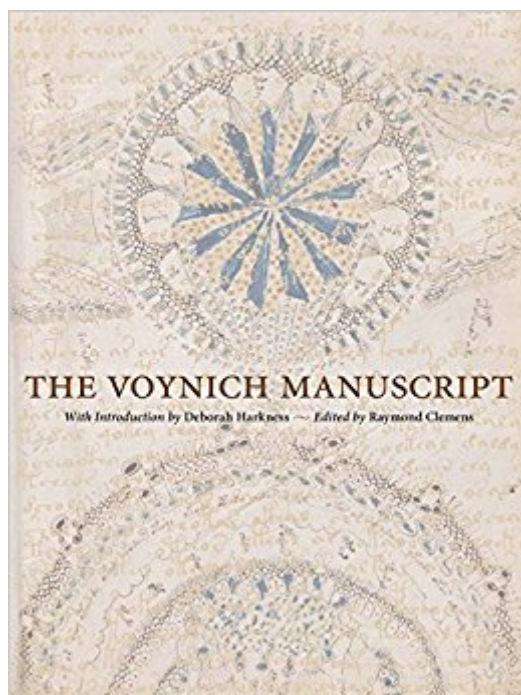


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# The Voynich Manuscript



## Synopsis

The first authorized copy of this mysterious, much-speculated-upon, one-of-a-kind, centuries-old puzzle. The Voynich Manuscript is produced from new photographs of the entire original and accompanied by expert essays that invite anyone to understand and explore the enigma. Many call the fifteenth-century codex, commonly known as the “Voynich Manuscript,” the world’s most mysterious book. Written in an unknown script by an unknown author, the manuscript has no clearer purpose now than when it was rediscovered in 1912 by rare books dealer Wilfrid Voynich. The manuscript appears and disappears throughout history, from the library of the Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II to a secret sale of books in 1903 by the Society of Jesus in Rome. The book’s language has eluded decipherment, and its elaborate illustrations remain as baffling as they are beautiful. For the first time, this facsimile, complete with elaborate folding sections, allows readers to explore this enigma in all its stunning detail, from its one-of-a-kind “Voynichese” text to its illustrations of otherworldly plants, unfamiliar constellations, and naked women swimming through fantastical tubes and green baths. The essays that accompany the manuscript explain what we have learned about this work—from alchemical, cryptographic, forensic, and historical perspectives—but they provide few definitive answers. Instead, as New York Times best-selling author Deborah Harkness says in her introduction, the book “invites the reader to join us at the heart of the mystery.”

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"For the first time, a complete reproduction [of] The Voynich Manuscript (Yale University Press), has been published, featuring essays exploring what is known about the book and extra-wide margins so readers can record their responses to its beguiling, beautiful strangeness." — Nina Maclaughlin, *Boston Globe*

"For people who like a good historical mystery, this first authorized publication of the fifteenth- or sixteenth-century Voynich Manuscript will fascinate." — Rebecca Onion, *Slate*

"The publication by Yale University Press of an actual-size colored facsimile, with an informative set of specialist essays on the manuscript's history, materials, cryptological puzzles, and public impact, will no doubt encourage wider engagement with its enigmas and set off a multitude of amateur as well as professional attempts to decipher it." — Eamon Duffy, *The New York Review of Books*

"Bibliophiles rejoice — one of the book world's most fascinating and enduring riddles is now available for all to examine. The so-called 'Voynich Manuscript' is proof that, even in our increasingly demystified world, mystery is still alive. . . . For the first time, Yale has reprinted the manuscript in full, in a gorgeous new edition coupled with scholarly essays on the book. All told, the new edition should continue to stoke interest in the eternally mysterious artifact." — New Criterion

"A mouthwatering facsimile of the incunabulum, complete with foldout pages — one origami-ed into six folios — and a handful of scholarly interrogations." — Peter Lewis, *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*

"This new book, reproducing the entire Voynich Manuscript, is a godsend. While the essays offer valid clues to the manuscript's age and relation to late medieval science, the manuscript itself stubbornly refuses to yield its secrets." — Roger S. Wieck, Department of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts, The Morgan Library & Museum

"A book worthy of its subject in every way. Clemens and his collaborators have done an extraordinary job teasing out some of the secrets and wonders of the enigmatic Voynich Manuscript in ways that will make this volume an invaluable resource for many years to come." — Bruce Holsinger, author of *A Burnable Book*

"Many hands have held Voynich's now-eponymous book over the centuries . . . yet none of them have managed convincingly to solve its mysteries." — Deborah Harkness, from the Introduction

Raymond Clemens is Curator of Early Books and Manuscripts at the Yale University Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library and coauthor of *Introduction to Manuscript Studies*. Deborah Harkness is a historian of science, professor at the University of Southern California, and the author of the New York Times best-selling *All Souls* trilogy.

