RESEARCH EXTRACT / PRE-PEER-REVIEW

The Surviving Testimony: The Askew and Bruce Codices

Chapter I from The Architecture of the Ineffable

Jermaine Broady, writing as Saint Germain

Selected public website chapter text. Chapter I narrative, five numbered sections, and conclusion retain source wording. Plate I and its caption/commentary are omitted and identified in place. The source apparatus note and endnotes 1, 2, 3, and 32 are included with original numbering and verification status. Layout and heading levels are adapted for reading. The source remains pre-peer-review; independent scholarly approval and complete original-manuscript Coptic collation are pending.

The modern study of Pistis Sophia and the Books of Jeu rests upon two principal manuscript witnesses.

The first is commonly called the Askew Codex.

The second is known as the Bruce Codex.

> Website edition note: Plate I and its caption/commentary are omitted from this text edition. The source identifies the plate as a modern conceptual arrangement, not a surviving ancient diagram.

Although the collections have different histories of preservation and modern acquisition, both are important witnesses to esoteric Christian literature transmitted in Coptic.

1. The Askew Codex

The Askew Codex preserves the collection conventionally called Pistis Sophia.[1]

Its name derives from Anthony Askew, the eighteenth-century collector who owned the manuscript before it entered the British Museum's collections.

The codex is now held by the British Library.

The surviving text is written in Coptic and is generally understood as preserving material translated from Greek.

The precise dates of composition, translation, and copying remain subjects of scholarly discussion.

Copyright 2026 Jermaine Broady. All rights reserved.

The collection is commonly associated with late-antique Egyptian Christianity, with substantial portions often dated to the third century or later.

Its contents include post-resurrection dialogues attributed to Jesus and his disciples, cosmological explanations, the extended narrative of Sophia's descent and restoration, and teachings concerning judgment, purification, and the mysteries of Light.

Mary Magdalene occupies a particularly prominent role among the questioning and interpreting disciples.

The codex should not be treated as a single composition written in one uninterrupted session.

Differences in style, subject matter, and theological organization indicate a composite literary history.[32]

This observation is especially important when comparing the opening books with the materials conventionally designated Book IV.

2. The Bruce Codex

The Bruce Codex contains the writings commonly designated the First and Second Books of Jeu, alongside other related material.[2]

The codex is associated with James Bruce, the eighteenth-century traveler and collector.

The surviving works contain accounts of celestial treasuries, emanations, sacred seals, ritual names, numerical ciphers, initiatory ceremonies, and the ascent through heavenly regions.

The first book includes descriptions and diagrams associated with the Treasuries of Light.

The second preserves particularly important ritual material, including the baptisms of water, fire, and the Holy Spirit.

Considerable manuscript losses complicate any attempt to reconstruct the complete treasury system.

The surviving diagrams are consequently indispensable evidence, but they do not supply a complete visual representation of every originally described region.

Copyright 2026 Jermaine Broady. All rights reserved.

3. The Relationship Between the Collections

The relationship between Pistis Sophia and the Books of Jeu is more substantial than a general resemblance of religious vocabulary.

Both collections employ distinctive terminology concerning heavenly treasuries, mysteries, receivers of light, and the passage of souls.

Pistis Sophia also refers to books associated with Jeu, indicating that its literary tradition recognized related revelatory materials as authoritative.

Scholars have debated the precise relationship between the referenced books and the surviving Bruce Codex writings.

The identification is important, but the preservation of related titles does not prove that the extant manuscripts contain precisely the editions known to every ancient author.

Erin Michelle Evans has argued that the collections preserve evidence of a developing religious group whose theology, ritual practices, and cosmology exhibit significant continuity despite the presence of multiple authors and textual layers.[3]

That interpretation offers a valuable framework for the present investigation.

Nevertheless, the shared theological vocabulary must be assessed alongside differences in chronology, literary composition, and cosmological arrangement.

4. The Meaning of Authenticity

Three distinct questions arise concerning authenticity.

The first concerns whether the surviving codices are genuine ancient manuscripts.

They are.

