



# **The Voynich Manuscript: The Unsolved Riddle of an Extraordinary Book Which has Defied Interpretation for Centuries**

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## **The Voynich Manuscript: The Unsolved Riddle of an Extraordinary Book Which has Defied Interpretation for Centuries** Gerry Kennedy , Rob Churchill

In 1912, Wilfrid Voynich, an antiquarian book dealer, stumbled upon a strange volume, its vellum pages covered in a beautiful but unrecognisable script accompanied by equally mystifying pictures. The codex has remained undeciphered from that day to this. Voynich believed the codex to be the work of medieval philosopher Roger Bacon, others that of the Elizabethan mathematician and occultist John Dee. Whoever created the book—which now resides at Yale University—it remains to this day a singular enigma which continues to defy the best efforts of linguists, cryptologists, and scholars. With the benefit of the authors' exhaustive research, readers can hazard their own guesses as to the meaning and provenance of this most beguiling of mysteries.

## **The Voynich Manuscript: The Unsolved Riddle of an Extraordinary Book Which has Defied Interpretation for Centuries Details**

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## **From Reader Review The Voynich Manuscript: The Unsolved Riddle of an Extraordinary Book Which has Defied Interpretation for Centuries for online ebook**

### **Anne says**

I heard of the Voynich Manuscript for the first time just a few weeks ago, and I'm not sure how I'd missed it before that - it's absolutely fascinating. Check it out on Wikipedia, and if you're intrigued, pick up this book to find out all that's known and unknown about the mysterious manuscript.

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### **Michael says**

Considering my fondness of Hisperic Literature in its various manifestations , I could not get through this book. I will revisit...

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### **S. Div. says**

Literary adventurers pounce on the opportunity to become enchanted by mysterious codes, their origins and authors shrouded in secrecy. Such curiosities allow their readers to take up magnifying glasses and burn midnight oil, fancying themselves the one to provide decades-hidden insight. It is with such vigor that one approaches The Voynich Manuscript, by Gerry Kennedy and Rob Churchill. The authors deliver a thorough exploration of a potentially insightful Goddess-oriented manuscript against a paternalistic playground of men attempting to understand and exploit it. To that end, this book is more about the story of the key figures and life around the manuscript, than it is on providing a solid focus on decoding the codex, itself. Found in 1912 by Wilfrid Voynich, the legacy of the manuscript came under public scrutiny, where it remains still. Kennedy learned at the funeral of a family member that Voynich was a distant relative of his. Through that lens the introduction of the text is quite personal, though the book quickly progresses into academic detailing of the manuscript's supposed journey into the present.

Through many conjectures about the linguistic origins of the text and the possible influences of its outlandish astrological and horticultural illustrations, there is still little known about the origins of the manuscript. Cryptologists may enjoy the abundance of chapters devoted to the meticulous methods employed in attempting to decipher the code. More esoteric types may resonate with the scant pages lending it to being a written account of glossolalia (speaking in tongues), or the artful result of medieval mental illness. The authors even give rich exploration to the possibility that the manuscript is a hoax. Whatever impression readers take from the research behind this book about the Voynich Manuscript, without doubt they will have been impressed by the legacy and mystery of its path.

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### **Christopher Roth says**

I am probably only going to read one book about the Voynich Manuscript, and I'm glad it was this one; I did research first, trying to figure out which one was the most comprehensive. This book is surprisingly well written, surprisingly scholarly, and very balanced and thorough, giving the reader enough background, information, and state of the debate to make his or her own tentative conclusion about the Manuscript. Personally, I am, like one of the co-authors of this book, leaning strongly toward modern hoax, probably by Voynich. But I am open to the possibility that it is a centuries-old work of what we'd now call "outsider art"--i.e., the product of a neuro-atypical mind pursuing a personal project with no intent necessarily to communicate anything to anyone else. In either case, that would mean that the writing in the manuscript is not a code or a cipher but something designed merely to resemble a natural language. It reminds me a lot of some works at an exhibit of art by autistic people that I saw once. And I personally think that the illustrations depict a biological interpretation of the transmigration of souls, with the naked "nymphs" being a representation of souls in the bardo. But who the hell knows?! The important next step is for someone to convince Yale University--which houses the original--to allow carbon-dating and other testing upon it. In fact, there should be a mass movement to petition Yale to do this. I'm surprised that isn't a bigger issue.

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### **Bill says**

Unique mystery manuscript - undeciphered, unintelligible. Real? Fake?  
Defied interpretation for at least one century

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### **Tracey says**

I am wavering between two and three stars for this book because it was rather enjoyable to read.

The Voynich Manuscript is a rather strange manuscript that has resisted all attempts to be explained as to what it is about.

Kennedy and Churchill attempt to look at every possible angle of what this book is about, from a historical document to a hoax. They present the various players in the history of the manuscript and look at what influence they have made on the book. All the theories are collected so as readers we can just be absorbed by the lengths people have gone to in trying to make sense of this manuscript.

I enjoyed the book, I enjoyed the theories and it was nicely presented. A good read.

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### **Robin Clark says**

#### **The book that cannot be read**

I love a good mystery! The Voynich Manuscript is one of the greatest mysteries of all time. I can't say I have read this book...no one has, in the true sense of the meaning! It is written in an unknown language, lavishly illustrated, with strange plants, animals and astrological signs. It imbues a timeless essence of 'something.'

