



A Critical Note on the Meaning of in *Gospel of Judas* 33:1

André Gagné

Volume 63, numéro 2, juin 2007

Théologie politique

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/016791ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/016791ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Faculté de philosophie, Université Laval

Faculté de théologie et de sciences religieuses, Université Laval

ISSN

0023-9054 (imprimé)

1703-8804 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer cet article

Gagné, A. (2007). A Critical Note on the Meaning of in *Gospel of Judas* 33:1.

Laval théologique et philosophique, 63(2), 377–383.

<https://doi.org/10.7202/016791ar>

Résumé de l'article

Cet article tente de mettre en lumière le sens du terme gréco-copte dans l'*Évangile de Judas* 33.1. La manière la plus courante de traduire ce vocable est « déclaration », « explication » ou « révélation ». Les experts font souvent référence à l'*Apophysis megalé* de Simon le Mage pour justifier cette façon de traduire l'expression en question. Mais on peut difficilement valider un tel choix de mots, en raison de l'emploi de dans le contexte immédiat. Les chercheurs ne semblent pas avoir remarqué une autre façon possible de traduire. Cet article propose de comprendre comme signifiant « déni », « négation » ou « exclusion ». Cette signification première est tout à fait cohérente avec la fonction narrative du personnage de Judas, ainsi qu'avec l'ensemble de cet évangile.

A CRITICAL NOTE ON THE MEANING OF ΑΠΟΦΑΣΙΣ IN GOSPEL OF JUDAS 33:1

André Gagné

Department of Religious Studies
University of Sudbury

RÉSUMÉ : Cet article tente de mettre en lumière le sens du terme gréco-copte ΑΠΟΦΑΣΙΣ dans l'Évangile de Judas 33,1. La manière la plus courante de traduire ce vocable est « déclaration », « explication » ou « révélation ». Les experts font souvent référence à l'Apophysis megalē de Simon le Mage pour justifier cette façon de traduire l'expression en question. Mais on peut difficilement valider un tel choix de mots, en raison de l'emploi de ΠΛΟΓΟΣ ΕΤΖΗΠ dans le contexte immédiat. Les chercheurs ne semblent pas avoir remarqué une autre façon possible de traduire ΑΠΟΦΑΣΙΣ. Cet article propose de comprendre ΑΠΟΦΑΣΙΣ comme signifiant « déni », « négation » ou « exclusion ». Cette signification première est tout à fait cohérente avec la fonction narrative du personnage de Judas, ainsi qu'avec l'ensemble de cet évangile.

ABSTRACT : This paper focuses on the meaning of the Greco-Coptic word ΑΠΟΦΑΣΙΣ in Gospel of Judas 33:1. The most common way of translating this noun is "declaration", "explanation" or "revelation". Experts often refer to Simon Magus' Apophysis megalē to legitimize this manner of translation. But in light of the use of ΠΛΟΓΟΣ ΕΤΖΗΠ in the immediate context, this choice of words is difficult to support. Scholars seem to have overlooked another possible way of translating ΑΠΟΦΑΣΙΣ. This paper proposes that we understand ΑΠΟΦΑΣΙΣ as "denial", "negation" or "exclusion". This primary meaning is coherent with the narrative role of Judas and with this gospel as a whole.

The recent discovery of the *Gospel of Judas* has sparked quite some interest among scholars. At first, everyone embraced the idea that this gospel depicted Judas Iscariot as a close friend of Jesus, a hero who would liberate him from his mortal body in order to return to the Pleroma. This positive assessment of Judas stemmed from what some considered being a request on the part of Jesus (*GosJud* 56:17-20) :¹

