

[written somewhere between Jan. 2 and Jan. 18, 1945]

Col. William F. Friedman
Cryptologist, War Department
Washington, D.C.

Dear Col. Friedman:

Professor O'Neill of the Catholic University has recently told me of your interest in the Voynich Manuscript. With the placing of the manuscript in the period that I am interested in it occurred to me that if possible, I ought to spend time in trying to decode it. I have been interested in the codes used in the 16th and 17th centuries for nearly twenty five years. It seems to me that if you have made any progress on this manuscript that it probably would not be worth my while to go into this extensively. Would you be so kind as to tell me whether the problem is now adequately handled.

Remembering your old interest in Genetics I am taking the liberty of sending you a reprint of my latest work in this field. The Genetics of Cancer Research is my vocation but Cryptology is my avocation. I also note in the American Men of Science that you are interested in communications. Perhaps you already know my brother-in-law, Lt. Col. Guy C. Bittner in the office of communications in the air corp. He had ben with the A.T. and T. and the New York Telephone Company a number of years before going to Washington. He already knows much of my interest in the code writing of the 16th century.

I would appreciate very much any courtesy on your part in relation to information on the Voynich manuscript.

Very sincerely yours,

Leonell C. Strong

The Catholic University of America
Washington, D.C.
Langlois Herbarium

Hugh O'Neill, Curator

Jan. 2, 1945

Prof. Leonell C. Strong,
Sterling Hall of Medicine,
333 Cedar St.,
New Haven, Conn.

Dear Prof. Strong:

Replying to your letter of Dec. 31, I am sending you herewith a reprint of my note on the Voynich MS. If you wish any further information regarding the MS, I will be glad to send you what I can. Mr. Friedman (now Colonel, I believe) of the Naval Intelligence is devoting considerable research to this cipher.

Regarding Prof. Newbold's work on this cipher, I can only say that, after careful study of his work published posthumously by his friend, Prof. Kent, I have reached the same conclusion reached by a number of other students, viz, that it is a remarkable case of subjectivism. To me, the Greek shorthand symbols which make up the characters of the cipher appear to be nothing more than the natural result of the pen-point traveling over the grain of the velum. I did not think it pertinent to my note to refer to Prof. Newbold's work. Prof. Kent gives in the opening chapters of Newbold's work an interesting account of the history of the MS.

I have a number of pages of notes and conclusions based on the none too certain identifications of the numerous plants figured in the MS. Considerable additional work will be necessary before any of this is in shape for publication.

I note with interest that you are engaged in Cancer Research and wish you all success in this field.

Sincerely yours,

Hugh O'Neill

Army Service Forces
Signal Security Agency
Washington, D.C.

18 January 1945

Mr. Leonell C. Strong
Yale University School of Medicine
333 Cedar Street
New Haven, Connecticut

Dear Mr. Strong:

Thank you very much for your letter of recent date forwarding a reprint of your paper in Genetics. In view of my former work in that field, I shall find your paper of considerable interest.

Last May, I came to the conclusion that it was high time that a serious attempt were made to solve the mystery of the Voynich Manuscript. Accordingly, I brought together a small group of students who might be interested in an extra-curricular activity of this sort and we discussed various ways of attacking the problem. During the summer, all work was suspended on account of the well-known Washington heat, but recently we resumed our weekly meetings which take approximately 1 hour. Some of the basic material is being processed by mechanical statistical aids, and I hope to have the data available shortly. A general theory as to the nature of the writing has been proposed and looks hopeful. That is about all I can tell you at the moment and this much I request that you keep confidential as I do not want any word of our investigation to find its way to the press or periodic literature. When and if we do arrive at any definite conclusions, then will be time enough for such a statement.

I note your interest in 16th and 17th centuries cryptography and it may be that you are quite well-equipped to continue your studies on the Voynich Manuscript regardless of what we may be doing. I should, however, tell you that I think you may be up against a very difficult problem.

I do indeed know your brother-in-law, Colonel Bittner, and the day after your letter arrived, happened to have some business with him.

If you are ever in Washington, I hope you will give me the opportunity to make your acquaintance.

With cordial greetings, I am,
Sincerely yours,
William F. Friedman
Director of Communications Research

January 22, 1945

Colonel William F. Friedman
Army Service Forces
Signal Security Agency
Washington, 25, D.C.

Dear Col. Friedman:

I have your very kind letter of January 18th at hand. I am glad to know you are interested in the Voynich manuscript. You have undoubtedly much more equipment to do this code than do I, but even then I may be able to contribute something to the final solution. you may be interested in knowing that I am already familiar with a companion work that was published apparently only a short time after the Voynich manuscript was written. Whether the same cyphers are used in both, I would like to determine. The Voynich manuscript was probably not printed due to the death of the author, who I believe may be known to me. If I can verify this finding, the information will be sent to you confidentially.

The fact that I have been doing cypher work for twenty five years without a word of my investigation getting into the press or periodic literature should be evidence that I shall keep your confidences in this work inviolate.

I have written Prof. O'Neill asking him to try to locate for me an original photostatic copy so that the characters used in the Voynich manuscript can be more definitely ascertained. To date I have not heard from Prof. O'Neill and would like to ask you the possibility of obtaining such an original photostat for the use of one.

I was interested to hear that you already knew Bittner. He probably has already told you of my interest in the Elizabethian Period. He is one of the best press agents I have, consequently i cannot even tell him the whole story.

Very sincerely yours,

Leonell C. Strong

January 25, 1945

Dr. Joseph Martin Feely
295 Maplewood Avenue
Rochester, New York

Dear Dr. Feely:

I assume from reading the title page of your recent brochure on Roger Bacon's cypher that the article was published privately. I am interested in the problem and if available I would appreciate receiving a copy. It is my intention to reimburse you for the same.

I hope you are going on with your investigation.

Very sincerely yours,

Leonell C. Strong

The Catholic University of America
Washington, D.C.
Langlois Herbarium

Hugh O'Neill, Curator

Jan. 25, 1945

Dr. Leonell C. Strong
Yale University School of Medicine,
New Haven, Conn.

Dear D. Strong:

In reply to your letter of January 22, I would suggest that you write to

Miss Ann Nill,
care of Mrs. E. L. Voynich,
450 W. 24th St.,
New York City

The original MS belongs to Mrs. Voynich who, I am told, keeps it in the vault of a bank in New York. On account of Mrs. Voynich advanced age, I think Miss Nill, her adopted daughter takes care of her correspondence. Before last Christmas, Mrs. Voynich was seriously ill. I believe they will give you facilities for your work. They are quite anxious to have the MS decoded and have welcomed anyone competent who wished to work on it.

Indeed I am very much interested to know that you are familiar with a companion work of the Voynich MS. If you have published anything on it, I would appreciate a reprint of your work. If you should happen to be in Washington, I hope you will call on me. I would like to show you some of the conclusions I have reached on the basis of the plants figured in the Voynich MS. All of my results are vague but still may be of some help. My colleague, Dr. Petersen, has not worked on the MS for some time. He is the cryptographer. My work is solely from the botanical side.

Sincerely yours,

Hugh O'Neill

Yale University School of Medicine
333 Cedar Street - New Haven - Connecticut
Affiliated With The New Haven Hospital

Department of Anatomy
Sterling Hall of Medicine

January 29, 1945

Miss Ann Nill
c/o Mrs. E. L. Voynich
450 West 24th Street
New York City

Dear Miss Nill:

I have recently become interested in the problem of decyphering the Voynich manuscript. My attention to this work was stimulated by Professor O'Neill's published note on two of the plants contained in this manuscript. Prof. O'Neill suggested that I communicate with you in trying to get a photostatic copy of the same. The only reprints I have access to are those already published and this reproduction makes it impossible to classify the original symbols of the manuscript. I understand Mr. Voynich had the manuscript photostated and I am wondering if a copy is available.

For the past twenty five years I have been interested in cypher of the 16th and 17th centuries as a hobby and this placing of the manuscript into this period by the work of Professor O'Neill intrigues me very much. I suppose you realize that considering the negative results already obtained by many scholars in attempting to decode this manuscript, I cannot guarantee any positive results but even the past experience of others does not deter me any.

My vocation is Cancer Research but my main avocation is in cypher.

Very sincerely yours,

Leonell C. Strong, Ph.D.

Army Service Forces
Signal Security Agency
Washington, D.C.

January 31, 1945

Mr. Leonell C. Strong
Yale University School of Medicine
333 Cedar Street
New Haven, Connecticut

Dear Mr. Strong:

Absence from the city has occasioned the delay in replying to your interesting letter of January 22nd.

I have no doubt that you will be able to contribute to the final solution of the Voynich Manuscript. I am indeed interested to know that you are already familiar with a companion work that was published apparently only a short time after the Voynich Manuscript was written. This statement implies that you are fairly certain of the approximate date of the latter, which is more than can be said on the evidence presented heretofore by others, taking in consideration even the brief note published by Father O'Neill some months ago. Your belief that you know the author of the Voynich Manuscript is also extremely interesting and I am sure that our group will be very glad to have any information which you feel able to let us have.

We have, through the courtesy of the owners of the Manuscript, Miss Voynich and Miss Nill, a complete photostatic copy thereof, but unfortunately I am not in a position to send it to you without special permission from the two ladies mentioned. However, if all you want to do is to compare the characters in the Voynich Manuscript with those of some other manuscript, I see no reason why I should not let you have a photostatic copy of such pages as have been published in Professor Newbold's book. If this will be satisfactory, please let me know.

i had not even the faintest idea of bringing into question your ability [to] keep confidential your efforts in regard to this work. If there is anything in my previous letter from which such an inference might be drawn, by all means disregard it, because nothing of the sort was intended. I merely wanted to indicate that so far as the general public is concerned, we did not want any newshawks to get wind of what we are trying to do and then come around for a story.

With cordial greetings, I am,

Sincerely yours,
William F. Friedman
Director of Communications Research

February 1, 1945

Mr. Joseph M. Feely
295 Maplewood Avenue
Rochester, 13, New York.

Dear Mr. Feely:

Enclosed find my personal check for \$2 to cover the cost of your book, "Roger Bacon's Cypher". I am interested as a hobby in cryptography and desire to have it for that purpose. However, my interest in Biology has intrigued me in going further in the analysis of this manuscript. I know that you have given up the idea that the manuscript was the work of Roger Bacon.

I am enclosing a recent reprint of mine dealing with certain phases of general biology. Perhaps I can look you up sometime on my trips to rochester.

Very sincerely yours,

Leonell C. Strong

February 3, 1945

Col. William F. Friedman
Office of the Chief Signal Officer
Washington, D.C.

Dear Col. Friedman:

Thanks very much for your letter of January 31st, including your offer of photostatic copies of the pages already published in Prof. Newbold's book. I already own a copy of this book which I purchased ten or more years ago. What I had in mind was to compare copies as near the original as possible since in continued reproduction some clarity of symbols is lost and it would be impossible to make a final frequency distribution used in Prof. Newbold's book.

As you know I also asked Father O'Neill for a copy of the original photostat made by Mr. Voynich. He gave me the name of Miss Nill who he said may be interested in sending me an original photostat. I have written Miss Nill a letter requesting one but so far I have received no word from her. The way I feel now I probably will do no more without the approval of Miss Nill. There are more important problems of the period under consideration that I am interested in.

So until I hear from Miss Nill no more work on the manuscript will be done.

Very sincerely yours,

Leonell C. Strong

February 6, 1945

The Keeper of the Sloane Manuscripts
British Museum
London, England

Dear Sir:

I would like to get, if possible, a film or preferably photostats of Sloane Manuscript, No. 3191. This I believe is by Dr. John Dee and is entitled "Claves Angelicae". If you would be so kind as to enclose the bill with this work I shall send the payment by return mail.

If you desire a London reference for me you can get in touch with Dr. E. L. Kennaway, Director of the Chester Beatty Research Institute, The Royal Cancer Hospital, London.

