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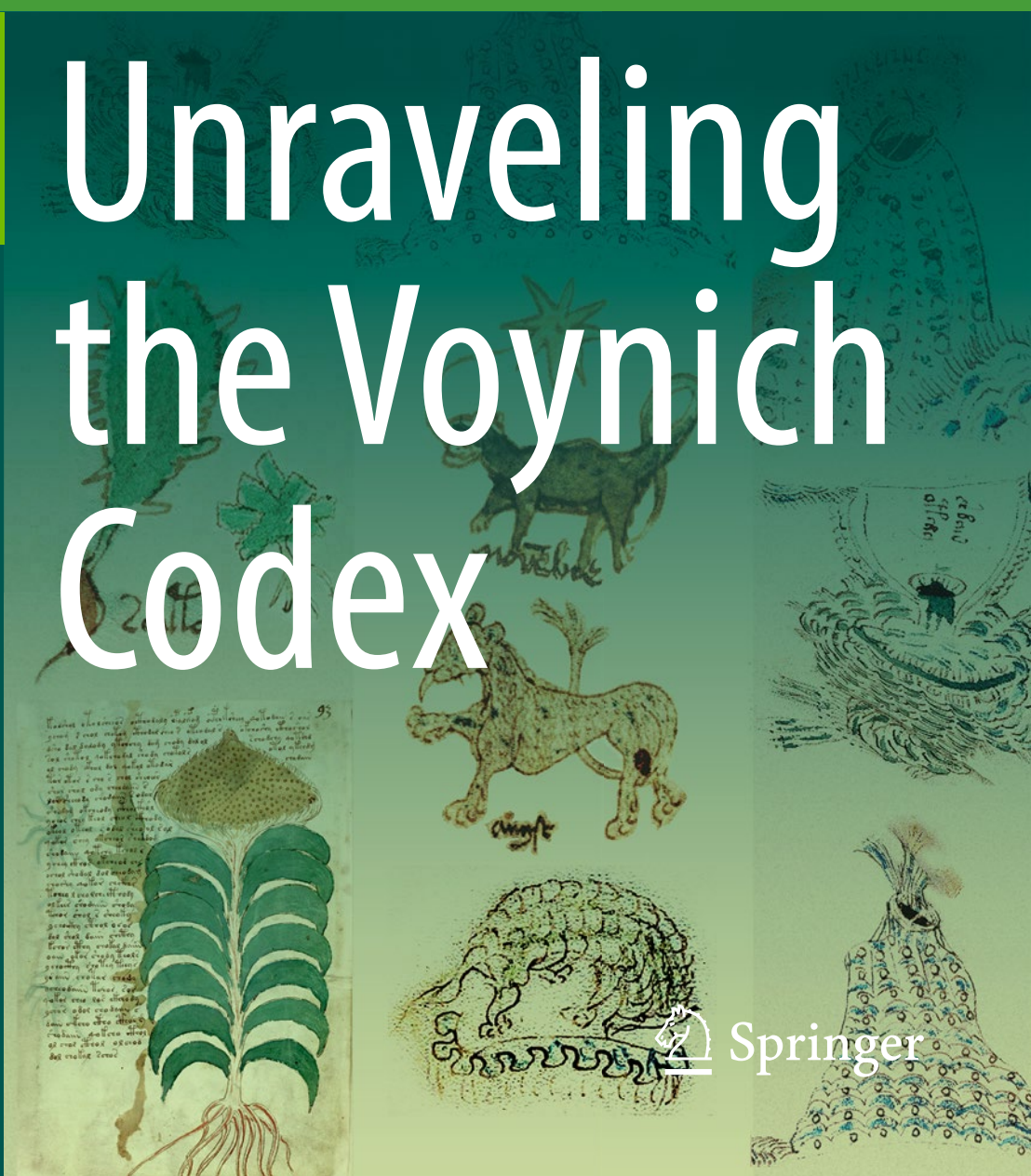
Jules Janick
Arthur O. Tucker

Unraveling the Voynich Codex



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Unraveling the Voynich Codex

Springer

Jules Janick
Department of Horticulture & Landscape Architecture
Purdue University
West Lafayette, IN, USA

Arthur O. Tucker
Department of Agriculture & Natural Resources
Delaware State University
Dover, DE, USA

Contributors

Fernando A. Moreira
Independent Researcher
Calgary, AB, Canada

Elizabeth A. Flaherty
Department of Forestry and Natural Resources
Purdue University
West Lafayette, IN, USA

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For Shirley R. Janick and Sharon L. Tucker

