Sources on Late Neoplatonic Theurgy  
(in English, with a few exceptions)  

(including Hekate & the Chaldean Oracles, Hermes & the Hermetica, the Emperor Julian, Harran, the “end” of classical Paganism, and other related subjects)  

(ver. 6.0)

Here are over 250 texts that I have found both accessible and informative. The list is by no means comprehensive, but offers introductory material on a wide-range of related subjects. The best introductions, IMHO — those that are also available at good book stores — are marked in red. Contact me if you have any questions or would like to examine copies, as all of the texts are in my library. I have much more available on each subject for those interested in deeper study.  
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Enjoy! … Don Frew (02/21/10)  
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EGYPTIAN MAGIC RELATING TO LATER CLASSICAL THEURGY

Boylan, Patrick, Thoth: The Hermes of Egypt, Oxford University Press, Oxford UK, 1922  (Lays the groundwork for the later “thrice-great” Thoth who becomes Hermes Trismegistus.  

Dieleman, Jacco, Priests, Tongues, and Rites: The London-Leiden Magical Manuscripts and Translations in Egyptian Ritual, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 2005

Ritner, Robert Kriech, The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice, The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, Chicago IL, 1993  (Too early for our period, but the definitive work on the subject and useful for comparison with later systems.)

EMPEDOCLES & THE ROOTS OF CLASSICAL MAGIC


LATE CLASSICAL MAGIC & RELIGION


Dickie, Matthew W., Magic and Magicians in the Greco-Roman World, Routledge, Londo, 2001


----------, Magic in the Ancient World, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA, 1997 (One of the leading figures in the field.)


Janowitz, Naomi, Icons of Power: Ritual Practices in Late Antiquity, Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park PA, 2002


---------------------, and Struck, Peter T., eds., Manikê: Studies in Ancient Divination, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 2005 (Excellent anthology covering the lesser known systems of divination commonly used in the ancient world.)

Norwegian Institute at Athens, 1999  (Huge collection of fascinating papers by Johnston, Versnel, Faraone, Graf, and others.)

Luck, Georg, Arcana Mundi: Magic and the Occult in the Greek and Roman Worlds, Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, Baltimore MD, 1985  (Good anthology on Classical magic, including theurgy, as presented in original texts.)

Martin, Luther, Hellenistic Religions: An Introduction, Oxford University Press, New York NY, 1987  (Good intro to the background and context.)


Ogden, Daniel, Greek and Roman Necromancy, Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ, 2001

-------------, Magic, Witchcraft, and Ghosts in the Greek and Roman Worlds: A Sourcebook, Oxford University Press, Oxford UK, 2002  (Great collection of original sources.)

Reale, Giovanni, The Schools of the Imperial Age (A History of Ancient Philosophy, vol. IV), SUNY, Albany NY, 1990  (Good systematic survey of Hermetic, Chaldean, and Neoplatonic authors, philosophy, and theurgy.)

Relihan, Joel C., tr. Apuleius: The Golden Ass, Hackett Publishing Co., Indianapolis MO, 2007  (Modern translation of this classic work by a Middle Platonist.)


Turcan, Robert, The Cults of the Roman Empire, Basil Blackwell, Ltd., Oxford, 1996  (Excellent overview of mystery cults in the late Empire.)

LATE CLASSICAL MAGIC & RELIGION ➔ Papyri Graecae Magicae


Faraone, Christopher, “The Collapse of Celestial and Chthonic Realms in a Late Antique ‘Apollonian Invocation’ (PGM I 262-347)”, in Boustan & Reed, eds., Heavenly Realms
and Earthly Realities in Late Antique Religions, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge UK, 2004

Flowers, Stephen Edred, Hermetic Magic: The Postmodern Magical Papyrus of Abaris, Samuel Weiser, Inc., York Beach ME, 1995  (Dicey history, but good portrayal of the mindset of a late antique magician. The “Papyrus of Abaris” is a creation of Flowers’.)