ΝΤΟΚ ΔΕ ΚΝΑΡ̄ ΖΟΥΟ ΕΡΟΟΥ ΤΗΡΟΥ ΠΡΩΜΕ ΓΑΡ ΕΤ̄Ρ̄ ΦΟΡΕΙ Μ̄ΜΟΕΙ ΚΝΑΡ̄
ΟΥΣΙΑΣΕ Μ̄ΜΟϚ²

1. Note 137 on page 43 of *The Gospel of Judas* reads as follows : "Judas is instructed by Jesus to help him by sacrificing the fleshly body ('the man') that clothes or bears the true spiritual self of Jesus. The death of Jesus, with the assistance of Judas, is taken to be the liberation of the spiritual person within" (see R. KASSER, M. MEYER, G. WURST, ed., *The Gospel of Judas*, Washington, DC, National Geographic, 2006). In the following notes, the preliminary edition will be referred to as *The Gospel of Judas* (2006).

2. Judging by the photograph of page 56 of Codex Tchacos, the Coptic in lines 18 to 20 is quite visible and can be read without difficulty ; see R. KASSER, G. WURST, M. MEYER and F. GAUDARD, *The Gospel of*

But you will do more than all of them, for the man who bears me, you will sacrifice him.³

However, a few weeks after the publication of the preliminary English translation by the National Geographic Society (NGS), doubts concerning this interpretation started to arise. Scholars began to seriously question the initial characterization of Judas Iscariot, to the point where some today adopt a completely different perspective : Judas Iscariot is no better in this gospel than the betrayer depicted in the canonical gospels.⁴

This short paper focuses on the meaning of *ἀποφασίς* found in the first lines of the *Gospel of Judas* (33:1-3). The manner in which one translates this noun can influence the way Judas Iscariot and the gospel as a whole is understood. In the first lines, the author gives us an important hermeneutical key. It is similar to what we find in the *Gospel according to Thomas*, where the interpretative key is at the beginning of the text. In the introduction, *Thomas* invites readers to seek the interpretation of the hidden words of Jesus. Unfortunately, most scholars strictly focus on the history of the text and never get around at interpreting the gospel. For many, *Thomas* is seen as a collection of random sayings having no relationship to one another. But despite initial appearances, the *Gospel according to Thomas* has a kind of logic that needs to be uncovered by the reader. How does one go about deciphering these hidden sayings ? One must actively participate in constructing the meaning of the text itself. The *Gospel according to Thomas* has a variety of interwoven themes. In order to uncover the meaning of a number of *logoi*, one must carefully establish a correlation between various themes. This type of exegesis is done through what I call a network of meaning.⁵

The opening lines of the *Gospel of Judas* also give us a clue on how one should interpret the text. The beginning of the gospel reads as follows :

Judas Together with the Letter of Peter to Philip, James, and A Book of Allogenes from Codex Tchacos. Critical Edition, Washington, DC, National Geographic Society, 2007, p. 230-231. In the following notes, the critical edition will be referred to as *The Gospel of Judas. Critical Edition*.

3. This is my own translation of the text. Apart from the English translation found in the critical edition, there is also K.L. King's version in E. PAGELS and K.L. KING, *Reading Judas : The Gospel of Judas and the Shaping of Christianity*, New York, Viking, 2007, p. 109-122. I am quite aware of the existence of two French translations, one by P. CHERIX that can be accessed at <http://www.coptica.ch/EvJudas-tra.pdf>, the other by R. Kasser in the critical edition (p. 237-252). German, Spanish and Dutch translations of the *Gospel of Judas* are also available. A.D. DECONICK will also have her own translation of the *GosJud* in her forthcoming book entitled *The Thirteenth Apostle. What the Gospel of Judas Really Says*, London, Continuum, 2007.
4. In a public lecture given on May 10, 2006 in Sudbury, Ontario, Canada, I questioned the idea that Jesus asked Judas to betray him in order to be liberated from his physical body. It would be more accurate to say that Jesus knew that Judas would sacrifice him. This was a prophecy, not a command or a request on the part of Jesus. The Coptic future tense here should be understood as a prediction. But the most significant contribution that challenges the initial interpretation made by the NGS team of experts is credited to Louis Painchaud from Université Laval in Quebec. He has brilliantly argued against the positive characterization of Judas on a number of occasions in meetings held in Europe and Canada since August 2006. PAINCHAUD has recently published an article entitled : "À propos de la (re)découverte de l'Évangile de Judas", *Laval théologique et philosophique*, 63 (2006), p. 553-568.
5. An example of this kind of interpretation can be found in my forthcoming article A. GAGNÉ, "Connaissance, identité et androgynéité. Condition du salut dans l'Évangile selon Thomas", in *Pratiques et constructions du corps en christianisme. Actes du 42^e congrès de la Société canadienne de théologie*, Montréal, Fides (coll. "Héritage et Projet"), 2008.