Very truly yours,

Dr. Leonell C. Strong

Feb. 14, 1945

London Terrace
450 West 24th St.
New York 11

Dear Dr. Strong:

This is to apologize for the delay in replying to your letter o Jan. 29. It caught us when we were very busy, and since then Mrs. Voynich has been ill - grippe - so that I have not had an opportunity to discuss the matter with her. As soon as she is quite recovered I shall do so and write to you then.

Yours Sincerely

Anne M. Nill

February 15, 1945

Prof. John M. Manly
Department of English
University of Chicago
Chicago, Ill.

Dear Prof. Manly:

If still available I would appreciate very much your two articles bearing upon the Voynich Manuscript, one appeared in Volume 6 of *Speculum* and the other in *Harper's Magazine*, July 1921.

I am greatly interested in the Voynich Manuscript and hope to be able to do something with it.

Very sincerely yours,

Leonell C. Strong

February 15, 1945

Mediaeval Academy of America
Cambridge, Mass.

Dear Sirs:

I would like to obtain, if available, that issue of *Speculum*, Vol. 6 containing the pages 345-391 relative to the article by Dr. John M. Manly "Roger Bacon and the Voynich Manuscript".

Kindly enclose bill with same.

Very truly yours,

Leonell C. Strong

February 15, 1945

Miss Anne M. Nill
London Terrace
450 West 24th Street
New York 11, New York

Dear Miss Nill,

Thanks very much for your card, consequently I am still hopeful that you will bring my request to the attention of Mrs. Voynich as soon as she recovers. Seeing many of the references in the literature to the effect that Mr. Voynich was so enthusiastic about getting scholars to work on this manuscript that I hope Mrs. Voynich harbors some of the same ideas. If my presence would help in presenting this matter to Mrs. Voynich I would be willing to come down to New York at any time.

Very sincerely yours,

Leonell C. Strong

February 15, 1945

Harper and Brothers Publishers
New York City

Dear Sirs:

I would like to obtain, if available a copy of the July 1921 issue of Harper's Magazine, Vol. 143, No. 854. Kindly enclose bill with same.

Very truly yours,

Leonell C. Strong

The University of Chicago
Department of English

March 1, 1945

Mr. Leonell C. Strong
Department of Anatomy
333 Cedar Street
New Haven, Connecticut

Dear Mr. Strong:

Since Professor Manly is deceased, I know of no way in which reprints of the articles to which you refer can be found.

Yours sincerely,

J. R. Hulbert
Secretary of the Department

K. H. P.

March 1, 1945

563 West Central Street
Franklin, Massachusetts

Dr. L. C. Strong
P.O. Box 2988
Amity Road
Woodbridge, Conn.

Katherine asked me to send the 'Selenus' to her at Vassar and she would have the pages photostated for you. From what I took down there are only 9 pages. I have just heard that Miss Herrick has broken her hip, am so distressed. All is well here and the excitement of your visit didn't disturb me. I did enjoy every minute. Hope you found all well at home. Much love to K.

As ever sincerely,

K. H. P.

John Howell Books
434 Post Street : : San Francisco, 2
(Opposite St. Francis Hotel)

March 5, 1945

Mr. Leonell C. Strong
Yale University School of Medicine
333 Cedar Street
New Haven, Connecticut

Dear Mr. Strong:

Your letter of March 1st has just arrived. I am glad to know you have continued your interest in Bacon.

I did not know Mrs. Prescott had not been well - I had a card from her at Christmas time.

I do happen to have one copy for sale of the facsimile I made of the Learned Pig several years ago. I am sending it to you on approval. You may have it at the original price of \$50.

I have nothing of any consequence on Napa or Lake County at this time, but will let you know when I secure books on the subject. One I have in mind is the History of Napa and Lake County, a rather large volume, which is interesting and not expensive.

Hoping to hear from you soon, with kindest regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

John Howell

March 14, 1945

Prof. Roland Grubb Kent
324 Aubrey Road
Wynnewood, Penna.

Dear Prof. Kent:

I have been interested for some time in decoding the Voynich Manuscript. At the present time I believe I have the proper key and have decoded a consistent message bearing upon Mediaeval Science even though all I have to work with are the plates published in your and Prof. Newbold's book. If you would be at all interested I would like to talk this problem over with you. I expect to be in Philadelphia on March 29th to April 2nd and would like very much to call on you during this time if you will be available.

Very sincerely yours,

Leonell C. Strong

March 14, 1945

Prof. Hugh O'Neill
Langlois Herbarium
Washington, D.C.

Dear Prof. O'Neill:

I had a talk with Miss Nill.. Either she is unwilling to let me have access to a photostatic copy of the Voynich or she is too busy to talk the matter over further with me or due to the unsettled condition of the Voynich estate, a photostatic copy of the Voynich will not or cannot be made available to me. I do not know which one of the three excuses is a valid one since all three was presented one after another. I cannot understand this attitude especially after I had told her that I had work[ed] out the correct solution of the code and that I had obtained a consistent story bearing on Mediaeval Science and that I would be willing to demonstrate to her the solution I had worked out. It may interest you that all I have available to work with are the plates in Newbold's book and the two plates you published in Speculum. Miss Nill also indicated to me that it was not to be assumed that Dr. Petersen had the exclusive monopoly of trying to decode this very valuable manuscript on Mediaeval Science. I have already spent some five hundred hours on this manuscript.

In view of the apparent noncooperation of the owners of the manuscript, there appears to be only one solution. I intend to write a manuscript demonstrating the solution to the cypher and to submit it for confidential storage to the National Research Council or some other learned society. The reason why I am writing you is to ask whether you would be interested in a confidential demonstration of my solution before my manuscript is sealed for some future publication. So far you have been the only one that has shown any spirit of cooperation and I would like very much to show my appreciation in this manner.

Miss Nill inferred that I thought Francis Bacon was the author of the manuscript. Where she got this idea I am at a loss to know. It is my honest opinion that the manuscript was actually written before Francis Bacon was born.

I expect to be in Washington sometime early in the summer to attend a meeting at Bethesda of the New England Cancer Society. My manuscript may not be in finished form by that time but may I suggest a meeting with you then.

Very sincerely yours,

Leonell C. Strong

British Museum
London W.C.I

16 March, 1945

Dr. Leonell C. Strong

Dear Sir

In answer to your letter of 6 February, I am very sorry to have to inform you that all our MSS. have been removed out of London for safety and will not be available for photography or any other purpose for, I fear, some months after the end of the war.

With many regards,
Faithfully yours

Eric G. Millar
Keeper of MSS.

17 North Main Street
Southampton
Long Island
New York

March 16, 1945

Dr. Leonell C. Strong
Yale University School of Medicine
New Haven, Connecticut

Dear Dr. Strong,

The story of finding the Andros Island cave is typed, together with many other cipher discoveries of my own, which grew out of it later. If it is ever published it will hitch right on to your own research, as in I now have given your directions by which we found the cave due credit, and in a foot note below said that I had not yet been able to ascertain your sources. I cannot yet decide about my library, as some of my own young people are not yet launched on their future careers. I think, however, if you see Mr. Jackson who is now at the head of the new Harvard Harvard Measure Building, he would be glad to show you anything you wanted to see and interested in all you had to tell. It was only the intransigent attitude of Dr. Kittredge that kept the investigation of cipher and cryptic illustrations from being pursued - it was generally understood that it was because of this stubbornness that he was asked to resign. my own research was interrupted by the war and I have not been able as yet to continue - but the graduate dean of Radcliffe and the former President-Comstock knew all about it and were much interested. It will be six months, probably before I can walk though. I hope to get around my room on crutches - most of the time am on my back with leg on a pillow, pin in the broken hip, and thank God! no cast. Please forgive this scrawl as writing under present conditions is difficult. Someday I hope we may meet again and have a good talk.

Sincerely yours,

Margaret F. Herrick

The Catholic University of America
Washington, D.C.
Langlois Herbarium

March 17, 1945

Dr. Leonell Strong,
Yale School of Medicine,
New Haven, Conn.

Dear Dr. Strong:

Replying to your letter of March 14, I will be very glad if you will call to see us whenever you happen to be in Washington. I see no reason why you cannot publish your findings based upon the pages of the Voynich MS which have been reproduced in print. I do not know Mrs. Voynich nor do I know Miss Nill so that I cannot comment upon the course of action they have taken.

Very truly yours,

Hugh O'Neill

University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia
The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
Indo-European Linguistics

March 17, 1945

Dear Dr. Strong:

I must say frankly that I edited the book on Newbold's researches on the cipher manuscript of Roger Bacon, only because I was asked to do so by virtue of the fact that as Newbold's most intimate friend I had heard more of the details of his studies than any other surviving person. It was not because I had any special capability in ciphers. This being the case, I did my task in a sympathetic way out of my great friendship for Newbold. After the book was finished I really had no further interest in the subject, since my own fields of work are quite different.

I should be glad however to see you when you are in Philadelphia, if we can agree upon a time. I shall not be available on March 30 and 31, nor on April 1; but if you are here early enough on Thursday, March 29, I can meet you at my office, 111 Bennett Hall, southeast corner 34th and Walnut Streets, at any hour which you designate. Otherwise my free time is limited to Monday, April , when I have 2.00 to 3.30 P.M. free; the rest of my time is taken up with teaching. Unfortunately I have no additional photographs or other materials which might be of assistance to you.

I deeply regret that I have to make this rather discouraging reply to you, and beg of you not to consider it a discourtesy. It is only the effect of previous commitments.

Looking forward to your reply,

Yours very sincerely,

Roland G. Kent

March 19, 1945

Dr. Roland G. Kent
Prof. of Linguistics
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia

Dear Prof. Kent:

I knew of your connection with the publication of Prof. Newbold's researches since I have read his book several times. My reasons for asking to see you, however, were two fold, in the first place since the almost scathing attack especially by Prof. Manly of Chicago on the scholarship of Prof. Newbold, I thought you as a friend may be interested in the recent work that is so intimately associated with Prof. Newbold. In the second place, the Voynich manuscript is certainly in the field of Philology and should be of interest to you aside from the Newbold investigation. I note your change in Philology to Linguistics and I as a Biologist, interested in the history of science cannot draw this fine distinction. Certainly all scholars interested in the love of learning should be interested. I believe that the love of learning is essentially the same as that intellectual capacity that we in pure science foster.

if you would like to see what I have decoded from the Voynich Manuscript without boring you of the details of cryptography I shall be at your office at 2 P.M. on Monday, April 2nd. Within a few minutes time we ought to be able to decide whether any mutual interests would be forthcoming. I will await your reply.

Very sincerely yours,

Leonell C. Strong

March 19, 1945

My dear Miss Herrick:

It was very nice of you to answer my letter so promptly especially under the trying conditions you are experiencing at the present time. Apparently you are benefiting from the new treatment without the use of a cast.

I do not know Mr. Jackson but hope from the standpoint of true scholarship that all sources of information be made available to all scholars irrespective of predilections. My own problem has been handicapped considerably, that I have to make a living at cancer research, and the only time I have available for Baconian cypher is in the evenings occasionally and the Yale Library, among others, will not permit these books to be taken home. The little library that I have been able to develop myself is all too meager for the task at hand. However, many more advances have been made in the past ten years and it would be a delight indeed to talk them over with you at some time. Andros Island is apparently a very important key point and much of the future investigation will be centered here.

The Duke of Brunswick is a central figure for the continental part of the period, also Emperor Rudolph the Third was somehow or other interested. I believe many of the funds necessary came from him. I have also found that the period of 15?? was very important in preparing the field for Francis Bacon later.

Whenever you feel like talking about Baconian matters I would be happy to come to see you. I frequently visit my brother-in-law in Manhasset.

Very sincerely yours,

Leonell C. Strong

March 19, 1945

Sec. College of Physicians
Philadelphia, Penna.

