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## **Victorian illuminated manuscripts shine in California State Library exhibit**

SACRAMENTO - The California State Library has opened a new exhibit, "Illumination and Color Printing in the Victorian Era," in the sleek marble foyer of Library and Courts II at 900 N Street. Curated by Gary Kurutz, director of Special Collections, the exhibit boasts some of the most beautiful books owned by the California State Library.

"Illumination and Color Printing in the Victorian Era" shows visitors how 19th century artists and printers emulated medievalism in the books they made. Many of the texts on display at the California State Library, for example, are highlighted in gold leaf, a medieval printing technique. The exhibit also illustrates how the new 19<sup>th</sup> century technology of color printing, or chromolithography, made book illustrations leap from a page. No longer coloring by hand, 19<sup>th</sup> century artists used a stone for each color in the text. One publication in "Illumination and Color Printing in the Victorian Era," Matthew Digby Wyatt's *Industrial Arts of the Nineteenth Century* (1851-53) used 1,065 stones in its production and required 1,350,500 press pulls for its 160 plates.

Highlights of the exhibit include: *Grapes and Grape Vines of California* (1887), arguably the most sophisticated book produced in 19<sup>th</sup> century California with its ten spectacular chromolithographs of grape clusters; the glorious facsimile of the book of hours commissioned by Anne of Brittany, the most elegant of all French color plate books (1861); and several gorgeous examples by the Englishmen, Henry Noels Humphreys and Owen Jones. *The Victoria Psalter* (1862) and *Sermon of the Mount* (1861) rank among the most famous neo-Gothic examples of color printing.

"Illumination and Color Printing in the Victorian Era," will run through April 2006 on the second floor foyer of the California State Library, Library and Courts II, 900 N Street, Sacramento. Hours are 9 AM to 4 PM. For more information contact Gary Kurutz at (916) 653-0101 or [gkurutz@library.ca.gov](mailto:gkurutz@library.ca.gov).

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