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# The Ambiguity of Judas: On the Mythicity of a New Testament Figure

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## Abstract

This article argues that the abundance and diversity of portrayals of Judas Iscariot in literature and the fine arts lie in the contradictory views of the figure already discernible in the Bible. Since his establishment as a figure in the New Testament Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, which already

comprise a plethora of exegetical processes, Judas has been a paradigmatic figure of mythical ambiguity, combining aspects and valuations that seem mutually exclusive and provoking fresh interpretations and evaluations *ad infinitum*. The article shows how the figure's potential to generate multiple narratives motivates a reception history that has been approached on the one hand with strategies of disambiguation (culminating in a denunciatory reading of Judas as 'the Jew') and, on the other hand, with an intent to highlight the figure's intrinsic ambiguity. This potential for varying significations constitutes the very element of *mythic*ity.

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