Dear Sir:

If available I would like to obtain the Appendix for your proceedings for the year 1921. I am interested in obtaining two articles on the Voynich Manuscript and I believe this is the only way of me obtaining them, since both authors have been dead for some time. Kindly enclose bill for same.

Very sincerely yours,

Leonell C. Strong

March 20, 1945

Dr. Leonell C. Strong
Sterling Hall of Medicine
333 Cedar Street
New Haven, Connecticut

Dear Dr. Strong:

I shall be very happy to see you at my office, 111 Bennett hall, 34th and Walnut Sts., on Monday, April 2, the time at which we are both free. I shall be very happy if I can in any way help you in your work on the Voynich manuscript. As for Manly's article, I can tell you something about that!

Yours sincerely,

R. G. Kent

Library of the
College of Physicians
of Philadelphia

19 South 22nd Street
Philadelphia, Pa. zone 3

March 27, 1945

Leonell C. Strong, Ph.D.
Yale University
The School of Medicine
Sterling Hall of Medicine
333 Cedar Street
New Haven, Conn.

Dear Dr. Strong:

I am sorry that your letter of the 19th regarding the appendix to the 1921 volume of our Transactions (containing the articles on the Voynich ms.) has not been answered before this.

Both the Voynich and Newbold article were reprinted, but we have not succeeded in turning up any duplicate copies of the reprints. Consequently all we can do is send you a copy of the whole volume, which we are doing.

You are aware, I am sure, that the material of these articles reappears, with slight alterations, in Newbold's posthumous "The Cipher of Roger Bacon", University of Pennsylvania Press, 1928.

Yours sincerely,

W. B. McDaniel, 2d
Librarian

Enclosure.

April 4th, 1945

Prof. R. G. Kent
Bennett Hall
University of Penna.
Philadelphia

Dear Professor Kent:

I would like to thank you for your kindness in talking over with me some of my recent work on the decoding of the Voynich manuscript. The interview was very successful to me and cleared up several points for me.

Very sincerely yours,

Leonell C. Strong

Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery
San Marino 15, California

April 4, 1945

Leonell C. Strong
Yale University School of Medicine
333 Cedar St., New Haven, Conn.

Dear Mr. Strong: We do not have the 1550 edition of Askham's A little Herball of the properties of Herbes; the only copy recorded in the Short Title Catalog (no. 856) is that of the Wellcome Hist.Med.Museum. We have the [1561?] edition, STC 857; if you wish a microfilm of our edition we can send it in a few days after you let us know.

Sincerely yours,

Herman R. Mead, Bibliographer

May 2, 1945

Recorder of Vital Statistics
Renova, Penna.

Dear Sir:

If available will you kindly send me a copy of my birth certificate--a son born to Clarence A. and Ella Mead Strong, January 19, 1894. Kindly enclose bill.

Very truly yours,

Leonell C. Strong

May 2, 1945

Prof. Hugh O'Neill
Catholic University
Washington, D.C.

Dear Professor O'Neill:

I regret very much to say that our Cancer meetings were shifted from Washington to Boston, consequently I do not expect to be in Washington this spring. If you would like to know what I have done with the sunflower folio I would like very much to meet you if you happen to be in this vicinity or even in New York.

With kindest personal regards.

Respectfully,

Leonell C. Strong

Department of Pharmacology
333 Cedar Street
New Haven, Conn.

Dr. Leonell C. Strong
Yale University
School of Medicine
333 Cedar St.
New Haven, Conn.

Dear Dr. Strong,

I should greatly appreciate it if you would send me a reprint of your paper entitled: Anthony Askham....Manuscript which appeared in Science 101: 608, 1945.

Yours sincerely,

W. T. Salter

Michigan State College
East Lansing

School of Agriculture
Department of Horticulture

June 20, 1945

Dr. Leonell C. Strong
Yale University
School of Medicine
333 Cedar St.
New Haven, Conn.

Dear Sir:

I should greatly appreciate 2 reprints of your paper Anthony Askham, the author of the Voynich manuscript, from the Science 101: 608 if you have copies available for distribution.

Yours very truly,

E. H. Lucas

Brooklyn College
Bedford Avenue and Avenue H
Brooklyn 10, N. Y.

Department of Chemistry

June 20, 1945

Dr. Leonell C. Strong
Yale University School of Medicine
New Haven, Conn.

My dear Dr. Long:

Your article in the current issue of Science is most interesting. I happen to be a member of the New York Cipher Society and the American Cryptogram Association, and at the last meeting of the N.Y.C.S. on Monday, I called attention to your article. Many of the members expressed much interest, and they should like to hear more about your methods etc. in deciphering the Voynich Manuscript.

Do you ever get to New York, and would you care to speak before the New York Cipher Society?

As far as I know, there are no serious objections in publishing analytical articles dealing with ciphers. Recently the Bifid was discussed in The cryptogram, the official journal of the A.C.A., and so I believe that publication of your methods in an appropriate place would not be criticized by any government agency. Of course, I am merely expressing my own opinion.

At this time please accept my congratulations.

Sincerely yours,

Louis Sattler
Associate Professor

In writing to me, please use my home address:

600 West 116th Street
New York City 27
N.Y.

Hester Bussel Lotker

35-20 190 Street
Flushing, New York.
June 22, 1945

Dr. Leonell C. Strong
Yale University
School of Medicine
New Haven, Conn.

Dear Dr. Strong,

As the Secretary of the New York Cipher Society of which Mr. Rosario Candela is President, I have been asked to write you in appreciation of your article on the Voynich manuscript in the June 15th issue of Science.

Our meetings are held throughout the year on the third Monday of the month at the Hotel Imperial, 32 Street and Broadway. It would be a great privilege to our membership if you could arrange to visit us. In the even that this is impractical or impossible, we would be pleased to present to the group any details that you see fit to send us.

Cordially yours,

Hester B. Lotker
Secretary

New York Cipher Society

The American Cryptogram Association

Editor-in-Chief - Sherlac
Charles Sedenger
3835 N. Darien St.
Philadelphia 40, Pa.

June 23, 1945

Dr. Leonell C. Strong
Yale University
New Haven, Conn.

Dear Doctor Strong:

In introducing myself, as you can see from the left hand column, I am the Editor of the Cryptogram, and your article, dealing with "The Voynich Cipher", was sent to me by Dr. Louis Sattler, of Brooklyn College, who is a member of our Association.

This particular manuscript has been mentioned by many writers on Cryptography, notably Mr. Fletcher Pratt, in "Secret and Urgent", he also is a member of the A.C.A.

Many of our members have corresponded with me concerning the possibility of securing more data on this intriguing subject.

I assume that you are familiar with the research of Professor Wm. R. Newbold, late of the University of Pennsylvania, but on the off chance that you have not seen his book; "The Cipher of Roger Bacon", I have a copy in my library, which I would be glad to lend you for examination, it is profusely illustrated and contains many comprehensive Tables of Values.

Awaiting your pleasure and with best wishes, Cordially Yours,

Charles Sedenger
SHERLAC

June 25, 1945

Dr. Louis Sattler
600 West 116 Street
New York 27, N.Y.

Dear Dr. Sattler:

I appreciate very much your expressed congratulations on the published article appearing in Science, as well as your invitation to speak before the New York Cipher Society. Unfortunately during the hot summer months this pleasure cannot be satisfied. Also an active life in cancer research and the spending of long hours on my hobby of cipher interferes considerably with other things I would like to do, however if things ease up so that I can accept your kind invitation to speak before the New York Cipher Society, I will get in touch with you then.

Kindly accept my thanks for your kindness in writing to me.

Very sincerely yours,

Leonell C. Strong

June 25, 1945

Mrs. A. Lotker
Secretary N.Y. Cipher Society
35-20 190 Street
Flushing, N.Y.

Dear Mrs. Lotker:

In reply to your letter of June 22nd, may I through you extend my sincerest thanks to your President Mr. Rosario Candela for his expressed appreciation of my recent article published in Science.

During the hot summer months it will be quite impossible for me to accept your invitation to visit the meetings of the N.Y. Cipher Society. Perhaps sometime in the future would be more convenient. an active life in cancer research and a hobby of the cryptography of the 16th and 17th centuries does not permit much freedom.

I intend to publish the details of my decipherment of the Voynich manuscript in book form sometime in the future. When available I shall be pleased to call it to your attention.

Very sincerely yours,

Leonell C. Strong

June 25, 1945

Mr. Charles Sedenger
3835 N. Darien Street
Philadelphia 40, Penna.

Dear Mr. Sedenger:

In reply to your letter of June 23rd, I would like to say that I have in my library nearly a complete collection of articles bearing upon the Voynich manuscript including Prof. Newbold's book which I purchased many years ago. I do not happen to have the article by Mr. Fletcher Pratt. I assume that you imply that this article appeared in the Cryptogram. The only set of the Cryptogram that I could locate near at hand is the one in the New York Public Library. They discontinued their subscription in January 194_. If you would give me the exact reference I shall see that it will be included in the bibliography of the book I intend to write.

I note with interest your particular reference to Prof. Newbold's book. In view of the scathing criticism of this work by Prof. John M. Manly of the University of Chicago in Harper's Magazine, as well as in Speculum, it seems to me that perhaps the book should not have been published in the first place.

When more of the cipher story is available I shall be all too pleased to call it to your attention.

Very sincerely yours,

Leonell C. Strong

The American Cryptogram Association

Editor-in-Chief - Sherlac
Charles Sedenger
3835 N. Darien St.
Philadelphia 40, Pa.

June 26, 1945

Dear Dr. Strong:

Thanks for your letter of June 25, concerning the "Voynich Manuscript", as I am not competent to discuss the pros and cons of the value of Prof. Newbold's Book, I'll say nothing about it.

The reference by Mr. Fletcher Pratt did not appear in the Cryptogram, but makes up the contents of Chapter II, in his book "Secret and Urgent" published in 1939 by Bobbs-Merrill Co. The chapter is titled "The Element of Doubt". No doubt you can secure a copy of this book from a nearby library.

Thank you for your offer to keep me informed on any progress that may be made, our more advanced members are keenly interested in this subject and would be happy to receive any additional information relating to it.

With Best Wishes,
Sincerely yours
Sherlac

July 12, 1945

Miss Anne M. Nill
London Terrace
450 West 24th Street
New York 11

Dear Miss Nill:

I am enclosing two copies of my recent article which appeared in Science. I trust that you will [give] one to Mrs. Voynich and retain one for yourself.

In the spirit of true scholarship I sincerely hope that you like the article.

Very sincerely yours,

Leonell C. Strong

July 12, 1945

Col. William F. Friedman

Office of the Chief
Signal Officer
Washington, D.C.

Dear Col. Friedman:

I am enclosing a recent article of mine which appeared in Science. I trust that you will like it.

Very sincerely yours,

Leonell C. Strong

July 12, 1945

Dr. Howard Blakeslee
Science Editor
Associated Press
New York City.

Dear Dr. Blakeslee:

Under separate cover I am sending a small box of cigars in appreciation for your kindness in handling the recent article in Science.

Apparently I gave you a wrong lead in saying that the article together with my photograph would appear in "Time". After four telephone conversations with Mr. Hewlett and a trip to New York leaving with him nearly a complete collection of papers dealing with the Voynich manuscript, the most recent report is that the Editor would not publish the article unless it included a photograph of me indicating on a folio of the Voynich manuscript where I had decoded the name of Anthony Askham. The owners of the manuscript, according to the report given me, would not give the release of copyright. Consequently the article will probably not appear in "Time". I had hoped that with this increased publication a demand would be stimulated whereby the owners would be willing to let me study the photostatic copy further. This so far has not materialized.

For the time being I am back in Cancer Research.

Very sincerely yours,

Leonell C. Strong

July 12, 1945

Prof. Hugh O'Neill
Langlois Herbarium
Catholic University
Washington, D.C.

Dear Prof. O'Neill:

I am enclosing a short note of mine which appeared in Science. I trust you like it.

