



Evil Eye

GBI Knowledge Center





History of the Mediterranean Good Luck Charm Nazar Boncugu

The most common article of 'decoration' (as perceived by a European) in any Turkish house, car, on a person, children or property is the mysterious staring 'eye', set in blue glass called the 'Nazar Boncugu' or 'Eye Bead'. From Turkey to Cyprus through the Central Asian Turkic republics to the Uigur Turks of China - and all those beyond and between - the belief in the effects of the 'eye' are not only believed but genuinely feared.

The earliest written references to the 'evil eye' occur on Sumerian clay tablets dating to the third millennium BC. Agate beads of exceptional quality, worn to protect the wearer from the influence of the evil eye were also discovered in the royal Sumerian graves at Ur.

But belief in the effects of the eye, or more correctly the glance or stare of envy and malice, are probably the oldest and widespread belief throughout the world. Old John Aubrey, in his *Miscellanies* (published in London in 1696) neatly summed up the belief; "The glances of envy and malice do shoot also subtly; the eye of the malicious person does really infect and make sick the spirit of the other."

Theories about the evil eye range from the rational to ridiculous. But this isn't to say that the stare of an envier is any less damaging to the envied. Envy is defined as the wishing for a blessing to be removed from someone without the envier benefiting from it. This is different from someone wishing a blessing to be transferred from the other to himself.

The true envier wants the blessing removed without him gaining any benefit for himself at all - sheer malice.

How does the evil eye work?

Envy is not something of substance that we can see and avoid. Generally the person glancing with envy does not even know they are doing it. This doesn't necessarily mean because it cannot be seen it does not exist. The smallest germs which are invisible to the naked eye are the most damaging to human life, and the most detrimental to health; they are also the most resistant to modern treatments.