The cover illustration of three sets of images each of New World plants, animals, and Mexican volcanos provide evidence that the Voynich Codex is a post-Columbian Mexican manuscript.

	jaguarundi	La Malinche volcano
prickly pear cactus + agave	ocelot	Pico de Orizaba cauldron
sunflower	armadillo	Popocatèpetl volcano

Foreword

The *Voynich Codex* is a mysterious, bizarre hand-written manuscript discovered by the book dealer Wilfrid Voynich in 1912. Its unique symbols and text have defied translation attempts by world-eminent cryptologists. The *Codex* is encyclopedic in scope and includes approximately 359 images of plants or plant parts, making it primarily an illustrated herbal, a book that combines traditional plant lore and medicinal properties. But it is much more than that. The *Voynich Codex* also depicts more than 500 nymphs, mostly nude, cavorting in pools with weird plumbing. There are strange magic circles, including ones with zodiac, astronomical, and cosmological depictions. The codex includes a large foldout section with kabbalah-like images that may be interpreted as a map. Many of its pages appear to be medical recipes, poetry, or incantations. The *Voynich Codex* has captured the imaginations of many, but all have failed to make sense of it.

This volume summarizes the collaborative attempts of a botanist and emeritus herbarium director at Delaware State University, Arthur O. Tucker, and a horticulturist at Purdue University, Jules Janick, to unravel the *Codex* from a new perspective. We believe that previous attempts to get to grips with the *Voynich Codex* have taken a wrong approach because they have erred on its origins in time and place, relying upon interpretations rather than the hard evidence. Furthermore, no one previously has been able to make sense of its many parts. No one has been successful in deciphering the codex, which holds its secrets. Although we have not fully succeeded, progress has been made.

The collaboration led to an invited seminar by Tucker at Purdue University in 2014 and a coauthored presentation by Janick at the annual meeting of the American Society for Horticultural Science in 2015. A coauthored joint paper expanding plant identifications appeared in 2016. Finally, a symposium entitled *Mysteries of the Voynich Codex: A Meso-American Herbal,* organized by Janick and Tucker, was held in Atlanta in 2016. The symposium abstract caught the attention of Kenneth Teng, a Springer editor, and this volume is the result of those encounters.

The origins of our collaboration are revealing. We first met in 1990. Later in 2007, Janick invited Tucker to speak at a horticultural congress in Indianapolis concerning herbs, for which Tucker is a recognized expert. Tucker became interested in

the *Voynich Codex* in June 2012, when he located a reference to it that coincided with a long interest in Latin American herbs and sixteenth century codices from New Spain. He was amazed at the large number of New World species in the *Voynich Codex* and incorrect identifications by nonbotanists. He sought out collaboration with Rexford H. Talbert, another herb expert and information technologist, formerly at NASA. This resulted in a manuscript entitled *A Preliminary Analysis of the Botany, Zoology, and Mineralogy of the Voynich Manuscript,* based on the identification of 37 plants, seven animals, and the mineral boleite, all indigenous to the New World. The manuscript was submitted in December 2012 to *HerbalGram*, a refereed journal of the American Botanical Council, and was published in 2013. It confirmed a 1944 paper by botanist Hugh O'Neill, which noted that the *Voynich Codex* contained New World plants and must have been written post-Columbus. Furthermore, the Voynichese symbols were decoded into an alphabet based on names attached to some of the plants in the Pharmaceutical section, providing the Rosetta Stone of the elusive codex.

The paper was generally treated with hostility by many members of the Voynich internet community, but received congratulations from academics. It proved a revelation to Janick, who had had minor contact with the *Voynich Codex*, first from a graduate student, Angela Catalina Ghionea, who was seeking advice for her doctoral thesis on magic and science, and later by Professor Lincoln Taiz, who submitted a manuscript on Voynich to Janick, who served as science editor for *Chronica Horticulturae*. Tucker's *HerbalGram* paper was immediately grasped by Janick as a breakthrough and a collaboration was formed that later included Fernando Moreira, a Canadian linguist, and Elizabeth A. Flaherty, a wildlife zoologist at Purdue University. The present book is based on this collaboration.