Very sincerely yours,

Leonell C. Strong

Army Service Forces
Signal Security Agency
Washington 25, D.C.

SPSIS-3

July 14, 1945

Mr. Leonell C. Strong
Department of Anatomy
Yale University School of Medicine
333 Cedar Street
New Haven, Connecticut

Dear Mr. Strong:

Your letter of July 12, 1945, addressed to Col. Friedman has arrived during his absence from the city. He will be gone for several months, so I am acknowledging the letter for him. I know he will appreciate your sending the copy of the recent article in Science.

Very truly yours,

Mark Rhoads
Captain, U.S.A., Retired
Asst. to Mr. Friedman

Time
Time & Life Building
The Weekly Newsmagazine
Rockefeller Center
New York
Editorial Offices

July 17, [1945]

Dear Dr. and Mrs. Strong,

We regret that were unable to run the story on the Voynich manuscript and sadly return the wealth of material that you so kindly lent us.

We felt unable to use this story because of the lack of cooperation on the part of the manuscript's owners. Naturally, our editors felt the subject too contentious to discuss without a fuller view of all its aspects.

Both Mr. Hewlett and I appreciate Dr. Strong's clarification on many technical difficulties and his whole-hearted help, we were extremely disappointed at not having the story appear in the magazine.

Again, many thanks indeed for your kindness, and the loan of Dr. Strong's research.

Yours faithfully,

Essie A. Lee (Books Dept.)

I have sent your books by Express mail.

Hudson View Gardens
New York City 33

July 17, 1945

Dr. Leonell Strong
Yale University
New Haven, Conn.

Dear Dr. Strong,

No doubt your publication in "Science" of your discovery of a key to the Voynich cipher MS has let loose a torrent of correspondence. May I be excused for adding to the flood on two considerations? Wilfred Voynich was one of my closest friends (we met in 1898 in Italy), I was present at the Newbold lecture in Philadelphia and received a copy of the Newbold-Kent volume inscribed in Mr. Voynich's hand. The address he delivered on the history of the MS appeared in pamphlet form - unfortunately my copy remained in Europe with other books when I came home in 1941.

The second consideration is that I wrote my thesis for the doctorate (Heidelberg) on an Old English theme. That was long ago and even then I had small acquaintance with middle English dialects. And now I come to the point of my inquiry. How have Old English scholars dated the language of the cipher as you have decoded it? Despite the conservative character of the Northumbrian dialect, the discrepancy between the passage quoted and the language of Roger Ascham's Scholemaster seems very great indeed. The quality of the drawings also suggests an earlier date. the "Wolkenband" ([snaky line drawn here]) shown on Plate XXI appears over and over again in Italian XV century manuscripts. I believe it came down from the north, but I am unable to say when.

I shall look forward with the greatest interest to your future publications on the subject.

Sincerely,

Erla Rodakiewicz

July 18, 1945

Dr. Erla Rodakiewicz
Hudson View Gardens
New York City 33, N.Y.

Dear Dr. Rodakiewicz:

I appreciate very much your kind letter of the 17th inst. bearing upon the publication in Science of a note on my key to the Voynich Manuscript. Kindly accept the two reprints of same enclosed.

It is a great joy to ascertain some friend of the late Wilfred Voynich who knows something of this very interesting manuscript. One of the reasons for my publication was to open up some such contacts as yours since the immediate family has seen fit to ignore my appeal to them dated January 29th for access to the use of a photostatic copy.

Your suggestion concerning the dialect used must be settled by someone else other than me since I know very little of the dialects of Mediaeval English. My training has been a Doctorate in Biology, twenty-five years of association in Schools of Medicine and an interest as a hobby of 16th and 17th [century] cryptography for the same period of time. I became interested in the Voynich manuscript as a biologist knowing something of the cyphers used in the century under consideration. My analysis of the data by which I arrived at the conclusion that the manuscript was in English is in manuscript only, the disposition of which is entirely unsettled.

I note you suggest that the dialect used as decoded material does not coincide with the language used by Roger Askham in his Scholmaster. Please do not confuse Roger with Anthony. I may also say that the dialect does not coincide with that used by Anthony Askham in the Little Herbal, a microfilm of the Huntington copy of which I own. It is also very doubtful whether Anthony Askham ever wrote the Little Herbal. I am still not convinced that Dr. John Dee may have more to do with the origin of the Voynich manuscript than mere ownership. Perhaps there may have been more relationship between Anthony Askham and Dr. John Dee than appears on the surface, similar to the relationship existing between Billingsley and Dr. John Dee in the writing of the mathematical books. You no doubt know that Dr. John Dee wrote in several English dialects, Welsh, Anglo-Saxon, Greek, Latin, German, and several others, he also had an interest in cypher writing, was an astrologer, which the author of the Voynich manuscript obviously was, and had all the characteristics presented herein. Someday if I get the opportunity I shall continue this investigation further but am convinced now that the only place that this can be done is in the British Museum. A recent letter from them states that for the duration their original manuscripts have been removed from London and are not available for study. I trust that you keep this information concerning Dr. John Dee confidential for the time being as I am not willing to publish this idea now.

the description of the birth of the child and all other material from the Voynich manuscript were decoded according to mathematical rules and the whole passage covering several pages makes continued sense. It must of necessity therefore be correct. I have not read anything into the passage that was not put there in cypher by the original author.

Kindly feel free to communicate with me at any time.

Very sincerely yours,
Leonell C. Strong

London Terrace
450 West 24th Street,
New York (11)

July 20, 1945

Professor Leonell C. Strong,
Department of Anatomy, Yale University School of Medicine,
333 Cedar Street, New Haven, Conn.

Dear Professor Strong:

Mrs. Voynich and I wish to thank you for the offprint of your article in Science of June 15th.

I will file it for reference with the other material concerning the Voynich cipher manuscript, which has been accumulating for many years.

Yours sincerely,

Anne M. Nill

Yale University

Memorandum

Dept. Obstetrics & Gynecology

To: Dr. Leonell C. Strong
C303 Sterling Hall of Medicine

July 25, 1945

Dear Leon:

Thank you indeed for your reprint on the Voynich manuscript. It is a fine piece of work and I do hope it stimulates the owners to let you have the rest of it.

Sincerely yours,

(signature illegible)

Hudson View Gardens
N. Y. C. 33

July 31, 1945

Dear Dr. Strong,

Before the turn of the month overtakes me, I want to thank you for your courtesy in sending me the reprints of your article in "Science".

First off all let me assure you that I shall treat your reference to John Dee as confidential and await further elaboration of your hypothesis with interest.

I did not "confuse" Roger with Anthony Ascham, but merely assumed that they would speak the same language, being brothers. That is why I checked through the 1st edition of the Scholemaster in the Morgan Library. I am wondering if the same forms of Early English in the other sections of the cipher MS.? The XV and XVI centuries were the age of the Compendium of this MS might present a collection of varied material from many authors, living at different times, might it not? Of course, it is very puzzling that Prof. Newbold should have had his readings confirmed independently by astronomers and chemists. Have you checked with the Yale 'Anglist'?

I wish I could help you gain access to the photostatic copy, but I am in a rather peculiar position myself in connection with another Voynich MS. - the De re militari of Roberto Valturio of Riimini (+1475). Miss Nill, co-owner with Mrs. Voynich, objected strongly to my mention of the MS. in an article in the 1940 issue of "Maso Fuigerra", published in Milan, by Prof. Donali of the Vatican Library. The irony of the situation is that my article was intended to promote interest in the MS. and was dedicated to the memory of my old friend.

Mrs. Voynich is in her 82nd year and after last winter's attack of double pneumonia, has been charged by her physician to avoid fatigue and emotional excitement. This may explain her silence.

Again thanking you,

r.s.g. Erla Rodakiewicz

Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery
San Marino, California

August 18, 1945

Dr. Leonell C. Strong
Yale University School of Medicine
Department of Anatomy
333 Cedar Street
New Haven, Connecticut

Dear Dr. Strong:

The Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery acknowledges with sincere thanks the gift noted below.

Leslie E. Bliss
Librarian

Strong, L.C.

...Anthony Askham, the author of the Voynich manuscript [1945]

The
NEW YORKER
No. 23 West 43rd Street

Nov. 10, 1945

Dear Dr. Strong:

It may be several days before I can get to the material you left with me, and I'd like to know if it will be all right for me to keep the books for a week or two. I can return them to you by mail if you are not planning to be in New York at the time.

Thanks very much for coming to see me. I realize now that I kept you from your lunch--I usually do without mine, and I sometimes forget that others do not. My best to Mrs. Strong.

Sincerely,

Lillian E. Ross

November 13, 1945

Miss Lillian E. Ross
The New Yorker
25 West 43rd Street
New York City

Dear Miss Ross:

It will be all right for you to keep the books another week, however, it will not be wise to have your proposed article postponed too long. A few days ago another Magazine contacted me for a story and I told them, without the name of your periodical, that I had given out the story and could not agree on any further commitment until I have definite word from you whether the New Yorker will run the story.

I expect to be down to New York on November 23rd at which time you ought to have definite word for me.

It was very nice for Mrs. Strong and myself of visiting with you. The luncheon we missed was not the first one I have missed. This happens every time I start to talk on cryptography. I have been known to talk till three o'clock in the morning. I trust the date of Nov. 23rd will be agreeable to you.

Very sincerely yours,

Leonell C. Strong

The
NEW YORKER
No. 23 West 43rd Street

Nov. 15, 1945

Dear Dr. Strong:

I've started reading the material you left with me, and I surely will be finished with it by next Friday. I plan to be in the office most of the day on Nov. 23rd, but if something urgent comes up and I have to leave, I will leave the material for you with our receptionist.

When you get to New York, will you telephone and let me know what time you plan to come to the office? Thanks very much.

Sincerely,

Lillian Ross

The Saturday
Evening
Post

January 2, 1946

Dear Mr. Strong:

Mr. Kohler has passed along to the editorial department your query of December 19. We regret very much that the cryptographical story that you propose fails to strike us as a good possibility for the Post.

Very truly yours,

Arthur W. Baum

Associate Editor

Life
Time & Life Building
Rockefeller Center
New York 20

January 16, 1946

Dear Dr. Strong:

Your letter to Mr. Coughlan about "The Secret Language of War" has been referred to this office.

Our statement that the Voynich Manuscript is undecipherable was based on the fact that the American Cryptogram Association does not recognize any theory as to its breaking. Because it is so obscure, this Manuscript can be changed to read a number of different ways.

We placed the Manuscript in the 13th century because it is generally attributed to Bacon. Since no one is certain of the origin, Professor Manly is equally entitled to his opinion, of course.

Sincerely yours,

Ruth Mehrtens

for the Editors

January 20, 1946

D. Ruth Mehrtens
Editorial Offices
Rockefeller Center
New York 20, New York

Dear Dr. Mehrtens:

I have your letter of January 16th at hand. I quite agree with Professor Manly that the Voynich Manuscript was not written by Roger Bacon. If Professor Manly were still alive I would demonstrate for him the key to the cypher that I have discovered. This also applies to any professional cryptologist or cryptographer in the business of recognized repute. As you know my statement of the description of the cypher system used in the Voynich Manuscript was accepted for publication in the official journal of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

I would like to inquire upon what grounds the American Cryptogram Association sets themselves up as a final authority on cryptography, especially on something they have never seen. After spending several weeks investigating their organization and finally locating their official publication in the New York Public Library, their subscription for which in recent times has apparently lapsed, I am quite convinced that the true cypher contained in the Voynich Manuscript is much beyond the appreciation of the adepts of cross word puzzles. This organization as you can verify is not recognized by "Scientific and Technical Societies and Institutions of the United States and Canada", 4th edition, 1942, published by the National Research Council, National Academy of Sciences, Washington, D.C. My authority in cryptography of the 15th and 16th centuries are (1) Trithemius and J. B. Porta. Some of their cyphers are discussed by Gustavus Selenus, 1624, a copy of which is in my hand at the present time.

