

A Simplified History of the Printing of the Bible

1450 c.e. thru 1633 c.e.*

* C.E. designates the Common Era, which Christianity calls A.D.



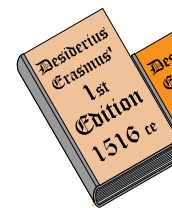
Johannes Gutenberg published Jerome's Latin Vulgate at Maypence (Mainz).



Soncino Press printed the first complete Hebrew Bible in Lombardy.



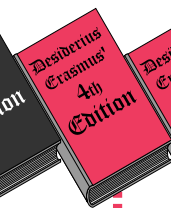
Francisco Ximenes de Cisneros, cardinal primate of Spain, planned the edition in 1502 c.e. Printed in Alcala (which is called Complutum in Latin), the Polyglot contains texts in Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, and Latin.



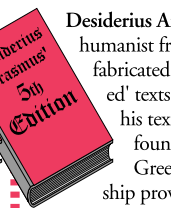
Desiderius Erasmus 1st Edition 1516 CE



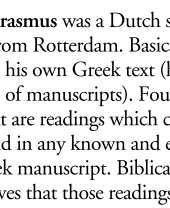
Desiderius Erasmus 2nd Edition 1519 CE



Desiderius Erasmus 3rd Edition



Desiderius Erasmus 4th Edition

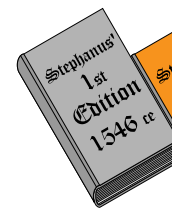


Desiderius Erasmus 5th Edition

Desiderius Erasmus was a Dutch scholar and humanist from Rotterdam. Basically, Erasmus fabricated his own Greek text (he 'corrected' texts of manuscripts). Found within his text are readings which cannot be found in any known and extant Greek manuscript. Biblical scholarship proves that those readings are still being perpetuated today in printings of the so-called Textus Receptus of the Greek N.T.. The oldest and best manuscript Erasmus used was Codex I, a minuscule written in the 10th century. His bible was the first on the market that was printed, bound, and available in a cheaper and a more conveniently handy form, resulting in greater circulation than its rival (the bulky and cumbersome Complutensian Polyglot). Its influence became greater and was therefore accepted because of one economic reason: its marketability and resulting sales.



Aldine Press of Venice published the entire Bible in Greek and in three parts. The N.T. was dedicated to Erasmus, and it follows Erasmus' 1st edition so closely as to reproduce many typographical errors - even the many errors which Erasmus had corrected in his list of errata.



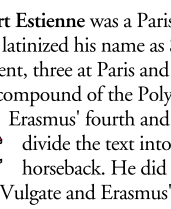
Stephanus 1st Edition 1546 CE



Stephanus 2nd Edition 1549 CE

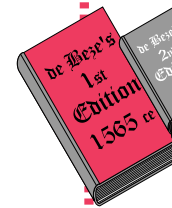


Stephanus 3rd Edition 1550 CE



Stephanus 4th Edition 1551 CE

Robert Estienne was a Parisian printer and publisher, who later became a monk and latinized his name as Stephanus. He issued four editions of the Greek Testament, three at Paris and his last at Geneva. The text of the first two editions was a compound of the Polyglot and Erasmian editions. His third edition followed Erasmus' fourth and fifth editions very closely. He became the first person to divide the text into numbered verses, which he accomplished while journeying on horseback. He did this to his fourth edition, which contains two Latin versions (the Vulgate and Erasmus' text) printed on either side of the Greek text.



