



The History of the Book: A Traveling Exhibit



Welcome to the Iowa Center for the Book's *Traveling History of the Book Exhibit*. The exhibit is the result of a creative collaboration between the Iowa Center for the Book (a program of Iowa Library Services and affiliate of the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress) and the University of Iowa Center for the Book. The project is funded by a major grant from the Iowa Center for the Book Foundation.

The exhibit's completion in 2014 is due to the work of Iowa Center for the Book committee members Timothy Barrett (Director of the University of Iowa Center for the Book and MacArthur Fellow), Brianna Glenn (State of Iowa Law Library), Gary Frost (University of Iowa Conservator Emeritus), Cheryl Jacobson (Lettering Artist) and Robin Martin (Coordinator, Iowa Center for the Book, State Library of Iowa).



1. The **large book box** container has several historical models handmade by Gary Frost, who is an author and recognized advocate for the continuing role of the book.

6. **Clay Counting Tokens** –The earliest known writing for record keeping evolved more than 4,000 years ago from a system of counting using small clay tokens, like these. Tokens were a payment method used in early farming to keep track of animals and produce.

7. **Story of the Book Scroll** – This piece represents an ancient book. Scribes glued sheets of papyrus together end to end to form long rolls. The text was written top to bottom in narrow columns so that it could be read easily, one column at a time. The scroll is usually unrolled so that one page is exposed at a time, for writing or reading, with the remaining pages rolled up to the left and right of the visible page. A scroll must be read sequentially from beginning to end. To reach a given page, we have to unroll and re-roll many other pages.

Items numbered 2-5 contain calligraphy of the book's era, handwritten by lettering artist Cheryl Jacobsen <http://cheryljacobsen.com>.

4. **Egyptian Papyrus Book with Laces** – Model from ancient times (4th century CE)

This book was made for reading outdoors. Wrapping and rewrapping the various ties of the cover was part of the habit of beginning and concluding recitation from the book. The pages are papyrus, made from the stem of the papyrus plant. Papyrus was invented by ancient Egyptians.

The earliest surviving papyrus is over 5,000 years old. When papyrus plants became scarce, other forms of writing materials emerged including parchment. Jacobsen's calligraphy is in Greek and copied from one of the earliest known manuscripts of Paul's correspondence to the Corinthians. (*Papyrus 72*)

3. Ethiopian Parchment Book – Parchment is a tightly stretched piece of animal skin usually from a sheep, goat or calf. The Ethiopian binding technique we see here may have emerged as early as the 4th century and was in use for hundreds of years. The wooden boards are sewn onto the pages through multiple holes (or tunnels) near the spine's edge. This pattern is one of the elements that differentiates an Ethiopian binding from other text blocks sewn with a series of chain stitches across the spine. (Hanmer) Jacobsen's calligraphy is taken from the 17th or early 18th century Ethiopic manuscript *The Golden Gospel of Zala*. It tells the story of an evangelizer and first metropolitan of Ethiopia. Zala 'Amanu'el is a rock-hewn church located close to the border of the historical site Däg'a Tämben. (ETHIO-SPARE)

2. Wooden Board Book – model of a book from the 16th century
The boards of medieval manuscripts were generally made of wood. Oak was commonly used in England and France; beech was usual in Italy. The boards were squared up into the shape of the book. In earlier manuscripts the boards were cut flush with the edges of the pages; after about 1200 CE they began to project beyond the edges and were often beveled on their edges like the one in our exhibit. (Medieval Manuscript Manual) Jacobsen's calligraphy is in the style of Gothic script found in *The Queen Mary Psalter*, written in England in the 14th century. (*Historical Scripts*)

5. German Accountant's Book – model from 16th century industrial society
Made for business records, the book has blank pages. The interesting long stitch bookbinding was common at that time. The sewing passes through the fold of the pages and through the cover. Stitches on the outside are protected by buttons when the book is opened. The long stitch account book opens flat without flexing the binding spine. Jacobsen's calligraphy is done in the style of a 17th century manuscript by historical writing artist Gebhard Overheide of Braunschweig Germany. (*Masterpieces of Calligraphy*)

10. Rosetta Stone Replica

We would not be able to read 5,000 year-old Egyptian writing called hieroglyphs if it were not for this stone. The original is now on display in the British Museum in England.

The Rosetta stone was first set up in a temple in 196 BCE. It was a very elaborate "thank you" message to a Greek ruler of Egypt, Ptolemy V, who reigned in the 2nd century B.C.E., for favors that he had given to the priests. There are three scripts on the stone containing the same message. The top is in Ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs, the middle in demotic, and the bottom in Ancient Greek. The stone was lost until 1779. A French archeologist was able to solve the puzzle of the symbols by matching the royal names in each of the 3 sections. With his knowledge of Greek, he could decipher the meaning of the other symbols. Because of his work, we can understand ancient Egyptian literature and civilization.

11. & 12. Braille books

Braille, developed by Louis Braille in the beginning of the 1800's, is a tactual reading and writing system that is read by touch by people who are blind or visually impaired. Braille uses characters made up of raised dots that which represent letters of the alphabet, numbers, and punctuation marks. The basic Braille symbol, called the Braille cell, consists of six dots arranged in the formation of a rectangle, three dots high and two across. Any combination of one to six dots may be raised within each cell, and the number and position of the raised dots within a cell conveys to the reader the letter, word, number or symbol each cell represents.

These two Braille children's books were donated to the exhibit by the Iowa Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.

