing is that he insists that the focus must always be on Jesus, but presented in a way that is uniquely Johannine, enshrining an eyewitness account, in a public (not private) proclamation of Jesus's teaching and ministry, organized in accordance with the Prologue and with the *Ego Eimi* sayings. He concludes that the Gospel of John is "a complex work that presents Jesus in a variety of profound and distinctive ways, with its own distinctive voice" (248). This is a book to be warmly recommended for its fresh treatment of Johannine issues.

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Beware the Evil Eye: The Evil Eye in the Bible and the Ancient World. By John H. Elliott. Vol. 1: *Introduction, Mesopotamia, and Egypt.* Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2015. Pp. x + 209. \$25.

Beware the Evil Eye. The Evil Eye in the Bible and the Ancient World. By John H. Elliott. Vol. 2: *The Evil Eye in the Bible and the Ancient World—Greece and Rome.* Eugene, OR: Cascade Press, 2016. Pp. x + 334. \$41.

This review covers the first two volumes of a four-volume work on the Evil Eye. Like good whiskey, this material has aged for over thirty years, as Elliott seined for text and images of the Evil Eye wherever they could be found. The volumes reviewed here cover the knowable origins of the concept and its evident transmission over centuries through ancient Greece and into late antiquity. This study, while written in English, is utterly Germanic in its sweep of the topic and its inexhaustible collection of literary citations. The sheer completeness of the study warrants maximum praise. Also, with a comprehensive index after each volume, one might easily decide to study this or that author or specific icons.

John Elliott was a pioneer in the use of social science criticism, his most successful example being *A Home for the Homeless*. He is as informed on the topic as is possible and spends the first third of the initial volume on an exposition of how he does his work and why. He defines, describes, and traces the Evil Eye, blessedly finishing the introduction with a report of his "method, aims, and procedures." Elliott's delight in his research and pervasive sense of humor put much fizz into what might seem heavy scholarship. He reports the origins of the Evil Eye in Mesopotamia and Egypt with a masterful command of their literature.

The second volume covers with comparable thoroughness the culture and literature of Greece and Rome. Any scholar investigating the Hellenistic world must know this book. As expected, the book begins with a detailed overview of Evil Eye belief and practice in the classical world. As a Baedeker for scholars, he lists the key features of the belief/practice, which guide readers to see what is said in the literature. His survey

includes discussion of bodily parts linked with the eye, namely, the heart and tongue. Most significant is his exposition of the ubiquitous belief once held that the eye is an aggressive organ, potentially causing harm and ruin on what it sees (cf. he looked daggers at him). The documentation of each aspect of the Eye belief and practice is as full as even the pickiest scholar could want. Nothing seems to have escaped his notice. One can see how an idea here led to research there; the fabric of the belief and practice is shown to be complete, comprehensive, and utterly persuasive.

The bulk of volume 2 on Greece and Rome contains an extended treatment of envy and its relationship to the Evil Eye. A more Germanic presentation of “envy” (highly to be praised) exposes the linguistic basis for distinguishing “envy,” “jealousy,” and “zeal.” No assertion is ever made without exhaustive documentary support. Midway through the central chapter, Elliott provides a summary of the material up to that point (113–18), where he returns to “Key Features of Evil Eye Belief and Practice” (47) and encapsulates his data up to this point. Such summaries would have been welcome throughout the books. “Protection through Word and Expressions” continues the survey of Evil Eye practice and belief, but with a focus on apotropaics to ward off the danger of amulets, chants, and the like (163–266). The final part of the book argues that “kai sou” (και σου) says that the person harming someone should himself be harmed similarly. Evidence for this, which is completely persuasive, derives of numerous mosaics excavated from Galilee to Antioch. But someone may also protect oneself by sticking out one’s tongue and spitting (a grand exposition of “spitting” and healing is found here), or by lifting up one’s hand, and especially by closing one or another fingers to express a phallus, which is also protection. Male and female genitals appear on charms and lamps, but especially on doorposts. The Roman *bullā* contained a diminutive phallus for the protection of a young boy.

This study is comprehensive, exhaustive, and completely persuasive. There is no doubt about the ubiquity of the Evil Eye in belief and practice. The payoff will come with volume 3, where the author will examine the topic in Scripture and the early church. Students of ancient Greece and Rome will devour this, less so college professors and their students. But this is significant scholarship on an important topic.

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Envisioning Islam: Syriac Christianity and the Early Muslim World. By Michael Philip Penn. Divinations: Rereading Late Ancient Religion. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2015. Pp. 294. \$59.95.

Following upon the widespread use of Syriac sources by Patricia Crone and Michael Cook in their 1977 work, *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World*, and the publication in 1997 of Robert Hoyland’s magisterial *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It*, there has been a renewed interest in the Syriac writings of early Christian authors concerning Islam and Muslim–Christian relations. The broader availability of Latin and Greek