

The earliest books were written on tablets of wood or pieces of bark.



MS 1835
Old Roman cursive. London, early 2nd c.

In Greece and Rome the tablets were covered with wax and writing was impressed upon them with a small stick called “stylus”.

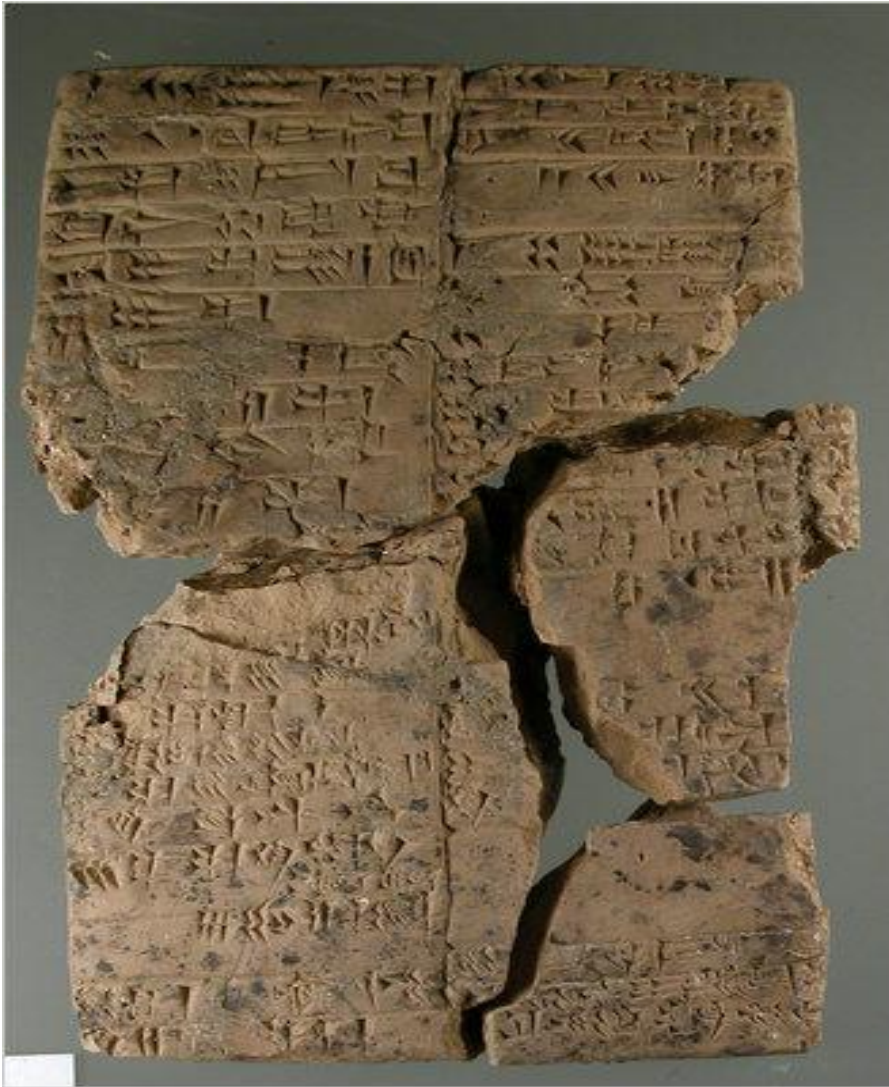


The tablets were held together with strips of leather or metal rings.