Janick worked on iconographic analysis of the *Voynich Codex*, and a key finding was achieved when a single foldout page (folio 86v), made up of six sheets, was identified as inspired by kabbalah. It was brought to the attention of Thomas Ryba, a philosophy professor at Purdue University and a theologian at Purdue's St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Center, who confirmed the kabbalah similarity and suggested that it might be a map. Tucker made the inspired leap that the map was associated with the Celestial City of Jerusalem (Angelopolis), in the present-day state of Puebla, Mexico. The city was founded in 1530 by Toribio de Benavente (known as Motolinía), one of the famous Twelve Apostles, Franciscan missionaries who arrived in Mexico in 1524 upon the recommendation of Hernán Cortés after the Aztec conquest. This information put the *Codex* into context in time and space. It gave a potential earliest date to the *Codex* (1530) and suggested that it must have been written before 1571, the date the Inquisition was formally introduced into New Spain, when it would have been dangerous to put any kabbalah images in a manuscript. This also confirmed that there was a Franciscan connection to the *Voynich Codex,* as follows:

1. The Franciscan order had created El Colegio de Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco (in present-day Mexico City; also called Colegio de Santa Cruz) for the sons of

Nahua (Aztec) nobility, and we believe that the author of the *Voynich Codex* must have been associated with that institution.
2. The Franciscans had been supporters of the kabbalah in Spain and could explain this allusion in the codex.
3. Motolinía was a Franciscan friar.
4. Finally, Bernardino de Sahagún, the great chronicler of Aztec culture, was a Franciscan and at one time a professor and dean at the Colegio de Santa Cruz.

With this discovery, a general hypothesis could be created. The author/artist of the *Voynich Codex* must have been associated with the Colegio de Santa Cruz and brought up with Spanish, Western, and Aztec sensibilities (both transcultural and syncretic). As a result, we re-examined the codex through the lens of this hypothesis. Parts of the *Codex* began to confirm and reinforce our assumptions. For example, the decipherment of the Voynichese symbols (or alphabet) allowed the decipherment of a variant of the name of the city Huejotzingo, written on a drawing of the convent-fortress in circle 2 of folio 86v. The zodiac clearly showed an amalgamation of Aztec and Western sensibility, with the replacement of many of the traditional signs with animals native to the New World. The nymphs could be explained as part of the bathing ceremonies of the Aztecs. The many medicinal plants and bathing facilities for concubines were clearly compatible with the gardens at the palace of Nezahualcoyotl as well. Furthermore, folio 86v distinctly showed three volcanoes, which were major landmarks of central Mexico. The presence of the star cluster universally recognized as the Pleiades fitted our hypothesis, as this star cluster was a vital part of Aztec cosmology, and its 52-year cycle was an essential component of Aztec culture and theology associated with the New Fire ceremony.

We found our hypothesis to be reinforced by events that had occurred at the Colegio de Santa Cruz. Many students and staff, such as Bernardino de Sahagún, had become renowned, including Martinus (or Martin) de la Cruz, a Nahua staff physician, and Juannes Badianus (or Juan Badiano), a Nahua teacher of Latin, who collaborated on an illustrated Aztec herbal (now known as the *Codex Cruz-Badianus*), written in Latin in 1552. Others included the indigenous writer Pedro de San Buenaventura, the historian Juan Bautista de Pomar, great grandson of Nezahualcoyotl, and Gaspar de Torres, master of students at Colegio de Santa Cruz from 1568 to 1572, highly educated as a physician and lawyer, a supporter of Indian rights, and governor of Cuba in 1580. In addition, Torres' name and the ligated initials of Juan Gerson, an indigenous artist (*tlacuilo*), were embedded in the first botanical image (folio 1v) of the codex, which suggested that Torres might have been its author and Gerson its illustrator.

Aside from the hard evidence of plant, animal, and mineral identifications, we are fully aware that many of our individual assertions are speculative, but we believe that they are plausible. We continually find associations that provide evidence for the hypothesis of an origin in sixteenth century New Spain. We both admit to academic deficiencies in linguistics and astronomy. Scholars in these fields are needed to complete the picture and we are frustrated at our inability to persuade them to join

our quest. We hope that this book will encourage a community of scholars to complete the task of translating the *Codex*, which, in the final analysis, holds the key. We are convinced that this would be crucial to a fuller understanding of post-colonial Aztec history because this codex comes to us unfiltered by Spanish or Inquisitorial censors. Although we have found evidence to support our hypothesis, we remain open-minded scientists, and look forward to data to prove, disprove, or expand our understanding of the *Voynich Codex*.

West Lafayette, IN, USA — Jules Janick
Dover, DE, USA — Arthur O. Tucker

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The original version of this book was revised. The correction is available at https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-77294-3_17

Contents

Part I
An Introduction to the Voynich Codex

Chapter 1
Origin and Provenance of the Voynich Codex

Arthur O. Tucker and Jules Janick

Origins

In 1912, an unnamed manuscript was purchased from a Jesuit college in Italy by Polish book dealer Wilfrid Voynich (1865–1930). As it is properly a codex, we call it the *Voynich Codex*. Wilfrid Voynich brought it to the USA in 1914 and attempted sell it – albeit unsuccessfully. At one time the codex was in the court of Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II (1552–1612), who was a great collector of books and art for his Kunstkammer, or cabinet of wonders.

