

Appendix II: Identifying the *Urtext* Manuscript

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1 What is the *Urtext*?

by Doug Thompson

Most students of *A Course in Miracles* have heard the story of the origins. Helen Schucman heard a “Voice” and took what she called “inner dictation” in her shorthand notebooks.

Periodically she dictated those notes to her colleague William Thetford who typed them up, and then read them back to her to ensure accuracy. This first typed transcript has been referred to as the “*Urtext*.” Later this first transcript was edited and retyped several times before the book was first printed. While the story was widely circulated, the original *Notebooks* and the *Thetford Transcript* were kept secret. The word “urtext” then has been widely un-

derstood to be synonymous, in terms of the Course, with the term *Thetford Transcript*.

When a collection of digitized photocopies of early typed manuscript copies of the Course labelled “*Urtext of a Course in Miracles*” surfaced in 2000 it was of course assumed to be that first *Thetford Transcript* of the original *Shorthand Notebooks*, and it was assumed to be a highly accurate copy of that original dictation.

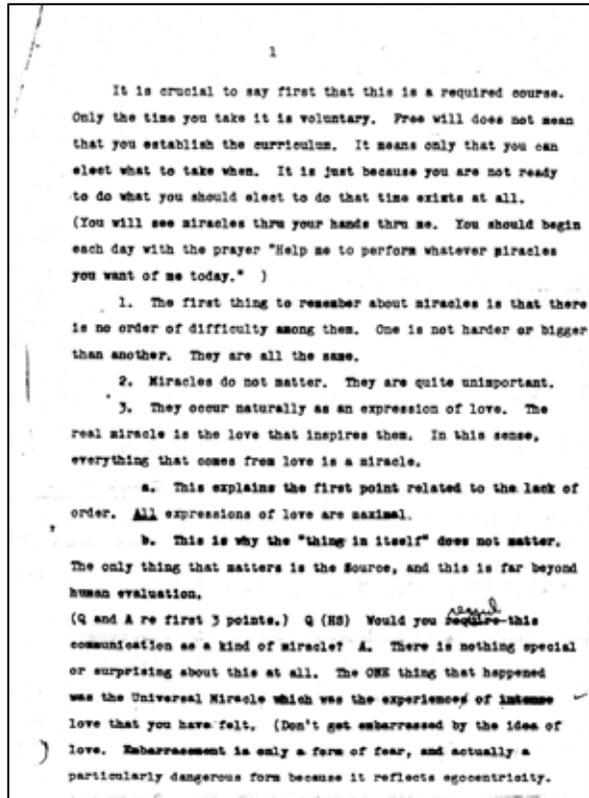


Figure 1: The first page of the *Urtext* manuscript of the *Text* volume

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While I think some of the *Urtext* material may well be that original *Thetford Transcript*, after seven years of studying it, I have gradually come to doubt that much of it is. There is considerable evidence that at least some of it is a later retyping. In this essay I shall attempt to review and discuss the relevant evidence which has come to my attention.

It is the second oldest manuscript of *A Course in Miracles (ACIM)* currently available, that much is beyond dispute. The most widely recognized authorities such as Kenneth Wapnick and Judith Skutch's Foundation for Inner Peace (FIP) have repeatedly asserted that the original *Thetford Transcript* was called by the name "urtext."

Two serious scholarly analyses of the differences between the "versions" published to date, by Robert Perry¹ and Richard Smoley,² have both accepted, without question, the identification of the *Urtext* as the *Thetford Transcript*. Neither author had access to the *Notes* when these articles were written, however.

I am not aware of anyone – except me – who has seriously challenged the identification of the *Urtext* with the *Thetford Transcript*. On this and a number of other questions there has been a tendency, which I have often shared, to simply accept the declarations of Wapnick and FIP as authoritative and not requiring corroboration. One reason for this has been the lack of access to the primary source materials without which corroboration is difficult.

It was only after nearly a decade of investigation, and with enormous reluctance, that I finally accepted that much of the *Urtext* is very likely **not** the *Thetford Transcript*, but rather a later retyping.

Because I am now convinced this is not the *Thetford Transcript*, and I am very aware that there is a widespread belief that it is, I feel it essential to at least present the evidence which can help us correctly identify this significant manuscript collection.

Within weeks of its release in August of 2000, a few questions began to be raised as to whether or not it really was that original *Thetford Transcript* or a later, edited re-typing, or even a combination of parts of several re-typings. Further study cast progressively more doubt on the identification of this document as the *Thetford Transcript*. The ultimate test is to simply compare the various documents in detail. Yet much of the

¹ Robert Perry: *The Earlier Versions and the Editing of A Course in Miracles*, Circle of Atonement. <http://www.circleofa.org/articles/EarlierVersions.php>

² Richard Smoley: *A Comparison of Miracles*, Fearless Press

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primary source material was not available to scholarship. Since comparisons with unavailable documents obviously couldn't be done there was a widespread feeling that there was no way to tell so that Wapnick's identification simply had to be accepted.

Now that we can compare much of it with the *Notes* we see that the *Urtext* is not an exact transcription of the *Notes*. Nor are many of the differences "inadvertent" discrepancies which could be explained as oral transcription errors. This *Urtext* is heavily edited in portions and a great deal of it shows clear, and in some cases utterly indisputable, evidence of being a "re-typing" with editing and sequencing changes and copying errors rather than an original transcript.

2 How is the word *Urtext* used in ACIM writings?

The source for the notion that the *Urtext* is the original *Thetford Transcript* is not hard to find. In the "Errata for the Second Edition"³ published by the Foundation for Inner Peace (FIP) in 1992 we read:

"Helen took down her internal dictation in notebooks, and regularly dictated these to her colleague and collaborator, Dr. William Thetford, who typed out her words. This original typing of the three books came to be called the "urtext,"⁴ a word denoting an original manuscript."

Wapnick, for his part, offers a slightly more detailed set of observations. The following quote comes from his introduction to the 32-part cassette tape series entitled: "*Classes on the Text of A Course in Miracles*":

"Let me say a few words about the relationship of the early chapters of the text to what Helen had originally taken down. Briefly – since most of you know the story – Helen had written down the dictation from Jesus in notebooks. [...] She then dictated what she had written down to Bill Thetford, who typed it out. What Bill typed out is what we usually refer to as the urtext. The word "ur" comes from the biblical story of Abraham, who was born in Ur of the Chaldees. Basically it is used to symbolize the beginning of something. (emphasis mine)

"So when we speak of an urtext, we mean the first version of a manuscript. Thus there are famous urtexts of Shakespeare's works and many other literary masters. With regard to *A Course in Miracles*, we used that

³ <http://www.miraclestudies.net/Errata.html> (errata to the FIP Second Edition)

⁴ It is interesting to note that FIP reserves the name "*Urtext*" for volumes 1,2, and 3 only, and does not include the other volumes.

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term to denote what Bill had typed, the original typed manuscript that was based on Helen's notebooks. Helen then re-typed the manuscript of the text twice. And then there was the penultimate version, which was the version I saw when I met Helen and Bill. That is the version⁵ Helen and I edited into the finished copy -- the published copy."

The two primary documentary sources explicitly say the *Urtext* is the *Thetford Transcript*. Since it was Wapnick who filed the "*Urtext*" material at the copyright office,⁶ it seemed to be a reasonable assumption that he understood what he was filing to be the *Thetford Transcript*. Wapnick, who probably had more and better access to a vastly wider range of primary source material than anyone else, and who knew the Scribes and their work as well as anyone alive, was presumed to be "The Authority" on this matter. Indeed, it was only after the evidence of the mistake became overwhelming that I reluctantly concluded that, incredible as it might seem, Wapnick was perhaps mistaken on this point.

The typed *Urtext* manuscript of the *Text* volume which appeared in 2000 was obviously earlier and much larger than any version of *ACIM* then public, and it was labelled "*Urtext*." Naturally, given these "authoritative" descriptions of the *Urtext* from FIP and Wapnick, it was first assumed to be the *Thetford Transcript*.

Also from the "*Errata*" we read:

"After each of these typing sessions, Bill read back to Helen what he typed to ensure that no mistakes were made. Thus, the urtext can be considered to have been carefully checked, and to be an accurate copy of Helen's original notes. Helen later re-typed the manuscript of the *Text* twice and the *Workbook* and *Manual* once, and none of these re-typings was [sic] ever proofread."

