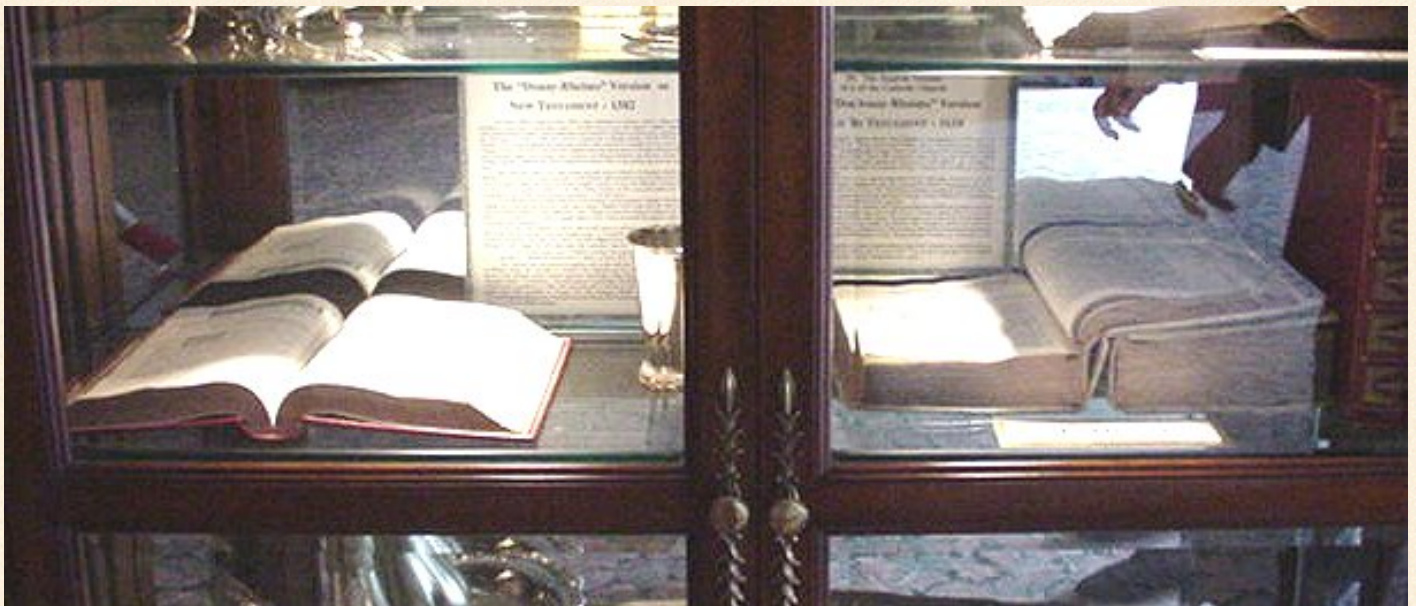


# The Dr. Gene Scott Bible Collection

## STATION 43:

### THE "DOUAY-RHEIMS" VERSION

#### *The English Version of the Catholic Church*



**Station 43: First  
Editions of the English**

**Catholic**

**New Testament at left,  
Old Testament at right**

### **New Testament - 1582**

As Queen Mary's reign of terror drove some reformers to Geneva, where they produced a marvelous version with copious, Calvinist notes (amply shown [Station 20](#) and others), so too the English Catholic exiles of Queen Elizabeth's reign found safety in France. Their community soon founded a College in conjunction with the University of Douai in 1568, and removed temporarily to Rheims during 1578-93. In October 1578, Gregory Martin, the foremost scholar there, started to translate the Latin Vulgate version of the New Testament into English, under the supervision of William Allen (later Cardinal Allen), the College's first President, and Richard Bristow (the Prefect of Studies). Martin completed the New Testament in March 1582; it was printed the same year.

The translation follows the Latin closely, and also shows evidence of comparison with the Greek.

But what is truly remarkable is that Martin didn't hesitate to borrow freely from Coverdale's diglot and other Protestant English versions. In turn, the Rheims New Testament had a significant impact on the King James Version of 1611, not least for its neologisms and careful contemporary translations of certain terms.