The origins of the *Voynich Codex* remain mysterious, and current dogma has been that it is a fifteenth century European manuscript as it was found in Italy and the vellum has been dated to ca. 1425. A strong indication that the codex must have been written after 1492 was based on the identification of a sunflower and capsicum peppers by Hugh O'Neill in 1944 (discussed in detail in Chap. 4). But this evidence was not accepted by most Voynich researchers, who were fixated on the hypothesis that the codex might be an Old World document. This assumption was accepted despite botanical evidence to the contrary and still persists (Clemens 2016). However, there were a few iconoclasts who suggested or promoted a New World origin of the *Voynich Codex*.

The Mexican Connection

The first mention of a New World origin for the *Voynich Codex* that we could discover was by Jacques B.M. Guy of the Telstra Research Laboratories in Clayton, Australia. In a Letter to the Editor of *Cryptologia* (1991b), entitled *Voynich*

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Revisited, the sunflower and capsicum identifications are provided (without a citation or mention of Hugh O'Neill) as evidence that the codex postdated the encounter of America by Christopher Columbus, the Italian explorer and navigator. Jacques B.M. Guy states that a botanist colleague "*soon identified a passionfruit, followed by a few native Australian plants … not a single European plant, and all the rest unknown or fantastic*." He concludes that the *Voynich Manuscript* "*is authentic*" and then mentions that the plants in the 1552 Aztec Badanius [sic] Herbal also are unrecognizable, quoting Blunt and Raphael (1979). However, they are recognizable and were identified by Emmart (1940). Jacques B.M. Guy posits the query: "*Is then the Voynich manuscript a treatise written in Nahuatl by a Mexican (Aztec, Totonac or other convert) who had been taught some Latin*?" He then hedges his supposition and ends his letter as follows: "*but I would be very surprised, very surprised indeed if it turned out to be written in Nahuatl. Still it was a tempting thought, wasn't it?*"

The next mention of a Mexican connection was the online reports/blogs of James C. Comegys, a seventh- and eighth-grade science teacher at Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School in Madera, California. James C. Comegys, who has a Master of Arts degree in linguistics, investigated the Mexican origin of the *Voynich Codex* in collaboration with his twin brother, John D. Comegys. These blogs are no longer on the internet and have not been read by us. However, there is evidence in the title of a 1999 oral presentation, *The congruence of Nahuatl grammar with Voynichese* by James C. Comegys and John D. Comegys, delivered at the Annual Central California Research Symposium at Fresno State University. In addition, James C. Comegys is listed as the author of a document entitled *Keys for the Voynich Scholar: Necessary Clues for the Decipherment and Reading of the World's Most Mysterious Manuscript Which is a Medical Text in Nahuatl Attributable to Francisco Hernández and his Aztec Ticiti* [sic] *Collaborators,* dated 31 May 2001. One copy of this document is filed in a remote Library of Congress warehouse in Maryland and is impossible to access it unless you are a US federal employee. This unusual document consisting of 104 typed pages reads like a personal journal and contains a number of abstracts and unpublished manuscripts without an index. The following statement is found on page iii: "*Unmistakable evidence within the Voynich Manuscript places its origin in Mexico; hieroglyphs, plants, architecture, etc. Moreover the evidence is consistent with the themes and methods of Francisco Hernández Expedition to New Spain in 1570. The best evidence that the Voynich is Mexican however is in grammar, syntax, lexicon and orthography of the document itself.*" We admit to difficulties in understanding the document's linguistic evidence, as explained in Chap. 11. The Voynichese symbols were deciphered and some plants were identified by names, but we remain skeptical about the following: peanut, maguey, Spanish lavender, *micaxihuatol,* cacao tree, cacao flower, and maize. The phytomorph on page 25 (folio 25v) is identified as poinsettia based on a sketch of a "*little dragon breathing fire, making obvious the speculation that the plant is bright red in color*." The plant, which is vegetative, remains unidentified by us, but the "little dragon" has been identified as the Mexican horned lizard (*Phynosoma taurus*), as explained in Chap. 6. James C. Comegys makes four references to Jacques B.M. Guy and mentions that they were in correspondence.