ΠΛΟΓΟ[Σ] ΕΤΖΗΠ̄ Ν̄ΤΑΠΟΦΑΣΙΣ Ν̄[ΤΑ] Ἰ̄ΗΣ̄ ΟΥΑΧΕ Μ̄Ν̄ ΙΟΥΔΑΣ [ΠΙ|ΣΚΑΡΙΩ-
ΤΗ[Σ] Ν̄ΖΗΤ̄

The secret word of declaration by which Jesus spoke in conversation with Judas Iscariot.⁶

Before I specifically examine the expression ΑΠΟΦΑΣΙΣ, a few words need to be said on some of the difficulties encountered in the opening phrase.⁷ For example, one must determine the antecedent of the relative Ν̄ΤΑ. The final preposition Ν̄ΖΗΤ̄ can shed light on the matter, since the masculine pronominal suffix -ῆ can only point to ΠΛΟΓΟΣ and not to ΑΠΟΦΑΣΙΣ which is feminine. ΑΠΟΦΑΣΙΣ is in fact the determinative of ΠΛΟΓΟΣ ΕΤΖΗΠ̄ (*the secret word*). The relative Ν̄ΤΑ (*which*) then clearly refers to the ΛΟΓΟΣ (*word*).⁸ There is also the necessity of figuring out the syntactical role of Ν̄ΤΑ. Here again, Ν̄ΖΗΤ̄ can be of some help. We know, for example, that this preposition (Ζ̄Ν̄) expresses notions of place (*in, within*), time (*at, during*) and instrument (*by, through*). Because of this, the syntactical role of Ν̄ΤΑ will be to mark a circumstance. We should then translate the phrase as follows : the secret word of the ΑΠΟΦΑΣΙΣ *by which* (or *in which ; during which*) Jesus spoke in conversation with Judas Iscariot. Jesus did not tell the secret word *to* Judas ; rather, he spoke in conversation with Judas *by* the secret word which the author understands to be an ΑΠΟΦΑΣΙΣ. But what exactly is the meaning of ΑΠΟΦΑΣΙΣ in *GosJud* 33:1 ? This is what I intend to examine here.

In the critical edition, M. Meyer and F. Gaudard translated the Greco-Coptic term ΑΠΟΦΑΣΙΣ (ἀπόφασις) by the word “declaration”.⁹ G. Wurst, in his introduction to the *GosJud*, appeals to Hippolytus’ *Refutatio omnium haeresium* by indicating that ΑΠΟΦΑΣΙΣ can mean “declaration”, “explanation” and even “revelation”.¹⁰ It seems that in his *Refutatio*, Hippolytus quoted from the *Apophasis megalē* (ἡ μεγάλη ἀπόφασις), a work he attributed to Simon Magus.¹¹ A plurality of meanings for ἀπόφασις is confirmed by the ways it is rendered in the *Refutatio*. At times, some will translate

6. The English translation is that of M. MEYER and F. GAUDARD, *The Gospel of Judas. Critical Edition*, p. 185.

7. G. WURST points out briefly some of the difficulties of this opening phrase in *The Gospel of Judas. Critical Edition*, p. 179-180. I will not comment on problems concerning the “eight days” and “three days” in the lines following the opening statement : Ν̄[Ω]ΜΟΥΝ Ν̄ΖΟΥ ΖΑ ΘΗ Ν̄ΩΟ[Μ]ΝΤ Ν̄ΖΟΥ ΕΜΠΑ-ΤΕΦ̄Ρ̄ΠΑΣΧΑ. Cherix offers various ways to interpret this difficult line ; see comments in his French preliminary translation at <http://www.coptica.ch/EvJudas-tra.pdf>.

