

I

THE OLD TESTAMENT, PARABIBLICAL LITERATURE, AND RELATED MATERIAL EVIDENCE CONCERNING THE EVIL EYE

INTRODUCTION

THE EVIL EYE WAS known, feared, and denounced in Israel and was mentioned often in its scriptures and parabiblical writings. Features of the belief and its accompanying practices in Israel and the Jesus movement are strikingly similar to those of other cultures of the Circum-Mediterranean world. Preceding volumes of *Beware the Evil Eye* have presented in detail evidence of Evil Eye belief and practice in Mesopotamia and Egypt (Vol. 1) and Greece and Rome (Vol. 2). This material describes the Mediterranean and Near Eastern matrix within which the biblical evidence of Evil Eye belief is properly understood—the focus of the present volume.¹ Israel and the Jesus movement, as will be shown, shared many aspects

1. Since an understanding of Israel's cultural matrix is presumed in what follows, readers of this present volume are encouraged to consult Vols. 1 and 2 for the evidence and broader context of Evil Eye belief and practice in the ancient Circum-Mediterranean world.

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of Evil Eye belief and practice of their neighbors, albeit with distinctive emphases and differences to be discussed in due course.

The Evil Eye is mentioned repeatedly throughout the Old Testament, Israel's parabiblical writings, and New Testament, with a variety of terms and expressions. The Old Testament (Greek Septuagint) contains no less than *fourteen text segments* involving some *twenty explicit references to the Evil Eye* (Deut 15:9; 28:54, 56; Prov 23:6; 28:22; Tob 4:7, 16; Sir 14:3, 6, 8, 9, 10; 18:18; 31:13; 37:11; Wis 4:12; 4 Macc 1:26; 2:15; Ep Jer 69/70). This last text, the Epistle of Jeremiah 69/70, is the sole explicit biblical mention of an amulet specifically aimed at countering the Evil Eye (*prosbaskanion*, an anti-Evil Eye safeguard positioned in a cucumber patch). At least three further texts are also likely implied references to an Evil Eye (1 Sam 2:29, 32; and 18:9), with some other texts as more distant possibilities.² The Evil Eye is mentioned also in the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the writings of Philo and Josephus—all of which are discussed below.³ The numerous references to the Evil Eye in Israel's rabbinic writings

2. The studies of the present author are the first to list *all* the likely biblical references to the Evil Eye; see Elliott 1988, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993:67–69; 1994, 2004; 2005a, 2005b:159–64; 2007a, 2011, 2014, 2015. Earlier works offered only partial lists and in some cases included improbable texts. Elworthy (1958/1895:6, n. 7a), for example, lists Deut 28:54, 56; Job 7:8; Ps 35:21, 54:7, 59:10, 92:11; Prov 6:13, 23:6, 28:22; Isa 13:18; Lam 2:4; Ezek 9:5; Matt 6:22–23; 20:15; Luke 11:34; Mark 7:22 “with many others.” His net, however, is too large and indiscriminating. Some texts he includes speak only of eyes and seeing, but not of an Evil Eye in particular (Job 7:8; Ps 35:21; Ps 54:7; 59:10; 92:11; Isa 13:18; Lam 2:4; Ezek 9:5). A winking eye (Prov 6:13) is not identified in antiquity as an Evil Eye. Seligmann (1910 1:12–14) lists three texts mentioning [*Me*] *aunenim* which he identifies, unconvincingly, as referring to an Evil Eye (Lev 19:26; Deut 18:10; 2 Kgs. 21:6), as well as Wis 4:12; Sir 14:8, 9, 10; Mark 7:22. He does not mention Matt 6:22–23 and specifically excludes Matt 20:15 and Gal 3:1 where he finds only “general conventional turns of phrase.” He does, however, note Acts 13:6–12 and Paul's intense staring at and cursing of Elymas resulting in the latter's blindness (1910 2:436). Contenau (1947:261) mentions Deut 28:54, 56; Isa 13:18 and Luke 11:34 as biblical examples.

3. On the Evil Eye in Israelite and Jewish tradition and lore see Grünbaum 1877:258–66; Garnett 1891; Hirsch 1892; Elworthy 1895/1958; Blau 1898:152–56, 1907b; Grunwald 1901; Reizenstein 1904:291–303; Blau and Kohler 1907 5:280–81; Grunwald 1900:40–41, 47–48; M. Gaster 1910; Kennedy 1910; Montgomery 1910–1911; Seligmann 1910, 1922, 1927; Lilienthal 1924; Löwinger 1926; Peterson 1926:96–109, 1982; Roback 1938; Friedenwald 1939; Merlin 1940; Levi 1941; Meisen 1950:145; Goodenough 1953 2:238–41; Kötting 1954:474–76; S. Thompson 1956:121 (D 993), 364 366. (D 2071); Shrut 1960; Ginsberg 1961 index; Mowinkel 1962 2:3; Nador 1965; Trachtenberg 1970/1939:45, 48, 54–56, 97, 111, 133, 136, 139–40, 158, 161–62, 198, 219, 283; Noy 1971; Kirschenblatt-Gimblett and Lenowitz 1973; Anonymous, *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Judaica* 1974:181; Birnbaum 1975:462–63; Nador 1975; Moss and Cappannari 1976; Budge 1978/1930:212–38; Shachar 1981:20–21; Opperwall 1982b; Schrire 1982; Yamauchi 1983:187–92; Aschkenazi. 1984; Naveh 1985; Rosenbaum

(second–sixth centuries CE) and the material evidence from this period are examined in Vol. 4, chap. 1. Evil Eye belief and practice in the Jesus movement is examined in chapter 2 of this present volume; evidence of the belief in post-biblical Christianity through Late Antiquity is treated in Vol. 4, chap. 2.

THE MATRIX OF BIBLICAL EVIL EYE BELIEF AND BEHAVIOR

To understand the biblical Evil Eye texts, it is essential to be aware of the physical, economic, social, and cultural environment in which Evil Eye belief and practice has been found to emerge and flourish. Beliefs and practices are products of, and responses to, the circumstances and conditions in which they emerge. The biblical communities of ancient Israel and early Christianity were among those cultures where Evil Eye belief originated and flourished, according to historical anthropologists. This includes Mesopotamia, Egypt, the ancient Near East, Greece and Rome, and the lands bordering on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. The ecological conditions, economic and social circumstances, and cultural world of the Israelites, in general terms, were similar to those of their neighbors in many respects and were equally conducive to Evil Eye belief and practice.

The cultures of these areas, as characterized by anthropologists Vivian Garrison and C. M. Arensberg,⁴ involve not only systems of writing and literary production, but also “complex stratified societies possessed of both milk animals (or nomadic herding populations) and grain fields (or stable peasant agricultural communities).”⁵ The “symbiosis of part-cultures (landlord, bureaucrat, agriculturalist, herder, artisan) . . . the destructive effect

1985; Elliott 1988, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993:67–69, 1994, 2005a, 2005b:159–64; 2007a, 2007b, 2008, 2011:118–22, 2014, 2015, 2016; Frankel and Teutsh 1991; Patai 1983:86–95; Lévy and Lévy Zumwalt 1987, 2002; T. H. Gaster 1989; Ross 1991; Ulmer 1991, 1992–93, 1994, 1998, 2003; Brav 1992/1908; Dundes 1992a:41–43, 1992b; Kotansky 1994:145, 298; Michaelides 1994:403–12; Schreiner 1996; Zumwalt 1996; Pilch and Malina 1998:59–63; Seawright 1988; Malina 2001b; Schroer and Staubli 2001:118–21; Lévy and Lévy 2002; Malul 2002:208–9, 267–68; 2009; Malina and Rohrbaugh 2003:50, 101–2, 176, 357–59; Kotzé 2006, 2007, 2008; Malina and Pilch 2006:359–62; Wazana 2007; Bohak 2008:152–53, 187, 249, 302, 322, 354, 373, 392; Nigosian 2008:45; Sinai 2008; Eshel 2010; Vukosavovic 2010; Avrahami 2011:152–53; Schmid 2012:81–89; Soderlund and Soderlund 2013; Tilford 2015a, 2015b. For Evil Eye belief and practice in nineteenth-century Palestine, see W. M. Thomson 1886 and Eiszler 1889.

4. Garrison and Arensberg 1976:286–328, esp. 294–97, summarizing the wealth of cross-cultural ethnographic data on Evil Eye cultures analyzed by J. M. Roberts 1976.

5. Garrison and Arensberg 1976:290.

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of the nomadic herders upon settled village and state societies,” and “the periodic redistribution of peasant fields typical of these societies created an environment of constant tension and conflict, suspicion and uncertainty.”⁶ The concept of an Evil Eye was a symptom of these conditions, tensions, and uncertainties: a fragile and unpredictable ecological environment; a precarious peasant-urban economy of mixed herding and agriculture made uncertain by conditions of topography, climate and limited technology, and rife with internal social tensions between agriculturalists and herders; technological specialization including metalworking, grain agriculture, domesticated large animals, milking or dairying; a subsistence base of bread, milk, and meat; economic and social disparities separating city populations and food-producing countrysides; peasant villages with fixed fields and a perception of limited resources; a redistributive economy in which periodic scarcity in produce called for forced sales at fixed prices in a centrally controlled market; highly economically and socially stratified societies involving few “haves” (2–3% of the population) in a world of mostly “have-nots” (97–98%) on the bare edge of subsistence; a symbiosis of part-cultures (landlord, bureaucrat, agriculturalist, herder, artisan), intense rivalries among villages, cities, tribes, and conceptual equals for resources perceived as scarce and limited so that one family’s gain entailed another’s loss (the notion of “limited good”);⁷ everyday life involving daily face-to-face contacts among members of families, occupational groups, village and urban neighborhood populations; high mortality and morbidity rates with infants and birthing mothers as prominent victims; weak or ineffective centralized means for resolving conflicts, enforcing law, or ensuring equitable distribution of resources, thereby resulting in recourse to patron-client arrangements and informal mechanisms of social control (such as Evil Eye accusations).

The poor state of sanitation and hygiene contributed to high infant mortality rates and frequent deaths of birthing mothers. In the absence of any scientific understanding of this connection, or of a consensus concerning the causes of illness in general, sickness was regularly attributed to the attack of hostile spirits and demons and an Evil Eye.⁸ Babies and birthing mothers, infants, and children who had not reached their majority were deemed especially vulnerable to the Evil Eye and therefore in need of constant protection. These conditions contributed to a perception of life in

6. *Ibid.*:295.

7. On the concept of limited good see G. Foster 1965; 1972; Garrison and Arensberg 1976:295–97; Malina 1979, 2001:81–107; Pilch and Malina 1998:122–27.

8. Murdock 1980:38–40, 58, 62.

general as a continuous struggle for survival endangered by hostile, malevolent forces, both human and demonic. Culturally, the world was thought populated and controlled by high gods and a multiplicity of lesser divinities, demons, spirits, angels (benevolent and malevolent), “principalities and powers” (human and divine), patrons (human and divine), ghosts and phantasms, witches and sorcerers, diviners, soothsayers, spell casters, augurs, necromancers, conjurers, exorcists, dream interpreters, seers, alongside prophets, holy men, and sages. Decisions were made by casting lots and reading animal entrails. The causes of illness, misfortune, and disasters were thought to include angry or capricious deities, demons, unclean spirits, and hostile humans with their Evil Eyes. Protection against harm was sought by incantations and spells, lead tablets, amulets and apotropaics of various kinds. Hope for healing was placed on exorcisms and rituals, powerful words, names, gestures, and potent sounds. Trust was placed in the efficacy of blessings and curses and the power of extraordinary persons to feed and heal, receive divine revelation, ascend to the heavenly realms, and in general influence and harness the forces of nature. It was a world of male machismo, veiled and sequestered women, ocular aggression, and tension and envy between the poor and the privileged, natives and strangers, agriculturalists and herders, rival tribes and feuding neighbors. In this xenophobic world where only the privileged few had occasion and means to travel and where most of the population never set foot outside the village, strangers were regarded as likely enemies and thus feared of having a hostile Evil Eye. Everything of value, and especially the children, flocks, herds and means of livelihood, was thought vulnerable to the Evil-Eyed gaze of envy and therefore in need of concealment and protection. Amulets and other means of defense were enlisted for repelling the forces of evil, both human and transcendent.⁹

It was in such an environment and conceptual world that Evil Eye belief and practice flourished and expanded among the Mesopotamians,

9. See J. M. Roberts 1976:223–78 and Garrison and Arensberg 1976:294–302; also Boecher 1970; Derrett 1973 (describing life in Israel as the time of Jesus: “the social scene” [31–71], “economic and political scene” [73–100], and “the mental and intellectual scene” [101–159], the latter of which includes Evil Eye belief and practice [123]); Malina 2001; van der Jagt 2002; Klutz, ed. 2003; Nigosian 2008, among others. For basic features of the “common human pattern” of conceptualizing the world and experience (nature, life, thought, time, authority, work) prior to the Western enlightenment see Roheim 1958. On rivalry and conflict see Gouldner 1969. On demons and hostile forces, see Conybeare 1895–96; Tamborino 1909; Jirku 1912; Billerbeck 1926 4/1:501–35; Canaan 1929; Langton 1949; Eitrem 1950; Gordon 1957; T. W. Gaster 1962; Foerster 1964; Böcher 1970, 1981; Colpe et al. 1976; J. Z. Smith 1978; Ferguson 1984; Brenk 1986; Levack 1992, vols. 9 and 12; Page 1995; Cotter 1999:75–127; Vukosavovic 2010. On ocular aggression and the Evil Eye, see Gilmore 1982, esp. 197–200.