Webb, Don, The Seven Faces of Darkness: Practical Typhonian Magic, Rûna-Raven Press, Smithville TX, 1996  (The author is the current head of the Temple of Set. As a result, this book has considerable Setian bias, but is probably a good portrayal of the mindset of a magician using the PGM. A sequel to Hermetic Magic.)

ORPHISM & ORPHIC HYMNS

Athanassakis, Apostolos N., The Orphic Hymns: Text, Translation and Notes, Scholars Press, Atlanta GA, 1977


PYTHAGOREANISM, NEO-PYTHAGOREANISM, & NUMBER MAGIC


**Godwin, Joscelyn, The Mystery of the Seven Vowels: in Theory and Practice**, Phanes Press, Grand Rapids MI, 1991  (Good discussion of the basic element of late antique magic and theurgy.)


Waterfield, Robin, tr., *The Theology of Arithmetic* (attrib. to Iamblichus), Phanes Press, Grand Rapids MI, 1988
**CHALDEAN ORACLES**


Majercik, R.T., *The Chaldean Oracles* (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World, Volume 5), E.J. Brill, Leiden, The Netherlands, 1989  (The only edition of these texts in print in English.)

-----------------, “Chaldean Triads in Neoplatonic Exegesis: Some Reconsiderations”, in *Classical Quaterly* 51.1 265-296 (2001), printed in Great Britain

**CHALDEAN ORACLES → Hekate (incl. non-Chaldaean contexts)**


Clay, Jenny Strauss, “The Hekate of the Theogony”, in *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies*, Volume 25, Number 1, Duke University Press, Durham NC, 1984


(Comprehensive guide to this goddess geared for a modern practitioner and devotee.)


Johnston, Sarah Iles, Hekate Soteira: A Study of Hekate’s Roles in the Chaldean Oracles and Related Literature, Scholars Press, Atlanta GA, 1990 (Hekate’s role in theurgy.)
-------------, “Crossroads”, in Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik, Vol. 88, Dr. Rudolf Habelt GMBH, Bonn, 1991 (Discusses the “Hekate’s Supper” rite.)
-------------, Restless Dead: Encounters between the Living and the Dead in Ancient Greece, University of California Press, Berkeley CA, 1999 (Chapter 6 is “Hecate and the Dying Maiden: How the Mistress of Ghosts Earned Her Title”.)


-------------, The Goddess Hekate, Chthonios Books, Hastings UK, 1992 (Good collection of previously published material plus Ronan’s essay of Hekate in the Chaldean Oracles.)

Segal, Charles, “Simaetha and the Iynx (Theocritus, Idyll II)”, in Quaderna Urbinati in Cultura Classica, N. 15, Universita de Urbino, 1973

Tavener, Eugene, “Iynx and Rhombus”, in Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association, Volume LXIV, Middletown CT, 1933


Von Rudolf, Robert, Hekate in Ancient Greek Religion, horned owl publishing, Victoria BC, 1999 (Mostly too early for our period, it includes some late antique material as well.)

HERMETICA & HERMES TRISMEGISTOS
Cicero, Chic & Tabitha, eds., The Golden Dawn Journal, Book III: The Art of Hermes, Llewellyn Publications, St. Paul MI, 1995 (There are several very good essays in this collection, including those by Stoltz, Forrest, Tyson, Oz, and Webster.)


Faivre, Antoine, The Eternal Hermes, Phanes Press, Grand Rapids MI, 1995 (Survey of Hermes Trismegistos from antiquity to the Renaissance.)

Fowden, Garth, The Egyptian Hermes: A Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind, Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ, 1986 (Hermes Trismegistos in the theurgy of the Hermetica and of Neoplatonism.)

Hauck, Dennis William, The Emerald Tablet: Alchemy for Personal Transformation, Arkana / Penguin, New York NY, 1999 (Quirky, but basically good overview of Hermeticism for the casual reader.)


Mead, G.R.S., Thrice Greatest Hermes, Samuel Weiser Inc., York Beach ME, 1992 (Dated and more than a bit slanted towards Theosophy, but an unparalleled collection of lore.)