If the FIP "history" here is correct, and there is independent corroboration of some key points, this is a fairly high level of "proofreading" and would certainly catch most inadvertent errors such as omitted words or phrases. William Thetford is on tape stating much the same thing about the careful proofreading. Schucman read her *Notes* to him aloud, he typed them up and read them back to her to ensure accuracy.

⁵ <http://www.miraclestudies.net/HLV.html>

⁶ 22 Volumes of "*Helen Schucman's Unpublished Writings*" were filed at the United States Copyright Office in 1990 by Kenneth Wapnick at the request of Helen Schucman's husband Louis Schucman. That material includes eight separate manuscripts labelled "*Urtext of A course in Miracles and Related Material*," one each for the *Text*, *Workbook*, *Manual*, *Use of Terms*, *Psychotherapy*, *Song of Prayer*, *Gifts of God* and *Special Messages*.

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We would therefore *assume* it to be accurate as Wapnick suggests. However, most notably in the early chapters, this *Urtext* is not nearly as accurate a copy of the *Notes* as we might expect from these accounts. To date no thorough comparison of the *Notes* and the *Urtext* has been done in order to completely catalogue the differences, but in the few chapters I've compared, the differences are numerous.

We'd expect any mortal typist to make some errors, and that would be a reason for this proofreading, to catch and correct typing mistakes. We'd expect that proofreading to identify some errors which we'd see as pencilled-in corrections but in the *Urtext* documents overall there is little which looks like the corrections we'd expect to see from such proofreading. In marked contrast, the short *Psychotherapy* volume, in just 29 pages, has several instances of precisely what we'd expect from an orally proofed transcript. In the 1072 pages of the *Urtext Text* volume, there is proportionately much less of this sort of editing.

While FIP and Wapnick disagree on the number of retypings, they both agree there were *at least two* typed manuscripts made, the original *Thetford Transcript* and one or more retypings of it, for every volume, with the *Text* having at least one more than the other volumes. The "other volumes" here may relate only to the *Workbook, Manual for Teachers*, and possibly the *Use of Terms*. So far, however, we only have a single typed manuscript earlier than the *HLC* for a total of two for the *Text* and only a single pre-1975 typed manuscript for the other volumes. These are the ones from 22 *Volumes* material labelled "*Urtext*."

So our sources say two or more typed manuscript copies of the Course were made. What we have here labelled "urtext" is a typed copy of the *Notes* with some material added, some material omitted, and some material re-sequenced. It is almost certainly one of the several early typed copies, but which one?

3 Version History from the FIP/Wapnick account

While FIP seems to indicate that the *HLC* may be the second re-typing, from Wapnick's descriptions the *Text* "version history" includes *six* versions:

1. *Notes*
2. *Thetford Transcript* (mistakenly called the *Urtext*?)
3. *First Re-typing* (which may actually be the *Urtext*?)
4. *Second Re-typing* (this may be a ghost and refer to the *HLC*?)
5. *HLC*
6. *Criswell/FIP* Editions

What we actually have copies of for the *Text* is only *four*:

1. *Notes*
2. *Urtext* (likely one of the re-typings)
3. *HLC*
4. *Criswell/FIP* Editions

From both the FIP and Wapnick descriptions, the other volumes "version history" involves *four* versions:

1. *Notes*
2. *Thetford Transcript* (which they called *Urtext*?)
3. *First Re-typing* (which more likely is the *Urtext*?)
4. *Criswell/FIP* First Edition

What we actually have copies of for the other volumes is only *three*:

1. *Notes*
2. *Urtext* (we can't be entirely certain which re-typing it is. Some portions may be the *Thetford Transcript*)
3. *Criswell/FIP*

Wapnick and FIP disagree on the number of additional retypings, but agree that there was more than one. The physical evidence appears to support their assertion that more exist than have so far come to light. There certainly is physical evidence of another re-typing for the *Text* and in the extant *Urtext* we can see that some sections appear to have been re-worked multiple times while other sections appear exactly as they do

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in the *Notes*. It would appear that some portions were more heavily edited, and perhaps more frequently re-typed, than other segments. There thus may be (or at one time may have been) several partial retypings reflecting different stages of editing, or different versions, for some portions of the Course.

In any event, if the FIP and Wapnick reports of multiple complete or even partial retypings are correct, and I know of no evidence to suggest they are not, the question arises as to which of those multiple retypings the manuscripts labelled “urtext” represent. Are they the original typed transcripts or a later re-typed copy, or a combination of two or more originally distinct manuscripts, or even something else entirely?

Wapnick and the FIP *Errata to the Second Edition* were really the only published sources from which we could assess what this “*Urtext*” material in the 22 *Volumes* was. While they disagree on a key point, that being how many retypings there were in total, they agree on what an “urtext” is. On this point however, it would seem that they may both be mistaken.

Wapnick said: “The word ‘ur’ comes from the Biblical story of Abraham, who was born in Ur of the Chaldees. Basically it is used to symbolize the beginning of something.” He also says “urtext” is “a word denoting an original manuscript.”

Every dictionary consulted, along with several encyclopaedias state that the term “urtext” derives from the German word “ur” (pronounced “oor”) which means “original.” It has nothing to do with Ur of the Chaldees or Abraham. As for “denoting an original manuscript” well ... not *exactly* and certainly not *necessarily*.

4 How is the word *Urtext* used elsewhere?

While dictionaries generally indicate that “ur” means “original” and “urtext” means “original text” this in no way means that “urtext” means the author’s original autograph or any precise copy of it. It must be noted that it is easy to assume from such a brief dictionary definition that this is exactly what it means, and that may explain part of how the word “urtext” became connected with the *Thetford Transcript*.

If “urtext is taken to mean “original manuscript,” the *Notes* would have to be considered “the urtext” since they are the original. A precisely accurate typed transcript could be considered the “same thing” or an “urtext transcript” but any subsequent edited version could not be considered “an urtext.” Yet, when we find “urtext versions” of musical

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scores being published, they are *neither* “original manuscripts” *nor* precise copies of original autographs.

This is crucial to our understanding of the *ACIM Urtext*. In fact, as we shall see, the word “urtext” is far from precise and may refer to a variety of “earlier” things, but only rarely to “original autographs” or exact typed copies of them.

The most common usage of the word “urtext” seems largely, but not entirely, confined to classical musical scores. It comes from the German root for “original,” “source,” or “earlier.” It is a prefix, much like “pre” in English. This meaning is not drawn from a dictionary, but from consultation with native German speakers who insist it *may* mean “original” or “earliest” but also *may* more generally mean “previous” or “earlier” – in short it is a relative, not a superlative term. Something may be both “earlier” than something else and also, but not necessarily, the “earliest.”

There is more evidence that it is not necessarily a superlative term. In the *Britannica* definition (below) it is described as something “pieced together” from earlier sources with the intent to reflect the “original” meaning, but that is quite different from “the original autograph” or “earliest primary source.”

In fact there seems little difference between the meaning of the term “Critical Edition” as applied to a literary work and “urtext” as applied to a musical score in that they share the overall intent to *reconstruct* or “piece together,” as *Britannica* puts it, the “original intent” as closely as possible from extant primary sources.

In that sense of being a scholarly work piecing together primary sources, far from being the most primary source of all, which is the connotation of the word “original,” it would in fact be a secondary source derived from primary sources, albeit with the intent to reflect an original document or at least the author’s original intent which was presumed to have existed, at least hypothetically.

I say “hypothetically” because while the author of any work may be presumed to have had “an intent” which is at least theoretically knowable, no single one of that author’s written drafts may actually represent it entirely. But, in sorting through the available evidence with the aim of representing that author’s original intent, the result is called an “urtext.” In short, it represents the *opinion* as to the author’s original intent of those who pieced it together by examining all relevant documents rather than the “author’s original statement” in any particular document.

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This is a crucial, if subtle, distinction. By this definition the *Thetford Transcript* and the *Notes* would not be considered “urtexts.” However, the document we refer to as the *Urtext* appears to genuinely be a “pieced together” urtext.

The document known as the *ACIM Urtext*, whatever it is, is not a precise copy of the *Notes*. It has many differences beyond what can be explained as copying errors. It shows clear signs of editing and many signs of visual copying errors and other evidence of retyping, but rather little sign of “oral errors” except in the *Psychotherapy* volume.