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Egyptians, Greeks and Romans, Israelites and Christians. As we turn to the biblical communities and their writings, we will be looking at texts produced in this general environment and involving similar cultural mentalities.

The Pentateuch legislated, and the prophets inveighed, against the occult arts practiced by Israel's neighbors (e.g. Deut 18:9–14; Exod 22:17; Isa 3:16–4:1).¹⁰ Egypt in particular was a target of condemnation. “Idols, sorcerers, mediums, and wizards” were claimed to populate the landscape and culture of Egypt (Isa 19:3). “Magic” and “sorcery” were more terminological weapons, however, than precisely defined practices. Attribution of magical practices and character flaws to the non-Israelite populations, projecting them back into hoary antiquity, and condemning them under Moses' name as foreign abominations, served to marginalize competing ideologies and reinforce Israel's distinctive self-identity. In what this magic and sorcery precisely consisted remains murky and unclarified. “Unlike the magic of artifact and inscription,” Brian Schmidt argues, “magic in the Hebrew Bible has far less to say about the phenomenology of magic in ancient Israelite society and far more to tell about its function as a category of controlling matters of purity and pollution” (2002:259).

Israel's sacred writings make no connection between such proscribed magical practices and the Evil Eye. As indicated in Vol. 1, current disagreement and uncertainty concerning the very concept of “magic,” and the absence of any direct explicit linking of the phenomenon of the Evil Eye with magic, has led us to avoid treatment of the Evil Eye in antiquity as an instance of sorcery or magical thought and practice.¹¹ This applies to the biblical evidence as well. The biblical communities did not equate the Evil Eye with sorcery or treat it as an instance of magic. They regarded it, as we shall see, as a phenomenon of nature, albeit noxious, and as a personal fault linked with conduct inconsistent with the will of God. It never is mentioned in biblical texts proscribing or denouncing customs or rituals associated with magic and conduct regularly linked with the practices of outsider Gentiles.¹² Conversely, where the Evil Eye is mentioned in the Bible, it is never labeled as an instance of magic, sorcery or the occult arts.

10. On Mesopotamian traditions and practice reflected in the proscriptions of “magical” actors and actions in Deuteronomy 18 see Schmidt 2002:242–59.

11. On this issue See Vol. 1, chap. 1, pp. 26–27, 61–66.

12. For example, Exod 7:11, 22; 8:18–19; 9:11; 22:18; Lev 19:21, 26, 31; 20:6, 27; Num 23:23; Deut 18:9–14; 1 Sam 28; 2 Kgs 9:22; 17:17; 21:5–6; 23:24; 2 Chron 33:6; Ps 58:5; Isa 3:3; 8:19; 47:9, 12; 57:3; Jer 27:9; Ezek 13:18–19; Dan 2:2; Mic 5:12; Nah 3:4; Mal 3:5; Wis 12:4, 17:7, 18:13; also *Ascen. Isa.* 2:5; *1 Enoch* 7:1, 64–65; *Jub.* 48:9–10; *L.A.B.* 34, 64; *T. Jud.* 23; Acts 8:9–24; 13:6–12; Gal 5:20; Rev 9:21; 18:23; 21:8, 22:15; *Barn.* 20:1; *Did.* 5:1 etc.

It is never condemned as a belief alien to Israel. Thus it appears that Evil Eye belief and practice was not included by the biblical communities under their rubric of magic and sorcery. The Evil Eye was dangerous, but not demonic. It worked mysteriously, but not magically. We respect this emic point of view of the biblical authors and treat Evil Eye belief and practice in the Bible as something distinct from what was named and condemned as “magic” or “sorcery.” We examine it as it was envisioned by the ancients: as a phenomenon of nature, conferred by nature on certain humans identified as fascinators by particular physical and ethnic features; it could strike anyone anywhere, but neonates, infants, and birthing mothers were considered especially vulnerable; resort was deemed possible to a wide array of protective means and measures.

Having considered in the foregoing Vols. 1 (chap. 2) and 2 belief and practice concerning the Evil Eye (and its associations) in the larger world of the Bible—Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, and Rome—we are now in a position to examine traces of this belief and practice in the Bible itself and the biblical communities.

Belief in, and protective measures taken against, the Evil Eye were as widespread in the biblical communities as in the surrounding cultures, occasional voices to the contrary notwithstanding.¹³ The more recent study of

13. Brav (1908/1992:46), for example, finds no mention of the Evil Eye in the biblical writings, taking *rah ayin* [sic] to mean rather “jealous/envious eye.” “The sacred literature,” he would have us believe, “is free from the stigma of this superstition” (1992:46), though it was “very prevalent” in Talmudic times” (1992:46). A similar position is taken by Nola Oppenwall in her *ISBE* entry on the Evil Eye (1982b:210) in respect to all biblical references to the Evil Eye except Gal 3:1. Siegfried Seligmann’s brief reference to the Evil Eye in the Bible (1910 1:12–13) is deficient and incorrect. Claiming that the Hebrews adopted Evil Eye belief from the Chaldeans, he gives Lev 19:26; Deut 18:10; and 2 Kgs 21:6 as OT texts mentioning persons, “Meaunenim /Aunenim,” who, according to one opinion, bewitch through an envious eye; on this term *me’onen* interpreted as “soothsayer,” see more recently Jeffers 1996:78–81. In Seligmann’s opinion, Wis 4:12 refers to fascination/Evil Eye; but Sir 14:8, 9, 10 and Prov 23:6 speak not of the Evil Eye but only of envy. In the New Testament, he allows that in Mark 7:22 Jesus mentions the Evil Eye, but that in Matt 20:15 and Gal 3:1 although the standard terminology for Evil Eye is employed, Jesus and Paul use it only for rhetorical effect and not because they actually believed in the “magical effect” of the Evil Eye (Seligmann 1910 1:13–14). On the other hand, the Jewish Mishnah, Talmud, and Kabbala, he observes, are replete with references to the Evil Eye (Seligmann 1910 1:14–16). Budge (1978/1930:359) states somewhat ambiguously that “The Hebrews were well acquainted with the Evil Eye and its dire effects, but it is not mentioned in the Old Testament, although it is clearly referred to in such passages as Deut xv.9 and Ps 141:4.” He also adds Ps 23:6; Wis 4:12; and Sir 14:8, and states that “our Lord seems to refer to the Evil Eye” in Mark 7:22 and Matt 20:15 and that Paul “most certainly does” in Gal 3:1 (1978/1930:359). Later he adds David (1 Sam 18:9) and Balaam (Num 24:5) as biblical persons believed to possess the Evil Eye (1978/1930:364).

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Rivka Kern Ulmer, *The Evil Eye in the Bible and Rabbinic Judaism*, devotes only four pages to the Evil Eye in the Bible (1994:1–4). She mentions Deut 15:9; 28:54, 56; 1 Sam 18:8–9 (the denominative verb “to eye” occurring only here in the Hebrew Bible); Prov 22:9 (a good eye signaling “a compassionate sharing of one’s provisions with the poor”); Prov 23:6, 28:22; and Sir 14:10 and 31:13 (concerning an Evil Eye), and Isa 13:18 (regarding a destructive “eye of the Medes”). Unfortunately, she insists on distinguishing the sense of these *biblical* texts from *rabbinic* references to the Evil Eye. She asserts unconvincingly:

Rabbinic interpreters later used these passages as the basis of the concept of an evil eye, but they [these biblical passages] can hardly be construed to refer to an evil or harmful power emanating from the human eye. The evil eye here [in the Bible] merely expresses malevolence, and it is the malevolent act, and not the eye itself, that afflicts other people. The only possible exception is found in the passage about the “eye of the Medes” which destroys everything: *Their eye shall not spare children* (Isa 13:18). (Ulmer 1994:3)

This erroneous notion concerning the biblical Evil Eye texts is due in great part to her failure to examine biblical and rabbinic concepts of the Evil Eye in relation to Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Greco-Roman, and Christian Evil Eye traditions. This de-contextualized approach focuses primarily on rabbinic written sources and fails to consider the extensive amuletic evidence of Evil Eye belief and practice in biblical and post-biblical Israel. Her statement about the “eye of the Medes” suggests that she also wishes, perhaps like Aaron Brav (1908/1992), to purge the biblical communities of conventional notions and practice concerning the Evil Eye and allow them only to outsiders.

By contrast, the *rabbinic literature*, she indicates, shows a different view of the Evil Eye, from that of the Bible, involving “a power radiating from the eyes” and a view of the Evil Eye as an expression of “ill-will, envy, and selfishness,” “niggardliness,” and as both an “internal disposition” and an “externalized power” (Ulmer 1994:4–5). This view of the Evil Eye that she attributes to the rabbis is, of course, consistent with Evil Eye notions across the ancient Circum-Mediterranean, prior to, contemporaneous with, and subsequent to the Hebrew Bible references. Ulmer and others who deny repeated reference to this malignant power of the Evil Eye in the biblical writings assume, but fail to provide any evidence of, an isolation and divergence of the biblical communities and authors from the Evil Eye tradition and practice of their neighbors. Ulmer’s 1994 study, while a useful assemblage

and classification of references to the Evil Eye in the rabbinic literature, provides little attention to cultural context or cross-cultural influence and limited theoretical analysis. No light is shed here on the biblical texts.

Karl Meisen, in his rich 1950 article on the Evil Eye in antiquity and early Christianity, states that the Israelites knew the Evil Eye, but that “passages like Deut 28:54, 56; Prov 23:6; 28:22; Isa 13:8 etc. are insufficient” evidence of this belief in the Bible. No amulet against the Evil Eye is mentioned in the Hebrew Bible, he insists, and only the apocryphal and rabbinic literature of later time contain certain evidence thereof. Nevertheless, he concludes that the frequency and clarity of this later evidence point with “virtual certainty” (*ziemlicher Sicherheit*) to its existence in earlier times.¹⁴ Such varied opinions may have influenced translators since the early twentieth century to translate actual references to the Evil Eye in the Bible not literally but according to assumed sense. The linguistic evidence of repeated references to the Evil Eye and malicious looking in the Bible, however, is indisputable; and the specific features of Evil Eye belief and practice recorded in the Bible, while distinctive, as we will note, also have much in common with those of the surrounding cultures. Particularly noteworthy in the biblical references to the Evil Eye is the focus on the Evil Eye of *humans*, with no reference to an Evil Eye demon, and the treatment of both Evil Eye and good eye as *moral* phenomena.

HEBREW AND GREEK OLD TESTAMENTS

In examining the Hebrew Bible and Greek Old Testament or Septuagint (LXX), we first will consider the terms and expressions employed for reference to the Evil Eye. Then we will examine in detail each of the relevant Evil Eye texts in the Old Testament and parabiblical writings. Finally, we will summarize our findings and note both the similarities and differences uniting and distinguishing Evil Eye belief and practice of the biblical communities from that of their neighbors. A following chapter will treat the New Testament Evil Eye references in similar fashion.

Hebrew and Greek Evil Eye Terminology

In the Old Testament (Hebrew and Greek), the chief formulations for the Evil Eye are *r*“ ‘*ayin* (verb), *ra*‘ ‘*ayin*, (noun) ‘*ayin harah* in Hebrew, and in

14. Meisen 1950:145.

Greek, *ophthalmos ponêros*, *ophthalmos phthoneros* (“envious Eye”) and various terms of the *bask-* family (*baskainô*, *baskania*, *baskanos*, *prosbaskanion*).

Expressions for Evil Eye (and Evil-Eyeing) in the Hebrew Bible

- *r*“ ‘*ayin* (verb “be evil” [*r*“] + noun “eye” [*ayin*] lit., “eye is evil;” also “do evil with the eye,” “look maliciously with an Evil Eye,” “to Evil Eye [someone]” Deut 15:9; 28:54, 56).¹⁵
- *ra*‘ *ayin* (adjective “evil” + noun “eye,” lit., [someone] “evil of eye”), with “eye” as synecdoche for the entire person: “Evil-Eyed person,” (Prov 23:6); see Prov 28:22 (*ish ra*‘ *ayin*, “person/man who is evil of eye;” “person/man with an Evil Eye.”¹⁶ The Aramaic for Evil Eye, *ayna’ bisha’*, does not appear in the OT. “Evil Eye” can stand for the entire person with an Evil Eye (Prov 23:6); see also Sirach 14:10 (*ayin ra*‘ / *ophthalmos ponêros phthoneros*).