Your statement that the manuscript is "so obscure, etc." does not apply to me as I can read it with the true cypher like an open book, that is, all the manuscript that has been made available to me. The only reason why I have not published more of my decoded material is because I have been advised by a newspaper man, and A. P. editor, that the true contents is so frank it could not be published at the present time, even after DeKruif published his book on the male sex hormone. If your editors question any of these statements I should be delighted to demonstrate, in person, before them the true cypher of the Voynich Manuscript.

Sincerely yours,

Leonell C. Strong

P.S. I am enclosing a reprint of my article from Science since there is no evidence in your letter that you have read it.

Life
Time & Life Building
Rockefeller Center
New York 20

21 February 1946

Dear Dr. Strong:

I am sorry to have been delayed in answering your letter to me of January 20th.

We appreciate your further discussion of the Voynich Manuscript, and thank you for writing again. I did read your article from "Science" when you first wrote and regret that you thought I had not done so.

Sincerely yours,

Ruth Mehrtens
for the Editors

Victor O. Freeburg
16 East 71 Street
New York 21, New York

July 19, 1946

Prof. Leonell C. Strong
Yale University School of Medicine
New Haven, Conn.

Dear Professor Strong: Your work on the Voynich manuscript as reported in Science, June 15, 1945, interests me very much as I am writing a paper on "Ciphers and Literary Men" to be presented in September before a meeting of the English Institute at Columbia University. I have read through the book by the late Professor William Romaine Newbold entitled "The Cipher of Roger Bacon", and the devastating review of it by the late Professor John M. Manly. I have also read "Roger Bacon's Cypher: The Right Key Found" by Joseph Martin Feely of Rochester, N.Y. and I must say that your article gave me a sense of relief. Naturally I should like to bring the matter up to date. Were you able to continue the deciphering of the manuscript? If you have published any recent articles on the subject won't you please give me the references so that I can look them up.

Sincerely yours,

Victor O. Freeburg

July 22, 1946

Dr. Victor O. Freeburg
16 East 71 Street
New York 21, New York

Dear Dr. Freeburg:

I have your kind letter of July 19th at hand. I also felt a sense of relief when I found that the Voynich Cipher was not nearly as involved as either Newbold or Feely tried to make out. Unfortunately the owners of the manuscript were unwilling to cooperate to the extent of furnishing me with a photostatic copy so that the work could go on.

Due to the nature of the cipher it was futile of me trying to decipher only the isolated charts of the manuscript that have already been published. The cipher is apparently a string cipher beginning at the first and continuing to the end. Consequently I have not published any more nor do I have the intention of doing so until the owners are more cooperative.

I envy you the opportunity of discussing "Ciphers and Literary Men" before the English Institute of Columbia University. Quite aside from the Bacon-Shakespeare controversy there is as you know a wealth of material in the English language. May I inquire whether you have looked into the cipher activities of Roger Ascham, the brother of the deciphered author of the Voynich manuscript? Also the cipher knowledge of Dr. John Dee has intrigued me considerable. In fact for a long while, I thought that Dr. John Dee was the author of the Voynich manuscript. As a matter of fact, I still believe his influence was tremendous on the real author, either as an author or friend. His book on Demonology should be reinvestigated from the statement by the distinguished biologist, Robert Hooke.

I have recently been fortunate enough to purchase a very fine copy of Gustavus Selenus.

Very sincerely yours,

Leonell C. Strong

Victor O. Freeburg
16 East 71 Street
New York 21, New York

July 30, 1946

Dr. Leonell C. Strong
355 Cedar Street
New Haven 11, Conn.

Dear Dr. Strong: Thank you for your interesting letter of July 22. It is just too bad that the owners of the Voynich manuscript have not furnished complete photostatic copies of it. Your decipherment, besides being a feat of analysis and interesting as such, would, I am sure, be a contribution to knowledge. Congratulations on obtaining a fine copy of Gustavus Selenus. That certainly is a fascinating compendium of cipher lore.

I appreciate your tips about Roger Ascham and Dr. John Dee. I have found about Dee's interest in cipher, but I am ashamed to admit that I am still in the dark about Roger Ascham.

Sincerely yours,

Victor O. Freeburg

Yale University School of Medicine
333 Cedar Street - New Haven 11 - Connecticut

Laboratory of Physiology

April 24, 1947

Dr. L. C. Strong
Department of Anatomy

Dear Dr. Strong:

I have your letter of the 23rd enclosing an account of the Voynich manuscript. I don't think that this could be properly inserted at the beginning of your paper because it is rather too long and detracts from the point of the paper itself. My suggestion would be that you put in a parenthesis after the first sentence saying 'see appendix' and use the account, which is really excellent, as an appendix to the paper. This would prevent people losing the thread of the story. It would point up the importance of your title, and the reader would not lose the thread in bibliophilic detail.

With best wishes,

Very sincerely yours,

J. F. Fulton, M.D.

cc: Dr. E. L. McCawley

April 26, 1947

Dr. John F. Fulton
Yale University

Dear Dr. Fulton:

The manuscript has been retyped and the introductory remark has been placed in an appendix as you suggest. Also the two bibliographies have been combined into one in alphabetical sequence. If you have any further suggestions I would appreciate very much having them. If not, would you be so kind as to send the manuscript to Dr. Sigerist for consideration for publication in the Bulletin of the History of Medicine.

I greatly appreciate your interest in this paper.

Very sincerely yours,

Leonell C. Strong

Yale University

Memorandum

Dept. Physiology

To: Dr. L. C. Strong

May 12, 1947

Dear Dr. Strong:

Herewith a letter from Dr. Genevieve Miller about your paper. Will you show it to McCawley and ask him to return it?

Yours sincerely,

J. F. Fulton, M.D.

November 28, 1947

Sir Henry Thomas
British Museum
London
England

Dear Sir Thomas:

I expect to be in London in June 1948 and would like very much to spend some time in the British Museum. I am particularly interested in looking up all references that you may have to Dr. Anthony Ascham who lived in the middle of the 16th century. I am enclosing a short reprint indicating my interest in him.

Professor John Fulton suggested that I write to you in order to ascertain whether or not it would be possible for you to have these references assembled now so that they would be available to me at the Museum in June so as to save as much of my time as possible. I would be interested not only in his published works but also manuscript material, personal letters, etc. Some of the material that would be of interest to me may be listed under his more famous brother, Roger.

May I have a reply at your earliest convenience.

Very sincerely yours,

Leonell C. Strong

Universiteit Van Amsterdam
Anatomisch-Embryologisch
Laboratorium

Amsterdam (0)
Mauritskade 61

January 2, 1948

Dr. Strong,
Department of Anatomy,
Yale University, Medical School,
333 Cedar Street
New Haven - Conn.

Dear Dr. Strong,

One of these days I showed your publication on the Voynick Manuscript to the associate professor of skandinavian languages in Amsterdam. She told me that she did not see any resemblance between some of the mysterious words of this manuscript and skandinavian languages but that of course it might be possible to see some more resemblance if she could see more of the text of this manuscript. So I would suggest that you write to her personally and give her some more informations. Her adres is: Mrs. P.M. Boer den Hoed, Corn. Kruseman - straat 8, Amsterdam-Z. I hope that Mrs. Strong and you are doing well and should be glad if you would remember me to Mrs. Strong.

With my kind regards,

Prof. Dr. M. W. Woerdeman

Department of Printed Books
British Museum, London, W.C.1

January 5, 1948

Mr. Leonell C. Strong,
Yale University,
Sterling Hall of Medicine,
Department of Anatomy,
333 Cedar Street,
New Haven II., Conn.
U. S. A.

Dear Sir,

I have to acknowledge your letter of 28th November addressed to Sir Henry Thomas. Sir Henry retired on 31st December and I have now succeeded him as Principal Keeper.

I am afraid you have been expecting to find more material here relating to Dr. Anthony Ascham than we in fact possess. All that we have in this Department is: -

A little Herball of the properties of Herbes.
[1550] Press-mark:C.31.b.21.

An Almanacke and Prognostication ... M.V.C.L.V.
Press-mark: 1880.d.9.(1)

These will be ready for your consultation at any time.

I asked the Keeper of Manuscripts to inform me of any relevant material to be found in his Department, but he tells me that there are no MSS. of Anthony Ascham there, and that such MSS. of Roger Ascham as are in the Department do not appear to relate to Anthony.

Yours sincerely,

C. B. Oldman

Principal Keeper

The Athenaeum
Pall Mall S.W.1

January 6, 1948

45 Gordon Square
Bloomsbury
London W.C.1

Dear Dr. Strong,

I was naturally interested to hear of your work on the Voynich MS and the possible relation of the Anthony Askham mystery.

Such Gaelic experts as I have been able to consult give no encouragement to the theory that the "language" in question has ever been used in any part of England, but if, before your arrival in June, I can get any more positive opinion, I will certainly let you know.

It so happens that I have the Bosanquet copies of STC 410 (858 is 1548) which are supposed to be unique, and even if I am away from London when you are here I can arrange for you to see them. In case I am called away, ring London 1472 (11 AM to 5 pm except Saturdays) and ask for the Assistant-Director of the Orthological Institute, Miss L.W. Lockhart who will know where I am.

The "Herball" is in the Wellcome Museum.

I shall be curious to learn whether you have been able to see the original MS.

Yours sincerely,

C.K. Ogden

My regards to Professor Fulton.

11, Fitzwilliam Place,
Dublin

January 13, 1948

Dear Mr. Strong,

I have to thank you for your letter, and for your interesting reprint of the paper on the Voynich Ms. I fear I am not able to help you with the Gaelic, much as I would like to be able to do so, but I suggest that you write to

Miss E. Knott, M.A.
Royal Irish Academy House,
Dawson Street, Dublin.

She is one of the best of our Gaelic scholars, and is at present working at the Gaelic Dictionary for the Academy. I feel sure that if she should not be able to resolve your difficulties herself she could refer you to some source of reliable information.

Yours very truly

J. Puy C. Kirkpatrick

January 23, 1948

Prof. Dr. M.W. Woerdeman
University of Amsterdam
Anatomy Department
Amsterdam (0)
The Netherlands

Dear Prof. Woerdeman:

thanks a million for your letter of January 2. Your contact with the specialist of the opposite sex has posed a very embarrassing problem in my mind. Most of the manuscript that I have decoded is an extremely frank auto-biographical sexual history of the author and I would be much embarrassed to consult the lady about it. However, I shall have a copy of my decoded material with me in Amsterdam and I shall let you read it and to use your judgment whether further consultation with Mrs. Boer den Hoed is desirable. We shall be in Amsterdam between May 15-21.

Very sincerely yours,

Leonell C. Strong

January 23, 1948

Sir C.B. Oldman
Principal Keeper
Department of Printed Books
British Museum
London, W.C. 1
England

Dear Sir:

I appreciate your letter January 5th relative to the books by Dr. Anthony Ascham. I shall be in London between June 1-20th and would like at that time to study them.

My reference to possible manuscripts of Roger Ascham was initiated by the idea that perhaps some of the letters of Roger Ascham may have been addressed to or from his brother Anthony. Since the brother Roger was the more famous of the two brothers that more items may have been filed under Roger. I can find very little information on Anthony in this country and it is my desire, while in England, to try to locate some personal memorabilia of Anthony Ascham. Would it be possible for you to turn this inquiry over to your Keeper of Manuscripts with the hopes that perhaps he may be able to aid me in this search in England.

Very sincerely yours,

Leonell C. Strong

Department of Printed Books
British Museum, London, W.C.1

February 3, 1948

Mr. Leonard C. Strong,
Yale University,
Sterling Hall of Medicine,
Department of Anatomy,
333 Cedar Street,
New Haven 11,
Connecticut, U.S.A.

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter of 23rd January. I have communicated its contents to the Keeper of Manuscripts, who assures me that the MSS. of Roger Ascham will be available for you to consult at any time. The officer in charge of the MSS. Students' Room will gladly give you any further assistance that you may need.