Yet it may well be the result of the Scribes “piecing together” earlier hand and typewritten drafts to reflect their idea of the author’s original intent. In fact, that is *exactly* what it looks like! If it *is* that then it *is* precisely and exactly an “urtext” of the “pieced together” sort. But it’s neither the *Thetford Transcript*, nor a precise typed transcript of the “original autograph” which is the *Notes*.

The *Britannica* definition (below) is also quick to point out that “urtext” does not necessarily mean “original autograph” but “may lead the uninitiated to suppose” that it does!

This came as quite a shock to me and I expect many others will be very surprised also. Before I read Wapnick I’d never encountered the term “urtext” and like many I simply *assumed* he knew what he was talking about and I didn’t question either his definition or his statement that the *Urtext* was the *Thetford Transcript*. I’ve learned many times that one must be careful of assumptions in this field. Many well-meaning people have passed on their untested assumptions, perhaps in good faith, but sincere good faith does not always equal accuracy.

From *Britannica*:

“The word *Urtext* (“original text”) may lead the uninitiated to suppose that they are being offered an exact reproduction of what Bach wrote. It must be understood that the autographs of many important works no longer exist. Therefore, Bach’s intentions often have to be pieced together from anything up to 20 sources, all different. Even first editions and facsimiles of autograph manuscripts are not infallible guides to Bach’s intentions. In fact, they are often dangerously misleading, and practical musicians should take expert advice before consulting them. ...”

While the primary use of the term appears to be for a kind of scholarly reconstruction of classical musical scores, some sources allow for its use on “a musical score or a literary work.”

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From Encarta:

“Urtext (German for “original text”), edition of music that tries to capture the original intentions of the composer and minimizes editorial interpretation as much as possible. Urtext editions are usually based upon the composer’s sketches and manuscripts, as well as original and early editions of the works.”

From Wikipedia:

“An urtext edition of a work of classical music is a printed version intended to reproduce the original intention of the composer as exactly as possible, without any added or changed material. Other kinds of editions distinct from urtext are facsimile and interpretive editions [...].

“The word "urtext" is of German origin; "ur-" means "original". Occasionally the word "urtext" is capitalized, following German spelling practice.”

From Oxford Literary Dictionary:

“Urtext, the German term for an original version of a text, usually applied to a version that is lost and so has to be reconstructed by textual criticism. Some scholars believe that Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is based on an earlier play that has not survived even in name; this hypothetical work is referred to as the *Ur-Hamlet*.”

On that note, Henning Diedrich observes “there is the *Ur-Faust*, which is a proper, valid play on its own. There is *Faust I*, *Faust II*, and *Ur-Faust*. *Ur-Faust* was written decades earlier, probably never published, and was prose, as opposed to the verses of *Faust I* and *II*.”

In this later sense of “ur” the German word’s connotation of original, early document is clearly dominant. The “*Ur-Hamlet*” and “*Ur-Faust*” however do not really refer to “urtexts” (pieced together reconstructions) of either *Hamlet* or *Faust*! The meaning of “*Ur-Hamlet*” isn’t “the first text (original copy) of *Hamlet*” so much as it is “the first *Hamlet*” or even “the literary origin or basis for *Hamlet*” which is something rather different. This is neither an “original autograph” nor a “pieced together” secondary work, so much as an earlier, previous, and even hypothetical precursor or prototype.

The difference is subtle but crucial. Assuming we had the first and original autographs of both *Hamlet* and *Ur-Hamlet*, we’d find them different, even if one was based on the other. And we could do an “urtext” (of the pieced together sort) of *Ur-Hamlet* as well as an “urtext” of *Hamlet*, if we had enough source material to work with.

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Similarly with *Ur-Faust* ... it's not the same play as *Faust I* and we could presumably do an "urtext" for each play.

There are then these two somewhat divergent connotations to the German prefix "ur." Both relate to "originality" but in the first case the reference is to the scholarly reconstruction, through textual criticism, of something that is lost or never actually existed. The second refers to an earlier, more 'original' draft or version which may or may not still exist.

It's not a common word, it is not present in many dictionaries, so it is not surprising perhaps that Wapnick thought it might have to do with Abraham. Like me, he may have never heard the word before coming in contact with *ACIM* and like me he may have made assumptions about what it meant without checking.

Assuming for many years that Wapnick's definition was correct, the steadily increasing evidence that much of the "urtext" material in the 22 *Volumes* was not the *Thetford Transcript* left me more and more puzzled. I was simply unprepared to accept there could be an error at this level for some years. I concede that it seems very unlikely and I fully expect there will be widespread scepticism of this hypothesis.

It seems possible the mistake was simply in the definition of the word "urtext." The word is sufficiently uncommon, imprecise and subject to variable usage that such a mistake is very understandable. I made it myself. That mistake was not recognized and corrected perhaps because they never checked. I can understand that also. It was only very recently that I began to suspect the word did *not* mean "autograph" and began to seriously check.

Getting the definition of a word wrong is one thing. Being unaware that the "urtext" was not in fact the *Thetford Transcript* while telling people for years that it was is a little more amazing. How could they have not known? Could it be that they never seriously checked that and several other assumptions they made and repeated, perhaps even in good faith, but without verifying them? Could it be that the actual *Thetford Transcript* no longer exists? Whatever misunderstandings of the definitions of unusual words might occur, it strikes me as highly improbable that one could fail to notice a difference between that original transcript and an urtext derived in part from it if one had both in one's hands.

In summary then, here's our problem: there is a "story" about the origins of the Course which comes from people who are in a position to know. So we believe it, having no reason not to, and besides it's not easy to check that story due to the fact that the documentary sources by

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which it could be checked are not available. As the documentary sources become available, we use the “story” to identify the documents but as we study the documents, various elements of the “story” are called into question. The origins of the word “urtext” with Abraham is simply not correct. The definition of the term “urtext” is not necessarily correct. The identification of the *Urtext* manuscript as the *Thetford Transcript* is almost certainly not entirely correct at least. And our two sources disagree with each other as to the number of retypings.

“The Authorities” on these matters appear less reliable than we’d like. This doesn’t mean the rest of their information is incorrect, but it does remind us that anyone can err and verification is required.

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5 Is the “*ACIM Urtext*” really an “urtext?” ... first impressions

Now Helen Schucman, who had some familiarity with classical music and might well have been familiar with *precisely* what an “urtext” is in that field, may well have adopted that word since it loosely described what she and Thetford had done with the “primary sources” which were her *Notes* and his *Transcript* as they edited those into a manuscript which I strongly suspect is in fact what we are referring to here by the name *Urtext*. They had corrected some typos in the earlier material, added to them segments “dictated without notes” and applied some of the corrections the Author had dictated. In short, the *ACIM Urtext* is, actually, an “urtext” in the “pieced together” meaning of the word, insofar as a term derived from music publishing can be applied to literature. Its use in literature is uncommon but not unprecedented. The *American Heritage Dictionary* does allow that while it normally applies to musical composition it can be used to refer to a “literary work.”

When you look at the *ACIM Urtext* the expression “piecing together” immediately comes to mind. It is obviously assembled from bits and pieces of several different drafts, it has multiple internal pagination systems, was typed on at least two different typewriters, contains some duplication, and even has some pages marked “re-typed,” rather proving it wasn’t a “single typing.” It includes material not in the *Notes* while omitting some material that is in the *Notes*. While this is not wholly conclusive by itself, it does raise doubts about this being the *Thetford Transcript*.

Now if we had a document typed up by Thetford, incrementally day by day, simply copying down what Schucman dictated from her *Notes*, we’d not expect to see such “piecing together.” Sure, some anomalies might arise from any number of causes, and Thetford may have re-typed the occasional page, but we aren’t seeing anomalies within a document that looks like what we’d expect, the whole thing is anomalous, and little of it, aside from the *Psychotherapy* volume, looks like it is a document dictated orally, and then orally proofed.

It looks just like an “urtext” based on visually copying without proof-reading, which we are told is how the first retyping came into being.

So let’s probe the evidence further.

6 What does the textual evidence itself tell us?

Aside from the fact that it doesn't look like an orally dictated transcript, or what we'd expect to see in such a transcript, is there any other evidence? What it "looks like" and that "it looks all wrong" may raise questions but questions are not proof.