MS 2032
Square capitals. Roma, 70

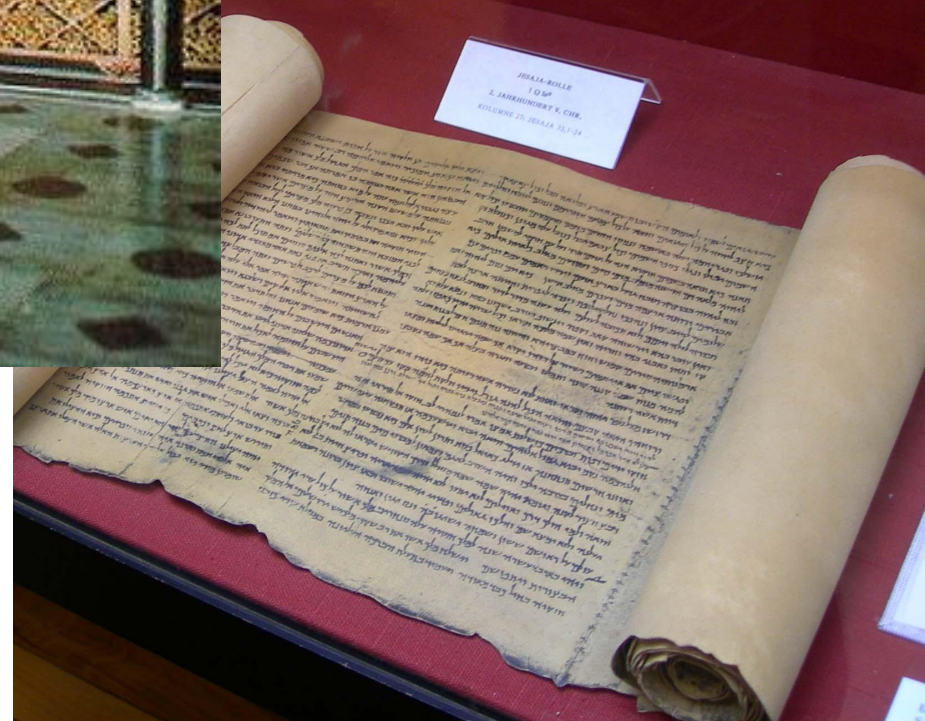
In Assyria and Babylonia writing was drawn on clay tablets.



The earliest books of ancient world were written on papyrus and skins of young animals.



These writings are known as *VOLUMEN*.



