

Pistis Sophia & The Books of Jeu

An Esoterica Study Guide

So, you want to study the Pistis Sophia and the Books of Jeu? Great – this is a brief guide to what is, beyond doubt, one of the most difficult texts to survive from antiquity. The first thing to know is that the Pistis Sophia is not one composition but several. And, reading them in the order they appear in the codex isn't – in my humble opinion – the most comprehensible way of approaching the text. So, the main thing I want to cover is the order in which, if I could re-read it again for the first time, I would tackle it and teach it.

So, I'm assuming you are probably reading it in print. There are two English options:

- The GRS Mead translation – <https://amzn.to/4bEacpM> – this edition is perfectly fine for reading the Pistis Sophia as literature. It no longer passes scholarly standards but it's also only \$15.
- The Brill edition – <https://brill.com/edcollbook/title/922?language=en> – yes, it's \$324 dollars. Brill is the damn devil, so get it ILL or pirate it. It is, however, the best translation and has the original Coptic facing.

I'd also highly recommend getting Evans *The Books of Jeu and the Pistis Sophia as Handbooks to Eternity* – <https://brill.com/display/title/26910?language=en> – not as expensive, but also Brill. You know what to do.

Also, you'll need *The Books of Jeu and the Untitled Text in the Bruce Codex* – <https://brill.com/edcollbook/title/926?language=en> – to complete the set.

Let's start with the Pistis Sophia. Here's the chapter order I would recommend:

1. 136-143: Some basic cosmology and an initial ritual
2. 103-135: Ethics, second chances and consequences of a badly lived life
3. 144-148: What happens to the worst sinners or why you want salvation
4. 30-82: The Pistis Sophia Myth (cf. other Sophia myths here!)
5. 1-29: Lower Cosmology
6. 83-102: Upper Cosmology

I'd read each section carefully, then read Evan's chapter on it, then re-read those chapters again, rinse and repeat.

Then, I'd tackle the *Books of 1 & 2 Jeu* as they detail the Treasuries of Light and the Baptisms which are essential to the path of salvation. Of course, reading Evans along the way for those sections as well. You can also wrap up with the creatively titled *Untitled Treatise of the Bruce Codex*.

The *Pistis Sophia* and the *Books of 1 & 2 Jeu* don't get the attention they deserve despite being true Gnostic epics, profound ritual and liturgical insights along with being adjacent to ancient magic and even illustrated to boot. Well worth a study and I hope this guide helps you to more deeply appreciate these wonderful, important and under-appreciated texts. If this study guide has been helpful please consider supporting Esoterica at <https://www.patreon.com/esotericachannel>

Jeu Speed and Good Luck!