A History of Booksellers, the Old and the New / 1874 / Henry Curwen / Chatto & Windus, 1874


Categories. The selling of books dates back to ancient times. The founding of libraries in c.300 BC stimulated the energies of the Athenian booksellers. In Rome, toward the end of the republic, it became the fashion to have a library, and Roman booksellers carried on a flourishing trade. In the book of Jeremiah the prophet is represented as dictating to Baruch the scribe, who described the mode in which his book was written. These scribes were the earliest booksellers, and supplied copies as they were demanded Book culture in the Middle Ages was dominated by monasteries, which became centers of intellectual life. The largest monasteries had rooms called scriptoriaRooms in monasteries where monks copied, decorated, and preserved volumes. Where monks copied, decorated, and preserved both religious and secular volumes.Â The desire for knowledge among the growing middle class and the new availability of classical texts from ancient Greece and Rome helped fuel the Renaissance, a period of celebration of the individual and of a turn toward humanism. For the first time, texts could be widely dispersed, allowing political, intellectual, religious, and cultural ideas to spread widely.