A third reference to the Mexican origin of the *Voynich Codex* was published in *HerbalGram*, a peer-reviewed journal, by Arthur O. Tucker and Rexford H. Talbert,

submitted in December 2012 and published in 2013, the major evidence being that 37 plants, one mineral, and most animals were indigenous to the New World. This book greatly extends this hypothesis and provides additional evidence based on iconographic analysis. This hypothesis was supported by two subsequently published papers, one on botanical identification (Tucker and Janick 2016, see Chap. 4), and another on the presumed illustrator and authorship of the *Voynich Codex* (Janick and Tucker 2017, see Chap. 15).

Finally, an unpublished manuscript by John D. Comegys appeared in 2014 (copyright 2013) entitled *The Voynich Manuscript: Aztec Herbal from New Spain*. This manuscript concluded a Mesoamerican origin for the *Voynich Codex* based on its artwork and Voynichese script. John D. Comegys presents evidence that the codex is written in a form of humanist hand known as courtesan script, the national script of Spain in the sixteenth century, and that the artwork in the botanical drawings is Mesoamerican in style or heritage, including Aztec glyphs and root forms. The language is presumed to be a combination of Nahuatl and Spanish.

Literature

The origin and provenance of the *Voynich Codex* remain mysterious and tortuous. The literature is widespread and includes a huge web presence, several books, and a few scholarly articles. These are listed chronologically with comments in Table 1.1. A history of the codex can be found in Brumbaugh (1978), D'Imperio (1978a), Kennedy and Churchill (2006), and Kircher and Becker (2012), and there is a detailed chronology by Zandbergen (2016, 2017), with many dates based on his discoveries. We are convinced from botanical and zoological evidence (not analyses) that the *Voynich Codex* is a sixteenth century New World document from New Spain and the subject of its origins is in large part the focus of this book. Any manuscript that contains a sunflower and an armadillo cannot be a pre-Columbian Old World manuscript, and we are amazed that the many people involved in this work have not embraced this simple fact. However, the path of the document from Mexico to Europe needs to be explained. The symbols were partially decoded (Tucker and Talbert 2013), and various plants, animals, a mineral, and cities were deciphered. Various cognates with Mexican languages have been found. However, (alas) we have been unable to decipher most of the text, which we believe to be a mixed synthetic language or Nahuatl lingua franca rather than a cipher. Our hypotheses on the *Voynich Codex* are in large part based on the evidence of botanical, zoological, mineralogical, and geographic identification, supplemented by historical, iconographic, and biographical correlates.

Two works summarizing the *Voynich Codex* were found to be informative, fair, and balanced: *The Voynich Manuscript: An Elegant Enigma,* by D'Imperio (1978a/1979), and *The Voynich Manuscript: The Mysterious Code That has Defied Interpretation for Centuries,* by Kennedy and Churchill (2006). There have been three recent facsimile editions: *The Voynich Manuscript: A facsimile of the complete work*, published by the Palatino Press (2016); *The Voynich Manuscript*, edited by

Table 1.1 *Voynich Codex* hypotheses, 1921–2017

Date	Author of hypothesis (background)	Putative date of Voynich	Putative location of Voynich writing	Putative Voynich author	Putative Voynich language	Evidence to support hypothesis	Publication of hypothesis	Notes
1921 (1928)	William R. Newbold (professor of philosophy, University of Pennsylvania, PA, USA)	13th century	UK	Roger Bacon (1214–1294)	Medieval Latin	Claimed to find depiction of Andromeda Spiral Nebula.	Newbold (1928), Theroux (1994)	Announced hypothesis in 1921 lecture, before the College of Physicians and the American Philosophical Society; argument refuted by Manly (1931), Richard Salomon (1931)
1943	Joseph M. Feely (lawyer, Rochester, NY, USA)				Medieval Latin	None cited	Feely (1943)	"*His unmethodical method produced text in unacceptable medieval Latin, in unauthentic abbreviated forms*." (Tiltman 1967/2002)
1944	Hugh O'Neill (plant taxonomist and curator, LCU Herbarium, Catholic University of America, Washington, DC, USA)	Post-1492				Identified four plants, including sunflower and capsicum pepper from the New World.	O'Neill (1944)	Worked from incomplete black and white photostats, but said that six botanists agreed with his identification of the sunflower