Two other expressions are also likely references to an envious Evil Eye:

- *ôyén* (participle of verb *ayin*, lit., “eyeing [enviously]”), “staring at maliciously” (1 Sam 18:9)
- *me ôyén* (full participial form of the verb *ayin*, lit., “eyeing [enviously]” “staring at maliciously”) (1 Sam 2:29, 32)

Expressions for Evil Eye in the Greek Old Testament (LXX)

The Greek Old Testament (LXX) contains various explicit formulations for “Evil Eye.” This includes expressions with *ophthalmos* (“eye”): *ophthalmos ponêros* (Sir 14:10), *ophthalmos ponêreuein* (Deut 15:9), *ophthalmos phthoneisthai* (Tob 4:7, 16; cf. Sir 14:10); *ophthalmos ponêros phthoneros* (Sir 14:10, the sole LXX occurrence of *phthoneros*; cf. *pleonektou ophthalmos* (Sir 14:9). This also includes expressions involving terms of the *bask-* family (13x): *baskanos* (*anêr baskanos*, Prov 23:6; 28:22; *anthrôpos baskanos*, Sir 14:3; *ponêros ho baskainôn ophthalmôi*, Sir 14:8; *baskanos*, absolute, 18:18; 37:11); *baskainein* (*baskainein tôi ophthalmôi*, Deut 28:54, 56; *baskainontos*

15. Beside meaning “be evil, do evil,” the verb *r*“ can mean “break, smash,” which also fits the concept of the Evil Eye striking, breaking, and destroying—as in some Mesopotamian incantations. However, in Deuteronomy it denotes the action of a *human* with an Evil Eye and not an Evil-Eyed demon.

16. Wazana (2007:687) notes the absence of the phrase *ayin harah* in the Hebrew Bible and its appearance only later in the rabbinic literature.

heauton, Sir 14:6, 8); *baskania* (Wis 4:12; 4 Macc 1:26; 2:15), and *probaskanion* (Ep. Jer. 69/70). Other formulations that are likely references to looking with an Evil Eye are *epiblepein* . . . *ophthalmôî* (1 Sam 2:29; cf. Deut 28:54, 56; Sir 14:8) and *hypoblepesthai* (1 Sam 18:9; cf. Sir 37:10).

The LXX rendering of the Hebrew *r' ayin* in Deut 15:9 is *ponêreusêtai ho ophthalmos sou*, “your eye is evil toward,” a combination of noun (*ho ophthalmos sou*, “your eye”) and verb (*ponêreusêtai*, “is evil toward”). The Greek, like the Hebrew, uses the verb “be evil” with “eye.” Both also presume the connection of eye and heart.¹⁷ The later passages of Tob 4:7 and 4:16 bear a close semblance in their formulation of noun (*ho ophthalmos sou*, “your eye”) and verb (*[mê] phthonêsatô*, “not be envious”). The LXX rendering of the Hebrew *r' ayin* in Deut 28:54 and 56 is *baskanei tôi ophthalmôî*, literally, “Evil-Eye with an eye,” a combination of the verb *baskanei* and the noun *ophthalmos* also appearing in Sir 14:8. The verb *baskainein* also occurs in Sir 14:6. The related noun *baskania* appears in Wis 4:12, 4 Macc 1:26; and 2:15. The adjective/substantive *baskanos* occurs in Prov 23:6; 28:22; Sir 4:3; 18:18; 37:11, and the noun *probaskanion*, in Ep Jer 69/70.

The Greek *andri baskanôî* (“with an Evil-Eyed man/person,” noun [*andri*]+ adjective [*baskanôî*]) renders Hebrew *ra' ayin* (Prov 23:6), with the LXX adding the noun *anêr* (“person”).¹⁸

The Greek phrase *ophthalmos ponêros phthoneros* (“[A person with] an Evil Eye is envious of/begrudging of”) renders Hebrew *ayin ra' ayin* at Sir 14:10. As in Prov 23:6, “Evil Eye” stands here for the entire person.¹⁹ *Ophthalmos ponêros* occurs in Sir 14:10 and Sirach 31:13, and in the New Testament in Matt 6:22–23/Luke 11:34–35; and Mark 7:22.

The LXX rendition of the Hebrew participle *ôyén* (“enviously [Evil-] Eyeing”) in 1 Sam 18:9 is *hypoblepomenos* (“looking askance”), a composite of *blepô* (“look”) and *hypo* (“from under”), literally, “looking up from under the eyebrows.” This Greek verb also occurs in Sir 37:10–11, where “looking askance” (*hypoblepomenou*, v. 10a) also implies looking enviously with an Evil Eye (*zêlountôn*, v. 10b) and where an “envious rival wife” and an Evil-Eyed person (*baskanou*, 11) also are mentioned. In 1 Sam 2:29 LXX,

17. Deut 15:10 HT, paralleling 15:9 and reading “your heart is evil (when you give)” LXX renders, “you shall not grieve (*lypêthêsé*) in your heart (when you give).”

18. This addition in Greek clarifies the synecdoche of the Hebrew in which “Evil Eye” stands in for the entire person; cf. also Sir 14:10 and the Ugaritic incantation KTU² 1.96 [= RS 22.225 = CAT 1.96] discussed previously in Vol. 1, chap. 2.

19. The consistent Greek equivalent for the Hebrew adjective *ra'* (“evil”) is *ponêros*, meaning “evil,” “essentially bad.” *Ponêros* is used of evil spirits (1 Sam 16:14, 23; Matt 12:45; Luke 7:21; 8:2, 11:26; Acts 19:12–16), evil demons (Tob 3:8), evil angels (Ps 78:49), evil beasts (Lev 26:6), and evil humans (Num 14:35; 1 Chr 2:3).

Hebrew *m^e óyén* (“looking with an Evil Eye”) is rendered “looking with a shameless eye,” *epeblepsas*. . . *anaidei ophthalmôî*, involving another composite of *blepô*.

Thus the Septuagint employs two main conventional Greek expressions for the Evil Eye: (a) formulations with *ophthalmos* (“eye”): *ophthalmos ponêreuesthai* (Deut 15:9), *ophthalmos ponêros* (Sir 14:10, 31:13), *ophthalmos ponêros phthoneros* (Sir 14:10), *ophthalmos phthonein* (Tob 4:7, 16) and (b) formulations with terms of the *baskanos* word group: *baskainein tôi ophthalmôî* (Deut 28:54, 56; Sir 14:6, 8), *baskanos* (Prov 23:6, 28:22; Sir 14:3, 18:18; 37:11), *baskania* (Wis 4:12); *probaskanion* (Ep Jer 69/70). In addition, some synonyms for “looking askance,” “looking with hostility or enviously or shamelessly with an Evil Eye” also appear (1 Sam 18:9; 1 Sam 2:29; Sir 37:10).

The article on the *bask-* wordfield by Gerhard Delling (1964) in the important and influential reference work, the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, requires a comment, given its misleading content on this subject. Delling links *baskanos* (a denominative construction meaning “defamatory,” “bewitching”) with *baskô* and *bazô* (1964:594), and gives as the “original meaning” of *baskanos* “to do hurt to someone through unfavorable words” (ibid.:594). The verb, he claims, had three senses: (a) “to bewitch,” (b) “to revile,” and (c) “to envy.” Added to the original meaning of (a), he continues, was “that of harm through hostile looks, so that (a) denotes ‘specifically the simple but all the more sinister’ witchcraft ‘exercised through hostile looks or words’ even though it might be unintentional.”²⁰ He claims that “*baskanos* is attested from the 5th cent. B.C, *baskania* since Plato, *baskainô* since Aristotle” (ibid.:594). At present, however, the canon of ancient Greek literature covered by the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* gives a different and more up-to-date picture, as reflected above in the discussion of these terms in Vol. 2. In regard to the *bask-* word family. Delling claims that “it is not merely a question of magic through the evil eye but of any bewitching or hurting through men or non-human forces. Hence it is clear that, unless *baskainein* is given this narrower sense by the context, it does not have to denote the evil eye, but may equally well refer to other means of harming by magic” (ibid.:594–95). This is particularly misleading. Beside the problematic and unsubstantiated association of the Evil Eye with magic, this expanded sense of *baskania* etc. is by no means certain. So for the sake of linguistic consistency, in this study I have always rendered terms of the *bask-* word family with “Evil Eye.” As to a connection with magic, Delling does correctly note that “*baskainein* is never used of other

20. Delling 1964:594, quoting Kuhnert 1909:2009.

magic which employs certain external means that acquire magical power by conjuration” (ibid.:595). But it is his categorization of the Evil Eye as magic that still remains problematic. Equally problematic is his taking none of the occurrences of *bask-* in the LXX or NT as referring to the Evil Eye. “In the LXX,” he claims, “it means only ‘to be unfavorably disposed to’” and in New Testament *baskainein* (Gal 3:1) supposedly has the sense of “to bewitch (by words)” (ibid.:595). This latter notion is clearly in error given the act of *looking* regularly implied by *bask-* terms, and given the repeated reference to eyes in both Gal 3:1 and 4:14 and the several other traces here of Evil Eye belief and practice, as our discussion of Galatians will indicate. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that Delling too seems intent on purging the Bible of any reference to the active and malevolent Evil Eye, rather than understanding what it entailed and implied. As a result, the article fails to illuminate the biblical passages containing these terms or other linguistic equivalents. Thomas Rakoczy levels a similar critique against Delling’s entry.²¹ Bauer-Danker-Arndt-Gingrich, *Greek-English Lexicon* (BDAG 2000), is a better lexical guide to the meanings of *baskania* etc. and the relevant literature.

The Latin Terminology of Jerome’s Vulgate

Jerome’s Latin Vulgate employs the standard Latin terminology for the Evil Eye (or envy as associated or equated with Evil Eye); namely, *oculus nequam* (Sir 14:10, 31:13; cf. Matt 6:23/Luke 11:34, Matt 20:15); *oculus malus* (Mark 7:22); *invidere* (Deut 28:54, 56; Prov 28:22; Sir 14:6) or *fascinatio* (Wis 4:12). The use of *invidere* to translate the Hebrew and Greek *Evil Eye*, e.g. Prov 28:22, also shows Jerome’s sense of the virtual synonymy of *invidere/invidia* and *baskainein/baskania*.²²

Original Languages and Translations

Examination of terminology in the original languages is essential for our analysis since all translations of the original Hebrew and Greek (and of Jerome’s Latin Vulgate) are not simply translations but interpretations. These interpretations are conditioned and limited by the translators’s knowledge of the cultural matrix of the terms employed and of the Evil Eye phenomenon itself, and by the assumptions of the translators’s culture. The Latin Vulgate, the Syriac Peshitta, and the King James Version (KJV) generally

21. Rakoczy 1996:124 n. 383.

22. On the Latin terms *fascinare* etc. and *invidere* etc. see Vol. 2.

render the original texts with “Evil Eye.” Other or later modern versions offer alternatives such as *Missgunst* (“begrudging,” Luther), *neidischer Blick* (“envious glance, Zürcher Bibel), *squardo invidioso* (“envious glance,” *Il Nuovo Testamento*); “jealousy” (TEV); and “envy” (RSV, NRSV, NEB, NAB, BJ). Translations that do not render the original Hebrew and Greek terms for “Evil Eye” or “looking, harming with an Evil Eye” as the same in the receptor language but that offer only an *assumed sense* of the original terms obscure for readers of the Bible that fact that the original texts explicitly mention the Evil Eye. In several Evil Eye texts, envy, for example, is explicitly mentioned or implied. The Evil Eye and envy, however, are allied but are not identical. Envy, we recall, is the emotion, and an Evil Eye is the physical organ—the malignant ocular glance—by which envy is conveyed. Rendering “Evil Eye” by “envy” in several instances confuses the matter. Translations often tell us more about the mindsets and culture of the translators than about the meaning of original terms in their original cultural settings. In this volume I will indicate the original Hebrew and Greek (and Latin) terms and will consistently translate Hebrew and Greek (and Latin) terms for Evil Eye with “Evil Eye,” “to Evil Eye,” “Evil-Eyed,” “harm with an Evil Eye” etc. as the original terms require.

The Old Testament Evil Eye Texts

Our examination of Old Testament and related texts commences with those passages of the Hebrew and Greek Old Testaments that *explicitly* mention the Evil Eye. *Implicit* references will be treated next. Finally, passages will be discussed where reference to the Evil Eye has been claimed but where the evidence remains inconclusive.