I love this book. It seems so familiar and organic. You can download or stream the original images of this book that has been dated back to around 1420. <http://archive.org/stream/TheVoynichM...>

The Voynich Manuscript has never been deciphered. I think this is what I like most about it. Voynich is a living mystery, an open invitation perhaps to another world! And on this note...readers may want to also check out THE GARDEN: <http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/97...>

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### **Kate Irwin-smiler says**

In the early 20th century, Wilfrid Voynich announced that he had found a mysterious medieval manuscript in Southern France. This manuscript is filled with unreadable text and indecipherable illustrations of plants, people, and stars. This book reviews the intriguing history of what has happened since - a variety of academics and others trying to interpret the contents of this manuscript, which is currently held by the Beinecke Library at Yale. It's an interesting read - I had never heard of the manuscript until shortly before I ran across this book. The color plates and other illustrations demonstrate what the authors call the sheer "weirdness" of the manuscript. It's just not normal. At a first glance, it looks like an ordinary medieval text. But it has resisted all efforts to read the text, and even the illustrations of plants have proved unidentifiable. The authors posit no grand theory regarding the manuscript, so if you're up on Voynich, you might want to skip this. But this was a comprehensive introduction for the uninitiated.

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### **Hope says**

I have long been intrigued, possibly obsessed, by the actual Voynich Manuscript, an enigmatic collection of undecipherable codes and illustrations, of undetermined age and authorship, i.e. no one knows what it is, when it was made, or where it came from. It surfaced a century or so ago. It could be a lot of things, including a diabolically clever hoax.

Perhaps this should have been titled, "More Than You Ever Realized You Didn't Need To Know About the Voynich Manuscript." The book is a long drawn-out study that goes into possibilities and probabilities, perhaps in more detail than is necessary. The history and various forms of ciphers are studied. The history and various forms of ecstatic drawing are covered. The history and various forms of scripts are looked at. The history and various forms on forgeries and literary hoaxes are studied. I wanted the information, and so read the entire thing, but in the end I was relieved it was all over. Fascinating but: Enough already!

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### **Todd says**

Fantastic book! The authors look at many aspects of the manuscript and examine each one detailing both what's likely and what's not possible about each. When it comes right down to it, no one really knows what this manuscript is. It might be legitimate or it could be a hoax or fraud. It might be the creation of a lunatic, or a lost language. It might be a phonetic alphabet helping to translate a foreign language. And then, what about the drawings? Are the fantastical plants pure imagination or an apothecary cookbook? Or maybe an alchemical manual or a horticultural guide.

It's a captivating manuscript and the authors do a good job of examining the thing. The authors say what they believe to be the most likely reason behind the manuscript, but they remain remarkably even keeled

throughout the book, never advancing one theory over another yet detailing what's likely and what's no in each one presented. They try to track the provenance of it and spend a good deal of time trying to follow the various personalities that have come in contact with the book.

A must read.

(A web search shows that the manuscript has finally been carbon dated to the mid-to-late 15th century, but that does little to pin down the actual date since it could easily have been old vellum used in its creation. This carbon dating was done after publication of the book and one of the chapters examines just how old it is.)

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### **Betty Cross says**

The chronology bounces around a bit, as another reviewer said, but this is an excellent introduction to the mysterious Voynich manuscript. In addition, it's a good example of how many inaccurate ways a coded message could be decoded by self-deluded amateur code-breakers.

For the Voynich Manuscript truly is a code. It features odd-looking plants only vaguely resembling those in a medieval herbary text (ie, a manual of herbs with medicinal properties), surrounded by a hand-written text in an unknown alphabet.

I don't believe I'm spoiling the ending when I say that to me the book is either a hoax or a highly personal visionary experience by a sufferer from some sort of neuropathology.

I recommend this book for anyone who's fascinated by ancient languages and alphabets, and loves a good historical mystery with occult overtones.

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### **Elizabeth says**

This is either a superb hoax, played out centuries ago or more recent times, or an erudite Eastern's study book from the 16th/17th century. Whether it is a code, or a private language, this was a thoughtful read.

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### **Xiphias says**

A lot of books on these kinds of subjects tend to be really poorly written, full of insane conjecture, or both.

This book is full of OTHER PEOPLE'S insane conjecture, which it then carefully and entertainingly explains, and deconstructs. It also provides a brief whirlwind tour of all the fascinating people who have been, or may have been, connected to the manuscript in some way.

All in all, a very impressive and solid work of scholarship on one of the most bizarre mysteries in the world. It's a fast read, too, so you really have no reason not to check it out.

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## **Niki says**

The most interesting book that will have you asleep in nine pages or less.

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## **Amalie says**

Along with Gobekli Tepe and the Lead Books (found in Jordan), The Voynich Manuscript is one of the greatest mysteries of all time. It is definitely the only book catalogued at Goodreads that **cannot be read** by anyone in the true sense of the meaning!

The Voynich is written in an unknown writing system in the early 15th century that has never been seen before or since. Some experts assume that it is written in a substitution cipher, and 600 years of studies have not been able to work out the language.

I think those who study the Voynich, has no clue what they are doing. They seem to have their own idea of what they want the manuscript to be, and they make it fit that view. The truth is, no one has deciphered the Voynich to this day. What you find here are different views of experts.

The Voynich contains drawings of unidentified plants, of enigmatic charts, and of nude women bathing together in some strange bizarre tubs. If you are interested in any of the above check this out at <https://archive.org>

Personally, I think this is a big joke of some medieval scholar.

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