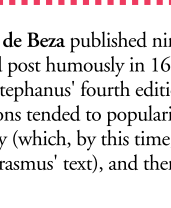
de Beze's 1st Edition 1565 CE



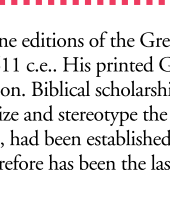
de Beze's 2nd Edition



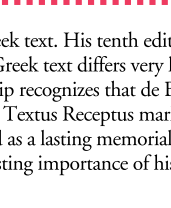
de Beze's 3rd Edition



de Beze's 4th Edition



de Beze's 5th Edition



de Beze's 6th Edition



de Beze's 7th Edition



de Beze's 8th Edition

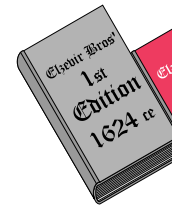


de Beze's 9th Edition



de Beze's 10th Edition

EDITIONS of 1588-89, 1598

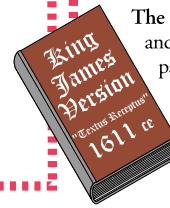


Elzevir Press 1st Edition 1624 CE



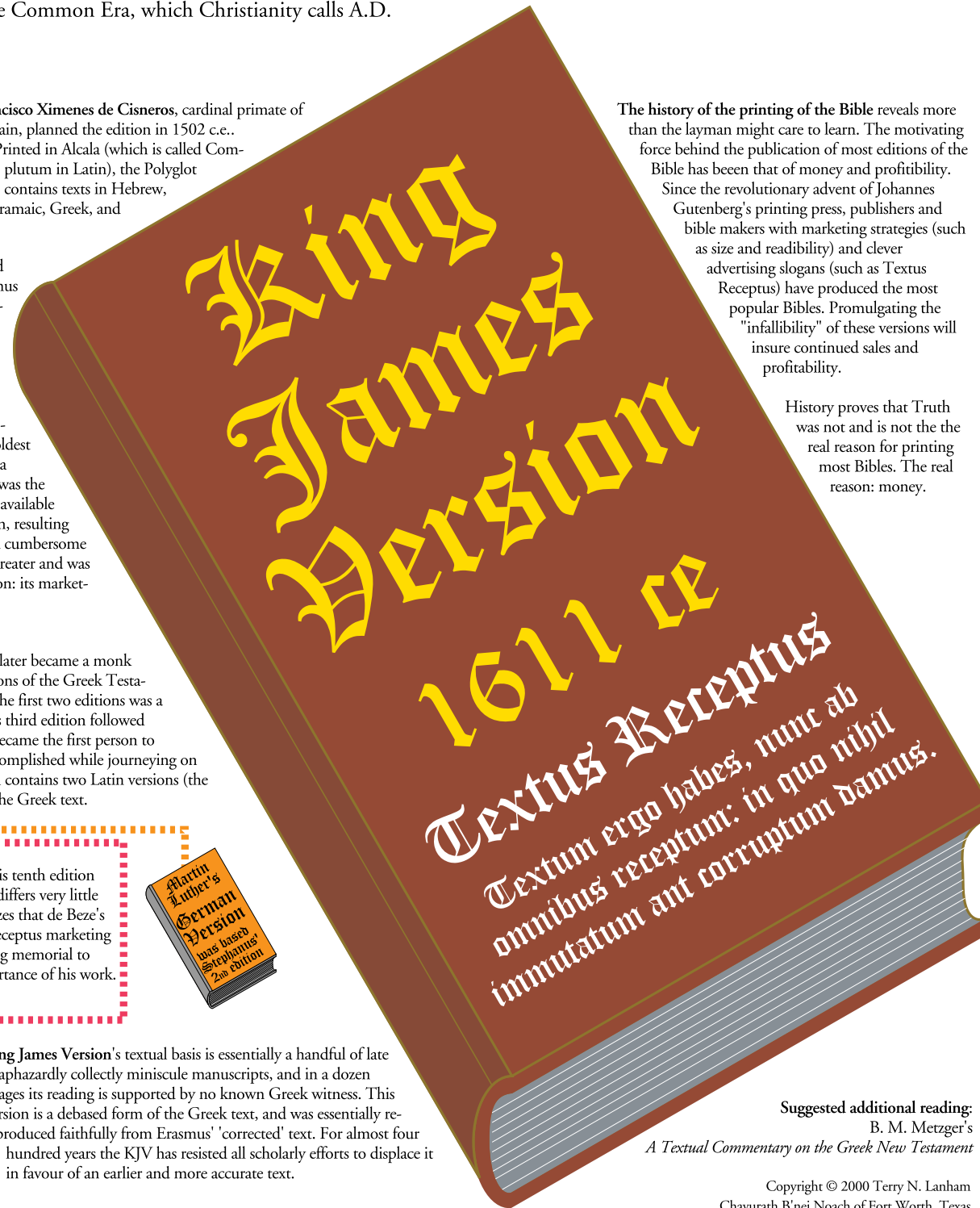
Elzevir Press 2nd Edition 1633 CE

Bonaventure and Abraham Elzevir published a smaller and more convenient edition of the Greek text. Their text was taken primarily from de Beze's smaller 1565 edition. In the preface to the second edition the boast is made that '[the reader has] the text which is now received by all, in which we give nothing changed or corrupted.'



King James Version 1611 CE

The King James Version's textual basis is essentially a handful of late and haphazardly collected minuscule manuscripts, and in a dozen passages its reading is supported by no known Greek witness. This version is a debased form of the Greek text, and was essentially reproduced faithfully from Erasmus' 'corrected' text. For almost four hundred years the KJV has resisted all scholarly efforts to displace it in favour of an earlier and more accurate text.



The history of the printing of the Bible reveals more than the layman might care to learn. The motivating force behind the publication of most editions of the Bible has been that of money and profitability. Since the revolutionary advent of Johannes Gutenberg's printing press, publishers and bible makers with marketing strategies (such as size and readability) and clever advertising slogans (such as Textus Receptus) have produced the most popular Bibles. Promulgating the "infallibility" of these versions will insure continued sales and profitability.

History proves that Truth was not and is not the the real reason for printing most Bibles. The real reason: money.

Suggested additional reading:
B. M. Metzger's
A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament

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