In the Greek Bible (containing, beyond the Hebrew writings, the apocryphal writings), we find, as indicated above,²³ fourteen text segments involving twenty explicit references to the Evil Eye, an eye that is evil, malicious, hostile, envious, stingy, or greedy: Deut 15:9; 28:54, 56; Prov 23:6; 28:22; Sir 14:3, 6, 8, 9, 10; 18:18; 31:13; 37:10, 11; Wis 4:12; Tob 4:7, 16; 4 Macc 1:26; 2:15; Ep Jer 69/70. Many references appear in the so-called Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament. This is to be expected, given the interest of these writings in the practical concerns of everyday living. This body of literature concerning conventional wisdom has extensive affinities with the folk wisdom and folklore of Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Greek, and Roman traditions. Additional traces of the belief in the Intertestamental period

23. See above, p. 2.

appear in the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha,²⁴ the Dead Sea Scrolls,²⁵ Philo,²⁶ and Josephus.²⁷ The New Testament attests the persistence of Evil Eye belief within the communities of Jesus of Nazareth and the apostle Paul. Four explicit references to the Evil Eye (*ophthalmos ponêros*) are attributed to Jesus (Matt 6:22–23//Luke 11:33–34; Matt 20:15; Mark 7:22). In Paul's letter to the Galatians, the explicit question, "O uncomprehending Galatians, who has injured you with the Evil Eye (*tis hymas ebaskanen*)?" (3:1) is one explicit reference to the phenomenon, among several allusions (especially in 4:12–20). In the post-biblical centuries, as we shall see, Jewish and Christian concern over the Evil Eye and its prevention continued unabated through and beyond Late Antiquity. This is evident from the extensive literary, epigraphic, iconographic and archaeological evidence.

A wide range of evidence thus indicates that ancient Israelites and Christians shared with their pagan neighbors the ubiquitous fear of the Evil Eye and a constant concern for avoiding or warding off its destructive power. Varying nuances of Evil Eye belief in the biblical literature will become apparent in our examination of representative texts. Modern translations, with the exception of the KJV, generally tend to render the assumed sense, rather than the actual terms, of the Hebrew and Greek expressions for "Evil Eye." For our purposes, therefore, attention to, and comparison of, the *original languages* must be our point of departure. Comparison with the Latin translation of Jerome's *Vulgata* will provide a checkpoint for the Latin equivalents.

The Evil Eye Belief Complex in the Bible

To prepare for an examination of the Old Testament texts mentioning an Evil Eye, it will be useful to review how the eye in general was viewed in the biblical communities, along with consideration of other components of the Evil Eye belief complex that appear in the biblical texts. Most of these components we have already encountered in Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Greek, or Roman sources.

24. *T. Iss.* 3:2–3; 4:1–6 (*baskanos, ophthalmous ponêrous*); *T. Benj.* 4:2–4 (*skoteinon ophthalmon . . . phthonei . . . zeloi*); cf. *T. Dan* 2:5; *T. Sol.* 18:39; and possibly *Jos. Asen.* 4:11; and 2 *Enoch* 52:7–8.

25. 4Q424, Frag. 1, lines 10–12; 4Q477 [4QDecrees], Frag. 1, col. 2.3–7; 1QS 7:13.

26. Philo, *Cherubim* 33; *Names* 95, 112; *Dreams* 1.107; *Moses* 1. 246; *Virtues* 170; *Flaccus* 29.

27. *War* 1.208; *Ant.* 1.188, 200, 260; 3.268; 6.59; 10.212, 250, 257; 11.265; *Life* 425; *Ag. Ap.* 1.72; 2.285.

The frequent references to the eyes of humans and of God in the Old Testament indicate how prominent the eyes were as means of apprehension of information and of perception of reality and truth, as indicators of internal states and affect, as instruments of communication and aggression, as means of moral evaluation, and as symbols of cognition and understanding. Yael Avrahami aptly speaks of the “centrality” and “supremacy” of sight in Israel’s sensorium.²⁸

The basic Hebrew term for “eye” (*ayin*) appears in the Hebrew Bible with varying senses, designating (a) “spring”: [of water, e. g., Gen 16:7] some twenty-three times or, more often, (b) “eye” (866+ times) referring to (b.1.) some human feature: physical eye (Exod 21:26); “eye of the land” or “face of the land” (Exod 10:15); the mental faculty of cognition (Gen 3:7, eyes opened); disposition, emotion (“your eye shall not pity them,” Deut 7:16; “set their eyes to cast me to the ground,” Ps 17:11); or the eye(s) of God (Deut 11:12; Judg 6:17; Prov 15:3 etc.).²⁹ The eyes conveyed a wide range of emotions including humility, arrogance, pity, defiance, dissimulation, generosity, miserliness, envy, malice, and hostility. As a verb, the action of “eyeing” involved looking with envy and malice (1 Sam 18:9). The semantic field also includes *chazah* and *ra'ah*, both actions of seeing.³⁰ In the Greek Old Testament (LXX, Septuagint), *ophthalmos* occurs almost 700 times and *omma*, ten times. Xavier Jacques’s *List of Septuagint Words Sharing Common Elements* lists forty-seven words connected with the Greek root *op-* whose terms (including *ophthalmos*, *optesthai*, *opsis*, etc.) designate various aspects of seeing, vision, and the organ of the eye.³¹ The semantic field of eye, seeing, looking, and experiencing in the OT is extensive and illustrates the great importance attributed to this human faculty.³²

(1) Expressions in the Old Testament imply that the Israelites thought of the eye as having its own light. “The light of my eyes—it also has gone from me” (Ps 37 (38):10). “The light of the eyes rejoices the heart” (Prov

28. Avrahami 2011:263–73.

29. In the Aramaic sections of the Old Testament ‘ayna’ appears five times (Dan 4:31; 7:8 [twice], 20; Ezra 5:5). The Aramaic for “Evil Eye,” ‘ayna’ bisha’ does not occur.

30. The eye and other organs of body are usually feminine in Hebrew; but on occasion also masculine (Song 4:9b, 6:5; Job 21:20; Zech 4:10).

31. Jacques 1972 s.v. The Greek semantic field also includes *horaô*, *blepô*, *theaomai*, *theorêô* and their compounds.

32. On “eye” in the OT, see Cheyne 1899; Jenni and Vetter 1976:259–68; Stendebach 1989:31–48; Rosenzweig 1892 (OT and Talmud); Seligmann 1922:501–7; Wilpert and Zenker 1950; Deonna 1965 (symbolism of eye); Michaelis 1967; Opperwall 1982a; Avrahami 2011:263–73. For the rabbinic material, see Levy 1924 3:639–41; Jastrow 1950 2:1071–72.

15:30). “The Lord gives light to the eyes” (Prov 29:13). Loss of that light constitutes a progressive dimming of the eyes and eventually blindness.

(2) Like the surrounding cultures, the biblical communities viewed the eye as an *active* organ, projecting its light similar to the sun projecting its rays or a lamp casting light. Dan 10:2–9 records the vision of a male figure, whose “body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches . . .” (Dan 10:6). *1 Enoch* describes righteous Noah as having been born with eyes “like the rays of the sun” (106:5, 10). Like the sun or a lamp, they project lights: “when he opened his eyes the whole house lighted up” (106:2, 10). Philo, the Alexandrian Israelite historian, speaks of eyes “reaching out” and “acting upon subjects: “the light within us “goes forth towards the things seen” (*Abraham* 150–156).³³ Revelation 1:14 describes a figure with “eyes as flames of fire” (see also Rev 2:18, 19:12; cf. *1 Enoch* 106:5, 10).³⁴ Accordingly, one could speak of “casting the eye” (Gen 39:7; 44:21; 2 Sam 22:28; Job 16:9; Ps 34:15; 101:6; 145:15).³⁵ Seven lamps mentioned in a vision recorded by Zechariah are identified by an angel as “the [seven] eyes of the Lord, which range through the whole earth” (Zech 4:10). The equation of eye and lamp is explicitly made in the *Testament of Job*: “My eyes, acting as lamps, looked about” (*T. Job* 18:4). This same equation of eye and lamp recurs in the well-known saying of Jesus in Matt 6:22–23/Luke 11:33–36. Also, like lamps, the eyes can also become “dim” or “darkened,” generally by age.³⁶ Sirach 18:18 states that an Evil Eye causes the dimming of the eyes (either one’s own or, more likely, those of others). Jesus speaks of an Evil Eye constituting or causing total darkness in the body (Matt 6:23/Luke 11:34).

These passages illustrate the fact that the biblical communities shared with their neighbors what is called an extramission theory of vision. This theory of vision, which prevailed throughout antiquity, posited that the eye was an active organ that projected energy outward, similar to the rays of the sun or the glow of a lamp.³⁷ No writing of the Bible explains in detail how the eye was thought to function. From the texts illustrating the understanding

33. See Allison 1987:61.

34. Pace Aquaro 2004:32, who erroneously claims that the Hebrews differed from the Greek notion of emanations/rays exiting from the eye.

35. The notion of “casting” an Evil Eye is expressed in Italian with *jettatura*, which derives from the verb *jettare*, “to cast, throw.”

36. See Gen 27:1; 48:10; Deut 34:7; 1 Sam 3:2; Job 17:7; Ps 69:23; Lam 5:17; Zech 11:17.

37. On the extramission theory of vision and its contrast to the intromission theory of vision that is now espoused by modern science, see Vol. 1, chap. 1, pp. 20–21, and Vol. 2, pp. 25–26, 71–72, 94–111.

of the eye as an active organ, however, it is clear that some version of the extramission theory of vision was en vogue among the biblical communities as it was throughout the ancient world. The process of vision and the action of an Evil Eye no doubt were understood in terms similar to those laid out by Plutarch and Heliodorus.³⁸

(3) The eye was assumed to be connected to the heart, the seat of disposition and feeling, the cognitive and affective center of personal identity.³⁹ As Plutarch linked the eye and envy with the mind (*psychê*),⁴⁰ so biblical authors associated the eye with the *heart*, the seat of all dispositions, intentions, and emotions including envy, jealousy, miserliness, anger, hatred, malice, greed etc. Eye(s) and heart are regularly mentioned in tandem.⁴¹ The psalmist sings of “integrity of heart . . . perverseness of heart, an arrogant heart” (Ps 101:2, 4, 5). “The light of the eyes rejoices the heart” (Prov 15:30). The heart rejoices from the enlightened eye (Ps 19:8). Correspondingly, the eye reveals and expresses the disposition and intentionality of the heart: “Walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes” (Eccl 11:9). One should not have “eyes and heart for dishonest gain and other evil” (Jer 22:17). The expression “the eyes of the heart” (Eph 1:17; *1 Clem.* 36:2) unites the two and appears to have been proverbial.

The eye or eyes express a variety of dispositions stirring in the heart: hostility (Job 16:9); hatred (Job 16:9; Ps 35:19; Prov 6:13); arrogance (Prov 6:17, 21:4; 30:13; Ps 101:5), humble trust (Ps 123:2), innocence (Ps 101:2); perverseness (Ps 101:4), mockery (Prov 30:17), sorrow (Job 3:10); sadness (Ps 6:7[8]; 31:9[10]; 88:9[10]; Jer 9:1, 18; Lam 1:16, 2:11); shamelessness (Sir 26:11); pity (Deut 7:16; 13:8; 19:13, 21; 25:12); insatiability (Eccl 1:8; 4:8; Prov 27:20; 30:17); desire, lust (Ps 73:7; Prov 17:24; Ezek 6:9; Sir 26:9), and, as we shall see, envy, miserliness, and greed as manifested in an Evil Eye. A winking eye reveals a conniving heart: “Whoever winks his eye plans evil deeds (Sir 27:22; cf. Ps 35:19; Prov 6:13; 10:10). *Ophthalmodoulia*, literally, “eye-service,” denotes the vice of flattery and obsequiousness (Eph 6:6; Col 3:22). Blindness, the non-functioning of the eyes and result of their

38. On the Evil Eye texts of Plutarch and Heliodorus see Vol. 2. pp. 48–56 and 64–69, respectively.

39. See the fuller discussion below, chapter 2, in relation to Mark 7:22. On the linguistic nuances of the term “heart” (*léb*) and its idiomatic usage see Stolz 1971; Leeb 2008.

40. Plutarch, *Quaest. Conv.* 5.7.3; *Mor.* 681D–F, 682C

41. See Num 15:39; Deut 4:9; 15:9–10; 28:65, 67; 1 Sam 2:33; 1 Kgs 9:3; 14:8; 2 Kgs 10:30; 2 Chr 7:16; 16:9; 25:2; Job 15:12; Pss 19:8; 36:1; 101:3–5; Prov 15:30; 21:2, 4; 23:26; Eccl 2:10; 11:9; Lam 5:17; Ezek 6:9; 21:6; Mark 7:22. See also below, chap. 2 on Mark 7:18–23, where heart and Evil Eye are also associated; for “evil heart” see also 1 Sam 1:8.