1945	Leonell C. Strong (Yale School of Medicine, CT, USA)	ca. 1553	UK	Anthony Askham (astrologer, fl. 1553)	Medieval English	None cited	Strong (1945)	Worked from incomplete photocopies
1950, 1970	William Friedman (National Security Agency, Washington, DC, USA) [Unpublished, but cited by others]				Synthetic universal language	None cited	Tiltman (1967/2002), Zimansky (1970)	"*It was clear that the productions of these two men were much too systematic, and anything of the kind would have been almost instantly recognizable.*" (Tiltman 1967/2002). Theory supposedly found in an envelope in the archives of the Philological Quarterly's editor (Zimansky 1970)
1962	William Friedman (National Security Agency, Washington, DC, USA)		"*Definitely European:*" UK, France, Italy, or Germany		Latin-based, may be English, French, Italian, or Teutonic	None cited	Friedman (1962), Zimansky (1970)	Newspaper article by Elizebeth Friedman, reported on her husband's findings, contrary to Tiltman and Zimansky; reported that a "Dutch" botanist named "Holm" did not agree with O'Neill's plant identifications, but did not provide any other information

(continued)

Table 1.1 (continued)

Date	Author of hypothesis (background)	Putative date of Voynich	Putative location of Voynich writing	Putative Voynich author	Putative Voynich language	Evidence to support hypothesis	Publication of hypothesis	Notes
1963	Hellmut Lehmann-Haupt (bibliographic – a consultant to H.P. Kraus, owner of MS 1962–1969)		Northern Italy, also possibly central or southern Italy or the Arab world		Arabic?	None cited	Letter to John Tiltman dated 1 November 1963; see D'Imperio (1978a, b)	
1967 (2002)	John H. Tiltman (National Security Agency, Washington, DC, USA)	1500–1641	Europe			None cited	Tiltman (1967/2002)	Presented 4 March 1967 to Baltimore Bibliophiles, later expanded and presented to the NSA in 1975 and 1976, but only released by the NSA in 2002: "*My analysis, I believe, shows that the text cannot be the result of substituting single symbols for letters in the natural order*"
1974	Robert S. Brumbaugh (professor of medieval philosophy, Yale University)			More than one writer (Currier A and Currier B)	Latin	Incorrect identification of plants	Brumbaugh (1974)	"*Given this start, I hope that someone whose botany is better than my own will work through the 10 pages of plant drawings …*"

1976 (2002), 2007	James R. Child (computer analyst, NSA, Washington, DC, USA)	ca. 1500	Northern Europe		Unknown North Germanic dialect	None cited	Child (1976/2002), Child (2007)	"*The distribution of vowel and consonant letters, some of which are surely Latin letters, makes a cipher improbable.*" "*… the Voynich manuscript is in a natural language especially reminiscent of those of the Germanic family.*"
1976 (1992)	Prescott Currier (linguist, UK)		UK?	Roger Bacon? or John Dee? (1527–1608)		None cited	Currier (1976)	Two authors, A and B
1976	William Ralph Bennett (professor of engineering and applied science and physics, Yale University)				Language similar to Hawaiian	None cited	Bennett (1976)	"*… it is worth mentioning that there actually are languages in some parts of the world that do have values of the entropy per character as low as those listed*"
1977	DENDAI [DICK] (Henry Ephron, American cryptanalyst)	16th century	Nola, Italy	Giordano Bruno	Latin	None cited	Dendai (1977)	
1978	Robert S. Brumbaugh (professor of philosophy, Yale University)		Khazar (Ukraine)		Forgery to fool Rudolf II, written in pseudo-Latin	None cited	Brumbaugh (1978)	

(continued)

Table 1.1 (continued)

Date	Author of hypothesis (background)	Putative date of Voynich	Putative location of Voynich writing	Putative Voynich author	Putative Voynich language	Evidence to support hypothesis	Publication of hypothesis	Notes
1978	John Stojko		Europe?		Slavic language of the Khazars (Ukrainian)	None cited	Stojko (1978)	
1978 (1979)	Mary E. D'Imperio (computer analyst, NSA, Washington, DC, USA)					None cited	D'Imperio (1978a/1979)	Primarily a review of the literature, but concentrates upon European sources almost exclusively and ignores possible sources in the New World
1978 (2009)	Mary E. D'Imperio (computer analyst, NSA, Washington, DC, USA)					None cited	D'Imperio (1978b/2009)	Found statistical evidence for more than one scribe
1979 (2009)	Mary E. D'Imperio (computer analyst, NSA, Washington, DC, USA)	20th century				None cited	D'Imperio (1979/2009)	"*It is hard to imagine any directly underlying natural language plain text whose characteristics can explain the phenomena adequately.*" & "*… an agglutinative language such as Turkish would provide an additional interesting test*"