8. G. WURST states that ΛΟΓΟΣ (λόγος) can also be translated as an “account” (*The Gospel of Judas. Critical Edition*, p. 179). The various meanings of λόγος were also pointed out in the NGS’s 2006 preliminary edition ; see *The Gospel of Judas* (2006), p. 19.

9. In their 2006 NGS edition, KASSER, MEYER, WURST and GAUDARD translated ΠΛΟΓΟ[Σ] ΕΤΖΗΠ̄ Ν̄ΤΑ-ΠΟΦΑΣΙΣ by “the secret account of the revelation” ; see *The Gospel of Judas* (2006), p. 19. As for the word ΑΠΟΦΑΣΙΣ, Cherix translates it as “discours” or “réponse”, and Karen L. KING’s new English translation refers to it as a “pronouncement” (*Reading Judas*, p. 109). Other translations follow the NGS’s 2006 edition and use equivalent words meaning “revelation”.

10. *The Gospel of Judas. Critical Edition*, p. 179. A similar remark was made in a footnote in NGS’s 2006 edition saying that ἀπόφασις can also mean “declaration”, “exposition” or “statement” ; see *The Gospel of Judas* (2006), p. 19.

11. For more on the *Apophasis megalē* see J.-M.A. SALLES-DABADIE, *Recherches sur Simon le Mage. I. L’Apophasis megalè*, Paris, Gabalda (coll. “Cahiers de la revue biblique”, 10), 1969.

ἀπόφασις with the expressions “decision” (*Ref* IV 17.7 ; 19.5)¹² or “revelation” (*Ref* V 9.20).¹³ Simon Magus’ *Apophasis megalē* (*Ref* VI 9.16 ; 11.4 ; 14.26 ; 18.6) is also understood as a “revelation”¹⁴ or an “announcement”.¹⁵ These different ways of translating ἀπόφασις all point in the same direction. According to the LSJ,¹⁶ the noun ἀπόφασις refers to a “sentence” (i.e. declaration) or a “decision”¹⁷, and derives from the verb ἀποφαίνω which means “to show forth”, “display” or “declare”.¹⁸ But at the same time, the LSJ considers the primary meaning of ἀπόφασις to be “denial”, “negation”¹⁹ and even “exclusion”.²⁰ In this case the noun would derive from ἀπόφημι.²¹ An example of this use is found in Aristotle’s *De interpretatione* where he clearly defines ἀπόφασις as “denial” or “negation”.²² This is also the case in his *Metaphysics*²³ and in many of his other works.²⁴ Ἀπόφασις also has the meaning of “denial” or “negation” in some Patristic texts, especially when it is used in negative theology as

