



# Arcana Mundi: Magic and the Occult in the Greek and Roman Worlds: A Collection of Ancient Texts

*Georg Luck*

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Magic, miracles, daemonology, divination, astrology, and alchemy were the *arcana mundi*, the "secrets of the universe," of the ancient Greeks and Romans. In this path-breaking collection of Greek and Roman writings on magic and the occult, Georg Luck provides a comprehensive sourcebook and introduction to magic as it was practiced by witches and sorcerers, *magi* and astrologers, in the Greek and Roman worlds.

In this new edition, Luck has gathered and translated 130 ancient texts dating from the eighth century BCE through the fourth century CE. Thoroughly revised, this volume offers several new elements: a comprehensive general introduction, an epilogue discussing the persistence of ancient magic into the early Christian and Byzantine eras, and an appendix on the use of mind-altering substances in occult practices. Also added is an extensive glossary of Greek and Latin magical terms.

In *Arcana Mundi* Georg Luck presents a fascinating—and at times startling—alternative vision of the ancient world. "For a long time it was fashionable to ignore the darker and, to us, perhaps, uncomfortable aspects of everyday life in Greece and Rome," Luck has written. "But we can no longer idealize the Greeks with their 'artistic genius' and the Romans with their 'sober realism.' Magic and witchcraft, the fear of daemons and ghosts, the wish to manipulate invisible powers—all of this was very much a part of their lives."

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