**Edited Polyglot Resource Introductory Essay(s)**

I. Intro Screen

*Title*

Exploring the Great Polyglots, 1514-1657

*Opening blurb:*

Uncover the intellectual roots, technical foundation, and applications for the great polyglot Bibles, the monuments to early modern religious devotion, critical scholarship, and technical skill.

II. Introductory Essay

This resource will introduce you to the great polyglot Bibles of the early modern period. These books – editions of the Bible that displayed multiple ancient translations side-by-side – rank among the most impressive monuments to early modern religious devotion, critical scholarship, and technical craftsmanship. This resource will allow you to engage with these great books and uncover the immense scholarly and technical effort that went into making them, the challenges that had to be overcome to produce them, and the different ways in which readers actually used them.

Polyglot Bibles had existed since at least the third century, but none could compare with the four “great” polyglot Bibles: the Complutensian (Alcalá de Henares, Spain, 1514-1517), Antwerp (1569-1572), Paris (1628-1645), and London (1654-1657) polyglots. These editions – all of them printed in large, folio-sized editions numbering between 6 and 8 volumes – are the printing equivalent of cathedrals: expressions of devotion to God through the highest level of intellectual and technical mastery. In them, readers encountered the cutting-edge of biblical scholarship and printing technology in books that were meant to bring honor and glory to the nations that produced them.

The great polyglots represented the major intellectual and cultural trends of the day. From humanism came the desire to create the most accurate biblical text possible in its original languages, from the Reformation came the impetus to evangelize and unite Christendom using the Bible, from increasing cultural exchanges with the Ottoman empire came the interest in Near Eastern languages, and from print culture came the resolution that all this could be accomplished through the printed word. Polyglots united all these strands of cultural history in the service of religion, and the work behind them went on to fundamentally shape intellectual culture for centuries.

The historical and cultural impact of the great polyglots is somewhat overlooked today. In large part, this is due to the fact that the massive collective effort behind these books is hidden by the printed page. This resource will draw back the curtain on the stories behind the three great polyglots in the collection of the Newberry Library: the Complutensian, the Antwerp, and the London.

In what follows, you will gain a sense of the individuals who helped create these great books.

In what follows, you will see biblical scholars, linguists, artists, grammarians, translators, editors, printers, and theologians working to create the editions of the Biblical text in various languages. On the technical side, you will see how printers, compositors, type founders, and engravers worked long hours to display these texts in a clear yet appealing manner. On top of all this, you will learn about how diplomats, bishops, publishers, and political operatives scrambled and cajoled to secure the immense amount of money required to fund these projects.

In short, our resource will provide an opportunity to engage with early modern religious and intellectual history, and also better understand what goes into the making of a great book.