-
12. The *Ante-Nicene Fathers*’ edition of HIPPOLYTUS’ *Refutation of all Heresies* 4.27.29 (*ANF* 5:33) translates ἰδία ἀποφάσει / ἰδίας ἀποφάσεως as “their own decisions” / “their own decision”; see A. ROBERTS and J. DONALDSON, ed., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 5, Peabody, MA, Hendrickson, 1994 (1986¹). For the Greek text, I consulted Marcovich’s edition of the *Refutatio*; see M. MARCOVICH, *Hippolytus. Refutatio omnium haeresium*, New York, Walter De Gruyter (coll. “Patristische Texte und Studien”, 25), 1986.
 13. See *The Refutation of all Heresies* 5.4 (*ANF* 5:56). A French translation understands ἀπόφασις (*Ref* V 9.20) as “la parole par laquelle est manifestée...” ; see A. SIOUVILLE, *Hippolyte de Rome. Philosophumena ou Réfutation de toutes les hérésies*, I, Milan, Archè, 1988, p. 155.
 14. See *The Refutation of all Heresies* 6.4.13 (*ANF* 5:75,79) ; *Philosophumena*, II, p. 16, 19, 22, 28 ; J.-M.A. SALLES-DABADIE, *Recherches sur Simon le Mage*, p. 13.
 15. *The Refutation of all Heresies* 6.6.9 (*ANF* 5:76-77). It is interesting to note that SALLES-DABADIE translates the Greek dative τῇ ἀποφάσει (*Ref* VI 11.4 ; 14.26 ; 18.6) into French as “l’Apophasis” ; see *Recherches sur Simon le Mage*, p. 17, 25, 37.
 16. LSJ refers to H.G. LIDDELL, R. SCOTT and H.S. JONES, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1958. The other Greek dictionaries I consulted are the Bailly (A. BAILLY, *Dictionnaire grec-français*, Paris, Hachette, 1950) and the Lampe (G.W.H. LAMPE, ed., *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1961).
 17. Other more remote meanings of ἀπόφασις are “catalogue”, “inventory”, “assertion”, “judgment”, “answer” and “oracle” ; see LSJ, p. 226. K.L. KING has partially noticed the ambiguity of the word *apophasis*. She states that *apophasis* has a double connotation. It could be understood as “something declared openly” (which justifies King’s use of “pronouncement”) or as a “court judgment” (see *Reading Judas*, p. 123). But this double connotation strictly derives from the verb ἀποφαίνω. She has omitted a more important variant of *apophasis*, one that stems from ἀπόφημι. This other variant opens up new possibilities of interpretation.
 18. According to LSJ, p. 225 and Bailly, p. 249, ἀπόφασις from ἀποφαίνω is also equivalent to ἀποφάνσις which means “declaration” or “statement”.
 19. It would seem that some late Latin writers have also retained the idea that *apophasis* means denial or negation, see ISIDORE OF SEVILLE’s *Etymologiarum* Lib. II Caput XXVII.3 (Migne 82, p. 145).
 20. Ἀπόφασις is also used to refer to the *exclusion* of something, see LSJ, p. 225.
 21. We can understand ἀπόφασις as the opposite of καταφάσις (affirmation), LSJ, p. 225 ; Bailly, p. 250.
 22. *De interpretatione* 6 : “Κατάφασις δέ ἐστιν ἀποφάνσις τινος κατὰ τινος. ἀπόφασις δέ ἐστιν ἀποφάνσις τινος ἀπὸ τινος.” ; O. GIGON, *Aristotelis opera / ex recensione Immanuel Bekkeri / edidit Academia Regia Borussica* (vol. 1), Berlin, De Gruyter, 1960.
 23. See *Metaph.* 990b ; 1004a ; 1007a-b ; 1008a ; 1011b ; 1012a ; 1017a ; 1022b ; 1027b ; 1029a ; 1046b ; 1056a ; 1058a ; 1062a ; 1089b. An exception to this is the use of ἀπόφασις as an equivalent of ἀποφάνσις (statement) in *Metaph.* 1079a ; see W.D. ROSS, *Aristotle’s Metaphysics. Vol. II*, London, Clarendon Press, 1958 (1924¹), p. 384. In a broader sense, H.G. APOSTLE defines *apophasis* as “something that does not belong to something else” ; see his *Aristotle’s Metaphysics*, London, Indiana University Press, 1966, p. 456.
 24. For an extensive list of references see, O. GIGON, *Aristotelis opera / ex recensione Immanuel Bekkeri / edidit Academia Regia Borussica* (Index Aristotelicus, edidit H. Bonitz, vol. 5), Berlin, De Gruyter, 1961, p. 88.