The secret of papermaking was found in China in the first century.



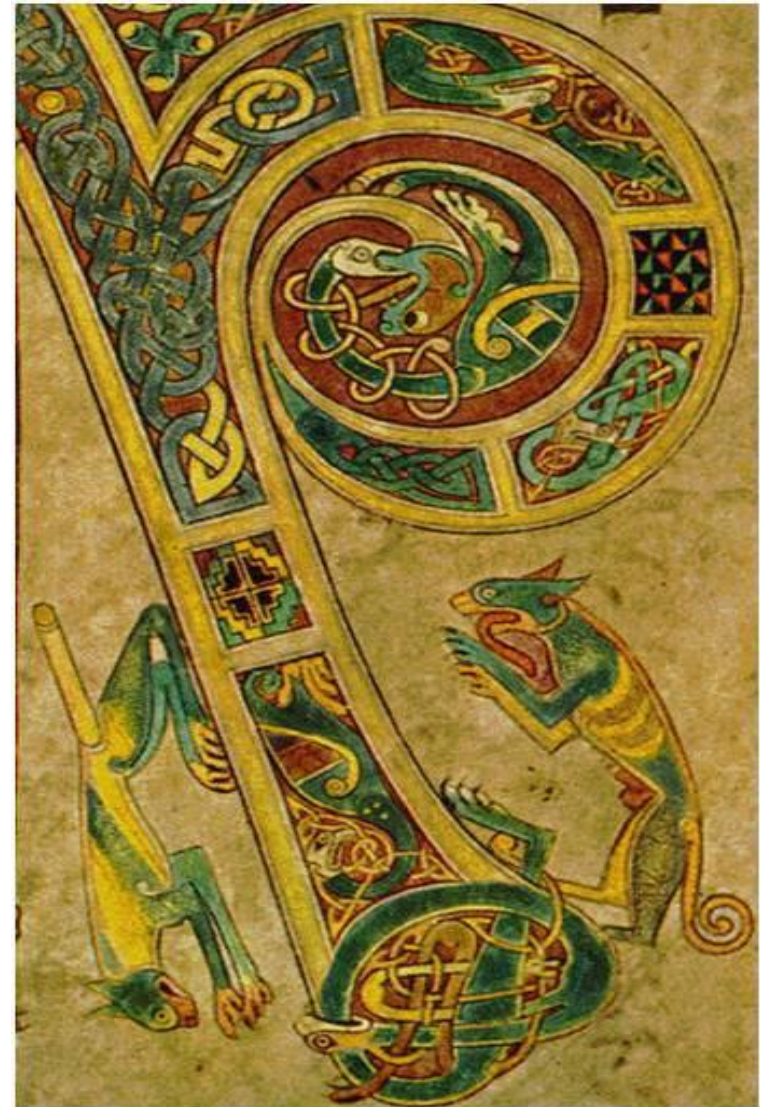
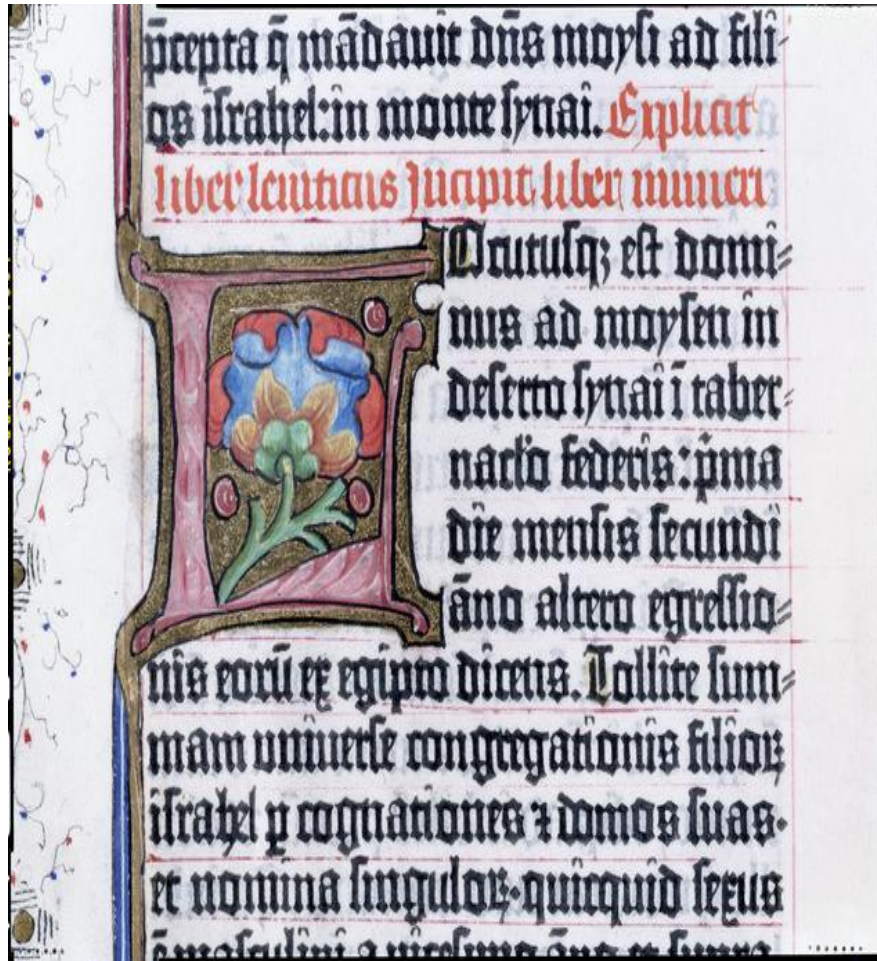
Books were quite common in ancient Rome: The first public library was founded there.



