

the VMS was written in an artificial language, similar to those of Cave Beck and John Wilkins [Z], [T]; this was published in the form of an anagram announcement in a footnote to a 1959 *Philological Quarterly* article “Acrostics, Anagrams, and Chaucer.” Folder 1614 contains an exchange of letters in 1954 with Erwin Panofsky about the VMS.

For much of the 1950s the Friedmans were occupied with the studies leading up to the publication in 1957 of their *The Shakespearean Ciphers Examined*.

In 1962 Friedman was able to assemble another after-hours group, the “Second Voynich Manuscript Study Group” (SSG), which sought to enter the text of the VMS into an RCA computer. The Friedman collection possesses several SSG items: item 1609.4, which includes a file of memos (of a highly bureaucratic nature, about the protocol for use of RCA equipment) and alphabet sheets; and a 63-page printout of a computer transcription into 46,424 computer characters of VMS pages 120 through 175 (which are f.67r1 through f.87r); and item 1609.3, a massive 692 page computer printout of a cross reference or “KWIC” tabulation of the transcription in item 1609.4. At roughly the same time Elizebeth S. Friedman wrote a survey article [F] about the VMS, published in the *Washington Post*, and William, possibly anticipating progress from the SSG, planned a weightier article for publication in *Isis* or *Speculum*. Unfortunately, the SSG effort terminated before it had much to show for its efforts, and the weightier paper was never written.

At about this time Friedman’s health began to deteriorate and he did no further major work on the VMS in the final decade of his life.

The First Study Group

There seem to be no published first-hand accounts of the activities of the First Study Group (hereafter abbreviated FSG). More-or-less equivalent secondary accounts can be found in Kahn [K], Zimansky [Z], and Clark [C]; a slightly more detailed account in D’Imperio [D1] (who had access to a partial set of minutes of the FSG’s meetings): At the end of the war, the Army cryptanalysts headed by Friedman found themselves without any pressing tasks. Many were simply awaiting demobilization and return to their universities and civilian practices. Friedman took