the only true way of speaking about the attributes of God.²⁵ Negative theology, also called Apophatic theology, endeavors to describe God in negative terms. It expresses what God is not rather than what he is. Apophatic theology uses denial statements in order to talk about the attributes of God, i.e., God is not evil, God is not darkness, God is not hate, etc.²⁶

When translating the Greco-Coptic word ΑΠΟΦΑΣΙΣ, one must keep in mind that the noun can have a plurality of meanings. If one decides that ΑΠΟΦΑΣΙΣ comes from ἀποφαίνω, then expressions like “declaration”, “explanation” and “revelation” make sense. If, however, we argue that the noun derives from ἀπόφημι, the translation would be “denial”, “negation” and “exclusion”. How then should we understand ΑΠΟΦΑΣΙΣ in the first lines of the *Gospel of Judas*? Those who wish to make a case for ΑΠΟΦΑΣΙΣ as “declaration”, “explanation” or “revelation” need to carefully consider the meaning of ΠΛΟΓΟΣ ΕΤΖΗΠ. Because of the immediate context, it is difficult to understand ΑΠΟΦΑΣΙΣ as a “declaration” or an “explanation”. According to the LSJ, ΛΟΓΟΣ already carries with it ideas such as “statement”, “sentence” and “explanation”.²⁷ This clearly overlaps in meaning with ΑΠΟΦΑΣΙΣ as deriving from ἀποφαίνω (*to show forth, display, or declare*). The same could be said of ΑΠΟΦΑΣΙΣ as “revelation”. The formulation ΠΛΟΓΟΣ ΕΤΖΗΠ recalls the famous ΝΨΑΧΕ ΕΘΗΠ (οἱ λόγοι οἱ ἀπόκρυφοί) found in the *incipit* of the *Gospel according to Thomas*.²⁸ There is no doubt that *Thomas* is a collection of “revealed” *secret sayings*. The reader needs to find their *interpretation*, not seek the content of the revelation which has already been given. The same thing can be said of ΠΛΟΓΟΣ ΕΤΖΗΠ. The *GosJud* is a “revelation”. Jesus does reveal to Judas the mysteries of the kingdom (*GosJud* 35:21-25 ; 46:8 ; 47:1-4). But there is really no need to use ΑΠΟΦΑΣΙΣ to inform the reader of that fact. We automatically assume the revelatory character of the Gnostic dialogue when reading ΠΛΟΓΟΣ ΕΤΖΗΠ. The basic nature of the Gnostic *secret word* is “revelation”.²⁹ It then seems redundant to translate ΑΠΟΦΑΣΙΣ as “declaration”, “explanation” or “revelation” in the context of an expression such as ΠΛΟΓΟΣ ΕΤΖΗΠ. However, if one understands ΑΠΟΦΑΣΙΣ as “denial”, this certainly eliminates some of the confusion. In that case, the first lines of the Judas gospel would read as follows :

25. The PSEUDO-DENYS' *Mystical Theology* 1.2 uses ἀπόφασις as “denial” or “negation” : τὰς ἀποφάσεις ἀντικειμένους εἶναι ταῖς καταφάσεσιν... (the denials oppose themselves to the affirmations...). For other examples, see Lampe, p. 219.

26. For more details concerning the use of negative theology by the Pseudo-Denys, see R. ROQUES, G. HEIL and M. DE GANDILLAC, *Denys l'Aréopagite. La Hiérarchie céleste*, Paris, Cerf (coll. “Sources Chrétien-nes”, 58), 1970 ; also Y. DE ANDIA, ed., *Denys l'Aréopagite et sa postérité en Orient et en Occident. Actes du Colloque International Paris, 21-24 septembre 1994*, Paris, Institut d'Études Augustiniennes (coll. “Études Augustiniennes”, Série Antiquité, 151), 1997 ; and J.-L. MARION, “Au nom. Comment ne pas parler de ‘théologie négative’”, *Laval théologique et philosophique*, 55 (1999), p. 339-363.