The second concerns whether the writings authentically represent religious ideas circulating in late antiquity.

They do.

The third concerns whether the speeches attributed to Jesus and his disciples preserve direct records of conversations that occurred during the first century.

The surviving evidence does not establish that claim.

Copyright 2026 Jermaine Broady. All rights reserved.

The literary form of post-resurrection revelation was a means through which ancient authors could present teachings under the authority of revered religious figures.

Recognizing this literary form does not render the manuscripts historically worthless.

Their value lies substantially in their testimony to the development of Christian religious thought beyond the boundaries of the later canonical collections.

5. The Limits of Reconstruction

The historian encounters several obstacles.

The authors remain anonymous.

The Greek antecedents are not fully preserved.

Some sections of the manuscripts are damaged or missing.

The terminology of the higher mysteries is difficult to translate consistently.

And the ancient writers themselves sometimes employ different descriptions of seemingly related divine powers.

For these reasons, the present study does not proceed by imposing one absolute genealogy upon the entire corpus.

It instead reconstructs relationships at the level of individual passages before considering larger theological patterns.

The distinction between manuscript evidence and interpretive synthesis will be maintained throughout.

Chapter Conclusion

The Askew and Bruce Codices provide genuine ancient witnesses to a complex religious tradition concerned with divine emanation, ritual knowledge, and the restoration of souls.

Their authenticity as historical artifacts does not establish the literal truth of their cosmological claims.

Nor does their shared vocabulary eliminate their differences.

They should be studied as related textual witnesses whose theological architecture can be reconstructed only through careful comparison of their surviving passages.

Copyright 2026 Jermaine Broady. All rights reserved.

Source endnotes

The following apparatus note and four endnotes are reproduced from the source proof. Their verification statements describe that edition. Original note numbers 1, 2, 3, and 32 are retained.

Endnotes are numbered to match reference marks in the chapters. Passage text, names and five-word formula have been checked selectively against G. R. S. Mead’s 1921 English translation. Schmidt-MacDermot (1978) has been independently verified bibliographically, but its Coptic readings and page-level loci have NOT been systematically collated; those details remain outstanding.

1. Askew Codex provenance and Coptic transmission. Carl Schmidt, ed., Violet MacDermot, trans., Pistis Sophia (Leiden: Brill, 1978), introductory matter. Critical edition consulted at publisher-catalogue level; manuscript details and pages require copy check. [Return to text]

2. Bruce Codex and ritual material. Carl Schmidt, ed., Violet MacDermot, trans., The Books of Jeu and the Untitled Text in the Bruce Codex (Leiden: Brill, 1978), introduction; exact page verification outstanding. [Return to text]

3. Relationship between the two collections. Erin Evans, The Books of Jeu and the Pistis Sophia as Handbooks to Eternity (Leiden: Brill, 2015), introduction and analysis of ritual practice. Publisher metadata verified; no precise page claim made. [Return to text]

32. Composite character and dating. Evans, Handbooks to Eternity (2015), and Schmidt-MacDermot (1978). Avoid deriving composition date solely from later manuscript date. [Return to text]

Source and edition

Jermaine Broady, writing as Saint Germain. The Architecture of the Ineffable: Divine Emanation, Cosmic Order, and the Restoration of Light in Pistis Sophia and the Books of Jeu. Sanctum Barbelo Press. Pre-peer-review final proof, October 24, 2026. Chapter I, source pages 13–21; source critical apparatus, notes 1, 2, 3, and 32.

Selected public website chapter text. Chapter I narrative, five numbered sections, and conclusion retain source wording. Plate I and its caption/commentary are omitted and identified in place. The source apparatus note and endnotes 1, 2, 3, and 32 are included with original numbering and verification status. Layout and heading levels are adapted for reading. The source remains pre-peer-review; independent scholarly approval and complete original-manuscript Coptic collation are pending.

Public website reading edition prepared November 6, 2026. This edition does not assert copyright registration or replace the authoritative source. Consult the website for current resource and program availability.

Copyright 2026 Jermaine Broady. All rights reserved.