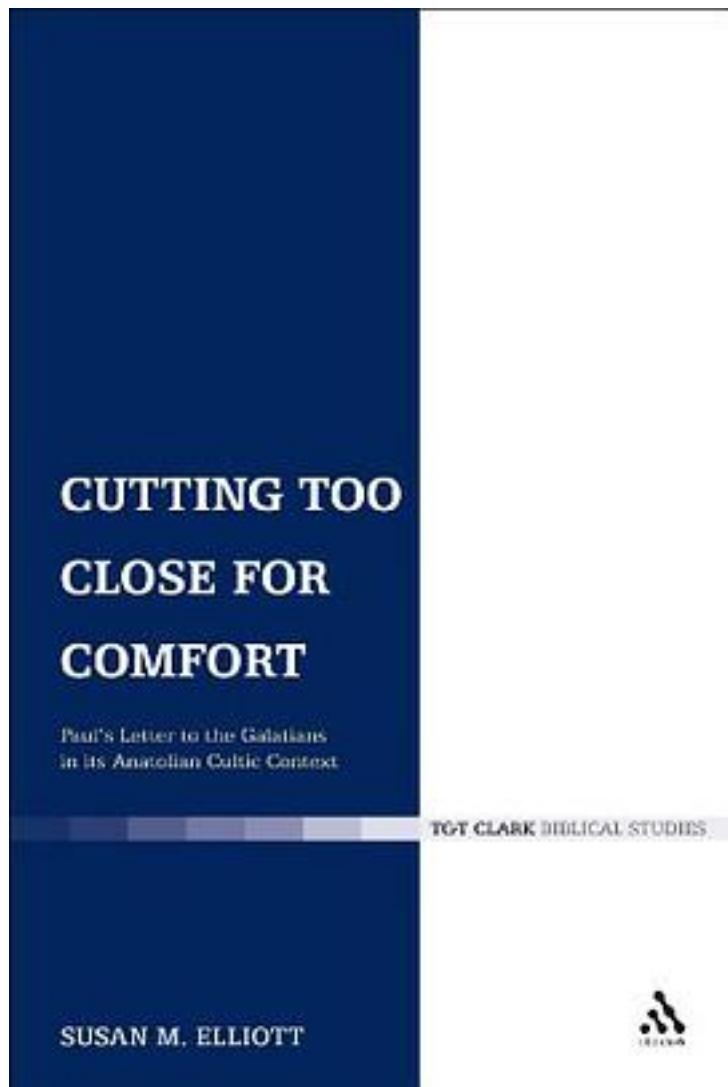


Cutting Too Close for Comfort



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著者:Elliott, Susan

出版者:

出版时间:2008-12

装帧:

isbn:9780567034359

In Cutting Too Close for Comfort, Susan Elliot considers Paul's letter to the Galatians in its Anatolian cultic context. What does circumcision have to do with castration? Self-castrated devotees of the Mother of the Gods travelled in the central Anatolian territory where the audience of Paul's letter to the Galatians lived. The goddess was identified with many of the region's mountains. In a goddess-possessed frenzy, these galli castrated themselves and became lifetime cultic representatives as her slaves. Cutting Too Close For Comfort offers a thick description of this cult and other aspects of the Anatolian cultic context to provide solutions to several persistent puzzles in the letter. Starting with problems in the so-called "Hagar and Sarah" passage (4.21-5.1), Elliot argues that Paul attempts to dissuade his audience from being circumcised by identifying circumcision with the enslaving self-castration of the galli and by portraying the Law as a Mountain Mother. The Anatolian background is also seen in Paul's Flesh-Spirit dichotomy in Gal. 3.1-5 and in the Two Ways form in Galatians 5-6.

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