Salaman, Clement; van Oyen, Dorine; Wharton, William D.; and Mahé, Jean-Pierre, The Way of Hermes: New Translations of The Corpus Hermeticum and The Definitions of Hermes Trismegistus to Asclepius, Inner Traditions, Rochester VT, 2000 (The only English translation of the latter text, recently discovered in Armenian manuscript.)

--------------------------, Asclepius: The Perfect Discourse of Hermes Trismegistus, Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., London, 2007 (Companion to the previous volume, containing a new translation with commentary of this important Hermetic text.)
Scott, Walter, ed. & trans., *Hermetica: Introduction, Texts and Translation*. Hermes House, Boulder CO, 1982 (The English translation is no longer considered reliable, but Scott’s notes and comments are considered invaluable.)


Waegeman, Maryse, *Amulet and Alphabet: Magical Amulets in the First Book of Cyranides*, J.C. Gieben, Amsterdam, 1987 (The *Cyranides* was one of the so-called “technical”, i.e. magical, Hermetica. This is the only English translation of which I am aware. It includes magical correspondences between plants, birds, fish, and stones.)

Warnock, Christopher, ed., *Kyranides: On the Occult Virtues of Plants, Animals, & Stones*. Renaissance Astrology Facsimile Editions, [www.renaissanceastrology.com](http://www.renaissanceastrology.com), 2007 (This website is a fantastic resource for late antique astrology and related magical practices. This text, one of the few “technical Hermetica” to survive, is the root text of all subsequent “tables of correspondence” in the European magical tradition. This facsimile is of a 1685 English translation.)

**MITHRAISM**

Betz, Hans Dieter, *The “Mithras Liturgy”*. Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen, 2003 (The best edition in English of the only Mithraic ritual text surviving – more or less.)

Clauss, Manfred, *The Roman Cult of Mithras: The God and His Mysteries*, tr. by Richard Gordon, Routledge, New York, 2001 (Good summary of current scholarship on this subject.)

Cooper, D. Jason, *Mithras: Mysteries and Initiation Rediscovered*. Weiser Books, York Beach ME, 1996 (Not the best scholarship, but Cooper brings the experience of a practicing magician too his interpretation of how Mithraic ritual spaces might have been used in ritual.)

Edmonds, Radcliffe, “Did the Mithraists Inhale?”, in *The Ancient World*, Vol. XXXII, No. 1, Golden CO, 2001 (Connects Mithraism with the Chaldean Oracles with the Mithras Liturgy in the PGM.)


-----------------, The Eighth Gate: The Mithraic Lion-Headed Figure and the Platonic World-Soul, http://www.well.com/user/davidu/ eighthgate.html

NEOPLATONISM


Luck, Georg, “Theurgy and Forms of Worship in Neoplatonism”, in Neusner, Jacob, et al., ed., Religion, Science, and Magic: In Concert and Conflict, Oxford University Press, New York NY, 1989 (Switch the names and terms from Roman to Celtic and these folks sound Gardnerian!)

Dillon, John, The Middle Platonists: 80 B.C. to A.D. 220, Cornell University Press, Ithaca NY, 1996 (The precursors to the Neoplatonists. This book has useful sections on Neopythagoreanism, the Chaldean Oracles, the Hermetica, and more.)

Nock, Arthur Darby, ed. and trans., Sallustius: Concerning the Gods and the Universe, Ares Publishers, Inc., Chicago IL, 1996 (Most recent English translation of this work, commissioned by Julian to be a popular catechism of Neoplatonism.)


Remes, Pauliina, Neoplatonism, Ancient Philosophies #4, University of California Press, Berkeley CA, 2008 (A superior overview of Neoplatonism as a whole, without the usual bias in favor of Plotinus. Dense at times, but the best book yet on the subject!)
Shaw, Gregory, “The Talisman: Magic and True Philosophers”, paper given at Stonehill College

Uždavinys, Algis, Philosophy as a Rite of Rebirth: From Ancient Egypt to Neoplatonism, The Prometheus Trust, Dilton Marsh UK, 2008

Wallis, R.T., Neoplatonism, Charles Scribner’s Sons, New York NY, 1972 (Absolutely the best single work on Neoplatonism. Heavy going at times, but well worth the study.)

