Century France (New Brunswick, 1983), but otherwise their coverage of the scholarship is good.

The book will, I think, find two audiences. The scholar of pilgrimage will find it useful as a handbook of information, charts, and maps about European pilgrimage, though not a very deep analysis. Some of the explanations in the book are in fact surprisingly elementary. It would be a poor scholar indeed who needed an explanation of John the Baptist, as the Nolans give on pages 136-137. Students comprise the second audience and are likely to be the book's most frequent users. In a cheaper edition, the book would make an excellent text for courses in popular religion.

Christian Pilgrimage in Modern Western Europe will not replace any of the classic works on pilgrimage, though it will find a place as a summa of current knowledge and as an introductory text. As such it is a welcome addition to the literature on pilgrimage.


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Alan Dundes, in his book The Evil Eye: A Case Book, presents a collection of essays by various scholars based on different regional research and source data, all aimed at explaining the origins and the facts behind the evil eye. In his introductory remarks to most of the essays and in the body of his own essay, Dundes suggests that the evil eye is a widespread but not universal belief. He gives examples of the evil eye in a rather selective area covering the Mediterranean, Indo-European, and Semitic worlds and also discusses some instances of its transmission to the New World from these regions.

Evil eye can be described as the unconscious power of envy that can harm animate and inanimate objects. In many cultures, there are beads, amulets, and other tools for the protection against the evil eye. In addition to those protective tools, there are also some actions that can be taken against the evil eye, such as spitting or doing hand gestures. Dundes describes the evil eye as a "folk belief complex according to which the gaze or praise of one individual at or for another may cause illness or even death to the second individual or to an object belonging to that individual." In Arabic, the evil eye is equated with a literal translation of the word "look," which is a malign glance that causes grievous harm to a person or his/her property.
In contrast to Dundes, sociologist Helmut Schoeck of Gottingen University argues that the evil eye is a universal belief. Schoeck claims that the evil eye is the fear that another's envy of one's own good fortune may bring about misfortune. At this point, the evil eye must be well-defined, since Schoeck attributes all kinds of envy to the evil eye. Based on observations of a restricted group of people (New Zealanders, Italians, and Italian-Americans in the United States), Schoeck's conclusions are overgeneralized and ignore a great segment of the world. Dundes's comments reinforce this reservation. For example, Dundes emphasizes throughout the book that the Native American Indians do not have an indigenous evil eye belief.

My impression throughout the essays is that the evil eye, as a mode of expressing envy or fear of the misfortune, can vary from one culture to another. Although we may articulate a single theme, the explanations and understandings of the concept of evil eye are different in various localities. The explanations require contextual data from the history and religion of the specific culture. This point has been emphasized in the essays, too: the final six essays concentrate on interpretation as well as the presentation of facts.

In the evil eye discussion, there are different points of view and theoretical applications. When scholars search for the origins of the evil eye, they often refer to classic writings or religious sources, both of which contain important data on that folk belief. Most of the articles about the origins of the evil eye point to the Bible, the Talmud and ancient Sumerian texts. Dundes, in the Bibliographical Addendum, refers to some applications implied by the Koran, saying that in Arab countries (except in sub-Saharan lands) belief in the evil eye is flourishing. Bess Alan Donaldson relies upon the Koran for some specific applications of the evil eye as it exists in Iran today. Using examples from Zoroastrian literature, Dundes, in his introductory remarks to the essays, draws attention to the fact that evil eye belief can also be traced back to the time before Islam. Similarly, A. Stewart Woodburne, when addressing the evil eye belief in India, notes examples of evil eye that can be found in Islam and Hinduism. He also associates the belief with magical operations.

Classicalist Eugene McCartney provides a different perspective in evil eye studies by demonstrating the continuation of an ancient heritage into modern times. He states that literal rather than figurative danger may result from evil eye acts or statements, and actual psychological and physical harm may result. Evil eye is "the misfortune of the modern times covered by insurance." He draws parallels between ancient and modern cultures, using examples from ancient Greece and Italy as well as contemporary evaluations from Scotland and Africa. In specific examples, he illustrates how the praise of infants, youths, and adults can hold the evil eye. He gives an interesting example from Turkey, where women spit and say "ugly, ugly, nasty thing"
to a beautiful baby to imply that the infant is not beautiful enough to be envied, and therefore cannot be harmed by the evil eye.

The psychoanalytic examples given by Roheim and Dundes aim at Freudian interpretations in presenting facts about the evil eye. Geza Roheim, the first folklorist to apply the psychoanalytic approach to folklore, uses ancient Greek mythology with examples from Macedonia, France, and North Africa, and interprets these in terms of psychoanalytic theory. Roheim also examines some Rumanian beliefs, relating them to the phallic figure. He says that those beliefs which can be traced back to the writings of Hesiod are still widespread in Europe.

Dundes, in his essay entitled "The Wet and the Dry, the Evil Eye," presents some of the common principles underlying the evil eye and states that evil eye belief is absent in Oceania and among Native American Indians, whereas in the Indo-European and the Semitic worlds, it is the most powerful superstitious belief. He refers to the writings of Ibn-i Khaldun, where Khaldun states that evil eye is the unconscious manifestation of the power of envy, and therefore must be distinguished from the conscious practice of sorcery.

The first article, "The Research Topic: Or Folklore Without End" by Arnold Van Gennep, describes the work of Jule Turchman, a self-taught ethnographer from the last decades of the nineteenth century who spent hours in the Bibliotheque Nationale of Paris studying the evil eye from a historical and social perspective. Turchman believed that to study a culture one must learn the language, but even after having learned 843 languages and dialects, Turchman still could not conclude his study on the evil eye. This case underscores the limits of linguistic expertise. I suggest that readers return to this essay after reading the entire book.

The topic of evil eye has endlessly interested many disciplines for centuries. In this case book, Dundes provides examples of perspectives and methodologies employed by various disciplines in pursuit of this subject. Some of the essays are aimed more at functional interpretations or symbolic explanations as suggested by psychoanalytic folklorists, as opposed to classicists, who use ancient written data to analyze belief origins. Dundes, by presenting the extant scholarly debate on the evil eye, again does a thorough job. The diversity of the essays offers abundant source materials and analysis of the data. However, I believe that the evil eye is probably more than the sum of the sources that make up this book. In order to understand the whole reality behind evil eye, we need more qualitative research, including ethnographies from other parts of the world (e.g. Russia, Afghanistan, and Pakistan) where, too, the evil eye belief can be observed.