In this thread on Bible translation, I have been talking about what it is translators of the New Testament actually translate. In order to answer the question, I have had to explain how we started to get printed editions of the Greek New Testament, including the first to come off the printing press, the Complutensian Polyglot (discussed in yesterday’s post). Today I take the discussion a step further, to talk about the first published (not the first printed!) Greek New Testament. Again, the discussion is taken from my book Misquoting Jesus.

The First Published Edition of the Greek New Testament

Even though the Complutensian Polyglot was the first printed edition of the Greek New Testament, it was not the first published version. As I pointed out, even though the work was printed by 1514, it did not actually see the light of published day until 1522. Between those two dates a famous and enterprising Dutch scholar, the humanist intellectual Desiderius Erasmus, both produced and published an edition of the Greek New Testament, receiving the honor, then, of editing the so-called “editio princeps” (= first published edition). Erasmus had studied the New Testament, along with other great works of antiquity, on and off for many years, and had considered at some point putting together an edition for printing. But it was only when he visited Basle in August 1514 that he was persuaded by a publisher named Johann Froben to move forward.

Both Erasmus and Froben knew that....

Where Did the King James Bible Come From?
The Oldest Printed Versions of the Greek New Testament