27. See LSJ, p. 1 057-1 059.

28. The relationship between the two expressions was also noticed by WURST, *The Gospel of Judas. Critical Edition*, p. 179.

29. PAINCHAUD states that the *GosJud* clearly displays the characteristics of Gnostic dialogues of revelation ; see “À propos de la (re)découverte de l'Évangile de Judas”, p. 555.

ΠΛΟΓΟ[С] ΕΤΖΗΠ̄ ΝΤΑΠΟΦΑΣΙС Ν[ΤΑ Ι]ΗΣ̄ ΟΥΑΧΕ ΜΝ̄ ΙΟΥΔΑΣ [ΠΙ]СΚΑ-
ΡΙΩΤΗ[С] ΝΖΗΤῒ

The secret word of *the denial* by which Jesus spoke in conversation with Judas Iscariot.

The *Gospel of Judas* would then be *the secret word of the denial*. This way of understanding ΑΠΟΦΑΣΙС is coherent with the rest of the gospel. As a matter of fact, the idea of *denial* does explain several statements and actions therein :

1. ΑΠΟΦΑΣΙС is first and foremost Jesus' *denial* of Judas. This can be seen in several places. For example, when Jesus reveals the mysteries of the kingdom to Judas, he calls him a demon (ΔΑΙΜΩΝ ; *GosJud* 44:21).³⁰ Jesus also tells Judas that he has been misled into thinking he could enter the house of the holy generation (*GosJud* 45:14-19). Still during the revelation, Jesus informs Judas that he was duped by his star (*GosJud* 45:13-14). Judas will eventually realize that he was purposely distanced from the holy generation and will never be part of it (*GosJud* 46:16-18).³¹ By *denying* Judas access to the holy generation, Jesus shows that the betrayer is not his favorite disciple. Here, Jesus *says no* to Judas ; he *denies* Judas the status and salvation he had come to believe for himself.³²

2. As I already mentioned, we should certainly not interpret *GosJud* 56:17-20 as a command or a request. Jesus simply predicts that Judas will sacrifice the man that bears him : “*But you will do more than all of them, for the man who bears me, you will sacrifice him.*” In the *Gospel of Judas*, sacrifices are always seen in a negative light (*GosJud* 38:16ff ; 39:26-40:1), and Jesus specifically orders his disciples to stop making sacrifices (*GosJud* 41:1-6).³³ Before the prediction of Judas' demise in *GosJud* 56:17-20, the text characterizes those who offer sacrifices to Saklas as evildoers

30. This is similar to what is found in the Fourth Gospel. However, the expression used to characterize Judas in John 6:70 is διάβολος and not δαίμων. On the other hand, some have established a connection between the ΔΑΙΜΩΝ and Socrates' own personal *daimon* in PLATO (*Symposium* 202e-203a). Whatever the connection one wishes to make, Judas, the thirteenth ΔΑΙΜΩΝ, will be denied access to the place reserved for the saints. This is certainly not a positive outcome for Judas ! It seems that in his vision, Judas was duped by his erring star into thinking that he could live with the saints and holy angels in the eon (*GosJud* 45:1-23). For more on the characterization of Judas Iscariot in the New Testament and especially in the Fourth Gospel, see A. GAGNÉ, “Caractérisation des figures de Satan et de Judas dans le IV^e évangile : stratégie narrative et déploiement des intrigues de conflit”, *Science et Esprit*, 55 (2003), p. 263-284.