6.1 *Characteristics of Visual Copying Errors: Dropping Words and Phrases*

When one makes a copy by typing by eye one typically makes different errors than one makes when typing from oral dictation. I worked for years as a newspaper typesetter, where much of the work in the shop involved copy-typists manually copying typed and handwritten paper documents. It's the same kind of technology I presume Schucman had available for her "re-typing" work on *ACIM*. The typist sits at a keyboard (typewriter or typesetting machine, the latter is just a more sophisticated typewriter) with a "copy stand" on which sits the paper "original." At the newspaper the "original" is generally the reporter's typed story as marked up and "edited" by the editor. The copy-typist reads it and types what the reporter wrote as adjusted by the editor. Secretaries in office typing pools and typesetters in publishing firms were doing vast amounts of that labour-intensive copy-typing all over the world until computers and scanners and OCR technology almost entirely replaced that copy-typing activity in the past two decades. Now reporters type into computer files instead of onto paper and editors simply modify the reporter's file on screen and send it straight to production, with no re-typing required. There's a huge saving in labour and a huge reduction in "copying mistakes."

There are a number of exceedingly common mistakes when humans copy type by eye, and they show up frequently in the *ACIM* manuscripts. I saw these every day for years in the typesetting shop which is why I noticed them immediately. It is very easy to leave out words and phrases and even sentences and whole paragraphs. This is especially the case when there are two instances of the same word in close proximity. If, when the words between those two instances are left out, the result is still grammatically and factually correct, as is often the case, it's far from obvious that a mistake has been made at all. It's difficult from reading the result to notice the omission. There are many instances of this in

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ACIM from version to version, and this is utterly typical of the most common of visual copy-typing errors.

This does not mean that every omission is an “error.” Some may well be intentional. Very few of the omissions appear to be intentional however.

I’ll cite just one of many hundreds of examples where a line is left out, almost certainly unintentionally, while visually copy-typing. This is from the *Text* chapter 2. The *Urtext* reads:

“T 2 C 8 The body, if properly understood, shares the invulnerability of the Atonement to two-edged application. This is not because the body is a miracle, but because it is not inherently open to misinterpretation. The body is merely a fact. Its ABILITIES can be, and frequently are, overevaluated. However, it is almost impossible to deny its existence. Those who do are engaging in a particularly unworthy form of denial. (The use of the word "unworthy" here implies simply that it is not necessary to protect the mind by denying the un-mindful. ***There is little doubt that the mind can miscreate.*** If one denies this unfortunate aspect of its power, one is also denying the power itself.)”

The emphasized line does not appear in the *HLC* or the later FIP editions. It is, however, in both the *Notes* and the *Urtext*. Without that sentence, the antecedent for “this unfortunate aspect” in the last sentence is gone, rendering it meaningless. What then does “this unfortunate aspect” refer to? The “unfortunate aspect” is, of course, the mind’s ability to miscreate.

This is a classic example of an “inadvertent omission” copy-typing mistake. Usually, when the effect of an omission is to leave the following sentence incoherent, as in this case, it gets caught. I am quite surprised this one didn’t get caught.

In the case of the *Urtext* to the *HLC* we presume it was visually re-typed and we see hundreds of these small omissions. They are entirely predictable in human copy-typing which has not been proofed but very rare in proofed material. In the *Urtext* when compared to the *Notes* we see the same pattern of numerous, and usually small omissions which do not appear to be intentional.

One of the many omissions of *Notes* material in the *Urtext* typical of copying by eye is found in chapter 16 of the *Text*, in the first paragraph. Both the original *Notes* and the partly proofed FIP *Second Edition* include as the fourth sentence of that paragraph “His way is very different.” It’s underlined in the *Notes*. Neither the “*Urtext*” manuscript nor

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the *HLC* manuscripts include this sentence, nor does the *FIP First Edition*.

That's not the kind of error we get when typing to oral dictation and then proofing it by reading it back! First, such omissions which are a kind of optical illusion are much less likely when typing to oral dictation that is pacing itself to your typing speed. We used to do that sometimes in newspapers too. Reporters who could not physically transport a typed story on paper back to the office in time would "phone it in" and someone at the office, sometimes me, would type what the reporter read over the phone, and then of course read it back to him to ensure accuracy.

That "reading it back" will almost always catch missing words and phrases. The kind of errors we get with oral dictation involve words which sound similar and whose substitution sounds plausible. Obvious errors can still occur because they aren't obvious until the sentence or paragraph is complete, but they get caught, crossed out, and the correct word is typed or handwritten in.

There actually are a few of these in the *Text* which may stem from the original oral dictation and which never got caught. But there aren't many. It's also possible to mistype when copying by eye such that the resulting word is wrong, but still makes sense and sounds similar. The *Psychotherapy* volume is a complete contrast to the *Text* volume. We see several "oral" errors, sound alike words being substituted, crossed out, with the correct word handwritten in, which is precisely what we'd expect in pages typed from oral dictation. It is both the presence of these in that volume which leads to its tentative identification as, in fact, the *Thetford Transcript* and the absence of them elsewhere in the *Urtext* manuscripts which raises doubts about those other volumes being the *Thetford Transcript*. From what we've been told about the process of transcribing, such mistakes should be present and should be corrected. In fact they simply aren't there in the numbers expected, except in *Psychotherapy* and to a lesser extent in *Song of Prayer*.

In this example and most of the many other cases, deliberate omission appears unlikely as one can see no reason to suppose the words were not authentic or would otherwise be disagreeable to the Scribes.

While any particular mistake could have been made by anyone for any number of reasons and by itself proves nothing, a *pattern* of mistakes is powerful evidence, though it may well still fall short of being conclusive proof. The examples I've cited are typical, and there are hundreds of the same sort. Were there only one or two, I'd say it wouldn't

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mean much. Where one sees the same pattern time and again, it becomes strongly suggestive, just as where one fails to see a pattern that should be there.

6.2 Characteristics of Oral Errors: Wrong Word Typing Mistakes

Because I've done a lot of it, I have a sense of the kinds of errors which occur when typing to oral dictation. I'd say that almost any kind of mistake can occur. But when you read it back, most get noticed and corrected. Typing to oral dictation, even for a good typist, means numerous errors which of course are easy to fix and make vanish on a computer, but when typing onto paper, they leave visible traces on that original copy, no matter how you correct them. They might be corrected with handwriting or with overstriking, as might any errors, but you'd expect a much higher rate of error and you'd also expect any errors to be caught in the oral proofing, except possibly for ones that you can't hear.

Since we have reason to believe that Schucman typed the *HLC* we can see she was an excellent typist. Her error rate is very low. There are very few typos. Her typing is clean and largely error free. Yet in the *Urtext* we do see some pages which don't reflect such clean typing and which do include a lot of mistakes that were fixed, most notably in the *Psychotherapy* pamphlet.

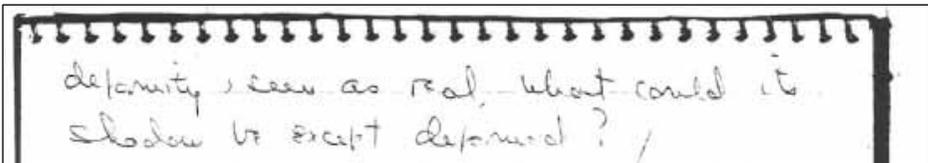


Figure 2 *Psychotherapy* 3 E from the *Notes*.

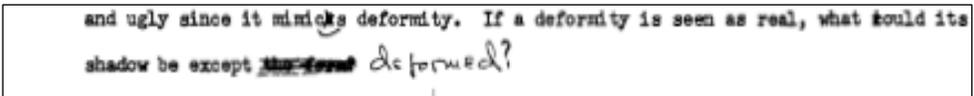


Figure 3 the same words as in figure 2 from the *Urtext* manuscript

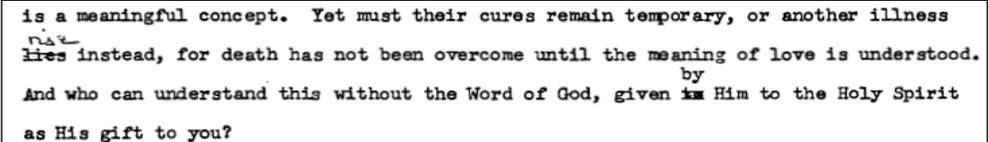
For example, there is one on the first page of *Psychotherapy* where we find "Light" and we see "Life" written in, and it does not appear to me to be Schucman's handwriting. "Light" and "Life" sound enough alike that when either "makes sense" in the context, it is an easy "hearing error" to make but one which could well be caught in the proofing. This one, it seems, was caught.