-------------, ed., Neoplatonism and Gnosticism, SUNY, Albany NY, 1992 (Good collection of relevant essays.)

Wright, Wilmer C., trans. Philostratus and Eunapius: Lives of the Sophists (Loeb Classical Library 134), Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA, 1989 (Two books in one; the Eunapius has biographies of many Neoplatonists.)

NEOPLATONISM \rightarrow Plotinus


Dillon, John, “Plotinus and the Chaldaean Oracles”, in Gersh & Kannengiesser, eds., Platonism in Late Antiquity, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame IN, 1992


Hadot, Pierre, Plotinus or The Simplicity of Vision, University of Chicago Press, Chicago IL, 1993 (Very good introduction to Plotinus from the perspective of a personal spiritual path.)


O’Meara, Dominic J., Plotinus: An Introduction to the Enneads, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1993 (Very good introduction to Plotinus from a theoretical perspective.)
NEOPLATONISM ⇒ Porphyry

Berchman, Robert M., *Porphyry Against the Christians*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 2005 (Porphyry’s original work was in 14 volumes and was considered by Christians to be the most dangerous book on Earth. All copies were collected and destroyed. This book is a collection of quotations and citations from Christian authors.)

Edwards, M.J., “Birth, Death, and Divinity in Porphyry’s Life of Plotinus”, in Hägg and Rousseau, eds., *Greek Biography and Panegyric in Late Antiquity*, University of California Press, Berkeley CA, 2000


Zimmern, Alice, trans., *Porphyry’s Letter to His Wife Marcella*, Phanes Press, Grand Rapids MI, 1986 (The Introduction by David Fideler is a great, concise, intro to Neoplatonism.)

NEOPLATONISM ⇒ Iamblichus


Clark, Gillian, “Philosophic Lives and the Philosophic Life: Porphyry and Iamblichus”, in Hägg and Rousseau, eds., *Greek Biography and Panegyric in Late Antiquity*, University of California Press, Berkeley CA, 2000


----------, *Iamblichus: On the Mysteries*, Society of Biblical Literature, Atlanta GA, 2003 (Modern English translation with the original Greek.)
Dillon, John, tr., Iamblichii Chalcidensis in Platonis Dialogos Commentariorum Fragmenta, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1973
--------------------------------, tr., Iamblichus of Chalcis: The Letters, Society of Biblical Literature, Atlanta GA, 2009


--------------------------------, “Theurgy as Demiurgy: Iamblichus’ Solution to the Problem of Embodiment”, in Dionysius, Vol. XII, December 1988
--------------------------------, Theurgy and the Soul: The Neoplatonism of Iamblichus, Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park PA, 1995 (Excellent book of these subjects! Highly recommended!)
--------------------------------, “After Aporia: Theurgy in Later Platonism”, in The Journal of Neoplatonic Studies, Vol. 5 No. 1, St. John’s University, Jamaica NY, 1996
--------------------------------, “Containg Ecstasy: The Strategies of Iamblichean Theurgy”, in Dionysius, Vol. XXI, December 2003 (Excellent article! Approaches reconciling Plotinus and Iamblichus on the undescended soul!)
--------------------------------, “The Geometry of Grace: A Pythagorean Approach to Theurgy”, source unkown, date unknown (An examination of Iamblichus’ use of Pythagoras in theurgy.)
Smith, Andrew, “Further Thoughts on Iamblichus as the First Philosopher of Religion”, in Kobusch & Erler, Metaphysik und Religion, K.G. Saur München, Leipzig, 2002

Taylor, Thomas, trans., Iamblichus’ On the Mysteries, Wizard’s Bookshelf, San Diego CA, 1984 (Dated language, but one of the few English translations in print.)


**NEOPLATONISM → Proclus**
(Note: Quite a bit of Proclus’ philosophical and scientific writings survive, but I have only included items with a direct bearing on theurgy and related subjects.)