If the Rheims New Testament has an overall problem, it is its excessive "Latinism," reliance on words derived from the Latin where simple English words could have been used. Its slavish reliance on the "approved" Latin Vulgate version was tempered by the ability of its translators to correct a passage based on the Greek text under the guise of "perfecting the translation."

At the end of the volume is a list of "new words" given in an **Explication**; many of these have become familiar in general English usage, i.e. **acquisition, advent, calumniate, character, evangelize, resuscitate** and **victims**. The **first edition** shown here was printed at Rheims by John Fogny. The title page states this translation was intended **"for the discoverie of the Corruptions of divers late translations, and specially for clearing the Controversies in religion, of these daies:"**

The Catholic text was printed in England, side-by-side with the Bishops' Version ([Station 19](#)) by **William Fulke**, who intended to "confute" the Catholics, but by so doing the many merits of the Rheims version became apparent; unwittingly, Fulke popularized what he detested! Fulke's "Confutation..." went through several printings. The Rheims version was printed anew at Antwerp in 1600, 1621 and 1630 and at Rouen in 1633 - and then not again until 1738 (probably at Douay). The first complete English Catholic Bible (incorporating the Rheims New Testament and the Douay Old Testament) was printed in 1764, probably at Dublin, Ireland.

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## Old Testament - 1610

Though the English Catholic New Testament had appeared in 1582, the Old Testament had to wait, in the words of the Preface, due to **"one general cause, our poore estate in banishment."**

Though Gregory Martin had completed the translation decades earlier, the editor of this Douay Old Testament states that the text had been newly compared, since Martin's time, against the **"most perfect Latin edition"** - the recension of the Vulgate published under the authority of Pope Clement VIII in 1592, the so-called "final" Vulgate version.

The annotations are sparser than those of the 1582 New Testament - and less vehement! Tables throughout the text were prepared by Thomas Worthington, President of the College at Douay



from 1599. The **Preface** criticizes specifically the renderings of current English Bibles, mentioning editions of 1552 (the "Great" Bible), 1577 (the Bishops' Bible), and 1579 and 1603 (Geneva versions).

This first English Catholic Old Testament (Herbert #300) was printed at Douay in 1610 (the general title page gives 1609, that to Volume 2 gives 1610) by Lawrence Kellam,

**"at the signe of the holie Lambe."**

Its appearance was too late to be of any influence on the King James Version (unlike the Rheims New Testament, which was one of the versions consulted for the King James). The complete Old and New Testaments are known, from their places of publication, as the "Douay-Rheims Version" or, commonly, as the "Douay Bible."

It is worth noting that a second edition of this Old Testament was printed at Douay in 1635, then, for a period of 115 years (1635-1750) no more printings of the English Catholic Bible or its separate Testaments were made!

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## FULKE'S "CONFUTATION..."

### Unrecorded Edition

William Fulke, Doctor of Divinity and Master of Pembroke College, Cambridge, attempted to "confute" the Rheims New Testament of 1582 (the English Roman Catholic version), intending to answer the criticisms of the Church of England which are set forth within the Rheims notes. His "Confutation..." presents his acerbic commentary as well as the text of the Bishops' version side by side with the Rheims. This work was first published in **1589**; further editions made in 1601, 1617 and 1633 are recorded by Herbert. This volume has the printer given as "G. B." (for George Bishop, who held the copyright until his death in 1611) and is **unrecorded** thus; it is otherwise similar to the 1601 edition. The irony of Fulke's effort is that, by presenting the English Catholic text verbatim, contrasted with the less than perfect Bishops' text, the many strengths and useful neo-locutions of the freshly translated Catholic version were made available to less passionate churchmen, and thus the Rheims version was carefully considered in the preparation of the King James Version (shown at [Station 27](#)).

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## STATION LOCATION MAP

Below is a floor plan map of the Cathedral in 3 sections, one for each level. The first section is the Lower Level, the second is the Foyer Level, and the third is the Mezzanine Level. This station is located in the Wall Case on the Foyer Level at the red #43.



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