“dimming,” represents darkness and gloom (Isa 29:18) and can be regarded as caused by God or the gods as punishment for arrogance or *hybris* or for casting an Evil Eye.⁴² The eye thus was the organ of seeing and witnessing, but also indicator of one’s state of physical health, emotions, intentions, and moral character.

(4) In the case of an Evil Eye, chief among these emotions, as in Greek and Roman thought, was envy.⁴³ The eye and the process of seeing are linked regularly with the disposition of envy. Envy arises in the heart (“Do not let your heart envy sinners,” Prov 23:17) and is conveyed outward through the eye, that is, an Evil Eye. “Saul (enviously Evil-) Eyed David” (1 Sam 18:9). Other formulations show the explicit association of Evil Eye and envy: “An Evil Eye is envious of (or ‘begrudges’) bread” (*Ophthalmos ponêros phthoneros ep’ artôî*, Sir 14:10); “do not begrudge with your Evil Eye the alms when you give them,” *mê phthonēsâtô sou ho ophthalmos . . .* (Tob 4:7, 16; lit., “do not envy with your eye . . .”; cf. also Sir 37:10, 11. As we shall discuss in greater detail below, envy is aroused by seeing the good fortune of others, comparing it with one’s own condition, and concluding that another’s gain has come at the cost of one’s own loss. Distress from feeling inferior and short-changed prompts the wish that the good fortune of the other be destroyed. Seeing is a precondition of envying.

The Greek for “envy” in the LXX, translating the Hebrew *qanah*, is the *zêlos* family of terms (*zêlos*, *antizêlos*, *zêloô*, *zêlos*, *zêlotypeô zêlotypia*, *zêlôsis*, *zêlôtês*, *zêlôtos*, *homozêlia*, *parazêloô*, *parazêlôsis*); only the Greek biblical apocryphal writings contain terms of the *phthon-* family.⁴⁴ The Latin *invidia*, from which the English “envy” derives, and the verb *invidere*, from which *invidia* derives, make the association of Evil Eye and envy explicit, conceptually and linguistically. In the Vulgate, *invidere* (*invidus*) is the Latin equivalent of the Greek *baskainein* (*baskanos*, which renders the Hebrew of Deut 28:54, 56; and Prov 23:6; 28:22). *Invidere* (*in + videre*, lit.,

42. See Sophocles, *Oedipus at Colonus* 149–156; and Bernidaki-Aldous 1988. The apostle Paul was struck blind by God for seeking to harm God’s people (Acts 9:1–8) and thereafter had his sight restored (Acts 9:17–19). Boughouts (1978:2), citing Schott 1931, refers to an Egyptian curse text mentioning Horus blinding the eyes of those casting an Evil Eye.

43. On envy in Israelite literature see Stumpf 1964; Sauer 1976; McKim 1982; de la Mora 1987; Schulz 1987; Dickie 1992; Pilch and Malina 1998:59–63, 209–12; Elliott 1992, 2007b, 2008; Kim 2001; Malina 2001b; Wazana 2007; Böttrich 2008; see also von Nordheim-Diehl 2012 (envy of God, the Devil, and humans in Second Temple Israel). On envy in antiquity (and its distinction from jealousy), see also Vol. 2, *Excursus on Envy* 83–113.

44. *Phthonein* (Tob 4:7, 16); *phthoneros* (Sir 14:10); *phthonos* (Wis 2:24; 6:23; 1 Macc 8:16; 3 Macc 6:7). See also *aphthonos* (3 Macc 5:2; 4 Macc 3:10); *aphthonôs* (Wis 7:13).

“to over-look”) means “to look askance at, to look maliciously or spitefully at, to cast an Evil Eye upon.”⁴⁵ *Invidia*, in turn, is the envy implicit in this evil glance. Thus, as the Greeks regularly associated envy (*phthonos*) with the Evil Eye and spoke of an *ophthalmos phthoneros* (“envious Eye”),⁴⁶ so the Romans reflected this association in their language through terms uniting the concepts of malevolent stare, envy, and Evil Eye. These associations have endured in Evil Eye cultures down through modern times.⁴⁷ It is essential to keep in mind that in antiquity envy was related to, but distinguished from, jealousy. The jealous person feared the loss of his possessions to a rival who sought to acquire them. The envious person grieved the good fortune and possessions enjoyed by others and wished them destroyed. Jealousy fears loss to self; envy wishes loss upon others. The husband’s concern about his possibly adulterous wife in Numbers 5 and the ritual involved is a classic case of jealousy rather than envy. Saul, on the other hand, is not *jealous* of David but rather *envies* him (1 Sam 18:9).⁴⁸

The accusation of enviousness, of course, could serve as a stereotype for putting down the “other,” the stranger or the alien. Philo of Alexandria insisted that envy (*phthonos*) was a typical feature of the Egyptian nature (*Flaccus* 29). The accusation also has been leveled at one’s own people. Centuries after Philo, Miguel de Unamuno directed the same charge against his own people, the Spaniards. On more than one occasion, the renowned author and former rector of the University of Salamanca declared envy to be a “deadly cancer” of the human spirit, but a vice characteristic of Spain in particular. “The national Spanish leprosy,” he called it; “the ferment of Spanish social life.”⁴⁹

(5) Another disposition regularly associated in the Bible with an Evil Eye is miserliness, stinginess with one’s resources, tight-fistedness, reluctance to be generous, giving only begrudgingly. “Be careful lest there be an evil thought in your heart . . . and your eye be evil against your needy neighbor and you give nothing” (Deut 15:9).⁵⁰ J. D. M. Derrett underscored the association in ancient Israelite society of the Evil Eye with “niggardliness,

45. Lewis and Short, *Latin Dictionary*, s.v.

46. Walcot 1978, esp. pp. 77–90 on the Evil Eye and envy.

47. Schoeck 1987 on envy and the Evil Eye; de la Mora 1987; Maloney 1976; Dundes, ed. 1992. Aquaro (2004:20–49), commenting on envy and the Evil Eye in the OT, unconvincingly sees “a much ‘higher’ and less superstitious understanding of envy in the Old Testament” than in its “Chaldean roots” (2004:49).

48. On this text see below, pp. 53, 65–66, 69, 70, 107, 183.

49. Cited by de la Mora 1987:55.

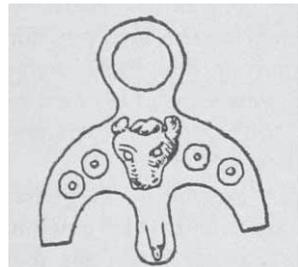
50. See also Deut 28:53–57; Tob 4:7–11, 16; Sir 14:3, 5, 8; Matt 6:22–23/Luke 11:34.

or meanness, in contexts where society expects, and rewards, generosity.”⁵¹ This Evil Eye of stinginess “is not a permanent characteristic, and can be remedied by a change in fortune or a change in attitude.” Warning against this aspect of the Evil Eye is a distinctive feature of biblical commentary on the malevolent eye.

(6) Persons with an Evil Eye were thought capable of causing illness and great harm to others and even to themselves. Sigmund Mowinkel notes that “illness was thought to be brought about not only by God and supernatural beings, demons or evil spirits,” but also by “the ‘might’ and supernatural ‘power’—evil or good—of particular individuals. Beside prophets and priests, women and other humans deemed “different” were thought capable of “‘the evil word,’ ‘the evil eye’ and other ‘damaging acts.’ . . .” used by any person against another; the popular mind looked upon the evil word and the evil eye as in themselves potent agents of disaster.”⁵² These and further features of an Evil Eye will be discussed in greater detail below and in the following chapter.

(7) The Evil Eye, it was believed, could be averted by a variety of means and measures. Frequent mention is made, for example, of an array of amulets employed to protect against all forms of evil forces, including the Evil Eye. These included ear rings (Gen 35:4, associated with “household gods,” cf. 31:19), Judah’s signet ring (Gen 38:18, 25), nose rings, and moon/crescent amulets (Judg 8:21, 24, 26). Israelite women, Isaiah complains, wore “crescent moon amulets,” other “amulets,” “signet rings,” “nose rings,” and “veils” (Isa 3:18–23)—all for protection. At this time, we recall, “every ornament was an amulet” worn just as much for protection against evil forces as for ornamentation.⁵³ Animals, too, were protected with amulets; e.g. camels (crescents, Judg 8:21, 26) and horses (bells, Zech 14:20). Israelite soldiers under Judas Maccabeus, contrary to law, concealed amulets (*hierômata*, “sacred tokens of the idols of Jamnia”) in their clothing (2 Macc 12:40), probably images of their protective deities similar to the images or “idols” of 2 Sam 5:21/1 Chr 14:12.

Three features of specifically Israelite piety provided prophylaxis and served to ward off evil



Illus. 1
Sketch of a crescent amulet for wearing, depicting a horned bull's head and a phallus (from Seligmann 1910 1:341, fig. 61).

51. Derrett 1995:68.

52. Mowinkel 1962 2:2–3.

53. So Kennedy 1910:439, among others.

forces in general and the Evil Eye in particular: (1) the donning of phylacteries (*phylaktêria*) at prayer (Exod 13:9, 16; Deut 6:8; 11:18; Matt 23:5); (2) the blue fringes or tassels (*tzitzit*, *kraspeda*) on the four corners of the prayer shawl (Num 15:37–41; Deut 22:12),⁵⁴ and (3) the *mezuzahs* affixed to the doorposts of domestic residences (Deut 6:9; 11:20).⁵⁵ On these three practices see below, pp. 100, 272–73, 282. Such protective practices of everyday



Illus. 2
Jewish phylacteries (from *Jewish Encyclopedia* 1906 10:24, reproducing an engraved drawing from Bernard Picart, 1725)



Illus. 3
Blue apotropaic tassels (*tzitzit*) on the four corners of the prayer shawl (*tallit*) worn by observant Jewish males during weekday morning services

54. Tassels and fringed objects, Egyptologist Budge reports (1978/1930:81), were thought by Egyptians to be “disliked by evil Spirits.” “In ancient Pentateuch rolls, some of the letters have fringes attached to them,” presumably for the same reason. For reference to these *tzitzit*/fringes in the New Testament, see Matt 9:20; 14:36; 23:5; Mark 6:56; Luke 8:44.

55. So Kennedy 1910:440; Nigosian 2008:45. On Hebrew and Jewish amulets (and charms) see also Peringer 1695; Rodkinson 1893; Blau 1898:86–93, 1907:546–50; 19142 M. Gaster 1900, 1910:451–55; Kennedy 1910; Montgomery 1910–11; Petrie 1914; Casanowicz 1917; Billerbeck 1928, vol. 4.1:529–33; Heller 1928; Kaufman 1939; Bonner 1950:302–3 and Plates XIV–XV, esp. Pl. XV, nos. 208–21; Goodenough 1953–68, vol. 2:153–295; vol. 3, nos. 379–81, 999–1209; Koetting 1954:474–476; Ben-Dor 1962:122; G. H. Davies 1962a, 1962b; Delatte and Derchain 1964, no. 371; Trachtenberg 1970/1939:132–52; Yitshaqi 1976; Budge 1978/1930:212–38 (Hebrew amulets), 283–90, 446–47 (Hebrew/Aramaic magic bowls, “devil traps”); T. W. Davies 1979; Harrison 1979; Peterson 1982; Schrire 1982; Yamauchi 1983:195–99; T. H. Gaster 1987; Naveh and Shaked 1987 (amulets and magic bowls); Kotansky 1991; Yardeni 1991; Barkay 1992, 2009 (oldest Israelite amulet, seventh–sixth cent. BCE); Schiffman and Swartz 1992; Ulmer 1994; Michaelides 1994; Keel 1996; Veltri 1996; Barkay et al. 2004; Schmitt 2004, 2012; Lincicum 2008; Vukosavovic 2010; Kosior 2014. On Egyptian amulets found in Palestine, see Rowe 1938; Hermann 1994, 2002.

life were shared by Israel with its neighbors and were prompted by a constant dread of the Evil Eye and other inimical forces. The specific *form* such apotropaics took in Israel's practice, however, illustrate Israel's distinctive mode of adaptation.