Guthrie, Kenneth S., trans., The Life of Proclus, Phanes Press, Grand Rapids MI, 1986 (Biography.)

Siorvanes, Lucas, Proclus: Neo-Platonic Philosophy and Science, Yale University Press, New Haven CT, 1996


--------------------------, “‘Becoming Like God’ according to Proclus’ interpretations of the Timaeus, the Eleusinian Mysteries, and the Chaldaean Oracles”, in Sharples & Sheppard, eds., Ancient Approaches to Plato’s Timaeus, Institute of Classical Studies, London, 2003

**NEOPLATONISM → Damascius & Simplicius**


--------------------------, trans., Damascius: The Philosophical History, Apamea Cultural Association, Athens, 1999 (The only English translation of this work by the last head of the Academy, who went to Harran.)

JULIAN

Athanassiadi, Polymnia, Julian: An Intellectual Biography, Routledge, New York NY, 1992 (Biography.)


Browning, Robert, The Emperor Julian, University of California Press, Berkeley CA, 1976 (Biography.)

Murdoch, Adrian, Julian the Apostate and the Death of the Ancient World, Sutton Publishing Ltd., UK, 2003 (Very readable history of Julian and his influence.)


Taylor, Thomas, trans., The Arguments of the Emperor Julian Against the Christians, Hermetic Publishing Company, Chicago IL, 1932 (Hilarious rhetoric by the well-educated, thoroughly Pagan, Emperor of the known world against those upstart, country-bumpkin Christians!)

Vidal, Gore, Julian, Ballantine Books, New York NY, 1964 (Biographical novel and a good read!)

THE LAST DAYS OF CLASSICAL PAGANISM

Athanassiadi, Polymnia, and Frede, Michael, eds., Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1999 (Excellent and eye-opening! Must-read!)


MacMullen, Ramsay, *Christianity & Paganism in the Fourth to Eighth Centuries*, Yale University Press, New Haven CT, 1997  (One of those “Everything you know is wrong” kind of books.  A must-read!)


Smith, John Holland, *The Death of Classical Paganism*, Charles Scribner’s Sons, New York NY, 1976  (A history of this period by a scholar who professes to be sympathetic to the Pagans.  Refreshing and eye opening!)

Smith, Jonathan Z., *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago IL, 1990  (Very good expose of Christian bias in the study of the religions of Late Antiquity.)


CLASSICAL “SURVIVAL” IN LATER EUROPE


CLASSICAL “SURVIVAL” IN ISLAM

(Note: This part of the Bibliography is a bit more extensive, as it hopes to be fairly comprehensive about this little-known area.)


Bowersock, G.W., *Hellenism in Late Antiquity*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor MI, 1990


-------------------, *Philosophy in the Renaissance of Islam: Abu Sulayman al-Sijistani and His Circle*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1986 (Both include many mentions of Harran and the Sabians in connection with Classical learning.)


----------------------, *The Islamic Intellectual Tradition in Persia*, Curzon Press, Richmond Surrey UK, 1996 (Discusses the influence of Hermeticism and Neoplatonism.)


----------------------, *Al-Farabi and His School*, Routledge, London and New York, 1992 (A Muslim philosopher influenced by Neoplatonism.)


**CLASSICAL “SURVIVAL” IN ISLAM → Harran & the Sabians**


Chwolson, D., *Die Ssabier und der Ssabismus* (2 vols.), Oriental Press, Amsterdam, 1965 (The standard classic on the Sabians. While dated, it is still an amazing collection of source texts.)

Corbin, Henry, *Temple and Contemplation*, Islamic Publications Ltd., London, 1986 (The chapter on “Sabian Temple and Ismailism” is very interesting.)

