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## **Exhibition of Medieval and Renaissance books opens at Bird Library**

Syracuse University Library's spring exhibition "The Power and The Piety: the World of Medieval and Renaissance Europe" opens with a reception on Thursday, January 26<sup>th</sup> at 5 p.m. in the Special Collections gallery on Bird Library's 6<sup>th</sup> floor. Curated by History Professor Chris Kyle with Senior Director of Special Collections Sean Quimby, it showcases the library's collection of illuminated manuscripts and early printed works, including a leaf from the Gutenberg Bible.

The title, "The Power and The Piety," refers to extraordinary influence that secular monarchies and the Church had on the lives of everyday men and women. Richly illustrated late medieval psalters and books of hours exemplify the painstaking attention that the pious paid to their spiritual well-being. But the printing revolution made it possible for new ideas to spread more rapidly. Printed works like Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* (1651) signified the increasing power wielded by kings, queens, and other secular authorities. As the Protestant Reformation and Scientific Revolution took hold of Europe, the power of the Catholic Church further waned. "The Power and the Piety" includes such important works as the first King James Bible (1611) and a second printing of Copernicus's *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium* (1566), which argued in favor of a heliocentric, or sun-centered, universe.

The exhibition is arranged thematically, highlighting the overarching themes of power and piety, as well as English literature, music, architecture, science, and fine bindings. According to curator Professor Chris Kyle, "The Power and the Piety highlights the world that shaped our own – from religious martyrdom, to the politics of Machiavelli and the extraordinary prose of Shakespeare, this exhibition brings to life the rich and vibrant eras of Medieval and Renaissance Europe."

The exhibition and reception is free and open to the public. It is co-sponsored by the 2011-2012 Ray Smith Symposium "Sex and Power from the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment." Based in Syracuse University's College of Arts in Sciences, the symposium features seminars given by prominent visiting scholars. For more information please visit [raysmithsymposium.syr.edu](http://raysmithsymposium.syr.edu).

The Special Collections Research Center is a hub for primary source research at Syracuse University Library. It is devoted to collecting and preserving rare research materials in all formats and to connecting students, faculty, outside scholars, and the community to its collections. For more information, please visit [scrc.syr.edu](http://scrc.syr.edu).