(8) Persons possessing a “good eye” are considered individuals of honor and integrity who are generous with their resources. Thus the sage observes, “He who has a good eye (*tov 'ayin*) will be blessed, for he shares his bread with the poor” (Prov 22:9, HT). The LXX renders this somewhat differently, with no mention of “good eye,” but similarly praising generosity: “He who has mercy on the poor shall himself be maintained; for he has given of his own bread to the poor” (Prov 22:8a, b). An added statement equates “showing mercy” and “giving liberally:” “he that gives liberally secures victory and honor” (Prov 22:9c). Sirach 35:8–11 likewise shows that acting with a “good eye” (*agathos ophthalmos*) denotes enthusiastic, generous behavior:



Illus. 4
Mezuzah at the entrance
to the Yochanan ben Zakai
Synagogue, Old Jerusalem

Glorify the Lord with a good eye (*en agathôi ophthalmôi*) (RSV: *generously*)
and do not stint the first fruits of your hands.
With every gift show a cheerful face,
and dedicate your tithe with gladness.
Give to the Most High as He has given and with a good eye
(*en agathôi ophthalmôi*) (RSV: *generously*) as your hand has
received.
For the Lord is one who repays,
and He will repay you sevenfold.⁵⁶

The first biblical text explicitly contrasting a good and an Evil Eye is the saying of Jesus in Matt 6:22–23/Luke 11:34, involving an implied contrast of generosity (“integral eye”) and miserliness (“Evil Eye”).⁵⁷

(8) The term “eye” could stand, *pars pro toto*, for the entire person. This is a case of synecdoche in which a part is employed to represent the whole.

56. On the good eye, see Seligmann 1910 1:244–51; Seligmann 1922:45off.; Deonna 1965:148–52. In the Greco-Roman world, a “good eye,” was mentioned less frequently than “Evil Eye,” and was attributed primarily to deities and transcendent figures (e.g., Zeus, sun, moon, justice); cf. Rakoczy 1996:227–45.

57. For this saying of Jesus see below, chap. 2; for this contrast in the Mishnah, see *m. Avot* 2:9; 5:13, 19; and Vol. 4, chap. 1.

“The eye that mocks a father and scorns to obey a mother will be picked out by the ravens of the valley and eaten by the vultures” (Prov 30:17). “No eye pitied you” (Ezek 16:5). “Do not eat the bread of an Evil Eye . . .” (i.e. of someone with an Evil Eye, Prov 23:6 HT; [LXX adds *anêr*, “someone”]). “An Evil Eye (i.e. someone with an Evil Eye) is envious (or begrudging) of bread, and it is absent from his table” (Sir 14:10). An “apple of someone’s eye” denotes a favorite (Ps 17:8). The “apple of God’s eye” was Israel (Deut 32:10; Zech 2:8.), a concept also illustrating how the Deity likewise was attributed eyes (Ezek 4:10) or an eye (Job 41:18) as a figurative expression of omniscience (Job 28:10; Ps 139:16; Prov 15:3), care (Judg 18:6; Ezra 5:5; 1 Pet 3:12), or judgment (Deut 7:16; 13:8; Ezek 5:11).⁵⁸

Among these characteristics of the eye in the biblical writings are several features relevant more particularly to the Evil Eye. Additional salient features of Evil Eye belief and practice as found in Greek and Roman cultures (the notion of limited good connected with envy, features of typical Evil Eye possessors, types of typical victims, and protective strategies and devices) appear in the Bible as well and will be noted in due course. The rendition of the Hebrew and Greek for “Evil Eye” in various biblical versions (such as “envy,” “jealousy,” *Missgunst*, *squardo invidioso*, etc.) will be indicated and examined in the treatment of the Evil Eye texts that follows.

Explicit Evil Eye Texts

DEUTERONOMY 15:9 (15:7–11)

The first explicit reference to the Evil Eye, Deut 15:9, occurs in a legal prescription appearing in Deut 15 and describing appropriate behavior in the Year of Release.⁵⁹ The situation involves behavior when confronting a fellow Israelite in need and how one should respond. Deut 15:7–11 is part of a larger unit of material (15:1–23) dealing with the “year of release” and the canceling of debts (vv. 1–6); treatment of the poor, especially in relation to the year of release (vv. 7–11); the release of fellow Israelite slaves after six years of indentured service (vv. 12–18); and the consecration of unblemished firstling males of herd and flock for sacrifice (vv. 19–23).⁶⁰ The connection of vv. 7–11 to vv. 1–6 is part of a consistent compositional pattern

58. As also typical of other cultures; see Deonna 1965:99 and n. 2, 96–108.

59. Elliott 1991:156–58 is an earlier version of this material.

60. Regarding these so-called Sabbatical or Seven Year laws see also Exod 21:2–6; 23:10–11; Lev 25:18–22; Wright 1984. On these laws as a component of Israelite legal and other responses to poverty see Domeris 2007:156–68.

found in vv. 1–11, 12–18, and 19–23.⁶¹ Each section opens with an older legal maxim which is then commented on and applied to the later and altered economic, political, and social situation presumed in the Deuteronomic Code (c. the reign of Manasseh, 687–642 BCE). Changes from an earlier situation included a settled urban society with a centralized sanctuary and political structure, a developing latifundialization, increased state taxes, and a resulting economic threat to the rural peasantry. The latter, often obliged in times of reduced harvests to float loans, had to bear the burden of the old sacral ordinance requiring a fallow land each seventh year. In vv. 1–11, this earlier ordinance (Exod 23:10–11; Lev 25:1–7), cited in v. 1, is then subjected in v. 2 to a legal interpretation taking into consideration the altered circumstances.⁶² Here in Deuteronomy, the “release” is extended to a release of *debts* affecting creditors and creditees alike. Verses 3–11 shift from apodictic command and legal considerations to moral exhortation regarding the just treatment of the needy and potential borrowers.⁶³

Within this literary and social context, vv. 7–11 exhibit a concern for the Evil Eye in conjunction with the treatment of needy fellow Israelites seeking loans when the year of release is imminent. The literary inclusion formed by the repetition of v. 7 in v. 11 frame and demarcate this unit of thought and indicate its main point, namely, generosity to any Israelite neighbor (“brother” used metaphorically) who is poor and in need.

Deuteronomy 15:7–11 reads as follows:

7. If there is among you in need, a member of your community in any of your towns within the land that the Lord your God is giving you, do not harden your heart or shut your hand against your needy neighbor 8. You should rather open your hand, willingly lending enough to meet the need, whatever it may be.

61. Von Rad 1966:104–8.

62. “In Deut 15:1–18,” Sharon Ringe observes (1985:16–32, esp. p. 20), “there is no specific mention of the agricultural fallow year, but the terminology of ‘release’ and the reference to a seven-year period link the collection of laws to Exod. 21:2–6 and 23:10–11.” For a later reinterpretation see Lev 25:1–7.

63. Similarly, vv. 12–18 begin with an older legal ordinance concerning slavery (Exod 21:1–11) which is reinterpreted for new circumstances. No longer is the “Hebrew” slave to be set free as a non-free foreigner, but as a “brother” Israelite who once was free and had sold himself in slavery to a fellow Israelite. Thus, by the time of the codification of laws reflected in Deuteronomy, the term “Hebrew” had come to identify the ethnic community of Israel rather than an alien economic class (Ringe 1985:20). Along with other modifications (von Rad 1966:107; Ringe 1985:21), vv. 12–18 focus, as do vv 1–11, on the generosity (vv. 13–14), emotions (vv. 16, 18), and experiential empathy (v. 15) of the agents. The same pattern recurs in vv. 19–23. An earlier legal maxim (v. 19a; cf. Exod 22:29b–30) is followed by “partly legal, partly homiletic accretion” (von Rad 1966:108).

9. Be careful lest there be an evil thought in your heart and you say: “The seventh year, the year of remission [of debts], is near,” and *you look with an Evil Eye upon* your needy neighbor (lit., “and *your eye be evil* against your needy neighbor”), you give nothing, and your neighbor cry to the Lord against you, and you be guilty of sinning. 10. Give liberally and do not grieve in your heart when you do so; for because of this the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake. 11. Since there will never cease to be some in need in the land, I therefore command you, “Open your hand wide to the poor and needy neighbor in your land.” (JHE translation)

Reference to the Evil Eye occurs in verse nine. The Hebrew expression is, literally, *your eye be evil* (רָאָה ‘*êynkâ*) (against your impoverished neighbor).⁶⁴ The Greek LXX gives an exact equivalent: “your eye be evil” (*ponêreusetai ho ophthalmos sou*). The Vulgate, “you avert your eyes” (*et avertas oculos tuos*), substitutes plural “eyes” for the singular (evil) eye and speaks of *turning one’s eyes away* rather than looking malevolently at.⁶⁵ As usual, heart and eye are connected. Having an Evil Eye (v. 9) is connected with grieving in one’s heart (v. 10), in this case regretting and resenting the need to be generous.⁶⁶ Malicious disposition (in the heart) is conveyed by malevolent agency (via the eye). The context makes clear that in this instance *an eye being evil*, or the *looking with an Evil Eye* or a *hostile glance*, involves a malicious disposition issuing in behaving hard-heartedly and tight-fistedly toward the needy, withholding aid, or giving only begrudgingly, or being miserly and stingy with one’s resources. In this case, Evil-Eyeing someone with hostility is the opposite of feeling compassion, opening one’s hand to the poor, and giving liberally and generously to the needy (15:8, 10, 11; cf. also 15:13–14). Compare the open hand of the good wife of Prov 31: “She opens her hand to the poor and reaches out her hands to the needy” (31:20).

64. The combination of this verb and noun occurs also in Deut 28:54, 56. For the verb *r’* “as “be evil,” see also Josh 24:5; as “do evil,” Prov 24:19.

65. In his generally excellent study of the Evil Eye in Mesopotamian and related texts, J. N. Ford (1998:230) translates Deut 15:9 “and your eye be mean towards your needy brother.” Imagining that a distinction between “magical” and “non-magical” is possible without any demonstration of this supposition, he asserts that this is “in a clearly non-magical context.” In his Additions and Corrections (2000), Ford apparently takes issue with Elliott 1991 who, he says, “understands Deut 15:9 and similar passages to refer to the (magical) evil eye.” In actuality I do refer to Deut 15:9, but not as an instance of a “magical evil eye.” I rather consider such an etic distinction as futile and misleading. The words are a clear reference to looking with an Evil Eye.

66. For instances of eye and heart mentioned in tandem, see above, pp. 11, 16, 18–19, 25.

Whether or not a seventh year remission of debt (Deut 15:1) was actually practiced, the warning against begrudging generosity, stinginess, and withholding aid is the key point, a theme that appears repeatedly in the Hebrew Evil Eye tradition. Tobit's encouragement of his son to be generous in the giving of alms and not begrudging the gift with an Evil Eye (4:7, 16) is a clear echo of Deut 15:7–11, as we note below,⁶⁷ and illustrates the continuity of this theme in biblical references to the Evil Eye.⁶⁸ Derrett aptly emphasizes the association in ancient Israelite society of the "Evil Eye" with "niggardliness, or meanness, in contexts where society expects, and rewards, generosity." This Evil Eye of stinginess "is not a permanent characteristic and can be remedied by a change in fortune or a change in attitude."⁶⁹

Verse 9 indicates that the situation of "the seventh year, the year of release" (cf. vv. 1–6), is still in view. With the year of release of debts imminent, a situation of tight credit is envisioned in which creditors would be reluctant to make loans which would soon be cancelled. Nevertheless, the hearers are urged to freely lend to the poor kinsman whatever he needs and to give generously (vv. 8, 11b). On the whole, this economic and social situation fits closely the circumstances where Evil Eye belief and practices tend to flourish, as outlined by anthropologists J. M. Roberts, V. Garrison, and C. M. Arensberg.⁷⁰ This includes the situation of peasant villages with fixed fields and limited production subject to the vagaries of nature and human-wrought disaster, grain agriculture competing with nomadic herders, peer rivalries and stratified society, peasant-urban redistributive economy, unstable government, and protection via patronage.

Mention of the Evil Eye in v. 9 thus comes as no surprise. Moreover, additional aspects of the Evil Eye phenomenon are also present. For one thing, the text reflects the assumed link of heart (vv. 7, 9, 10), including a "hardened" heart (v. 7) or resentful heart (v. 10), and an eye that acts evilly (v. 9).⁷¹ Furthermore, as is typical in Evil Eye cultures, the Evil Eye is invoked here in an ambiguous situation where legal regulation is lacking and "matters of the heart," attitudes and moral dispositions, are of concern.

The issue at stake is the proper attitude and behavior of creditors toward borrowers, "haves" toward "have-nots," at a critical but legally unclarified

67. For Tob 4:7, 16 see below, pp. 57–60.

68. See also Deut 28:53–57; Prov 23:6; 28:22; Sir 14:8, 10; 18:18; Tob 4:7–11, 16; Matt 6:22–23; 20:15.

69. Derrett 1995:68. For opening of the hand to the poor as a gesture of generosity see also Prov 31:20; Ps 104:28; Sir 40:14.

