

Notes from small ring binder, found in a folder marked "Anne Nill research notes on Cipher Manuscript", box 6 of Voynich Papers, Grolier Club Library:

Page 1:

Cipher Ms. The Cipher

Prof. Manly, in his letter of March 16, 1920. To W.M.V., Says:

"I still think there is a possibility that the cipher is less complicated than he [Prof. Newbold] believes, and is largely disguised by the use of nulls. As we are entirely ignorant of the language underlying the cipher, it seems to me that only way in which the nulls can be isolated is by comparing the relative frequencies of the symbols on a considerable number of pages. I have as you know, eight sheets. This number is, I think, hardly sufficient for the purpose in question.

Transcriber note: Along the edge of this page was written, "Sent this quot. to Father Petersen Sept. 11/60"

[W.M.V. then sent him 16 pp. of text (FF. numbered 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 111, 112, 115)

Prof. Manly's letter to Prof. Newbold. Same Date:

"...the comparative frequencies of the cipher symbols agree sufficiently well with the supposition that the manuscript is written in a comparatively simple cipher disguised by the textensive use of nulls, to make that hypothesis still one to be reckoned with.

Page 2:

Cipher Ms. The Cipher

Edith Richert to W.M.V.- Letter Aug 1-1917:

"I should be glad to know your reasons for believing that the symbols vary according to their position. I have my own reasons. I should like to see whether they agree."

In reply, W.M.V. wrote Sept. 18/17:

"I have no reasons for believing that the symbols vary to their positions, as I know nothing about cipher. But it was the opinion of two or three European professors."

Page 3:

Cipher Ms.- The Date

A.M.N To Rudolf Hirseh, U.Pa. letter of Dec. 10, 1952

“In a letter from Dr. Richard Solomon... dated July 9, 1936, he says: “Some weeks ago, in London, I had a short talk about the Ms. with Mr. E.P. [sic: reversed] Goldschmidt, the antiquarian. I was astonished that this eminent connoiseur of mss. is inclined to put the the ms. as far back as the 13th century, or, at least, not to deny the possibility of so early an origin. Nevertheless I, personally, stick to my opinion about the date.

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Cipher Ms. Re Price

(Difficulty in deciding on a price)

In my letter to Thomas R. Adams, V. of Pa., Dated April. 22/52 I said:

“We do realize that this manuscript is extroadinarily difficult to appraise, since it falls in no known category. That is at once its fascination and its drawback, and the fascination seems to entail the drawback. During the more than thirty years which have elapsed since Mr. Voynich brought the manuscript to this country nothing similar to it has come to light. Despite the wide publicity it has received, nor has the solution of the cipher been found (if we exclude Professor Newbold’s solution, which, as you know, has not been accepted). Not with standing long continued work on the problem by other experts and scholars.”

“Scholars love a mystery” Prof. Soloman once said to me, and that seems to me to be true. But in trying to sell the m.s. its mystery seems to be a drawback. What price to ask for a unique and interesting ms. such as this, but which, when the key to the cipher has been found, might prove to be of not great importance, though it will still be unique.

Should I let it be sold at Sotheby’s, risking its being “lost”* somewhere, or must I hang on to it as long as possible, at whatever cost to me in loss of time which I should devote to the problems of E.L.V’s biography and here unpublished music?

July 12/61. The above is now obsolete, since the ms. was suddenly sold to H.P. Kraus today.

*i.e. to rush its falling into the hands of a apparantly private collector