31. The Coptic reads : ΑΚΠΟΡΧῒ ΕΤΓΕΝΕΑ ΕΤῒΜΑΥ. For *GosJud* 46:16-18, M. MEYER and F. GAUDARD translate : “[...] you have set me apart for that generation” (*The Gospel of Judas. Critical Edition*, p. 211). CHERIX's French translation is clearly more precise and corresponds to the Coptic reading : “[...] que tu m'aies écarté de cette génération-là ?” (<http://www.coptica.ch/EvJudas-tra.pdf>). KASSER's French translation in the critical edition corrects the English with the following : “[...] que tu m'aies séparé de cette génération-là” (*The Gospel of Judas. Critical Edition*, p. 245). There is, however, a discrete note in the English translation of the critical edition recognizing the meaning of “[...] from that generation”. The correct translation of ΠΟΡΧ ε- is clearly “separate from” and not “separate for” ; see W.E. CRUM, *Coptic Dictionary*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1939, 271 b. PAINCHAUD had also noticed this problem, “À propos de la (re)découverte de l'Évangile de Judas”, p. 561.

32. To *deny* actually means to “say no”. It is important to note that the New Testament uses the Greek word ἀρνέομαι when it speaks of “denial” (Matt 19:33 ; Lk 12:9 ; John 13:38 ; Acts 4:16 ; 2 Tim 2:12-13). This being said, nothing prevents the author of the *Gospel of Judas* from using another word (ΑΠΟΦΑΣΙС) when referring to “denial”.

33. The role of sacrifices in *GosJud* is explained by PAINCHAUD in “À propos de la (re)découverte de l'Évangile de Judas”, p. 557-558.

(*GosJud* 56:12-16). Judas will do more than all of them (ΚΝΑΒ̄ ΖΟΥΟ ΕΡΟΥΥ ΤΗΡΟΥ), that is, more evil than those who sacrifice to Saklas. According to Jesus, the pinnacle of wickedness is to sacrifice the man that bears him. How will Judas accomplish such an evil deed? The canonical gospels refer to Judas' action as that of *handing over* or *betrayal* (παραδίδωμι; Matt 26:46; Mk 14:14; Lk 22:21; John 6:71). This is also what happens in our text when Judas *hands over* (ΠΑΡΑΔΙΔΟΥ) Jesus to the high priests and scribes (*GosJud* 58:9-26). But why would Judas actually decide to hand over Jesus after having received this revelation from him? The reason seems obvious: Judas has been *denied* access to the place reserved for the holy, making it impossible for him to ascend to the holy generation (*GosJud* 45:12-24; 46:24-47:1). He was displeased with the content of the revelation. This secret word or revelation didn't turn out to his advantage, since it was an ΑΠΟΦΑΣΙΣ. This secret word is to be understood as a denial or refusal. As a result, Judas negatively responds to Jesus' *denial* of him. This clearly explains Judas' ΠΑΡΑΔΙΔΟΥ of his master at the end of the gospel. Through his betrayal, Judas does exactly what Jesus predicted in *GosJud* 56:17-20. The ΠΑΡΑΔΙΔΟΥ is a reaction to the ΑΠΟΦΑΣΙΣ.

In conclusion, we have seen how our understanding of ΑΠΟΦΑΣΙΣ can influence our interpretation of the *GosJud* as a whole. Deriving from the verb ἀποφαίνω, the noun ΑΠΟΦΑΣΙΣ can certainly mean “declaration”, “explanation” or “revelation”. It is difficult to make sense of such a choice of words in the *GosJud*, since these expressions are redundant with the use of ΠΛΟΓΟΣ ΕΤΖΗΠ. In the opening lines of the *GosJud*, ΑΠΟΦΑΣΙΣ most probably derives from ἀπόφημι and should be translated as “denial” (or “exclusion”). This fits perfectly with the overall thrust of the gospel: Judas is *denied* access to the holy generation and deprived of true salvation. As we have seen, Judas realizes that he was separated from (*denied, excluded*) from that generation (*GosJud* 46:16-18). His “denial” or “exclusion” from the holy generation is actually what constitutes the ΑΠΟΦΑΣΙΣ. He violently retaliates by *handing over* his master to the Jewish authorities (*GosJud* 58:9-26). This way, Judas finds himself fulfilling what was prophesied by Jesus in *GosJud* 56:17-20.