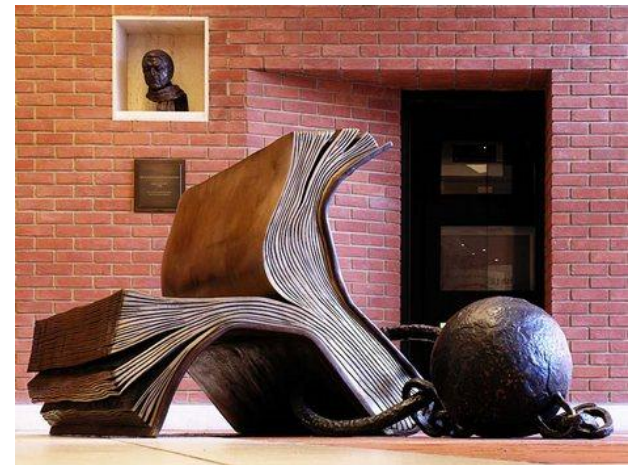
Only the rich could buy books or make their slaves copy them.



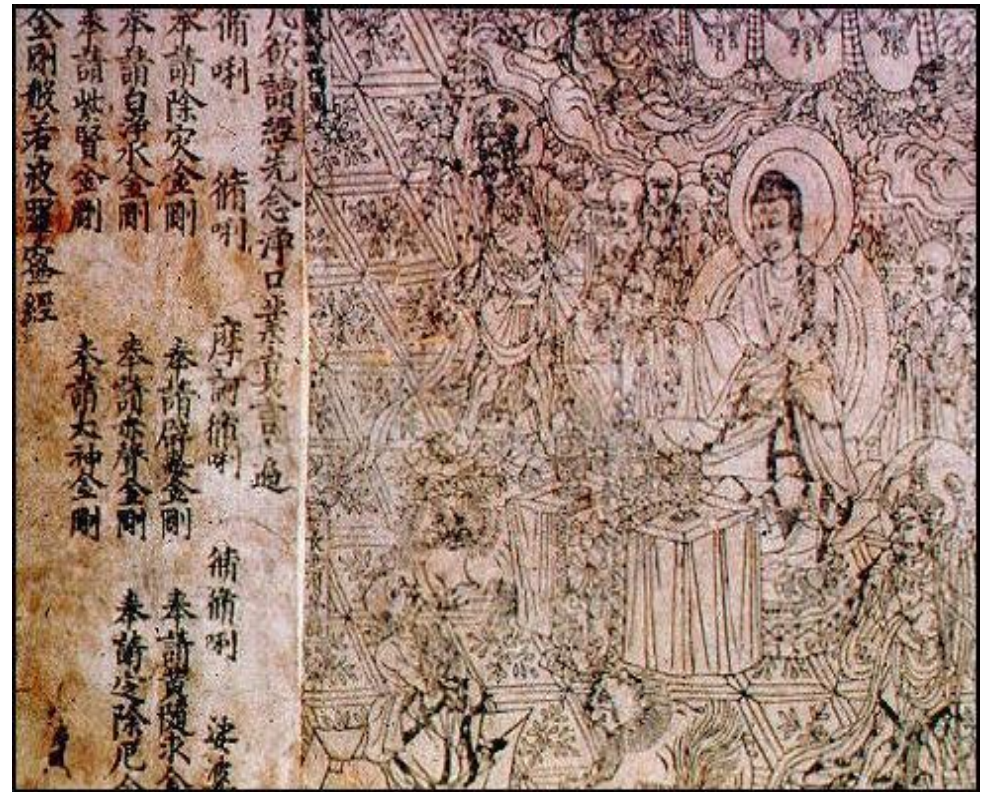
By the time of the Middle Ages all books were handwritten and beautifully decorated.



Libraries used to chain books to the shelves so that they could not be removed from the building.



The first people to invent printing were the Chinese.



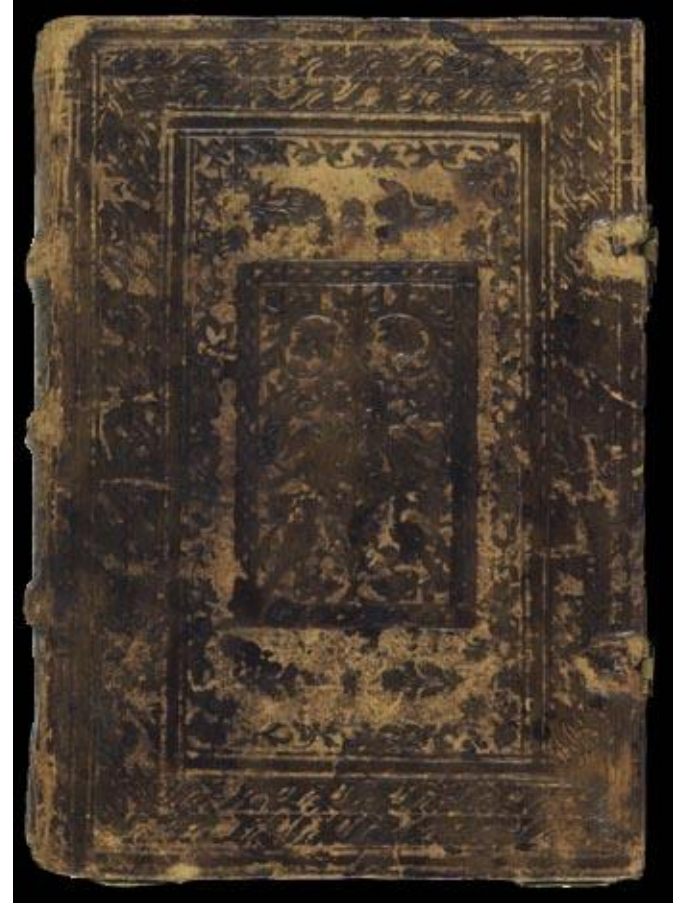
The best –known European printers are Johann Gutenberg in Germany,...