1986	Michael Barlow (Quebec, Canada)	ca. 1163	Northern Europe	Wilfrid Voynich (1865–1930)		None cited	Barlow (1986)	Fraud
1987	Leo L. Levitov (doctor of medicine)			Cathar	Polyglot oral tongue	None cited	Levitov (1987)	Claimed that this is a liturgical manual of the Endura, or Cathar suicide rite
1991, 2004, 2006	Jacques B.M. Guy (Telstra Research Laboratories, Clayton, Australia)	16th century			Chinese, Nahuatl	None cited	Guy (1991a, b, c, 1997), Kennedy and Churchill (2004, 2006)	Proposed Marco Polo connection
1995	Eugene Newsom (code breaker in the U.S. Army Signal Corp Officer in World War II)	17th century	Italy	Tommaso Campanella (1568–1609)			Newsom (1995)	Self-published pamphlet by the author, who died in 2004
1996	Sergio Toresella (Italian historian of medicine)		Italy			None cited	Toresella (1996)	Alchemical herbal by author who had a psychiatric disturbance
1997	Jacques B.M. Guy (Telstra Research Laboratories, Clayton, Australia)				Two dialects of a true, natural language	None cited	Guy (1997)	Distribution of signs provide evidence for real language
1999	Antoine Casanova (computer science Ph.D. candidate, University of Paris)	1571–1577	Mexico		Two languages detected, possibly four at most	None cited	Casanova (1999)	"*We regard the manuscript as one single text or as a conglomerate of cryptograms endowed with six separate alphabets*"

(continued)

Table 1.1 (continued)

Date	Author of hypothesis (background)	Putative date of Voynich	Putative location of Voynich writing	Putative Voynich author	Putative Voynich language	Evidence to support hypothesis	Publication of hypothesis	Notes
1999, 2001	James C. Comegys (middle school teacher, California) and John D. Comegys (twin brother of J.C. Comegys)	1551–1586	Mexico	Francisco Hernández and Aztec collaborators	Classical Nahuatl	Incorrect plant identification by middle school students	Comegys and Comegys (1999), Comegys (2001)	Claimed that reading is from top to bottom, right to left
1999	Robert L. Williams CT, USA				Meaningless text in Old Greek	None cited	Williams (1999)	*"I believe the manuscript is written in a language invented by it's* [sic] *author, who used symbol/letter substitution cipher base on Greek"*
2000–2011	Philip Neal (researcher, natural language processing; technical author, information technology)				"*I have long believed that the Voynich manuscript is written in a cipher which used some kind of grid which restricted the occurrence of each character in certain positions with a Voynich 'word.*'"	None cited	Neal (2000–2011)	

2001, 2004, 2006, 2012	James Finn (independent researcher, North Carolina, USA)			Michel de Nostredame (Nostradamus) or his son Cesar	Hebrew	None cited	Finn (2001, 2004), Kennedy and Churchill (2004, 2006), Dragoni (2012)	Includes the end of the world
2001	Gabriel Landini (School of Dentistry, University of Birmingham, UK)					None cited	Landini (2001)	By "*spectral analysis" … "The findings shown here favor the natural language theory.*"
2002, 2004, 2006	Edith Sherwood (organic chemist, Texas, USA)	Early 15th century	East Asia			Incorrect plant identifications	Sherwood (2002), Kennedy and Churchill (2004, 2006)	Da Vinci connection, birthing manual
2002–2003	Akinori Ito				Natural language	None cited	Ito (2002a, b)	"*VMS is written in some kind of natural language*"
2003	Zbigniew Banasik (Poland)	Some centuries BC			Pre-Manchu	None cited	Banasik (2003)	
2003	Dana Gibson (Middle East historian, Canada)	Pre-medieval	Middle East, recopied by European scribes during medieval times		Semitic, possibly Nabatean	None cited	Gibson (2003)	
2004	Manish Rajkarnikar (software engineer, Minnesota, USA)				Human language	None cited	Rajkarnikar (2004)	"*Based on above observation, it can be concluded that VMS has property similar to that of human text and is a bit different from gibberish*"

(continued)

Table 1.1 (continued)