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Another example appears on page 9 of *Psychotherapy*. Figures 2 and 3 show the two lines in question, bottom of the second paragraph of section 3 E, *The Process of Illness*.

If you look closely (Fig. 3) you see that the last words were initially typed “*shadow be except the form.*” That’s very typical of an “oral” error, “*the form*” and “*deformed*” sound very similar. The result makes grammatical and logical sense, so it could easily be missed. It is very unlikely that kind of mistake would be made by visual copying, however, since the two forms do not *look* at all alike. The *Notes* reads “*shadow be except deformed?*” This is exactly the kind of mistake we’d **expect** to find in oral dictation that had been proofed. We’d expect it and in *Psychotherapy*, we see it, and we see it several times in a mere 29 pages! However, this kind of mistake and correction is very rare in the *Text* volume. This kind of error would of course be caught usually and would not often survive into a visually re-typed copy. Interestingly, however, the handwriting is obviously that of the same person, presumably Schucman. And that is not what we’d expect to see if Thetford is reading to her what he had just typed and marking corrections himself. Possibly this mistake was not detected in their oral proofing but was caught by Schucman later. We may never know for sure.

Another example of typical “oral mistakes” occurs on page 10 of the typed *Psychotherapy* manuscript. (see Figure 4) We see “illness lies instead” being corrected to “illness rise instead.” That is what is in the *Notes*. But again “rise” and “lies” sound very much alike. These are typical of the sort of **hearing errors** which we’d expect of a manuscript typed to oral dictation.



is a meaningful concept. Yet must their cures remain temporary, or another illness ~~lies~~^{rise} instead, for death has not been overcome until the meaning of love is understood. And who can understand this without the Word of God, given ~~in~~^{by} Him to the Holy Spirit as His gift to you?

Figure 4 In the second line “lies” is crossed out and becomes “rise” in the *Psychotherapy* manuscript which is characteristic of a hearing error rather than a visual copying error..

Their presence here in the *Psychotherapy* manuscript is strongly suggestive that this may indeed be the *Thetford Transcript* and not a later re-typing. The fact that such mistakes, common in this document, are very rare in the *Urtext Text* volume would seem to indicate it is what it appears to be, a later re-typing and not the original *Thetford Transcript*. Those are just three examples. We even find corrections written into the

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Notes, such as exchanging “seek” for “find” also written into the *Psychotherapy* manuscript which suggests the “correction” was made in both at the same time. Unless this typed manuscript was proofed against the *Notes* later, it is hard to explain how the same handwritten correction would occur in both documents. It could well have been done during the initial transcription as Schucman decided a change was needed after she dictated the word, and then made it in both her *Notes* and the transcript. It’s very rare that we find editing changes in the typed manuscript reflected in the *Notes* that way. Of course it is difficult to be certain, but this is plausible and might well be expected in oral dictation and proofing, that Schucman would decide to introduce a change after first dictating it, while hearing it read back.

I’ve only noticed one other example of visible editing on a typed page being reflected in visible editing on a page of the *Notes*. That is actually in the *Text* volume. There may be others but they certainly are not common. The vast majority of editing we see on the typed manuscripts does not show up in the *Notes*. A possible explanation is that it was done some time later, during or after a re-typing. What we don’t find here that we do find in the *Text* is numerous dropped words and phrases. The correspondence, word for word, comma for comma, between the typed manuscript of *Psychotherapy* and the *Notes* is higher than the average for the other typed manuscripts.

These, I submit, are powerful indicators which help us distinguish documents which have been copied “by ear” from the spoken word and documents which have been copied “by eye” from the written word.

6.3 *Idiosyncratic Errors*

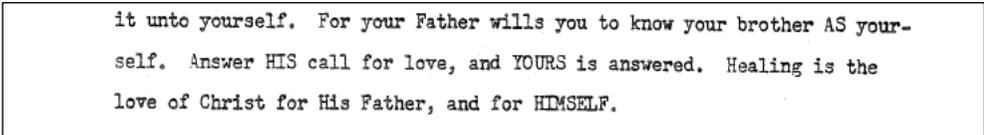
Thetford described how he made certain typical typing errors, such as typing “bother” instead of “brother” and “slavation” instead of “salvation” and “crucifiction” instead of “crucifixion.” Only in the *Psychotherapy* pamphlet have I found any of those “ideosyncratic errors.” There are none in the rest of the *Urtext* material that I’ve spotted. Their absence in other volumes of the *Urtext* suggests a re-typed copy in which those sorts of errors were, of course, corrected. This is perhaps the most powerful evidence that in the *Urtext* we aren’t looking at Thetford’s original typing but at a re-typing with some editing, at least to the extent of fixing his spelling mistakes. There are two explanations for the lack of the patterns of idiosyncratic errors Thetford said were there: either this isn’t the document he typed with

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those errors or he just made the story up. The latter seems extremely unlikely. The former is consistent with most of the other evidence.

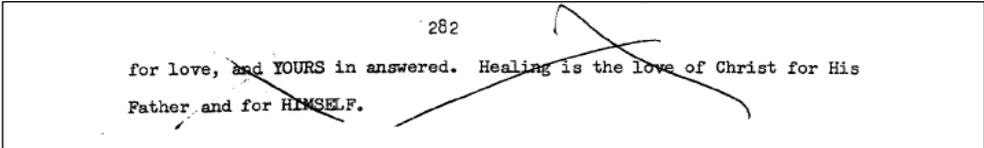
6.4 Duplications

In the *Urtext* manuscript we find several instances where the same material is typed twice, not duplicate photocopies of the same page, but the same words typed on different typewriters, or with different line end-



it unto yourself. For your Father wills you to know your brother AS yourself. Answer HIS call for love, and YOURS is answered. Healing is the love of Christ for His Father, and for HIMSELF.

Figure 5 Bottom of Urtext 454



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for love, and YOURS in answered. Healing is the love of Christ for His Father, and for HIMSELF.

Figure 6 Top of Urtext 455

ings or on different parts of the page, but otherwise exactly the same words. Where the page beginning and ending are the same, this indicates that to some extent at least, this document is a combination of at least two distinct typed documents, and some of the material, at least, is re-typed and is not the “original” typed transcript. Where the duplication involves shifting page breaks, as in the example in figures 5 and 6, we see evidence which is more consistent with visual re-typing than with oral transcribing.

For instance, to pick just one of many examples, if we look at the bottom of page 454 and the top of page 455 (marked 281-282) we see the last two sentences of page 454 repeated on 455 and then crossed out by hand. (see figures 5 and 6)

It is perhaps impossible to be entirely sure of what has happened here, but it seems unlikely we’d see Thetford, while listening to Schucman read from the *Notes*, pause to change paper and then resume typing on a new page 18 words before where he’d stopped on the previous page, in the middle of a sentence! This sort of error appears much more consistent with visual re-typing than aural transcription.

It is quite possible that in re-typing, the typist got an extra two lines on the page such that the new page finished 18 words later than the page

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being copied. Then, perhaps having been distracted, when resuming typing on the next page the copyist began where the next page began, 18 words before where she'd left off previously. Later, this was noticed and the extra words were crossed out.

And in case you were wondering, the *Notes* (8:144-145) page break doesn't occur between "His call" and "for love" but actually a few words later, between "is" and "answered." Note that in the first copy on page 454, the word "is" is misspelled as "in." This is another sign of visual rather than aural copying. It also suggests a tired or distracted copy-typist.

It is also interesting to note that while the first two lines on p 282 (fig. 6) are the same as the last two on the previous page, there is one small difference. In the first, (fig. 5) there is a comma after "Father" which is not there in the second copy. This is illustrative of a general pattern seen where we have multiple typed copies: there are generally numerous small differences of this sort.

This isn't certain proof due to the fact that anyone can make almost any sort of error for almost any reason now and then. We weren't there at the time and cannot be entirely sure how any *particular* error arose. This is just one of many indications that we are dealing with a re-typed copy and not an original typed manuscript, however.

One or two such indications here and there are certainly not conclusive, but when we have a consistent pattern involving hundreds, the weight of "suggestive" evidence begins to add up to "conclusive proof."