I hope that I shall have the pleasure of making your acquaintance when you come to England in June.

Yours sincerely,

C. B. Oldman,

Principal Keeper.

February 9, 1948

Miss E. Knott, M.A.
Royal Irish Academy House
Dawson Street
Dublin, Ireland

Dear Miss Knott:

A recent letter from Dr. Kirkpatrick indicates that perhaps you may be able to help me in the analysis of the language used in the Voynich Manuscript according to the enclosed reprint. The opinion has been expressed by Mag. art. Chr. Westergaard-Nielsen, University of Copenhagen and by Professor Hammerich that "they do believe the phrases to be Gaelic but they are afraid that there are some misunderstandings as well in the transcription as in your translation".

I would appreciate very much if [you] would give me an opinion whether you consider this sentence as Gaelic either from the words used or the grammatical construction. I realize the extreme difficulty of passing judgment on such a short quotation but I would like to do the best with the material available. I intend to go on someday with decoding the rest of the manuscript so that if I knew now the exact dialect used it would aid me considerable.

I would appreciate very much your kindness of any aid you may give me on this problem.

Very sincerely yours,

Leonell C. Strong

University of Dublin

Trinity College
2 Sallymount Terrace
Dublin

February 16, 1948

Dear Dr. Strong,

The sentence "when ... crawknot" in the offprint you sent (returned herewith) is not Irish Gaelic in vocabulary or syntax. It is true that there is in modern Irish a demonstrative adj. spell seo but that makes no sense in this context, where seo may be quite another word. I cannot see any grounds for supposing the sentence to be Gaelic.

I hope you will succeed in decoding the whole of the MS.

Yours sincerely,

Eleanor Knott

The University of Texas - Medical Branch
Galveston

March 8, 1948

Dr. L. C. Strong
Department of Anatomy
Yale Medical School
333 Cedar Street
New Haven, Connecticut

Dear Doctor Strong:

Now you and Elton McCawley have done it! You've got us all excited about the decoding of the Voynich manuscript. Your article in the December issue of the Bulletin of the History of Medicine is delightful. It is one of the few instances where an ancient prescription has been put to the practical test. It is amazing how accurately peoples in the past have observed the effects by experience of various materials in their environment which might be used for medical purposes. Your contribution is a most important one, and it is very stimulating indeed.

We will all look forward with much interest to the other material what you find from the Voynich manuscript. Are you investigating anymore prescriptions? We will put you on the Ebers and Hearst prescriptions next!

The two of you will have much pleasure developing your historical interest. I hope that you work together frequently. You will have a lot that you can contribute in the field of the history of medicine, and I hope that your satisfaction will be as great as the pleasure you are giving your readers.

With best wishes,

Sincerely yours,

Chauncey D. Leake

Vice-President

March 19, 1948

Dr. Chauncey D. Leake
University of Texas
Medical Branch
Galveston
Texas

Dear Dr. Leake:

It was very kind of you to take the time of discussing our recent paper in the bulletin on the History of Medicine. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to be able [to] decypher some of these old manuscripts. It is still a mystery why so much cypher was resorted to but of course there probably were several reasons.

I have also wondered considerably why the prescriptions and formulae of the past have not been more carefully investigated in the modern scientific laboratory. Certainly in the period of description and classification in the history of science many valid observations were made. However when modern science threw out the peculiar philosophical attempts to explain observations, apparently the observations were also thrown out for no legitimate reason.

I wish we could spend some time on the Ebers and Hearst prescriptions, but my time has been considerably taken up with an active career in cancer research and I do not even have the time to spend much on the continuation of the Voynich manuscript. Somehow or rather the idea that the Voynich manuscript cypher has been cracked opens up the possibility of branching out into another "undecypherable code".

Not all observations are in cypher. Shortly after Drs. Minot and Murphy received the Nobel Prize for the treatment of pernicious anemia with liver, I showed Dr. Minot a reference to the treatment of emaciating diseases with liver in the Sylva Sylvarum of Francis Bacon, and this reference was published in the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal, November, 1927.

I also believe that the symbolism of the mediaeval alchemist also contain much that should be of interest to modern science.

Very sincerely yours,

Leonell C. Strong

June 14, 1948

Reverend Todd
Waterstock
Oxfordshire
England

Dear Reverend Todd:

I was visiting the Bodleian Library today and Dr. Hassall suggested that perhaps you would be a good man to contact for a particular problem that I am interested in. In the November-December 1947 issue of the Bulletin of History of Medicine there is an article by me on Dr. Anthony Ascham, a man who took an M.D. degree at Cambridge in 1540, became a Vicar and settled in Yorkshire. I can find very little information on this man, he being shadowed by his more famous brother, Roger. It occurred to me that perhaps in your reading you may have found some information that may be of interest to me. I would appreciate very much if you do have a few references that may aid me in this investigation.

Very sincerely yours,

Leonell C. Strong

c/o Dr. Bonser
Dept. of Pathology
University of Leeds

Leeds, England

Oxford, England
June 14, 1948

Mr. C. T. Clay
Librarian of the House of Lords
London, England

Dear Sir:

I have just visited the Bodleian Library of Oxford University and Dr. Hassall suggested that perhaps you may be in a position to help on a problem that confronts me at the present time. Dr. Hassall told me that you were an authority on Yorkshire. For some time I have been interested in a man who lived in Burneston, Yorkshire during the latter part of the 16th century, Dr. Anthony Ascham, a brother of Roger Ascham. I can find very little information on this man and I am writing you to inquire whether you may have information that I desire or if not, whether you could put me in touch with some other specialist who may help, not only in finding material on the man, but also in studying the Yorkshire dialect of this particular district during the 16th century.

In the November-December 1947 issue of the Bulletin of the History of Medicine, there is an article of mine which discusses Anthony Ascham. Next week I am going to Yorkshire for the purpose of trying to further my research and I would appreciate very much your kindness in helping me in this matter. Between June 19-22 I can be reached by letter in care of Dr. Bonser, Dept. of Pathology, University of Leeds, Leeds, England. I shall be greatly in your favor for any suggestions you may have.

Dr. Hassall asked me to send his respects to you.

Very sincerely yours,

Leonell C. Strong

The Royal Society
Burlington House
London W.1

June 16, 1948

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter of 14 June addressed to Mr. Robinson. Mr. Robinson has now retired and has asked me to answer your query.

I can only give you the sort of information about Ascham that, no doubt, you have already obtained from the standard works of reference. I take it that you have consulted all the references given in the Dictionary of National Biography at the end of the article on Anthony Ascham.

Mr. W.J. Bishop, the Librarian of the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum, 183-193 Euston Road, London N.W.1., may be able to assist you. He told me he would be glad to give you any information he has on Ascham.

Yours faithfully,

D. C. Martin
Assistant Secretary

L.C. Strong, Esq.,
c/o Dr. Bonser,
Department of Pathology,

University of Leeds.

House of Lords Library

June 16, 1948

Dear Sir

In reply to your letter I should be very glad to help you in any way I could, but, I am afraid that I have not information available about Dr. Anthony Ascham.

I should like, however, to make the suggestion that you should call at the Library of the Yorkshire Archeological Society (a society with which I am closely connected) at 10 Park Place, Leeds. There you will find Mrs. Hebdilck, our Librarian, who I know will give you any help she can. I do not of course know whether she can throw any useful light on Dr. Ascham, but I am sending your letter on to her so that she can be prepared for a visit should you have time to call there.

Yours sincerely,

Charles Clay

Mr. Leonell C. Strong

I see that the account in Dict. Nat. Biog. makes him the
incumbent of Burneston, not as having been born there.

Waterstock Rectory,
Wheatley,
Oxford.

June 17, 1948

Dear Dr. Strong,

I have no information about Dr. Anthony ascham beyond what is contained in the short article on him in the Dictionary of National Biography which you have, no doubt, already consulted.

He was not a member of the Royal College of Physicians as his name does not occur in Munk's "Roll of the Royal College of Physicians 1518-1825". He is mentioned in Venn's "Alumni Cantabrigenses" as taking his M.B. <not M.D.> 1539-1540, after eight years at Cambridge. Melhlay, where he became Rector in 1552, is close to Leeds. It would be worthwhile asking to see the Parish Register, - if it is still in existence - to see whether there is the entry of his death in it.

I am sorry that I cannot add more, but if at any time, I stumble across any fact which bears on his life, I shall certainly let you know.

Yours sincerely

John Todd

University Press Oxford

September 22, 1948

Dr. L. C. Strong,
Yale University,
School of Medicine,
New Haven,
Connecticut,
U.S.A.

Dear Sir,

Under separate cover and by registered post I am sending to you microfilms from the whole of MS. Bodley 68., in the Bodleian Library.

I enclose my account for this work.

Yours faithfully,
Charles Batey
Printer to the University

Encl:

September 29, 1948

Keeper of Manuscripts
Bodleian Library
Oxford University
Oxford, England

Dear Sir:

While at the Bodleian Library last June, 1948, I sent in a request to have a microfilm made for one of your manuscripts by Anthony Askham. I am particularly interested in getting this microfilm this fall as I have more time for study during the winter months. I would appreciate very much if you could personally look up my application and to decide whether my application was reasonably presented so that I may have this microfilm for study soon. Kindly enclose bill for reproduction and I shall send a money order upon receipt.

Very respectfully yours,

Leonell C. Strong

Prof. of Anatomy

Department of Western MSS.
Bodleian Library
The Keeper of Western MSS.
Oxford

October 5, 1948

Dear Sir,

The University Press photographer informs me that your microfilm was sent to you on September 22.

Yours truly,

R. W. Hunt

Keeper of Western Manuscripts

Central Library
Leeds

October 25, 1948

Dear Mr. Strong,

I was pleased to learn from your letter that you are satisfied with the information and photostats which Mr. Bonser had sent you.

There is not charge for the photostats, my Committee taking the view that if it is its duty to serve scholarship, then it must carry out that duty without restrictions.

I am happy to have been of service to you.

Yours sincerely,

F. G. B. Hutchings

City Librarian.

Genevieve Miller

Box 32
South Lansing, N.Y.

December 14, 1948

Professor L. C. Strong
Department of Anatomy
Yale University School of Medicine
New Haven, Conn.

Dear Professor Strong:

Last year when I was associated with the Johns Hopkins Institute of the History of Medicine as Associate Editor of the Bulletin of the History of Medicine I recall that we published an article by you and Professor McCawley on the Voynich manuscript.

Now I am doing graduate work in the history of science at Cornell University, and by coincidence have been assigned the task of discussing this manuscript in a medieval history seminar devoted to historical myths. You mentioned in the appendix to your article that the details of decoding the Voynich manuscript would be made available later, and I am therefore writing to ask you whether you have succeeded in decoding the entire manuscript. I should be interested in knowing a little more about your method of decoding and how you ascertained that the manuscript was written by Anthony Askham. Incidentally, I am not a cryptographer, and any information which you give me will not be used to anticipate any of your own work and future publications.

If you have an extra reprint of the article you published in the Bulletin (November-December, 1947 issue) I should like very much to have one to present to the Cornell Library.

Yours very sincerely,

Genevieve Miller

December 22, 1948

Miss Genevieve Miller
South Lansing
Box 32
New York

Dear Miss Miller:

Your letter of December 14th was received while we were on a California trip. Hence the delay.

I have been interested in cryptography as a hobby for nearly thirty years. I have been interested mostly in the 16th and 17th centuries, since these were the centuries in which cyphers received their greatest development. When Professor Newbold's book on the Voynich Manuscript was published, I purchased the book and read it merely as a book on cypher. I did not try to analyze nor criticize the work since I did not have the time to go back to the 13th century. However later when the botanical specimens were emphasized I started to apply my methods of decyphering since the manuscript was then placed in the century in which I was interested. My first publication in Science was published with the primary purpose of trying to get the owners of the manuscript interested in my work. As you perhaps know, photostating of the entire manuscript and secretarial help would be too great for my means at my disposal. Instead of becoming interested in my cypher work, the owners seemed to resent any work on it. I was told by one of the legatees mentioned in Mr. Voynich's will that as an undecypherable manuscript it would be worth more than it would be with the cypher known, when then it becomes another manuscript in the history of medicine. Whether the owners still have this opinion I do not know and I would not like to be quoted on the matter.