Date	Author of hypothesis (background)	Putative date of Voynich	Putative location of Voynich writing	Putative Voynich author	Putative Voynich language	Evidence to support hypothesis	Publication of hypothesis	Notes
2004, 2006	Gerry Kennedy and Rob Churchill (English writers)	16th century				Incorrect plant and animal identifications	Kennedy and Churchill (2006)	"*Voynich manuscript … a beautiful object an enigmatic, alluring and enduring mystery that is, in the final reckoning, perhaps better left unsolved?*"
	Beatrice Gwynn (Dublin, formerly at Bletchley Park)	1500–1600	Europe (area between Rome, Avignon, Munich, Prague)		Middle High German	None cited	Kennedy and Churchill (2004, 2006)	Da Vinci connection, hygiene manual
	Petr Kazil (IT security auditor, Rotterdam)	20th century		Unknown and unknowable		None cited	Kennedy and Churchill (2004, 2006)	Hoax
	Tim Mervyn	1450–1500	Northern Italy	Edward Kelley (1555–1597), John Dee, and/ Francis Pucci	Cipher	None cited	Kennedy and Churchill (2004, 2006)	Used notes from his uncle, Peter Long, a senior figure in the British Signal Intelligence
	Matthew Platts			Unknown	Romance dialect	None cited	Kennedy and Churchill (2004, 2006)	Found system of herbal medicine
	Jorge Stolfi (computer scientist, Brazil)	1450–1499	Italy, Spain, southern Germany		Proto-Manchu or Jurchen (Chinese)	None cited	Kennedy and Churchill (2004, 2006)	Based on a theory proposed by Zbigniew Banasik

2004, 2013	Gordon Rugg (computer scientist, School of Computing and Mathematics, Keele University, UK) and Laura Aylward	1503–1631	France	Edward Kelley with the help of John Dee	Gibberish, (probably based upon English or Latin)	None cited	Rugg (2004a, b), Aylward and Rugg (2004), Kennedy and Churchill (2004, 2006), Rugg (2013)	Assumed writer employed a Cardan Grille and thus a hoax, but did not cite evidence to support this hypothesis; supported by Schinner (2007). Disproven by Hermes (2012)
2004–2017, 2006, 2017	René Zandbergen (satellite navigation expert, European Space Agency)	15th century	England? Alpine region of northern Italy?	Fringe scientist?	Unknown, perhaps Arabic or Sanskrit derivation? Hoax?	None cited	Zandbergen (2004–2017, 2016, 2017), Kennedy and Churchill (2004, 2006)	
2005	Lawrence and Nancy Goldstone (historians & novelists, U.S.)	1470–1608	UK	Roger Bacon	Cipher	None cited	Goldstone and Goldstone (2005)	"*With all the failures and dead ends, it becomes tempting to wonder if Newbold might have been correct back in 1921. More than eighty years later, no one has really done any better*"
2005	Ursula Papke and Dirk Weydemann (Germany)				Presented concepts, not encrypted text	None cited	Papke and Weydemann (2005)	
2005, 2006, 2009	Claudio Marcelo Dos Santos (journalist, Argentina)	1450–1480	Milan	Edward Kelley and John Dee	Gibberish	None cited	Dos Santos (2005, 2006, 2009)	Quotes Gordon Rugg repeatedly

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Table 1.1 (continued)

Date	Author of hypothesis (background)	Putative date of Voynich	Putative location of Voynich writing	Putative Voynich author	Putative Voynich language	Evidence to support hypothesis	Publication of hypothesis	Notes
2006	Nicholas Pelling (computer programmer, UK)	?		Antonio Averlino (1400–1469), encrypted by Circo Simonetta (1410–1480)	Cipher; later annotations of months in Occitan	None cited	Pelling (2006)	Reviewed by Buonafalce (2007): "*Some of his conclusions are rather extravagant. Despite his efforts, he does not arrive at any convincing decipherment of the encoded text*"
2008	Erhard Landmann (linguist)				Latin	None cited	Landmann (2008)	Claims that the text deals with spacecraft, space origin of man, and Germanic mythology
2009	Richard Rogers (US Army/Navy computer programmer)					None cited	Pelling (2006)	
2009	Robert Teague (novelist, US)					None cited	Teague (2009)	Claims that the script is written vertically by the use of a "Magic Rectangle"

2009, 2011	Sravanna Reddy (Dept. of Computer Science, University of Chicago) and Kevin Knight (Information Sciences Institute, University of Southern California)					None cited	Knight (2009), Knight and Reddy (2011a, b)	"*Some features – the lack of repeated bigrams and the distributions of letters at line-edges – are linguistically aberrant, which others – the word length and frequency distributions, the apparent presence of morphology, and most notably, the presence of page-level topics – conform to natural language-like text*"
2009, 2012	Erich von Däniken (novelist)	1404–1438	Northern Italy			None cited	Von Däniken (2009), Dragoni (2012)	Connected with the Book of Enoch
2010	Aldo Gritti (novelist)	Pre-1912		Wilfrid Voynich		None cited; as a novel, this mixes fact and fiction	Gritti (2010)	Forgery with relationships to the death of Pierre Curie, the murder of Rosa Luxemburg, and the sinking of the Titanic
2010	Erich H. Peter Roitzsch (computer scientist, Germany)		Asia			None cited	Roitzsch (2010)	

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