The Iowa Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (ILBPH) is a free library service for Iowans who are unable to use standard print materials due to a visual or physical disability. Materials are mailed to and from library patrons at their homes, postage free. The library's collection includes fiction and nonfiction books and magazines for all ages in Braille, digital audio and large print formats. ILBPH is a member of a national network of cooperating libraries coordinated by the National Library Service of the Library of Congress. The Iowa Library for the Blind has circulated more than 8 million books to Iowans and people across the United States and is one of the largest libraries of its kind in the world.

13. The **modern mass market paperback** is machine made. Its binding and paper covers are attached with glue. Early paperbacks were known as "Dime Novels." They were short fiction works with colorful covers that sold for a dime. They were light, portable and disposable. The first dime novel, *Malaeska, the Indian Wife of the White Hunter*, was published in the US in 1860. The first highly regarded mass market paperback in the US was *The Good Earth*, published by Pocket Books in November, 1938. (*Paper for the People*)

14. Miniature Books

Miniature books can be traced to the 13th and 14th centuries, before the invention of printing, when text was handwritten and pictures were painted on pages measuring about 3 by 1 7/8 inches. With the development of the printing press, thinner paper and smaller typefaces, the number of miniature books published increased during the centuries that followed. "Little books" served very practical purposes, holding information in easily portable and compact spaces. Nobles, nuns, priests, students and laypersons found it easier to travel with miniature books tucked into pockets or attached to girdles and belts. Printers enjoyed the challenge of making miniature books with extravagant bindings of tortoise shell, leather, sterling silver, embroidery, and vellum. The classic miniature book is about 3-by-3 inches and can be read with the naked eye. The *Guinness Book of World Records* listed Ian McDonald's 1 millimeter copy of *Old King Cole* as the "smallest book in the world." According to a report in the March 1998, *Miniature Book News*, Anatoli Konenko of Omsk, Russia challenged that record with his miniature version of Chekov's *Hameleon*. It measures .9 millimeter by .9 millimeter, and must be read with a 30-power magnifying glass!

15. **Wooden Stamps** are included for hands-on activities. With these, we can experience the act of hand printing on paper.

16. **Map of the “Spread of Writing”** shows how writing and materials used for writing, such as clay tablets, papyrus, parchment and paper, spread from ancient China in the east to the west.

Sacred Texts

These beautiful photographs show the words from a number of sacred books from the major world religions. There are hand written pages from the #17 **Torah** (the Hebrew Bible from the Jewish faith), #18 the **Bible** (Latin manuscript from the early Christian faith), #19 the **Diamond Sutra** (a Buddhist sermon written in Chinese – a page from the world’s oldest *printed* book) and #20 the **Qur’an** (Muslim scripture written in Arabic).

17. **Torah** means “instruction” or “teaching” and is the holiest book in Judaism. Traditionally the words are written on a scroll of parchment in Hebrew. The **Torah** contains the first five books of the Hebrew Bible. This image comes from the oldest known complete **Torah** scroll which was discovered in Italy. It is housed in the old Glockengasse Synagogue in Cologne, Germany. The document dates from 1155-1225 CE. Notice the **Torah** is written with a double scroll, the text can be accessed from both beginning and end, and the portions of the scroll not being read can remain wound. Image source Wikimedia Commons

<http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:K%C3%B6ln-Tora-und-Innenansicht-Synagoge-Glockengasse-040.JPG>

18. This illuminated manuscript from the Book of Numbers in the **Bible** was hand written in Latin in Belgium in 1407 CE by Gerard Brils. It would be used for reading aloud in a monastery. Monks in monasteries made beautiful decorated manuscripts to reflect the glory of God. Until the printing press was invented the 15th century, every single book had to be written by hand. This **Bible** is currently housed in Malmesbury Abbey, Wiltshire, England. Image source Wikimedia Commons

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Bible.malesbury.arp.jpg>

19. When a Chinese monk was sweeping sand out a cave where he was living near the Gobi desert in 1900, he uncovered one of the world’s great literary secrets: a time capsule from the ancient Silk Road. Inside, scrolls were piled from floor to ceiling, undisturbed for a thousand years. The gem within was the **Diamond Sutra** printed on May 11, 868 CE—12 centuries earlier! Seven strips of yellow-stained paper were printed from carved wooden blocks and pasted together to form a scroll over 16 feet long. Though written in Chinese, the text is one of the most important sacred works of the Buddhist faith, which was founded in India. This key Buddhist teaching, made 500 years before the Gutenberg Bible, is the world’s oldest printed book. You are looking at a copy of the first page of the **Diamond Sutra**.

The word **Sutra** comes from Sanskrit, the ancient and sacred language of India. It means a religious teaching or sermon, and is most often used to describe the teachings of the Buddha. Sutras preached by the Buddha were committed to memory by his disciples and passed down from generation to generation. The illustration at the beginning of this **Diamond Sutra** shows the Buddha expounding the sutra to an elderly disciple. Image licensed from: British Library ImagesOnline 7-30-13.

20. This image from the **Qur'an** is from the First Surah, or chapter. Known as the Al-Fatiha ("The Opening"), it is a prayer for God's guidance. This text was created by Turkish calligrapher Hattat Aziz (1871-1934). It is in the Arabic script. In the 7th century, the Islamic faith was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. The word of God had to be written down by his followers and passed on correctly. Scribes strive to convey the word of god as perfectly and beautifully as they can. (*Eyewitness Books: Book*)
Image source Wikimedia Commons

<http://upload.wikimedia.org/Wikipedia/commons/5/50/FirstSurahKoran.jpg>

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Comments or questions, please email Karen Jutzi at karen.jutzi@yale.edu

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