The second article in the History of Medicine with Professor McCawley was again for the purpose of trying to stimulate the owners interest. This has been to no avail. Whether I shall ever publish any more depends upon the future. I have been asked by the editor of Speculum, the official organ of the Mediaeval Academy of America, of which I am a member, to write a lengthy article on my work of decoding the Voynich Manuscript. I am still undecided whether I can ever get the time to do this.

The key to the code can be found in Porta and Trithemius. It is also discussed in the Cryptomenes of Gustavus Selenus, a copy of which I own. This is all I can say on the method. Frankly there is a personal matter involved here. I feel that since I determined the method of the code that I should be given the opportunity of decyphering the entire manuscript or at least that part which appeals to me.

My recent work on this matter has been the accumulation of all the evidence I can find on Anthony Askam and I can say now that this information is very meager. There is one manuscript supposedly in the hand writing in the Bodleian Library, a microfilm of which I now have. When enlargements of this microfilm have been made I propose to compare this hand writing in the Voynich manuscript. During my recent visit to England last June I also found that Anthony Askam was Rector of two parishes in Yorkshire. It was customary in those days for Rectors to record births, marriages and deaths. I have photostats of these two parishes during Anthony Askam's tenure of office. I also intend to compare these with the hand writing in the Voynich manuscript.

I am extremely interested to hear of your interest in this manuscript. May I hope that after your seminar you may have additional time to investigate the problem. I feel that the Voynich manuscript is a very important one in the history of medicine, perhaps not containing any great contributions in the art of medicine, but perhaps an attempt has been made to rationalize on medical lore possessed by the English peasant of the early 16th century, also on the reinterpretation of astrology and the influence on the stars of human disease and an evaluation of a man's life (particularly sex physiology) in relation to the community.

I am enclosing the two reprints already published.

Very sincerely yours,

Leonell C. Strong

Genevieve Miller

Box 32
South Lansing, N.Y.

January 11, 1949

Dr. Leonell C. Strong
Department of Anatomy
Yale University School of Medicine
333 Cedar St.
New Haven 11, Conn.

Dear Dr. Strong:

Thank you very much for your kind letter of December 22. I apologize for my delay in acknowledging it; as a matter of fact I have been so busy preparing the Roger Bacon paper which is due this Friday, that I have had to drop everything else.

I was very interested in your remarks about the Voynich Ms, and I fully appreciate your desire to reserve the details of your decoding method until you have had an opportunity to decipher the entire manuscript. If you cannot obtain access to the manuscript in any other way, it is possible that you could obtain microfilm of the set of photostats in the British Museum (mentioned at the conclusion of Manly's article in *Speculum*). What puzzles me, is why Askham would put such a work in cipher, where it is so inaccessible that no one before you has been able to read it? I have not studied the 16th century in any detail and therefore have no judgment except my own curiosity on the subject, but since so many popular treatises on medicine and medicinal remedies were being written and published at the time, I simply wonder why he should have felt any necessity to conceal the contents of his book. However, you are undoubtedly familiar with the cryptological literature of the day and may know of other instances of scientific treatises being thus enciphered. Astrology, for example, was openly accepted and written about, and there was also a considerable gynecological literature. Therefore, why the cipher? Was it an intellectual game?

I very much appreciated your sending the reprints of your articles, and I hope that you will find it possible to continue your work on the manuscript.

Yours very sincerely,

Genevieve Miller

Hudson View Gardens
New York 33, N.Y.

March 14, 1949

Dear Dr. Strong,

Since I had the pleasure of hearing from you in 1945*, I have often thought of your researches in the authorship of the Voynich cipher MS and wondered if you were able to continue them in London, as you had hoped to do. As I am quite out of touch with my old friends, the owners, I never learned if eventually they granted you access to the photostatic copy in the N.Y. Public Library.

Then, the other day, I picked up rather idly a number (Nov. '48) of Isis and of course my glance was arrested by the sight of the name of Athanasius Kircher. I read the article and, noting the omission of a reference to your reading of the cipher as it appeared in Science, I called the author's attention to the fact. (I hope this was not taking liberties, for I suggested his getting in touch with you.)

In his reply thanking me Dr. McCracken uses the plural: "articles", so I am writing now to ask if you have published anything on the subject since your first note in Science, with its attribution to Dr. Anthony Ascham, brother of Roger.

And what about Dr. John Dee?

Sincerely yours,

Erla Rodakiewicz

* July 18

[Doctor Strong's response to the above letter is missing as of 7/30/92 - Carried as letter number 94 in the Letters index-the following excerpt was transcribed from the letter in 1987]

To: Erla Rodakiewicz
From: L. C. Strong

March 16, 1949

"There is a gradual approach to the distribution obtained by passing backward through the classical writers of the 17th and 16th centuries in English. The nearest approach was found to be in some early writing of John Dee at it was this characteristic which originally led me to believe that John Dee had something to do with its construction."..."If you will look on the last page of John Dee's Actions with Spirits which was published in 1659 you will find a very interesting page. By dividing the page into two parts you will find that one half has exactly the same frequency distribution of word size that is found in the Voynich manuscript. If anybody be interested in working out this cypher, you will find the identical cypher which I determined in the Voynich manuscript. The only difference being in the number of alphabets used and the difference in the arithmetical progressions."

Hudson View Gardens

May 1, 1949

Dear Dr. Strong,

The date of your letter is a mute reproach. Please believe that I appreciate both letter and the copies of your article, but I have reached the age when Time becomes a swift unbroken current. In addition to the infirmities of my years, everything seems to happen at once with me.

In late March our Renaissance Club made a pilgrimage to Princeton for the last meeting of the season. I mentioned – with due discretion - your work in cryptography to Professor George Parks of Queens College, so do not be surprised someday to receive an inquiry from him if you would have time and the inclination to speak before the Club. By the way are you acquainted with a quarterly publication: Renaissance hows (Dartmouth, for the American Council of Learned Societies). Studies in progress on especially the listed acquisitions in Britain and in the U.S.A. offer useful information in research. No doubt this "newsletter" may be found in your Yale Library.

Your contributions to the knowledge of the Voynich MS. should, in my opinion, make it doubly attractive to the New York Academy of Medicine, which many years ago considered purchasing it. (Perhaps this should be held confidential, in the interest of the owners). Has the Academy shown interest in your readings of the text? Your suggestion that the cypher was used by a group of scholars certainly opens many vistas. I am too unfamiliar with the subject and the period to be aware of the existence of corroborative evidence. Who knows what uncatalogued treasures the British and perhaps continental libraries may still hold and which the publication planned by you may lure into the light?

Again with my thanks,

Very sincerely yours,

Erla Rodakiewicz

Windsor Gate
Great Neck, New York

August 8, 1951

Dr. Leonell C. Strong
Amity Road
Woodbridge
New Haven, Connecticut

My dear Dr. Strong,

It was with a great deal of interest that I read your article in Science in 1945 concerning your decypherment of the Voynich manuscript. I have long been interested in this manuscript and its several "solutions", but yours is the only one I've seen that shows any signs of plausibility. You said in the article that you could not divulge the method of encipherment at the time of publication because of security reasons. I wonder if you would mind now telling me briefly what the method of encipherment is and what results you've obtained from your reading of the manuscript.

Very truly yours,

David Kahn

August 9, 1951

Mr. David Kahn
Windsor Gate
Great Neck
New York

Dear Mr. Kahn:

It was a pleasure to have your letter of August 8th relative to my decipherment of the Voynich Manuscript. When I published the article the method of decipherment was not given due to the fact that articles on cypher are not very popular during war years. I have full confidence that with this publication an interest would be aroused by which my cypher research could be continued. However I have been entirely unsuccessful in interesting or even contacting the owners of the manuscript. I requested the opportunity of studying a photostatic copy and this was denied me. Life Magazine wanted to publish a feature article on my work and I had several interviews with their Editors. However I understand the owners of the manuscript would not give permission for this article to appear in Life and in order to avoid a controversy the Life article was not published. I do know that there are several photostatic copies of the manuscript in existence, one of which was used by Col. Friedman of Washington. I have had a very interesting correspondence with the Colonel among which is his statement that he wanted me to publish nothing but to submit all my decipherment to him. Without the entire manuscript and more time than I can spare from a career in cancer research no further progress can be made. I have deciphered all the charts available to me, the ones that appear [in] "the Cypher of Roger Bacon" by Newbold.

I admit that I do not have the complete multiple alphabet, but I have enough to convince me that I am on the right track. If I would publish what I do have somebody, especially in Washington, with all the modern machinery for decipherment, could take my system and complete the entire manuscript and destroy what little fun I have had in solving the "most mysterious manuscript in the world".

You may be interested to know that the New Yorker interviewed me about publishing an article in their magazine and when I had finished they agreed with me that it would be inappropriate to publish it at the present time. A good deal of the manuscript deals with sex physiology and relations in the middle ages.

Very sincerely yours,

Windsor Gate
Great Neck, New York

August 15, 1951

Dr. Leonell C. Strong
Amity Road
Woodbridge
New Haven, Connecticut

Dear Dr. Strong:

It was a pleasure to hear from you so promptly. I must say that you certainly have had your problems with the manuscript.

Just to see what would happen, I called Mrs. Voynich on the telephone today. Her secretary answered and we had a five-minute talk. I told her that I was working on the manuscript but needed a complete photostatic copy to complete my decryptment. She replied that no more copies were being given out, and indicated that the reason was that a plethora of copies would lower the ultimate selling price of the manuscript itself. It has not yet been sold, and no price has been fixed. The secretary even declined to give the names of those who have copies, but she did mention one Father Peterson, formerly of Washington, D.C., who has been working on the manuscript for many years. The Archdiocese of Washington might know him and his whereabouts.

You may be interested to know that there is a group in New York which meets once a month to discuss our hobby of cryptography. Nearly all of them know of the manuscript, and I feel sure that a talk by you concerning your solution and the method of decypherment would be of intense interest to all. Would you like to address this group? I should be more than pleased to get in touch with the president for you. We might even get Mrs. Voynich to attend!

Sincerely yours,

David Kahn

310 Second Street, S.E.
Washington 3, D. C.

October 20, 1954

Miss Pauline Holmes
50 Bates Road
Watertown, Massachusetts

Dear Miss Holmes:

About a half dozen years ago we exchanged some correspondence in connection with your studies in the field of Baconian ciphers. I have recently reviewed the correspondence and note that at the time of your writing you obviously had in your temporary possession certain work sheets and notebooks of Mrs. Gallup's on the biliteral cipher. These were referred to as the property of Mr. Sloman. I am wondering whether by any chance you still have these work sheets and notebooks, or whether you returned them to Mr. Sloman. Whatever you can tell me about these will be much appreciated.

Hoping this letter will find you well, I am,

Sincerely,

William F. Friedman

Boston Home For Incurables
2049-2061 Dorchester Ave.
Boston, Mass.

November 3, 1954

William F. Friedman
310 Second Street, S.E.
Washington 3, D.C.

Dear Mr. Friedman:

Your recent letter was forwarded to the above address where I have been living for the last year. Yes, I recall very vividly my correspondence with you several years ago.

I returned to Mr. Edmund M. Sloman, a year or more before his death, the Dr. Owen wheel and all the Owen and Gallup papers which Mr. Sloman had loaned me. His widow (85 Eason Ave., Highland Park, Michigan) has since written me that she planned to give the wheel to the Detroit Public Library. I enclose a list of the papers. This collection does not include Mrs. Gallup's work sheets for the biliteral cipher. I have never been able to locate these.