The "error pattern" is consistent with visual copy-typing which was not proofed, and not aural transcription which was subsequently proofed.

6.5 Evidence from the Pagination

Further evidence lies in the pagination. It is important to note that my observations here are not based on any attempt at a thorough analysis of the pagination anomalies. It is the fact of the anomalies and the patterns I *have* noticed which are directly relevant. I strongly suspect that a very careful analysis of the pagination issues might yield significant new insights into the process by which the *Text* volume was created.

In the first 382 pages many pages bear at least two and often more page numbers, with all but one crossed out.

After page 84 the number marked on the page does not correspond exactly to the actual page number. The page numbering in the *Text* volume up to approximately the end of chapter 8 is utterly chaotic, starting,

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stopping, and restarting, with some pages having as many as four different numbers written, then crossed out. At the 174th page the numbering restarts at “1” and at the end of chapter 8, 382 pages from the start, the page is marked 209 and from that point to the end the numbering continues with substantial consistency and few multiple page numbers.

There are a few pagination anomalies in the latter three quarters of the manuscript. In chapter 18, section H, we have three pages of later material inserted out of chronological sequence to reflect the *HLC* ordering. It should be noted that this particular anomaly reflects the *HLC* editing and my attempt to match the *Urtext* manuscript page order to that of the *HLC* for the purpose of aligning chapter and section divisions identically between the two. Those three pages are part of the *Special Messages* material but bear page numbers and dates which would put them between 22 F and 22 G. This is not, then, an anomaly in the *Urtext* manuscript proper. This reflects subsequent scribal editing which relocated these three pages from their original sequence. The Scribes ended up including this material where we do in later editing, apparently accepting it as a “dictated correction” or “expansion” of earlier material.

In chapter 20 we have page 567a between 567 and 568 (absolute page number 744) and we have the page marked 583a between 583 and 584 (absolute page number 761). In chapter 21 we have 596a (absolute page 775). In chapter 22 we have 617a (797). Further study is required to begin to guess exactly why the Scribes needed to number some pages as “a” rather than assign a new page number but this may indicate pagination variation between an earlier copy and a new copy being made which required the insertion of extra pages. It may also indicate later insertion of material.

In chapter 26 Section F we have the page marked 732 followed by 740 with page numbers 733-739 (913-914) missing. However, there is no other indication of missing material here. The text across the “missing page numbers” is identical in the *Notes*. The anomaly here appears to be only in the page numbering. At page 731 (912) we also have an obvious change in typewriter from elite to pica. These clues suggest that possibly one segment is a later copy than the other.

In chapter 29 section E the marked pagination goes from 824 (998) back to 813 (999), reusing the page numbers 813-824. This sort of thing could happen if two or more “versions” whose pagination was slightly different due to editing or the use of different typewriters and margins were being combined later.

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Careful study of these numbering anomalies and other physical clues such as changing typewriters may allow us to ultimately surmise more about the pattern of copying and recopying here. We can for instance easily discern at least two different typewriters being used and that may turn out to be an important clue as to the “generation” in copying. It may be that the shift from one typewriter to another happened at a certain point in time and that the relative age of the page may be indicated by which typewriter was used. It’s also possible that Thetford used a different typewriter than Schucman did. Further study will be needed to determine if those hunches have any merit. If they do, we may be able to discern a great deal more about the actual creation of these physical pages in terms of when it was done and by whom.

The numbering anomalies in the last three quarters of the *Text* may appear numerous when listed here but are fewer than those in the first one quarter where there are too many to list.

In that latter section we also see very little handwritten mark-up. The page marked 209 is actually the 382nd page of the *Text* volume! From page 209 to the end, page 886, which is actually the 1072nd page of the *Urtext* manuscript, the numbers also very closely approximate those of the later *HLC* version. The material on page 209 of the *Urtext* occurs on page 219 of the *HLC*. Just 10 pages off. The material on page 886 of the *Urtext* occurs on page 866 of the *HLC*. Just 20 pages off. After factoring in the previously indicated pagination anomalies, the last three quarters of the *Urtext* is then just 47 pages longer than the *HLC*. Most of the page count difference is explained by differing average page length, however.

If we do a word count we find that the *Urtext* has 224,238 words from page 209 to the end and the *HLC* from the same point to the end has 223,222 words. That’s a difference of 1,016 words or about 0.45% or the equivalent of roughly 3 average typed manuscript pages out of the 690 manuscript pages involved.

The reason why the actual page counts show a greater difference is that in contrast to the *HLC* manuscript, in the *Urtext* a great many pages have only a single paragraph and thus a lot of blank space. This is another of the oddities about the manuscript which may provide clues as to its origins. It is more likely in a retyping that one would not stop to replace the paper after only one paragraph whereas in the original transcript we might assume that the typist would stop at the end of that day’s scribing and pick up again on a new sheet of paper for the next segment. It seems equally possible, however, that in a retyping process following

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editing, one might well try to keep the page breaks the same which could result both in our “a” page numbers and in pages with only a few lines, if different typewriters and different margin settings were used. This would most particularly be the case if one were retyping only a few pages within a larger segment, and there is some evidence that this in fact happened on at least one occasion. There would be a strong incentive in that case to keep the pagination as close as possible to the original.

As with other physical evidence, further research may well yield further answers.

However, the first quarter of the *Urtext* is 163 actual pages longer than the corresponding *HLC* material. *Urtext* 209 is really 382 pages from the beginning. Because the number of words per page is variable, the word count is more meaningful. The *Urtext*, from the beginning to chapter 8 section K is 108,659 words. The *HLC* is 79,552 or 29,107 words shorter. That means this first segment of 8 chapters of the *Urtext* is 26.78% longer than the *HLC* compared to 0.45% longer in the last 23 chapters. This is an enormous difference and reflects the relative extent of the editing between the two segments.

All in all these two segments are radically different from each other in several major characteristics strongly suggesting they reflect different generations of the editing and copying process.

The early manuscripts were stored by the Scribes in sets of four three-ring binders, we are told, roughly eight chapters to a binder. Thus this dividing point (end of chapter 8) is approximately the end of the first binder. Were the pages from 209 to the end found separately, in the three binders they represent, the obvious inference one could draw would be that we were missing the first binder, and that we had an edited copy which immediately preceded the *HLC* and from which most of the “personal” material had already been removed and otherwise showed relatively little difference. The differences between these last three binders of the *Urtext* and the *HLC* are really mostly minor re-writing and substantial paragraph break adjustment. In addition we find there are numerous dropped words, phrases, sentences, etc. This is typical of visual copy-typing. In fact, the bulk of the 1,016 word difference in length between the final 23 chapters of the two versions can be accounted for by these inadvertent omissions of words and phrases.

There is little or nothing about this latter three quarters of the material which, if it didn't bear the name “*Urtext*” would lead anyone to think it

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was the original *Thetford Transcript* as opposed to one of the later retypings, indeed the one immediately preceding the *HLC*. The latter three quarters of the material bears few hallmarks of “oral dictation” but does show numerous signs of visual copying errors.

Were one to find the first 382 pages by themselves one might well think, due to the chaotic numbering, that we had bits and pieces of several partial retypings presumably made during editing, pieced together in preparation for a further retyping or further editing, both of which we know did occur with this material. Yet the later *HLC* reduces these 382 pages to 219 pages. So quite a bit of editing took place between the *Urtext* and the *HLC*. A huge amount in fact. But when we compare these 382 pages with the *Notes* we see that there are large parts omitted, but also significant amounts of material, more than a dozen pages, **added!** This is rather what we’d expect from an “urtext” if that word is used in the Britannica sense of “piecing together” from earlier sources, but not at all what we’d expect from the original *Thetford Transcript*.

Of course it’s not at all impossible that Schucman might have skipped some of the more “personal” material in her *Notes* while dictating to Thetford. That can’t be ruled out entirely. It does seem doubtful however because she certainly did include a great deal of personal material which probably should have been omitted. So we have no certain *evidence* that she “omitted on the fly” rather than removing material later. She certainly removed material later, increasingly so as the years and copying went on.

The pagination chaos in the early material is somewhat baffling and difficult to explain at first glance. Some of it is explained by the “dictated without notes” segments which are inserted in the *Urtext*. Each such insertion generally commences with the page number 1.

