

In my last couple of posts I began to describe how my edition of the Apocryphal Gospels came about. After having done the Apostolic Fathers in two volumes for the Loeb, I had decided never to do another translation project again. Too hard! But then, forgetting my decision, I thought it would be useful to have a Greek/Latin - English version of the early Christian non-canonical Gospels. And at the urging of the editor at Harvard, submitted a proposal also for the Loeb Classical Library. But the editorial board decided that they did not want to start publishing new editions of Christian texts in the series, since that would detract from its typical focus on Greek and Roman classics. And so I was now interested in a project without an publisher.

I should say - this may not be widely known - that most of the time a scholar writes a book, s/he does not know who will be publishing it, or even if *anyone* will be. This can be a source of real anxiety, especially for younger scholars who desperately need to get a book published in order to get a good teaching job or, if they have a job, in order to get tenure. But for a big project like this, I was not about to put in all the work - I knew it would be an enormous amount of work - without being assured of a publisher. So before beginning the project, I decided to secure a contract on the book.

Years ago, Oxford University Press had told me that they would be interested in knowing about any books I wanted to publish: scholarly monographs, textbooks, anthologies, and trade books. And for a number of years, I did everything with them. But I eventually decided to try a different publisher for my trade books, and ended up with HarperOne (my first book with them was Misquoting Jesus). After doing seven books with them, I moved a few years ago over to Simon & Schuster for trade. But most of my other things come out with Oxford.

Oxford is a fantastic press - by far and away the largest university press in the world, more than three times as large as the next larges (Cambridge) and many times larger than others (Princeton, Harvard, UPenn, Chicago, and so on). They have a lot of muscle and publish and enormous range of books. And so I approached them with the idea of a bi-lingual (well, tri-lingual) edition of the "Apocryphal Gospels" and they were eager to do it. So I was set to go.

But then a thought occurred.

For the rest of this post you will need to be a blog member. A year's membership costs about the same as two meals at Five Guys. And trust me, even though it may not be as amazing on the palate, it is **way** better for you. So why not join?

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