

Pamela Eisenbaum had this to say in connection with the publication of the Gospel of Judas in Spring, 2006:

'Is [this depiction of Judas] closer to historical reality than what we know from the canonical gospels?' My answer [is] the same given by virtually every scholar: 'The Gospel of Judas is unlikely to reveal much about historical events leading up to Jesus' execution.' No doubt the Gospel of Judas is enormously significant for our understanding of early Christianity, especially Egyptian Christianity of the second and third centuries. The manuscript, written in Coptic, has been dated to the third century, but is likely a translation of a second century Greek text.

But the Gospel of Judas cannot bring us any closer to historical 'fact' than do the four canonical gospels. The gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and Judas were not written as history of the sort we expect from modern historians. In antiquity, historians wrote to convey what we might call the historical essence of past events. They couldn't imagine simply reporting the 'facts.'

Ancient writers and readers certainly had standards for determining the legitimacy of historical accounts. But a good account was measured by whether it captured the essence of the past so as to provide readers with a meaningful reflection on it ("New Insights into Judas?" *The Denver Post*, Guest Commentary).

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