...William Caxton in England...



...and Ivan Fyodorov in Russia.



The more people could read the more books appeared. That led to opening more libraries.



Now most countries have their own national libraries, for example, **the British Museum Library** in London,...



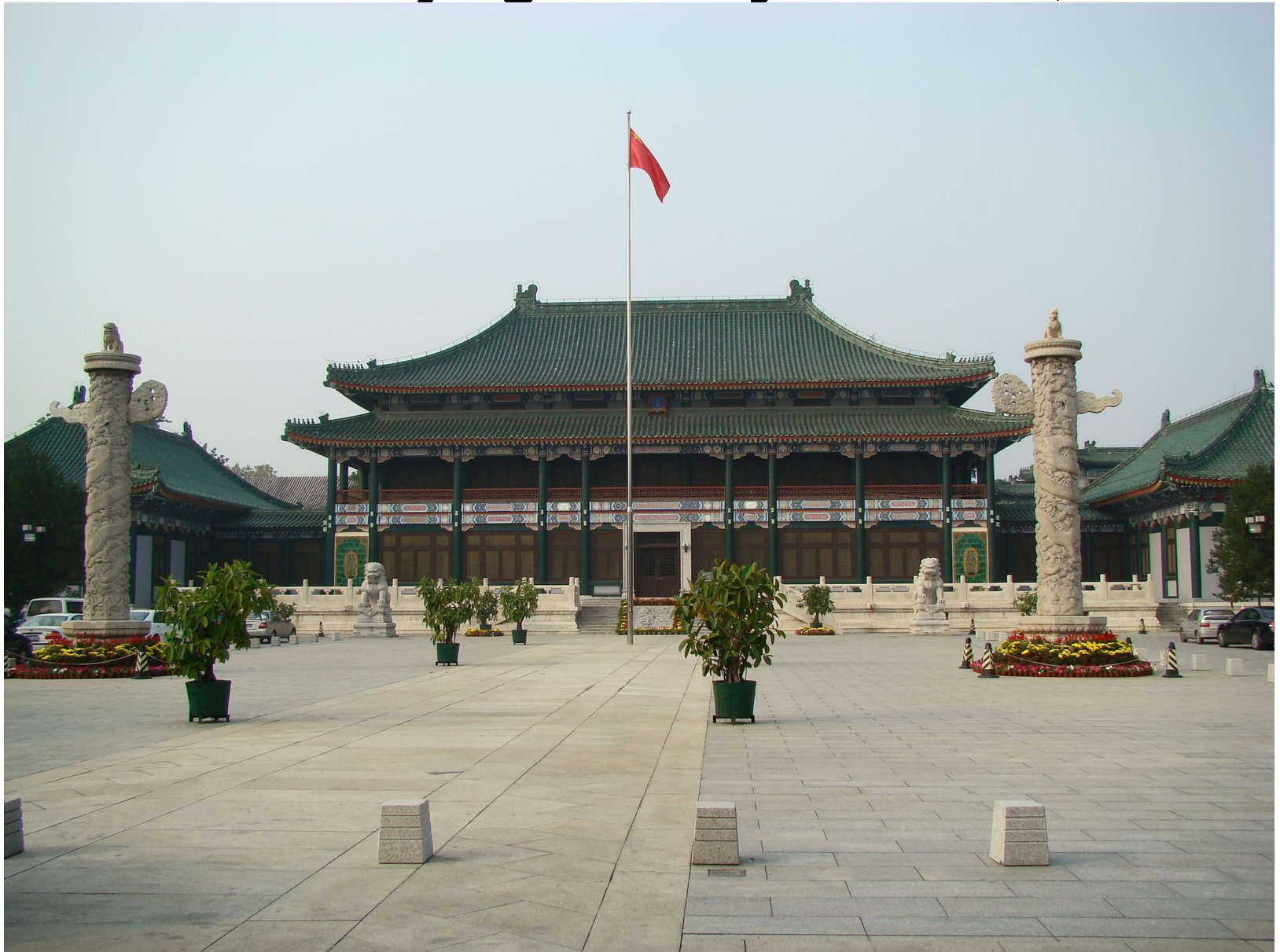
...the **Library of Congress** in the United States (which is the largest library with 90 million items),...



...Bibliotheque Nationale in France ...



...the Beijing Library in China,...



...the State Public Library in Moscow.



Modern libraries do their best to help people get information.