Under separate cover I am sending you the following:

1. Mrs. Prescott's book. Read pages 36-53.
2. Baconiana, New Year issue, 1949, containing my article on the discovery of the Morgan Coleman manuscript. Read notes on pages 33-35.
3. Baconiana, Spring 1949. Article by Edward D. Johnson

You may know that George B. Curtis and Samuel B. Haskell have both died within the last few years. I suggest that you write to Mrs. Curtis, Moravian College for Women, Bethlehem, Penn.

It is pleasant to resume correspondence with you.

Cordially yours,

[Miss Pauline Holmes]

Mayo Clinic
Rochester, Minnesota

Section of Biophysics

March 23, 1961

Dr. Leonell C. Strong
Director, Biological Station
Roswell Park Memorial Institute
Springville, New York

Dear Doctor Strong:

I have had occasion recently to look up the life history of Roger Bacon, and of course came across the Voynich Cipher Manuscript and the publications regarding this manuscript which appeared in the Transactions of the College of Physicians in 1921. Just the other day I saw your communication to Science of June, 1945, as well as a note in the Transactions of the College of Physicians, June, 1945.

I am writing to you to inquire if there is any additional information available concerning the translation of the Voynich manuscript. I have been unable to find anything in the literature since June, 1945, and would appreciate it very much if you could inform me of any recent references.

Very sincerely yours,

E. J. Baldes

March 27, 1961

Dr. E. J. Baldes
Section of Biophysics
Mayo Clinic
Rochester, Minnesota

Dear Dr. Baldes:

I assume from your letter of March 23rd that you are more interested in Roger Bacon rather than in the Voynich manuscript. It was a very great mistake to have the two as mixed up as they seem to be even though the mistake goes back to Professor Newbold who was unquestionably a fine gentleman and a scholar.

To me the Voynich manuscript was not written until the 16th century. I have published two papers on this idea which are enclosed in this letter. You have already referred to the one in Science. I have much more of the Voynich manuscript deciphered but shall probably never publish anything further on it due to the fact that the original manuscript and the photostatic copies are in as deep freeze as any section of Zeta which is a characteristic of some of our educational institutions.

It was even suggested by one of our top cryptographers in Washington that since they had the mechanical machine to do the entire decipherment all they needed was my system of decoding which I had obtained by hard work. This I was loath to do and so the matter rests. As a matter of fact even if further decipherment of the Voynich manuscript could be made available it probably could not be published at the present time. To me the Voynich manuscript is merely another manuscript in the history of medicine.

If there is any further service I may be to you kindly feel free to call upon me at any time.

Sincerely yours,

Leonell C. Strong, Ph.D.
Director

Western Union
Telegram

June 18, 1962

850P EDT JUN 18 62 SYB517

SPE251 SSB722 SY HEA576 PD GARDEN CITY NY 18 819P EDT

DR LEONELL STRONG, PHONE LY 2 7032

SPRINGVILLE NY BIOLOGICAL STATION SPRINGVILLE NY

(RTE SPRINGVILLE AGCY VIA BFLO CTA)

NEWYORK TIMES PUBLISHED TODAY STORY ON VOYNICH MANUSCRIPT
OFFERED

FOR \$160,000 MENTIONING NEITHER YOU NOR NEWBOLD NOR FEELY. AS A
REPORTER ON THE LONG ISLAND DAILY, NEWSDAY, I AM WRITING A FULL
PAGE ILLUSTRATED PIECE ON THE MANUSCRIPT, AND WOULD LIKE TO
INCLUDE SOME DETAILS OF YOUR WORK IN ADDITION TO YOUR TWO
ARTICLES. I WILL TELEPHONE YOU SOMETIME TUESDAY AND WILL BE MOST
GRATEFUL IF YOU CAN HELP ME OUT. YOU MAY REMEMBER THAT I WROTE
YOU A DECADE AGO AS A YOUNGSTER INTERESTED IN CRYPTOLOGY AND
THAT YOU REPLIED TO ME VERY KINDLY I'M STILL INTERESTED, INCIDENTLY

[David Kahn]

(note attached to letter- call David Kahn collect at Pioneer 1-1234 up until 1:30, from 3:00 on call Hunter 73964 collect)

June 21, 1962

Mr. David Kahn
The Long Island Daily, Newsday
Garden City, New York

Dear Mr. Kahn:

your telegram was delivered to us late in the evening on June 18. We were expecting a call from you on Tuesday. Not hearing from you, I could only conclude that you probably run into as much difficulty as I had experienced on at least two occasions following my original publication in Science Magazine. I was approached by both Time magazine and The New Yorker to present more information on my decipherment of the Voynich Manuscript. Unfortunately, in both cases in order to avoid an argument, the owner of the Voynich Manuscript was expected to okay these two news releases. This okay apparently never did materialize because I heard nothing further from either manuscript.

If the manuscript is undecipherable it may be worth all the owners expect to get for it. If the ciphering were known, and I certainly did decipher it, the manuscript would only be another in the history of medicine. It is my firm conviction that some of the material in the manuscript could not be published now, it could even be called a Kinsey report from the 17th century. However, news is news and you know that field a lot more than I do.

I have a dim memory of contacting you many years ago. Were you not the boy who corresponded with Miss Pauline Holmes? If so, you may know that she died several years ago.

Here's luck to you in your search for truth no matter where it can be found.

Sincerely yours,

Leonell C. Strong, Ph.D.

My present address is:
Pfc. Donald R. Tumasonis
RA 11639481
B Btry, 5th Bn, 7th Arty
Franklin Lakes, New Jersey
07417

November 21, 1967

Sir:

I humbly beg your forgiveness for this intrusion upon the privacy of one who is most certainly engaged in matters of greater import, but I am relying upon your gracious help for the solution of a question to which otherwise I feel I could find no answer.

Two years ago, I first came across the enigma of the Voynich manuscript. At the present time, I believe that I am either in possession of, or have access to all published commentary on that most curious book. In the June 15 issue of Science, 1945, an article appeared under your name, pertaining to a solution of the cipher.

Since that time, I have been unable to discover further reference to your findings on this problem. I also believe that most are unaware of your research on the Voynich manuscript, since the most recent writings on it (Altick, Ashbrook) make no mention of your work, treating the cipher as still unsolved.

My question, sir, is this: did you publish any further research concerning the manuscript, and if so, where? If, sir, you did no further writing, may I humbly ask, why?

Your answer would be an immense aid towards settling a question that has perplexed me for the past two years. If you would graciously deign to answer my request, my gratitude would be boundless. I am,

Most Obediently Yours,

Donald Tumasonis

Rand Corporation
1700 Main St.
Santa Monica, CA 90406

August 14, 1975

Dear Dr. Strong,

I recently was able to find your paper on the Voynich Manuscript in Science (15 Jun 1945) from a citation in The Codebreakers, by David Kahn. The description of your results was very interesting (but tantalizing) to me. Have you published the keys you used in the "double system of arithmetical progressions of multiple alphabets"? I have a copy of the microfilm from the British Museum with the first 67 pages of the manuscript, but have made no progress with it.

I would be interested to see your method; I am particularly mystified that a progressive multiple alphabet system could produce situations like the three contiguous repetitions of the work 40HC89 in the plate on p. 865 of The Codebreakers. I hope this request is not an imposition on your time.

Sincerely yours,

Jim Gillogly
Information Sciences Dept.

August 16, 1975

Dr. Jim Gillogly
Information Sciences Dept.
Rand Corporation
1700 Main St.
Santa Monica, CA 90406

Dear Dr. Gillogly

At one time, I had the intention of publishing the complete analysis of the decoding of the Voynich manuscript. But after the insulting report of the early work by David Kahn, based upon the sloppy work of Friedman, I decided never to publish further on the research. Neither Kahn nor Friedman have ever seen my original analysis, including work sheets and for them to draw a conclusion without knowing all the evidence is unsound science and should be considered unethical practice in crypto-analysis. Friedman, in his correspondence to me admitted he was unable to decypher the Voynich MMS himself, and thus expressed a vane of vanity which probably was part of the reason why he tried to discredit me. Some build up a reputation by trying to destroy everyone else.

I was never able to find out whether Ascham ever had the idea that his MMS would ever be decyphered. But if Ascham waited for four hundred years before his code system was discovered, I can wait just as long for recognition in finding Ashcham's reason.

If you continue p. 865 you may find more repetitions of what you call "the word 40HC89". You may conclude that this combination is not even a single word and the combination may have different meanings. In other words it is not a unit of words but a unit for the entire passage. That is as far as I will go in indicating my system.

My description of the system of decoding used is clear. But even without this clear hint, any expert decoder should be a master in his own field.

Information Sciences Dept.
Rand Corporation
1700 Main St.
Santa Monica, CA 90406

August 20, 1975

Dear Dr. Strong,

Just a note to thank you for your speedy response to my letter of 14 Aug. about the Voynich manuscript, and for your hint about the problems I'm having with it. I trust it will become clearer to me as I study the manuscript further. I respect your position about not disseminating your solution and will not press for further information.

Thank you also for clarifying your position with respect to Kahn and Friedman (who died several years ago, I believe). I certainly agree that Friedman's rejection of your solution was sloppy and unscientific - a clear cryptographic method with few degrees of freedom (unlike Newbold's attempt) would certainly overshadow any linguistic objections. The correct conclusion for him to have drawn was merely that your solution was unproven, since the essence of science is reproducibility of experiments. I must respectfully disagree with your inclusion of Kahn in the same category, however. I didn't fee that his treatment of your work was insulting, but that he had drawn the only conclusion possible - that it was unproven (because unpublished). He reports Friedman's opinion as opinion, and does not express his own opinion. In his chapter about Friedman, by the way, he echoes your comment about Friedman building his reputation by tearing down others.

Thanks again for your letter. I trust you will one day receive the recognition you deserve - and that you won't have to wait four hundred years.

Sincerely,

Jim Gillogly

(Mr., not Dr. - M.S. in Computer Sci.)

Philip M. Arnold
Box 1457
Bartlesville, Oklahoma 74003

April 19, 1977

Dr. L. C. Strong
10457 Roselle St.
San Diego, Cal. 92121

Dear Dr. Strong:

In Science, Vol. 101, No. 2633, page 608 (June 15, 1945), you reported that you had found the key to the Voynich manuscript, but because of the war then going on you did not feel it appropriate to publish your findings in full. The manuscript was then in the hands of Kraus, the New York book dealer, and you apparently had seen only photocopies of certain pages of it. However, as a result of your work, you ascribed it to Anthony Ascham.

Did you ever publish the key that you found to the manuscript, and if so, where? Did you ever have access to the complete manuscript, and do you still think that your decipherment, based on a limited sample, is valid?

I would be grateful for any information that you can give me on this subject. In view of the long lapse of time, it may no longer be of interest to you, but I can assure you that other people are still interested.

Sincerely yours,

P. M. Arnold

April 22, 1977

Mr. P. M. Arnold
Box 1457
Bartlesville, Okla 74003

It is a surprise to hear about some of my old work. Yes, I am interested in the manuscript even after I received some pretty rough treatment with the custodian for the former owner, Mr. Voynich. As you may know there had been several copies made and deposited in various libraries. The one at the New York Library could only be seen by the permission of the custodian. She denied my request. Colonel Friedman of our USA code division also had access to a copy. With this, he had the audacity to ask me for my system of decipherment since he had the wonderful machines in Washington for decipherment. Hence I then determined that if the machines were as good as they were claimed to be, one should determine what system had been employed and I would be holding a ?climbing? throttle! I shall never divulge the system i used. I carefully described it in the Science article. you can find the cypher in Trithemius.

I am certain that Anthony Ascham was the author.

I also have taken note that the manuscript is now at Yale University - but several years after I had determined the nature of the manuscript at the Medical School, Yale University where I spent many hours in the wonderful Cushing Library.

I wish you all the luck in your search. I fondly remember the hours of scout work I did before the light broke.

Sincerely