

## Reed pens

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Reed pens are an ancient type of pens that were made of a reed straw or bamboo by cutting and shaping them. They were used for writing on papyrus, and were the most common writing instrument at the time when the New Testament was being written. Reed pens with relatively modern characteristics, for example, a split nib, have been found in Ancient Egyptian sites dating from the 4th Century BC. Reed pens have a long and interesting history. The invention of inks paralleled the introduction of paper. The early Egyptians, Romans, Greeks and Hebrews, used papyrus and parchment papers to write on. One of the oldest pieces of writing on papyrus that is known to us today is the famous Egyptian "Pnisse Papyrus" dating back to 2000 B.C. The Romans made reed pens, that were most suitable for parchment and ink, from the hollow tubular-stems of marsh grasses (precisely from the jointed bamboo plant). They converted bamboo stems into a primitive form of fountain pen. They cut one end into the form of a pen nib or point. The principle was very much alike with the one that is used in modern fountains: the stem was filled with writing fluid or ink; when you squeeze the reed fluid is forced to the nib so you can write with it.

Nevertheless, reed pens were very stiff and couldn't retain a sharp point for a long time. Eventually they were replaced by quill pens. But nowadays the interest to reeds was revived and the reed pen is used as an important writing instrument in calligraphy (primarily for making bold strokes).

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