It appears as if the material was reorganized and renumbered multiple times. Where pages have as many as four different numbers written and crossed out, we cannot readily tell which number was written first. Given that most of the editing, save for the insertion of obvious “dictated without notes” segments, resulted in the removal of material, we can guess that where we have multiple page numbers crossed out, the larger numbers might generally be the earlier and the smaller numbers the later.

In the process of editing which involved both removing and adding multiple pages, if the scribes paused to renumber things from time to time, this would pretty much explain a good deal of the renumbering that we see. In time, a more thorough examination of the many crossed out

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page numbers may enable us to reconstruct the stages of compilation with more confidence.

The real mystery is how it is that the 382nd page bears the number 209! And then that latter numbering system remains largely consistent to the end. How did they come up with the number 209? The mostly obvious explanation is that there is another document, 208 pages long, which is a condensed and edited retyping of the first eight chapters, one we don't have! In fact that appears exceedingly likely to me. There are certainly other possibilities. On the 174th page, the start of Chapter 3 Section H, the numbering restarts at 1. The previous page is numbered 172. That second numbering system is reasonably consistent through to the end with only minor anomalies. That page is dated Dec. 10, 1965. So, for whatever reason, at page 172 on Dec 10, 1965 it appears the Scribes started the numbering all over again from 1 and thereafter more or less stuck to it.

I think it should be obvious by now that further research is required to explain the numbers that we see but also that the numbers we see don't tend to support the idea that this is the first typed transcript. If it were, and Thetford added pages to the total each time he transcribed new material, why would some pages bear as many as four different page numbers? And why would he restart the numbering at 1 less than two months into the process?

If this *Urtext* is the "first retyping" that "missing document" would be the second retyping, and we do have some evidence here then which is consistent with Wapnick's claim that there were two retypings after the *Thetford Transcript* and before the *HLC*. It is possible that the early editing was largely confined to the first 8 chapters and that after page 209, what we see is at least a "first retyping" of the *Thetford Transcript*.

It's also possible that there are, or at least once were two entire retypings and what we're looking at is the first binder of one and the last three binders of the other.

It is possible that in the history of this *Urtext* document, that "first binder" of 208 pages of abridged chapters 1-8 was substituted, intentionally or inadvertently, for the 381 page collection we now see in the *Urtext*. It's also possible that there was never anything more than 381 pages to that document. It may be an early "partial retyping" of the first eight chapters.

It should be remembered that the scribing of the *Text* volume took place over a three year period and there is every indication that the ear-

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lier material was being edited and retyped as the later material was being dictated.

It seems that while we're told there were two retypings of the *Thetford Transcript* prior to the retyping we call the *HLC*, in fact the early chapters may have been reworked more often than the later chapters. Certainly that is where the bulk of the editing differences occur.

Due to the fact that we rather obviously don't have a "single retyping" here but a combination of at least two, and possibly many more partial retypings, it would seem clear that some of the material is certainly not the original *Thetford Transcript*. But that doesn't mean that all of it necessarily isn't.

Life would be much simpler if we simply had access to all the primary source material. It would be much easier to tell which was earlier and which was later when compared side by side than to try to discern from a single document whether it is the earlier copy, the later copy, or bits of both.

A careful analysis of the page numbering chaos might indeed provide evidence of several different uniquely identifiable drafts, at least one of which just might possibly be a part of the original *Thetford Transcript*.

I can offer one theory which does explain the evidence.

This material is *not* a direct transcript of the *Notes* entirely. Not only are portions of the *Notes* missing, but there is material present here which is not present in the *Notes*. However many of its pages might represent the first *Notes* transcript, this collection of pages has been edited, with material both added and removed.

We would expect an original transcript typed by Thetford and proofed orally to have considerable mark-up indicating corrections of original typing errors. We see very little of that sort of thing.

With the *Thetford Transcript* and with the "dictated without notes" fragments, Schucman, with an unknown degree of help from Thetford, may have pieced together the typed pages for small segments from time to time and then re-typed those segments with some editing changes so as to have a "clean copy" to share with others. We know that from quite early on, certainly as early as 1968, she was sharing at least portions of the material with a number of other people.

The frequent "short pages" may actually mark the boundary of such a re-typed segment.

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Understandably, when sharing, she'd want a reasonably clean typed manuscript to xerox and share, rather than one full of editing marks, cut out portions, insertions, handwritten corrections, etc.

It is understandable to me how she could think of what she was doing in that process as 'preparing an urtext' from the earlier drafts since she would in fact be "piecing together" discreet source documents and producing what she felt to be something closer to what the Author intended than any one of those sources.

I say "Schucman edited" here but of course we don't know how much Thetford participated in that editing. It might have been a great deal, it might have been very little. We have very little information on that. Wapnick and FIP state that the retypings were done by Schucman, with only that first transcript being done by Thetford. Verifying this may not be easy. For the moment since I have no evidence to the contrary, I'm simply accepting it as a working hypothesis.

If we assume that she undertook this kind of process several times with different segments of the first eight chapters, each time producing a unique document for circulation which was numbered page 1 to whatever, and then later collected these separate edited and re-typed segments together in their chronological sequence, we can perhaps begin to explain the page numbering we do in fact see.

In this theory, they didn't wait until the dictation was finished to edit and re-type it. The editing proceeded on previously dictated material as new material was being received. This initial editing produced re-typed segments of varying sizes, from time to time. These segments were initially "stand alone documents" with their own specific pagination, prepared by Schuman for distribution to others. Later these several segments were collected together along with subsequent "dictated without notes" segments and become what we now know as the *Urtext*. It's important to remember that the Scribes had no idea how long the dictation would be until it was finished. Certainly in the first few months where the material is most chaotic and heavily edited, their way of handling the material likely would have been evolving.

After collecting two or more such re-typed and edited segments, a new numbering system for the collection would be needed. Earlier numbers would be crossed out and new ones manually written in, all this in preparation for yet another retyping. If we imagine this process was repeated several times, we end up with several page numbers on some pages. And that *is* just what we see.

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What I'm suggesting here is that rather than sitting down and "retyping the whole thing" with some editing, she may well have edited it segment by segment, at different times, retyping those small segments, quite possibly more than once for some of them, and then collected the most recent edited segments into a whole which was then further edited and again re-typed later.

This is, I suggest, what the *Urtext* appears to be, and this account of its creation explains what we see. There is nothing in what we see to suggest, however, that this is entirely, or even mostly, the original *Thetford Transcript*.

I don't *know* how it came to appear as it does, obviously, but at least I can visualize *some* plausible means of processing which would explain what we see. It is not impossible that in this process some of the original *Thetford Transcript* pages were used without retyping. The fact that some of the material is certainly a later edited re-typing doesn't prove that all of it is.

6.6 *Contra-indications*

Now so far all this evidence points to the *Text* volume being a later re-typing rather than an original oral transcript, but there are contra-indications on some pages. In these we see a variety of evidence which is quite consistent with the material being an oral dictation. Some handwritten corrections are of minor typing mistakes which could be oral errors and appear to be in handwriting other than Schucman's. I don't have enough of Thetford's handwriting to be sure it is his, but it could be from what I can tell so far. There is at least one crossed out line which is also crossed out in the *Notes*, suggesting the correction might have been made in both the *Notes* and the original transcript at the same time. It seems unlikely such a correction would be "copied" in a "retyping" so this suggests that the page in question, at least, might be the original *Thetford Transcript*. The contra-indications are sufficiently numerous in some segments to strongly suggest that at least portions of the *Text* volume may in fact be copies of that original *Thetford Transcript*.

The key element here is that the *Urtext* is a collection of different pieces, and the specific creation history of the various segments might well be rather different. While some pages are almost certainly later retyped copies, other pages may well be Thetford's original transcript.

7 Conclusion: The *Urtext* is not entirely the *Thetford Transcript*

Any conclusions based on a less than exhaustive examination of evidence that is sometimes fragmentary cannot be a “final” conclusion. There is definitely a need for further study and clarification of this question but based on the evidence examined so far, it seems indisputable that what emerged in 2000 as the “*Urtext*” of a *Course in Miracles* was assembled from at least two and almost certainly more discreet, earlier documents and that some of this, perhaps the majority of this, is almost certainly not the original *Thetford Transcript* although some portions may well be just that. While the evidence is strong, one way or the other on some pages, for other pages the evidence is less clear.

