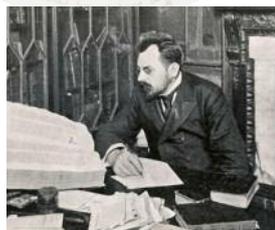


The Voynich Manuscript

Written in a strange language that is completely unknown to all, the **Voynich is the only medieval manuscript** left on the planet that is yet to be deciphered. It appears to consist of a **herbalist's notebook** of plants that have so far not been identified, followed by what looks like a treatise on **astronomy**, another on **cosmology**, a section on **biology**, a section on **pharmacy** and alchemical-esoteric **recipes**.



Wilfrid Voynich

What meaning, if any, does this codex really hold, in what language, writing system or cryptographic code is it written, and what motives led its mysterious author to write a treatise apparently destined to be read by no one? These and many others are the questions surrounding this impenetrable and subjugating book.

This could be a recipe for a contraceptive potion or a secret alchemical formula for obtaining gold, or perhaps it is an elvish testament, and some even postulate that it is the diary of an extra-terrestrial being.

The treatise is named after its latest discoverer: **Wilfrid Voynich**, a Polish antiquarian bookseller, who acquired it in 1912. It had been lost from the Renaissance until then.

Written in a **totally unknown language**, apparently encrypted, it has so far not been decoded even by the military cryptographers who broke the German and Japanese codes in the Second World War. Such a succession of failures has only made the Voynich legend loom even larger.

The mysterious text is illustrated by multiple scenes of naked women, apparently pregnant; they are bathing in a kind of cistern in what may well be an initiatory rite. Unknown or non-existent plants abound, as well as constellations that astronomers are unable to identify. The subject is so exciting and inexhaustible, and the efforts to elucidate this stubborn hieroglyphic text are so vast and considerable, that they have given rise to a whole new science: **voynichology**.



The Voynich has been successively attributed to various historical figures, each more famous and well-known than the last: from the great Franciscan philosopher, scientist and theologian **Roger Bacon**, who lived between 1214 and 1294, to the excellent mathematician, astronomer, astrologer and consultant to the Queen of England Elizabeth I, **John Dee** (1527-1609), or to **Edward Talbot**, alias Kelley (1555-1597), an English alchemist and occultist, Dee's assistant, or to **Simon Bakalar** from Prague –whose real name was Simon Hajeck– the father of Doctor Hajeck, the emperor's physician. And even, of course, to **Leonardo Da Vinci** himself.

In the 21st century, this majestic challenge still remains, in spite of the fact that the efforts to solve it are ever more numerous. This is why it is still said that we are before the most cryptic and unfathomable text in human history, or the greatest literary challenge and enigma of all time.

This facsimile edition aims, among other things, to make its knowledge a little more widely known and to encourage, as far as possible, to draw back the veil and assault the seemingly impregnable fortress of its masked text.