70. J. M. Roberts 1976:234–78; Garrison and Arensberg 1976:286–328, esp. 294–97.

71. See also Prov 23:6–8; Sir 37:11–12; Matt 6:19–23; Mark 7:18–23; for envy and the heart, see Prov 23:17.

juncture just prior to the commencement of the year of debt release. Where execution of the law is unclear or uncertain, appeal to traditional values and beliefs take over, along with regard for the action, judgment and blessing of the Lord (vv. 7–10). As the Lord God has given (v. 7a), so his people should give (vv. 7b–8). Whereas an Evil Eye toward the needy brother is “sin” (v.9), the gift of a non-grudging eye and heart invites the Lord’s blessing (v. 10). Giving liberally and generously (v.10) with an open hand (vv. 8, 11) is the antithesis to looking at someone with an Evil Eye and begrudging aid. This urging of generosity and reminder of divine recompense is a typical refrain of proverbial wisdom: see, for example, Prov 14:31; 19:17; 22:9; and 28:27:

He who oppresses a poor man insults his [the poor man’s]
 Maker,
 but he who is kind to the needy honors him. (14:31 RSV)

He who is kind to the poor lends to the LORD,
 and his good deed He will repay to him. (19:17)

He who has a good eye will be blessed,
 for he shares his bread with the poor. (22:9 RSV)

He who gives to the poor will not lack,
 but he who hides his eyes will get many a curse. (28:27)

The notion of the Evil Eye is invoked in Deuteronomy 15 as elsewhere when the focus is on wealth and the selfish accumulation of goods (cf. Prov 28:22), on the miserly refusal to share of one’s substance (Deut 28:53–57), and on the neglect of the virtue of generosity and the begrudging of gifts and alms (Prov 23:6–8; Sir 14:3–4, 8, 10; 18:18; 37:11; Tob 4:1–21). Here too an Evil Eye is linked with a heart that is hardened to another’s need and a hand that is shut to a poor brother in want.

Socially, this warning against an Evil Eye reflects the concern for mutual support and covenantal solidarity in a society plagued by economic disparity, conflict, suspicion of wealth, a perception of limited good, and occasions of severe deprivation. The Evil Eye behavior mentioned in Deut 28:54 and 56 envisions a desperate situation of famine in which husbands and wives begrudge with an Evil Eye food to even spouses, brother, and their own children (Deut 28:53–57).

Morally, exercise of the Evil Eye is identified as “sinning” (Deut 15:9), a violation of covenantal obligation and behavior incompatible with the experience of a generous God (vv. 7, 10–11). Generosity, on the other hand, is blessed by God (Deut 15:10). The principle at stake here is captured by the later words of Sirach and Tobit in the Greek Old Testament: “The bread

of the needy is the life of the poor; whoever deprives them of it is a man of blood" (Sir 34:21). A passage in Tobit (4:1–21) encourages generosity to the poor and warns against ignoring their plight. Echoing the warning of Deut 15:9, but applying it not to a year of release but to the more recurrent and conventional action of almsgiving, a dying Tobit urges his son, "Do not begrudge with an Evil Eye the alms when you give them" (4:7a, 16; lit., "do not let your eye begrudge," *mê phthonesatô sou ho ophthalmos*). "Do not turn your face from any poor man, and the face of God will not be turned from you" (Tob 4:7b). Tobit 4:7, 16, like Deut 15:9 LXX, involve the formulation of "your eye" with verbs that are similar if not synonymous.⁷² Further Evil Eye texts, Sir 14:10 and 18:15–18, criticize the Evil-Eyed begrudging of food and gifts, and likewise urge unconditional generosity.⁷³

In his classic sociological study, *Ancient Judaism* (1952/1921), pioneering historical sociologist Max Weber had noted how pre-exilic Israel's economic ethic and its call for charity was likely "influenced by Egypt directly or by way of Phoenicia," an influence that was "strongest in Deuteronomic times."⁷⁴ Israel's ethic and focus on charity, nevertheless distinguished itself from that of Babylonia and Egypt.

Nothing is transmitted from both these cultural areas [Babylonia, Egypt] which would equal or merely resemble a systematic ethical religious exhortation of the kind of Deuteronomy. Unlike pre-exilic Israel, Babylonia and Egypt knew no unified, religiously substructured ethic . . . In Israel this ethic was the product of the ethical Torah of the Levites continued for many generations, and of prophecy.⁷⁵

The stress on charity was "one characteristic element of the old Israelite ethic."⁷⁶ "The formal law of debt bondage was . . . supplemented in the moral exhortation by far-reaching stipulations concerning payment of wages, debt remission, limitation on pledges, and general charity."⁷⁷ Weber expressly cites Deut 15:11 as one of "the most general formulations of these duties."⁷⁸

Weber says nothing about the act of looking with a hostile Evil Eye that is proscribed in Deut 15:7–11. However, his singling out of this Deuteronomic passage as prime illustration of Israel's stress on charity toward the

72. On Tobit, see below, pp 57–61.

73. On these texts, see below, pp. 46–47.

74. Weber 1952/1921:258.

75. *Ibid.*, 254–55.

76. *Ibid.*, 255.

77. *Ibid.*

78. *Ibid.*

needy is significant. It helps us appreciate how a key expression of Israelite concern for the poor and a hallmark of Israel's ethic in general were opposed to the exercise of an Evil Eye. The Evil Eye is the antithesis to a spirit of generosity. Paired with a closed hand, it is an expression of miserliness and an eye that is blind toward, or little moved by, the plight of the poor and needy.

The translations upon which most Bible readers are dependent tend to obscure the fact that here at Deuteronomy 15, and in numerous other relevant instances, mention originally was made of an Evil Eye. While the King James Version (KJV) preserves in its rendition the reference to an Evil Eye, most modern versions offer what the translation teams of each assume to be the *sense* of the words, rather than a literal translation:

KJV and JPS: *thine eye be evil (against thy poor brother)*

RSV: *your eye be hostile*

NRSV: *(you) view with hostility*

NEB: *look askance at*

NAB: *grudge help to*

JB: *look coldly on*

Goodspeed: *behave meanly to*

TEV: *Do not refuse to lend him something*

These and similar translations capture one or more aspects of an Evil Eye, such as the mode of looking (with hostility or coldness or looking askance) or a mode of behavior (begrudging help, behaving meanly, refusing to lend). But they do not indicate to the readers that Deut 15:9 speaks explicitly of *behavior entailing a malignant ocular glance*. Among themselves, the versions show little consistency in their translations or in the aspects of Evil Eye behavior they choose to express. This is the case throughout the many biblical instances where “Evil Eye” appears in the original Hebrew or Greek. As a consequence, readers reliant on translations gain no impression of the abundance of biblical references to the Evil Eye and see no common threads among the Evil Eye texts. Nor do the translations always illuminate the social dynamics involved. These problems concerning the Bible versions—namely terminological multiplicity, translational inconsistency, and semantic unclarity—plague most of the renditions of biblical Evil Eye texts. The translations often result in inconsistent wordings from text to text, uncertainty of the connection of one text to another, and lack of clarity concerning the social dynamics involved. In its terminology, the KJV is

a notable exception, usually reading “Evil Eye” where this is stated in the original Hebrew and Greek.

To document the existence and extent of Evil Eye belief and practice in the Bible and antiquity, and to address these problems, I have considered it advisable when translating the ancient texts to use a consistent set of terms and expressions such as “Evil Eye,” an “eye being evil,” “casting an Evil Eye” or “injuring with an Evil Eye.” All my English translations of “Evil Eye” in the original languages include “eye” and “evil” for the sake of linguistic and semantic consistency. It has been suggested by some scholars that in the primary sources the term *envy* (Heb: *qanah*; Grk: *phthonos*, *zêlos*; Lat: *invidia* and their respective word families) can on occasion be a substitute for the expression “Evil Eye,” an expression deemed to be too dangerous to utter. I, however, have used the translation “Evil Eye” only when the primary source has “Evil Eye” or some paronym thereof, while allowing for an implied reference to an Evil Eye whenever the closely linked emotion of envy is mentioned. Let us recall once more that in Evil Eye cultures, envy and Evil Eye are related but not identical. They related to each other as disposition (envy) and mechanism of conveyance (eye). Envy is a malice that is conveyed from one living entity at another by means of an Evil Eye, a malevolent glance, an eye looking askance, an eye overlooking. Moreover, an “eye being evil,” or “Evil Eye,” or “casting an Evil Eye,” or “injuring with an Evil Eye” are not merely ancient and antiquated expressions, but rather references to what was taken to be a natural phenomenon of an eye operating in a malicious and harmful way toward a specific target.

DEUTERONOMY 28:54, 56 (28:53–57)

A double mention of the Evil Eye occurs in Deut 28:53–57. Looking with a hostile Evil Eye at others in need and selfishly withholding sustenance from them relate this passage to that of Deuteronomy 15. This passage falls within the concluding section of the book of Deuteronomy, chs. 28–34; and as a conclusion to Moses’s second address (chs. 5–28). More specifically it occurs within the section 28:47–57 elaborating on the divine curses to befall Israel because of its nonobservance of the commandments and its failure to serve the Lord with joyfulness and gladness of heart (28:47). The details of the divine punishment and foreign attack reflect the gruesome experiences of Judah during the Neo-Babylonian invasion of 587 BCE in the reign of King Zedekiah (2 Kings 25). Judah, according to Moses’s forecast, will be attacked and besieged by a merciless enemy, stripped of its cattle and food, and its population reduced to want and starvation (Deut 28:48–52). The

besieged will finally resort to eating their own children: “and you shall eat the offspring of your own body, the flesh of your sons and daughters, whom the LORD your God has given you, in the siege and in the distress with which your enemies shall distress you” (28:53). In this situation of extreme deprivation and desperation, family members will be subject to the depraved Evil Eye of their very own relatives. Deuteronomy 28:54–57 reads:

54 The man, who is tender among you and delicately bred, will look with an Evil Eye (lit., “*his eye shall be evil*,” [téra’ éno]) against his fellow Israelite (lit. “brother”), against his beloved wife, and against the last of his children who remain to him, 55 begrudging them (for food) the flesh of his children that he is eating because he has nothing else left to him in the siege and in the distress with which your enemy shall distress you in all your towns. 56 The woman, who is tender among you and delicately bred, who would not venture to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, will look with an Evil Eye (lit., *her eye shall be evil* [téra’ énah]) against her beloved husband, against her son, and against her daughter; 57 begrudging them (for food) the afterbirth that oozes from her genitals⁷⁹ and the baby that she bears; for she shall eat them herself secretly for lack of anything else (to eat), in the siege and in the distress with which your enemy shall distress you in your towns.

Here in the horrific situation of food shortage created by a siege and the throes of starvation, the extremes of human dispositions and behavior are depicted. Normally tender and refined fathers and mothers will act with an Evil Eye against each other and other family members, not only by cannibalizing their own children, but also in refusing a share, even of the placenta, to their starving households. The text constitutes the most extreme illustration of Evil Eye behavior in all of Scripture. In this most desperate of human situations, the most extreme manifestation of evil (as another text will describe the Evil Eye) will be unleashed.

As in Deut 15:9, the Hebrew speaks literally of “an eye being evil” (against someone), involving the combination of the noun “eye” and the verb “be evil.” The Greek LXX translation shows that the translators took the Hebrew as referring to the Evil Eye. The husband’s looking with an Evil Eye/casting an Evil Eye (vv. 54–55) is paralleled by that of his wife (vv. 56–57). The context indicates that the Evil-Eyeing consists of behavior similar to that condemned in Deut 15:9; namely, withholding something that is desperately needed to survive—in this case something edible. That the only

79. Literally, “from between her feet,” a euphemism for genitals; or, “from between her legs.”

thing remaining to eat is the flesh of one's own children—and that even this is withheld from starving relatives by Evil-Eyeing husband and wife paints a macabre picture of extreme desperation and depravity. The selfish act of begrudgingly *holding back* something that is needed links this passage to that of Deut 15:9; Sir 14:8; and Tob 4:7, 16. The *withholding* of something to *eat* links this text with other biblical Evil Eye texts warning against an Evil Eye at occasions of *dining* (such as Prov 23:6; Sir 14:10; 31:12).