Of this enigmatic manuscript's many reprintings, this is the highest quality I have seen. It is an

authorized copy published by the Yale University Press. (Yale University's Beinecke Library is the current owner of the manuscript) This volume contains detailed, 1:1 scale, photographic reproductions of every page of the manuscript. The foldouts from the original are printed at full scale on special foldout pages. I was pleased to discover that the binding is folio stitched, rather than the loose leaf pages common in many reproductions. In addition to the facsimile, the book contains six chapters dedicated to the history of the manuscript and the attempts that have been made to decipher it. While these chapters contain little new information, they are well researched, and cover what can be known about the manuscript without straying into the realm of unprovable hypothesis. In conclusion, if you ever wanted to page through The Voynich Manuscript on something other than a computer screen... this is as good an opportunity as you will ever find.

I found a fabulous recipe for elbow softening, and the ladies' bath cure sounds nice. -- No seriously, this is a beautiful reproduction of an enigmatic manuscript, and my favorite book I can't actually read. I like that it's a life sized copy of the pages, and that it includes information about how it's bound, photos of even the top and bottom, etc. The white borders didn't bother me; the alternative would be a smaller book to keep the scale 1:1. Personally I think the border sets it off well, but you can see for yourself in the photo. Paper is thick and not too glossy (bleed-through you can see in photos is just on the original pages, of course), and the fold-outs feel sturdy. My camera's old, so I apologize for the quality, but thought I'd add since there aren't other photos up (at the moment).

This amazing volume contains a complete reproduction of the Voynich manuscript. As Raymond Clemens writes in the introduction "this facsimile strives to reproduce as much of the experience of leafing through the original as possible". This goal has been wonderfully achieved. The reproduction of the manuscript is accompanied by a set of very informative essays by outstanding scholars: they provide an excellent introduction for those new to the study of the manuscript, as well as a reliable assessment of the state of the art that will be of interest to all researchers.

Probably the most beautiful text I own next to my collection of Emily Dickinson's poetry collection that was written on old envelopes.

This oversized, hardcover reprint of Beinecke MS 408, commonly known as the Voynich Manuscript after Wilfrid Voynich who purchased it in 1912, makes for a nice addition to anyone's collection. As

Raymond Clemens writes in the preface, "This facsimile strives to reproduce as much of the experience of leafing through the original as possible. Each photograph in the facsimile section is reproduced at roughly the same size as the original page in the Voynich Manuscript" (pg. xvi). The essays following the enigmatic fifteenth century manuscript examine the earliest owners, Voynich the buyer, physical findings, cryptographic attempts, alchemical traditions, and the world's most mysterious manuscript, along with a chronology of the document. Deborah Hakrness, author of the introduction, writes, "This collections of essays, and the facsimile of the Voynich Manuscript that accompanies it, do not attempt to arrive at definitive answers to the many perplexing questions that remain about the text. Instead, they invite the reader to join us at the heart of the mystery as we strive to better understand this complex book and its history" (pg. ix). Those interested in the esoteric or bizarre will find this a great addition to their collection.

Beautiful oversized volume that has finally delivered the Voynich Manuscript to the public in a format that it so richly deserves. The original book is presented in clear photo facsimiles of every page and detail including large foldouts to cover the foldout sections within the original manuscript. This book has been a fascination of mine for some time and to be able to finally look at the images of every page, take my time doing so, and then enjoy reading some of the collected essays and history of it makes this purchase worth every penny.

A bevy of insight from experts in the field accompanies high-resolution scans of the admittedly impenetrable manuscript, complete with fold-out sections that mirror the fold-out sections found in the original. The entire work is exquisitely bound and encased in a translucent vellum jacket. Set aside a few hours to get lost in the mystery of the Voynich for a while, and then leave it somewhere in the house (a coffee table, likely) for someone else to find. You've got an excellent conversation piece for years to come.

Very good version and scan of the original. Clear, easy to see all the details and even have enough room to write your own comments. Very pleased with my purchased.

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