Drijvers, H.J.W., “Bardaisan of Edessa and the Hermetica: The Aramaic Philosopher and the Philosophy of His Time”, in Jaarbericht van het Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Genootschap Ex Oriente Lux 21, Leiden, 1970 (Bardaisan was a Hermeticist at nearby Edessa)


Frew, Donald H., “Harran: Last Refuge of Classical Paganism”, *The Pomegranate*, Issue #9, August 1999, pp. 17–29 (My own article on Harran, emphasizing its current endangered status. The article and the follow-up letters from subsequent issues are online at http://chass.colostate-pueblo.edu/natrel/pom/old/POM9a1.html)

Gündüz, Şinasi, The Knowledge of Life: The Origins and Early History of the Mandaeans and Their Relation to the Sabians of the Qur’an and to the Harranians, (Journal of Semitic Studies Supplement 3), Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1994 (Gunduz argues in favor of the “con-job” story, but his arguments are refuted by Green, op. cit.)


Ross, Steven, K., Roman Edessa: Politics and Culture on the Eastern Fringes of the Roman Empire, 114 – 242 CE, Routledge, London and New York, 2001 (Includes important info on the inscriptions at Sumatar Harabesi.)


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van Bladel, Kevin, The Arabic Hermes: From Pagan Sage to Prophet of Science, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2009 (Excellent first-ever study of Hermes Trismegistus in Arabic magical and philosophical literature!) [Also listed above in the Hermes Trismegistus section.]

van der Meer, Annine, “The Harran of the Sabians in the First Millennium A.D.: Cradle of a Hermetic Tradition?”, presented at the session on Western Esotericism and Jewish Mysticism at the IAHR congress in Durban S.A., 2000


CLASSICAL “SURVIVAL” IN ISLAM ➔ Harran & the Sabians ➔ Contemporary Sources


----------------------, “Some Syriac Excerpts from Greek Collections of Pagan Prophecies”, in *Vigiliae Christianae: A review of early christian life and language*, Vol. 38, pp. 77 – 90, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1984 (c. 600 CE Both of these address texts attributed to Baba the Harranian.)


Levey, Martin, tr. and ed., *Medieval Arabic Toxicology: The Book on Poisons of Ibn Wahshiya and Its Relation to early Indian and Greek Texts*, The American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia PA, 1966 (10th cent. CE One of the few surviving magical writings by a Harranian.)


von Hammer-Purgstall, Joseph, tr., *Ancient Alphabets and Hieroglyphic Characters Explained* (translation of Ibn Wahshiya’s “The long desired Knowledge of occult Alphabets attained.”), W. Bulmer, London, 1806 (10th cent. CE One of the few surviving magical writings by a Harranian.)

**CLASSICAL “SURVIVAL” IN ISLAM ➔ Harran & the Sabians ➔ The Ihkwan al-Safa (Brethren of Purity) & the Ghayat al-Hakim (Picatrix)**

Nasr, Seyyed Hossein, *Islamic Science: An Illustrated Study*, World of Islam Festival Publishing Ltd., Westerham Kent UK, 1976 (Discusses the Ghayat al-Hakim.)
An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1993 (Discusses both the Ghayat al-Hakim and the Rasa’il Ikhwan al-Safa.)


Netton, Ian Richard, ed., Picatrix: The Latin version of the Ghayat Al-Hakim, The Warburg Institute, London, 1986 (The Picatrix is an important source for Harranian ritual. While this edition is in Latin, the introduction is in English.)

Ritter, Helmutt, Pseudo-Magriti Das Ziel Des Weisen, B.G. Teubner, Leipzig and Berlin, 1933 (German translation of the Picatrix.)


CLASSICAL “SURVIVAL” IN ISLAM ➔ Harran & the Sabians ➔ The Ishraqqiyah (“Illuminationist” School)

Nasr, Seyyed Hossein, Three Muslim Sages: Avicenna – Suhrawardi – Ibn Arabi, Caravan Books, Delmar NY, 1964 (Discusses the influence of Harran on Avicenna and Suhrawardi.)

Razavi, Mehdi Amin, Suhrawardi and the School of Illumination, Curzon Press, Richmond Surrey UK, 1997

al-Suhrawardi, Hazrat Shabuddin Yahya, The Shape of Light (Hayakal Al-Nur), Fons Vitae, Louisville KY, 1998


