

In my previous post I indicated that I am debating over my next trade book (for general audiences. The one I described there has to do with how Christians appropriated the Jewish Scriptures for themselves, leading to (and being implicated in) the rise of Christian anti-Judaism. It's a fascinating topic, and I'm definitely planning on writing the book. But something else has come up that is driving my research right now instead, and I suspect this will be the next book. But I'm happy to hear your opinions about the value of doing one or the other first.

First I need to provide a bit of background. As I have mentioned a number of times on the blog, I am trying to alternate the kinds of books I write - hard-hitting scholarly work, textbooks for university students, and trade books for normal human beings. My next scholarly book was supposed to be a commentary on the early Greek Gospel fragments of the second century (the Gospel of Peter; Papyrus Egerton 2; and a bunch of Gospel fragments of which I would be \*amazed\* if you had ever heard!). I decided about a month ago that I would not write the commentary.

Here's why. I had done a ton of work for it - -reading extensively in the field, translating all of the texts, considering their textual problems, and so on. And at the time (six weeks ago or so) I was reading (slowly!) an Italian commentary on the Gospel of Peter. And I simply realized: you know, I find this really boring! The way a commentary like this tends to work is that you go verse by verse through the book you're commenting on, and if it's a non-canonical Gospel you show how every sentence, every phrase, every word relates to what you can find in the New Testament Gospels ("this phrase is like what you find in Matthew, except that it uses this word instead of that word; it is less like Mark but also different because of x, y, and z; but it does have some close comparisons to John...." etc. You do that for three or four pages and then go to the next verse). This is highly important work for scholars. But I asked myself: do I really want to spend the next three years of my life working on this kind of thing?

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