

Yale University Library
Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library

Guide to the Wilfred M. Voynich and Ethel Voynich Provenance and Research files on the Cipher (Voynich) Manuscript

Beinecke MS 408A



Compiled by Mary Caldera from catalog description by Barbara Shailor

2023 June

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
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New Haven, CT 06520-8330
(203) 432-2977
beinecke.library@yale.edu
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

CALL NUMBER: Beinecke MS 408A

CREATOR: Voynich, Wilfred Michael, 1865-1930

TITLE: Wilfred M. Voynich and Ethel Voynich provenance and research files on the Cipher (Voynich) manuscript

DATES: 1666; 1912-1976

BULK DATES: 1912-1976

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 7 linear feet (14 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English; Latin

SUMMARY: The collection contains correspondence, notes, and articles on the provenance and research on the Cipher (Voynich) manuscript.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.voynichprovenance>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.voynichprovenance>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to beinecke.images@yale.edu.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Given to the Beinecke Library in 1969 by H. P. Kraus who had purchased it from the estate of Ethel Voynich.

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

Preferred Citation

Wilfred M. Voynich and Ethel Voynich Provenance and Research Files on the Cipher (Voynich) manuscript. General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

Related Materials

Associated material: Cipher manuscript (Voynich manuscript) (Beinecke MS 408), Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

Biographical / Historical

Wilfred M. Voynich (1865-1930) was an antiquarian and rare book dealer. He acquired the Cipher manuscript, now known as the Voynich manuscript, in 1912. The undeciphered manuscript and accompanying files were inherited by his wife Ethel Voynich in 1930. Wilfred and Ethel Voynich conducted research on the manuscript's provenance and meaning.

Scope and Contents

The collection contains correspondence, notes, and articles on the provenance and research on the Cipher (Voynich) manuscript.

Arrangement

The material is arranged as received.

Collection Contents

| | | |
|------------|--|--------------------|
| b. A | Johannes Marcus Marci of Cronland, autograph letter | AD 1666 [or 1665?] |
| | <p>Autograph letter of Johannes Marcus Marci of Cronland in which he presents the manuscript to Athanasius Kircher in Rome, in the belief that Kircher would be able to decipher it. "Reuerende et Eximie Domine in Christo Pater. Librum hunc ab amico singulari mihi testamento relictum, mox eundem tibi amicissime Athanisi ubi primum possidere coepi, animo destinaui: siquidem persuasum habui a nullo nisi abs te legi posse. Petijt aliquando per litteras ejusdem libri tum possessor judicium tuum parte aliqua a se descripta et tibi transmissa, ex qua reliqua a te legi posse persuasum habuit; uerum librum ipsum transmittere tum recusabat in quo discifando posuit indefessum laborem, uti manifestum ex conatibus ejusdem hic una tibi transmissis neque prius huius spei quam uitae suae finem fecit. Verum labor hic frustraneus fuit, siquidem non nisi suo Kirchero obediunt eiusmodi sphinges. Accipe ergo modo quod pridem tibi debebatur hoc quaecumque mei erga te affectus indicium; huiusque seras, si quae sunt, consueta tibi felicitate perrumpe. retulit mihi D. Doctor Raphael Ferdinandi tertij Regis tum Boemiae in lingua boemica instructor dictum librum fuisse Rudolphi Imperatoris, pro quo ipse latori qui librum attulisset 600 ducatos praesentarit, authorem uero ipsum putabat esse Rogerium Baconem Anglum. ego judicium meum hic suspendo. tu uero quid nobis hic sentiendum defini, cujus fauori et gratiae me totum commendo maneoque. Reuerentiae Vestrae. Ad Obsequia Joannes Marcus Marci a Cronland. Pragae 19 Augusti. AD 1666 [or 1665?].</p> | |
| b. B | Correspondence | 1919–1961 |
| | <p>Correspondence between W. Voynich and Prof. W. R. Newbold concerning Newbold's supposed decipherment of the manuscript (1919-26). Correspondence between Anne M. Nills, executrix of the estate of Ethel Voynich, and the Rev. Theodore C. Peterson, dated 1935-61, concerning the provenance, dating and decipherment of the manuscript.</p> | |
| b. C | Articles from international newspapers and magazines concerning the announced sale by H. P. Kraus of the cipher manuscript | |
| b. D | Scrapbook of newspaper clippings concerning the cipher manuscript, compiled by Wilfred Voynich | 1912–1926 |
| | Provenance and miscellaneous files Miscellaneous handwritten notes of W. Voynich. | |
| b. E, f. 1 | Ciphers | |
| b. E, f. 2 | Bacon, Roger | |
| b. E, f. 3 | Plant drawings, identifications by Ethel L. V Voynich | |
| b. E, f. 4 | Ethel L. Voynich 's Thorndike notes | |
| b. E, f. 5 | Collation – various notes and versions | |
| b. E, f. 6 | Provenance | |
| b. E, f. 7 | Provenance - John Dee | |
| b. E, f. 8 | Provenance – Tepenecz, Jacobus de | |
| | Photographs of finest page of cipher manuscript. | |

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|-------------|--|
| b. E, f. 9 | Provence - Marcus Mari |
| b. E, f. 10 | Provenance - Prague archives |
| b. F | Miscellaneous material, including handwritten notes by A. Nills about the cipher, and her correspondence about the sale of the manuscript |
| b. G | Five notebooks handwritten by Ethel Voynich Notebooks contain notes on the identification of the plants, medicinal herbs and roots; miscellaneous notes by A. Nills listing some characters or combinations of characters as they appear in the manuscript. |
| b. I | Lectures, pamphlets, reviews and articles concerning the manuscript |
| b. J | Lectures, pamphlets, reviews and articles concerning the manuscript |
| b. K | Lectures, pamphlets, reviews and articles concerning the manuscript Includes the transcript of a seminar held in Washington D. C. on November 1976 entitled "New Research on the Voynich Manuscript." |
| b. L | Lectures, pamphlets, reviews and articles concerning the manuscript |
| b. M | Miscellaneous correspondence between R. Brumbaugh and J. M. Saul (Paris) and J. Arnold (Oak Grove, Mo.) Miscellaneous correspondence between R. Brumbaugh and J. M. Saul (Paris) and J. Arnold (Oak Grove, Mo.). Handwritten transcription of ff. 89v-116r by R. Brumbaugh. |
| b. M | Handwritten transcription of ff. 89v-116r by R. Brumbaugh |