The LXX version of *téra' éno* and *téra' énah* in vv. 54 and 56 reads somewhat redundantly: *baskanei tòi ophthalmôî*, literally, *Evil-Eye with the [his] eye* (v. 54); *baskanei tòi ophthalmôî autês*, literally, *Evil-Eye with her eye* (v. 54). This Greek translation (third century BCE) shows that Israelites speaking and writing Greek were familiar with the standard Greek *bask-* family of terms that designated the “Evil Eye” and “Evil-Eyeing.” It also shows that the Hebrew expressions *téra' éno* and *téra' énah* were understood by the LXX translators as references to the Evil Eye. Terms of this *bask-* word group appear elsewhere in the Bible designating an Evil Eye and its action.⁸⁰ The LXX juxtaposition of *ho haplos* and *hê haplê* (lit., “the simple man/woman”) with *baskainein* (“to Evil Eye”) is echoed in the juxtaposition of *ophthalmos haplous* (lit., “single eye”) and *ophthalmos ponêros* (“Evil Eye”) in Matt 6:22–23 (cf. Luke 11:34).

The Vulgate Latin verb *invidēbit* (vv. 54, 57) indicates that Jerome regarded *invidere* (“to envy”) as an apt rendition of the Hebrew “eye be evil against.” The context and the sense of the passage rules out *invidēbit* having the sense of “envy” here. It is therefore likely that *invidēbit* is equivalent in sense to the LXX *baskanei*: “look with a hostile Evil Eye,” “cast an Evil Eye upon.” This is then an instance where *invidere* substitutes for, or is regarded as synonymous with, *fascinare*, as *phthonos* occasionally substitutes for *baskainen*; see Vol. 2 concerning the occasional substitution of “envy” for “Evil Eye” in Greek and Latin texts and inscriptions. Other instances of this equivalence of *invidus*, *invidere*, and *baskanos* occur in Prov 23:6 (LXX: *andri baskanô*; Vulg.: *homine invido*) and Prov 28:22, where for the Hebrew *'iš ra' ayin* the LXX has *anêr baskanos* and the Vulgate, *vir qui . . . invidet*.

Among conventional English language biblical translations of this passage, only the KJV and the Jewish Publication Society translation of the Masoretic Text (JPS) preserve the explicit reference to the Evil Eye contained in the original Hebrew: “his/her eye shall be evil.” Other translations attempt to convey the assumed sense or implication of the Evil Eye reference: RSV, NAB: “will (be)grudge (food);” NEB, TEV: “will not share”; JB: “will glower

80. Prov 23:6; 28:22; Sir 14:3, 6, 8; 18:18; 37:11; Wis 4:12; 4 Macc 1:26; 2:15; Ep Jer 69/70; Gal 3:1.

at”; Goodspeed: “will act (so) meanly toward.” This translational procedure is typical for most of the biblical Evil Eye references. As a consequence, the modern reader is left unaware of the biblical appearances of the Evil Eye phenomenon. The commentaries likewise rarely accord it any attention.

The Vulgate, RSV, and NRSV, on the other hand, translate according to the assumed *sense* of the action, but omit explicit mention of Evil-Eyeing. The Vulgate translates *invidēbit* (“will overlook/look with envy at”). RSV reads: “will grudge food to” (v. 54), “will grudge to” (v. 56). NRSV reads “will begrudge food to” (v. 54); “will begrudge food to” (v. 56), “begrudging even the afterbirth” (v. 57). The action of grudging/begrudging is an aspect of Evil-Eyeing that fits several Evil Eye contexts. As a translation option here, however, it is insufficient without explicit reference to looking with an Evil Eye. To grudge or begrudge something is to give something or concede reluctantly, to resent giving something while preferring to retain it, such as offering food at a meal but really wanting to keep it for yourself (Sir 14:10; cf. Prov 23:6–8), or offering praise but really wanting to withhold it. To “begrudge” can also imply *looking* resentfully at and *envying* someone’s enjoyment of something.⁸¹ Thus “grudge/begrudge” can be an aspect of looking with an Evil Eye in two possible ways: an Evil Eye *begrudgingly holding back* something, or an Evil Eye *begrudgingly envying* something enjoyed by another. In the present case, looking with an Evil Eye involves begrudgingly withholding something edible desperately needed by a relative for survival. The translation *grudge/begrudge*, however, without explicit mention of “looking with an Evil Eye” (as in the case of the RSV, NIV, etc.), obscures the fact that both the Hebrew and Greek speak expressly of *Evil-Eyeing*. Thus this translation, like other translations only according to sense,⁸² fails to indicate that this is another Evil Eye text and that Deut 28:53–57 relates to Deut 15:7–11 and other biblical Evil Eye references.⁸³

81. “Begrudge 1: to give or concede reluctantly. 2a: to look upon with reluctance or disapproval. 2b: to take little pleasure in: be annoyed by; 3: to envy the pleasure or enjoyment of” (*Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary*, 1977, *sub* grudge). “Grudge” derives from Middle English *grucchen*, *grudgen*, “to grumble, complain,” fr[om] OF *groucier*. It is of Germanic origin, akin to Middle High German *grogezen*, “to howl”: “to be unwilling to give or admit: give or allow with reluctance or resentment: begrudge <grudged the money to pay taxes>.”

82. For example, NAB: “will (be)grudge (food)”; NEB, TEV: “will not share”; JB: “will glower at”; Goodspeed: “will act (so) meanly toward.”

83. The claim has been made that Deut 28:53–57 prompted Paul’s mention of *bas-kainein* in Gal 3:1 (S. Eastman 2001, mistranslating *ebaskanen* in Gal 3:1 as “put you under a curse” rather than “Evil-Eyed you.” The conjecture is unconvincing and will be discussed in connection with our analysis of Paul and Gal 3:1; see below, chap. 2). Eastman’s study illustrates how unfamiliarity with the phenomenon of the Evil Eye and its frequent mention in the Bible can lead to misleading translation and unconvincing

Israel's *Wisdom Literature*, where skill in everyday living, good sense, and sound judgment is the general theme, makes frequent reference to the Evil Eye and many of its diverse connotations. Its close relation and remarkable similarities to the wisdom traditions of Mesopotamia, Phoenicia, and Egypt include common thinking and practice concerning the Evil Eye, though with a more prominent accent on the human moral aspects of the Evil Eye.

Occasions of dining are one situation where the malice of an Evil Eye was anticipated. Proverbs 23:6–8 is a good illustration. Sirach 14:10 and 31:12–13 are also relevant and are discussed below. Deuteronomy 28:53–57, as we have seen, envisions a dire situation where the eating involved is cannibalism.

PROVERBS 23:6 (23:6–8)

Proverbs 23:6–8 is part of a sage's instruction to a student about conduct at meals (Prov 23:1–8, 20–21, 29–35). Verses 6–8 warn:

- 6 Do not eat the bread of (*someone with*) *an Evil Eye*;
do not desire that person's delicacies;
7 for that person is like one who reckons inwardly.
“Eat and drink!” s/he says to you;
but her/his heart is not with you.
8 You will vomit up the little you have eaten
and waste your pleasant words”

The Hebrew of v. 6 reads, literally, “do not eat the bread of an Evil Eye,” with “Evil Eye” (*ra' ayin*) standing *pars pro toto* for the entire malevolent person.⁸⁴ My English translation supplies “someone with” according to sense, following the LXX, which does the same by adding *anêr* (“man/person/someone”). The LXX omits “the bread of;” adds “someone;” and reads: “Do not eat with someone with an Evil Eye” (*Mê sundeipnei andri baskanô*). The Hebrew of Prov 28:22 has the fuller formulation: *'iš ra' ayin*, “someone with an Evil Eye.” The Vulgate renders the Hebrew with *homine invido*, also supplying “someone.” The Latin adjective *invidus*, which can have the sense of “envious;” in this instance is equivalent in sense to *baskanos* in the LXX

exegesis.

84. The eye, when referring to the organ of a human, can stand in for the entire person. This is a case of synecdoche in which a part is employed to represent the whole. For Evil Eye texts involving synecdoche see also Sir 14:9, 10; 31:13.

Greek version, and in rendering the Hebrew *ra' ayin* means not “envious” but “someone with an Evil Eye.”⁸⁵

KJV and JPS translate “him that hath an Evil Eye.” RSV renders according to presumed sense: “a man who is stingy.” Stinginess could entail resentful giving, although in this context of offering a banquet to guests, having and looking with an Evil Eye seems less a matter of stinginess than of *begrudging* the gift of food while serving it. Stinginess would keep the person from being hospitable in the first place. *Begrudging* the gift of food when serving it involves an internal disposition arising in the heart⁸⁶ and manifested through an Evil Eye—an emotion and action inconsistent with an act of apparent generosity. As in Deut 15:9, a connection of eye (v. 6) and heart (v. 7) is assumed, with the former giving expression to a disposition of the latter. The point is that the hospitality of Evil-Eyed persons is a sham in which courteous words of welcome mask evil intentions and a begrudging serving of food. Eating their food results not in a full stomach and a pleasant repast but in vomiting and wasted words. This theme of giving grudgingly, like refused generosity, we shall see, is a recurrent one among Old Testament Evil Eye texts; see Deut 15:7–9, 28:54–57; Prov 23:6–8; Sir 14:8, 10; 18:18; 37:11; and Tob 4:7, 16.

This passage is one of the instances in the Old Testament where the Evil Eye is expressly said to cause physical distress or illness; see also Sir 18:18 (the Evil Eye causes the eyes to melt, a “dimming of the eyes” = blindness or senescence); Sir 14:9 (“withers the soul”); and Sir 31:13 (causes “tears to fall from every face”).⁸⁷ In the case of Deut 28:53–57, the deadly consequence of a begrudging Evil Eye, namely starvation and death, is implied rather than directly stated.

The predicament of eating with others and then vomiting because struck by an Evil Eye is the same as that discussed by Pseudo-Aristotle in *Problemata physica* (20.34 926 b20–31) cited in Vol. 2. Pseudo-Aristotle, we recall, indicates that dining with others aroused fear of being struck by an Evil Eye of a fellow diner. The vomiting caused by Evil Eye, it was believed, could be cured or forestalled by taking the herb rue prior to eating, an effect for which Pseudo-Aristotle provides a rational explanation. Both Prov 23:6–8 and Pseudo-Aristotle, *Prob. phys.* 20.34 record the belief that an Evil

85. For *invidus* or *invidere* with the sense of “Evil Eye” or “cast an Evil Eye” rather than “envy,” see also Vulg Deut 28:54, 56; and Prov 28:22 (*vir qui invidet*, cf. LXX *anêr baskanos*).

86. “Her/his heart is not with you” = she/he is not disposed favorably toward you, which disposition is conveyed outward through an Evil Eye’s glance causing vomiting.

87. Boughouts (1978:2) makes reference to an Egyptian curse text mentioning Horus blinding the eyes of those casting an Evil Eye, citing Schott 1931:106–10.

Eye could strike persons dining with others and could cause vomiting by those struck. Both indicate the same negative consequence of being struck by an Evil Eye while eating, namely vomiting up the food. Pseudo-Aristotle explains how rue counteracts or cures the Evil Eye and its noxious effect. Proverbs 28:6–8 advises avoiding eating altogether with anyone possessing an Evil Eye. Proverbs 23:6–8 envisions a host, rather than any of the guests, that casts an Evil Eye; Pseudo-Aristotle in *Prob. phys.* 20.34 leaves the identity of the Evil-Eyed person unstated.⁸⁸

Pseudo-Aristotle in *Prob. phys.* 20.34 does, however, mention that *eating greedily* was thought to arouse an Evil Eye, a notion expressed in another piece of biblical wisdom, namely Sir 31:12–13, one of two texts of the Wisdom of Jesus ben Sirach that also mention the Evil Eye in conjunction with dining and behavior at the table:

A person with an Evil Eye begrudges bread;
and it is lacking from her/his table. (Sir 14:10)

A second states:

If you sit at a bountiful table,
do not be gluttonous at it,
and do not say “there is lots of food on it.”
Remember that an Evil Eye is a wicked thing.
What has been created more evil than an (Evil) Eye?
For this reason tears fall from every face. (Sir 31:12–13)

Both texts are discussed below (see pp. 40, 43–46 and pp. 48–52, respectively). The sharing or non-sharing of food is just one instance of the various social exchanges where an Evil Eye was feared. Another important area of social interaction involved the acquisition of wealth and the refusal to share one’s possessions with the needy.

Within a collection of wise sayings attributed to Solomon censuring the unrighteous and praising the righteous for conduct relating to wealth (Prov 25:1–29:27) is a statement concerning the behavior of one with an Evil Eye, Prov 28:22. It follows criticism of the quest for wealth (28:20), and is followed by censure of robbing one’s parents (28:24), of greed, which stirs up strife (28:25), and of hiding one’s eyes from the poor (28:27b).

88. The Egyptian *Instruction of Ptah-hotep* (c. 2414–2375 BCE) advised eating what is set before one and focusing on this rather than casting glances at the host and molesting him since this would offend the *ka*; see Lichtheim 1985 1:65, no. 7 (= 6, 11–12). This ancient Egyptian advice could have had the noxious glance of an Evil Eye in mind. If this is the case, it would involve an Evil-Eyeing of the host by the guest.