The conclusion that there is – or at least once was – additional typed material from the Scribes is corroborated by other evidence, notably Wapnick’s enumeration of Schucman’s retypings. Should copies of that material ever become available, it will be much easier to determine which is “original” and which is the “copy.” Without actual copies to compare, most “evidence” is indirect and is more suggestive than conclusive. However there is such a preponderance of “suggestive” evidence indicating that some pages at least are later retypings that we can with some certainty say that the *Urtext* is not entirely the *Thetford Transcript* and indeed most of it does not appear to be.

The bulk of the analysis I’ve done has been on two volumes, the *Text* most (or all) of which I believe is likely a re-typed, edited copy of the *Thetford Transcript* and the *Psychotherapy* volume which I suspect may well be an original orally produced transcript of the *Notes*. A few brief comments on the *Workbook* are in order. While I have done only a cursory examination of that manuscript with the “generational question” in mind I’ve seen considerable evidence of “visual” retyping and editing in the single typed manuscript I have available. I’ve also noted an absence of “oral typing errors” where homonyms (words that “sound alike”) are typed and then are corrected, although there are a few. Where changes are marked, either handwritten or typed between lines, they very rarely correct an inaccurate copying of the *Notes*. Most mark-up involves either a deviation from the *Notes* or simply changes to paragraph breaks which are exceedingly numerous. Changes of that sort are suggestive much more of later editing rather than early proofing. We would fully expect that in an oral transcript that had been proofed, the typist would make errors which deviate from the *Notes* and the corrections or marked-

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up changes would restore the material to the reading in the *Notes*. In the *Workbook* we see a few of these but the vast preponderance of handwritten changes alters typed material that is an accurate reflection of the *Notes*. In short, it's not a correction of an error in copying the *Notes*, it is subsequent copy-editing. And the handwriting is Schucman's. We also do see some examples of "dropped phrases" between two instances of the same word on adjacent lines, which is typical of visual copying mistakes.

The extensive mark-up for paragraph changes, most of which is preserved in the FIP editions, would more likely have been done late in the editing process with the most recent retyping rather than on the earliest, first typed transcript. This would also suggest that if there were two different typed manuscripts of the *Workbook* as Wapnick suggests, we're looking at the second and not the first.

In summary, then, most of the mark-up in the *Workbook* appears to be late copy-editing just before going to press rather than early proofing of an oral transcript.

Much closer and more thorough scrutiny on these other volumes is required before anything conclusive can be said of them, but the preliminary indications certainly suggest that except for *Psychotherapy* and possibly *Song of Prayer*, we are dealing with an edited copy of the first transcript, and not the first *Thetford Transcript* itself.

Little of what we've seen in the *Urtext*, outside of the *Psychotherapy* volume, is consistent with what we've been told about the *Thetford Transcript*. Rather, it is mostly consistent with a visually typed copy and Wapnick's information states that such a copy was made. In the *Text* volume we appear to have bits and pieces of several different retypings. None of that excludes the possibility that some pages may in fact be that original *Thetford Transcript*. Now that the *Notes* are available we can see that there are large gaps in the *Urtext* which we'd not expect to appear in the original *Thetford Transcript*. We also find that while the *Urtext* is **mostly** a very faithful transcript of the *Notes* (so is every version, for that matter), there are differences of a frequency and nature which suggest both inadvertent **visual** copying errors *and* intentional editing, neither of which should be present in the first transcript.

While there is generally much less editing of the "re-writing" sort between the *Notes* and the *Urtext* than between the *Urtext* and the *HLC* or between the *HLC* and the *FIP Abridgement*, there is still a good deal

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more editing than we'd expect from the *Thetford Transcript* original copy.

Basically everything we've been told about the *Thetford Transcript* by people who we suppose to have seen it, including Thetford himself, doesn't fit the *Urtext* in one or more critical ways. The reservations are so numerous and serious in nature that it must be considered extremely unlikely that this is the *Thetford Transcript*. Its identification as at least mostly the (or one of the, or a combination of two or more of the) later retyping(s) by Schucman is indicated.

My best guess is that the first 381 pages are Schucman's first retyping and the second 677 pages are her second retyping, assuming that Wapnick's statement that there were two retypings is correct. Whether the first one ever went past chapter eight is open to question. Wapnick did say the material was re-typed twice, but he didn't specify that *all* of the *Text* volume was re-typed twice. That is implied, but that is not stated. That the second retyping included chapters one to eight is strongly suggested by the page number 209 at the beginning of that second part, roughly the start of Chapter 9. From that point on the typing is cleaner, more consistent and the page number anomalies are much fewer indicating that most of it at least may be a "single retyping."

There is evidence then that we are missing the first eight chapters of the second retyping and possibly that we're missing the last three quarters of the first retyping and the whole of the *Thetford Transcript*.

The main evidence suggesting this is the *Thetford Transcript* is the label "*Urtext*" and the assertion by Wapnick and FIP that "urtext" means "original transcript." But, as we've seen, Wapnick and FIP may have been mistaken on that point, that's not at all what the word "urtext" necessarily means. It's not even certain that if the Scribes used that word, they were referring to the original *Thetford Transcript*. The word could be as correctly or even *more correctly* applied to an edited re-typing in which they understood themselves to be cleaning up mistakes in an earlier, first rough transcript. It is not impossible that Wapnick *assumed* it meant the original transcript but never confirmed that assumption.

8 How could such a mistake be made and persist?

My argument is that the balance of evidence would likely convince any random jury that this is not, or at least largely not, the *Theftord Transcript*.

I can offer a theory which can account for this misidentification.

We can recall that Wapnick says the first version of the Course he saw was the *HLC*. He and Helen worked on this from May of 1973 until late in 1975, abridging it into what became the *FIP First Edition*. It's not known when he first saw any earlier material but that may not have happened until after Helen's death or at least well after he'd formed the belief that "urtext = original transcript."

I'm guessing that Helen and or Bill may have spoken to him of there being an "urtext" which was earlier than the *HLC* and of which the *HLC* was an edited abridgement. From the available evidence it would certainly appear that this is correct: Helen and Bill edited the *Urtext* and produced the abridged *HLC* version.

It is possible that Helen and or Bill may have spoken to him about the early scribing and transcribing and he may simply have made a mistake many others have made, and *assumed* that the first transcript and the "urtext" were one and the same thing rather than the latter being a derivative of the former. While he does speak of two retypings by Schucman prior to the *HLC*, he may be repeating what he was told, and that may be correct, but he may never have seen those other typed manuscripts.

If sorting out the early versions and identifying them was not important to him, and it would appear that it was never very important to him at the time, then it is not surprising that he never bothered to actually check. The question simply wasn't worth the effort for him. Further, he'd have no reason to even suspect that his identification was mistaken, so there'd be no particular reason to check.

Since the primary source material was withheld from scholarship, others who were interested did not have the opportunity to do the checking which would have cleared up the confusion.

Thus a very simple and mundane misunderstanding which is eminently understandable persisted because no one who had the means to

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check had a reason to check and no one who had a reason to check had the means to check.

That could quite plausibly explain how a misidentification arose and didn't get corrected.

It is not known to me if, among the papers of Helen and Bill which survive, any copy of that original transcript still exists. Nor do I know if Wapnick is in possession of a copy. If it does exist, it should be readily obvious with a side by side comparison which is the earlier and more original. If it doesn't still exist, and I am not aware of any evidence to suggest it does, then the confusion is even more understandable.

I know full well that many people have been told this document is the *Thetford Transcript* and have simply believed that and never thought to question it. Why not Wapnick? In fact, having been told that myself, I was inclined to believe it for years even as my study of the document kept revealing evidence that it wasn't. It was some years before I lined up all the evidence on both sides and concluded that most of this material simply couldn't be the *Thetford Transcript*. This rather shows that the human mind, having accepted a certain assertion as correct, sometimes requires rather a LOT of evidence of error before even considering there might be an error ***especially when the presence of error appears to be highly unlikely*** as it most certainly did in this case.

I would submit then that Wapnick, not having access to the original documents and not being particularly interested in them at first, may easily have misunderstood what the Scribes meant by the use of the unusual word "urtext" just as so many others have. That he was unfamiliar with the term is strongly indicated by his assertion that it comes from Abraham and "Ur of the Chaldees." It doesn't. Then, never having any reason to suspect a misunderstanding, he never felt the need to check and so continued to believe it was the *Thetford Transcript*.

How could Wapnick be wrong? