**Polyglot Resource Introductory Essay(s)**

I. Intro Screen

*Title*

Cathedrals of Print/Printed Cathedrals

*Subtitle*:

Exploring the Great Polyglots, 1514-1657

*One-line Introduction:*

Discover the sources, innovations, and uses of these monuments to early modern devotion, scholarship, and technical skill.

*Longer Blurb*

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. In the pages that follow, you can 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.

*Sources Blurb* (no Learn More needed, I don’t think)

These sections describe the raw material for the great polyglots: manuscripts, printed books, and other scholarly materials that polyglot scholars used to make their great books.

*Translations Blurb*

These fields show the techniques and strategies polyglot scholars adopted to make the many unfamiliar languages of Scripture accessible and understandable to their readers

*Tools Blurb*

These sections discuss the wide range of scholarly applications for using the great polyglots, and the different types of printed works they made possible.

II. Polyglot Contexts Page

*Title*

The Age of the Great Polyglots

1502-1657

*One-Line Description*

Conditions and Challenges Behind the Making of the Great Polyglots

**Meg, let’s just try to put all of the text below on one page, and we’ll see how long it goes. Overflow can go onto a second page if we need it. Sound good?**

*Cathedrals of Print*

Polyglot Bibles had existed since at least the third century, but none could compare with the four “great” polyglot Bibles of the early modern period: 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.

*Historical Background*

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 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.

*The Polyglot Project*

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, many of which had never appeared before in print. 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.

*Polyglot Images*

**Meg, let’s use the background image for each polyglot here (as you’ve already done with the Complutensian)**.

Complutensian (1517)

Alacalá de Henares, Spain

The first great polyglot Bible

Antwerp (1571)

Antwerp, Belgium

Christopher Plantin’s royal achievement

London (1657)

London, England

The pinnacle of polyglot scholarship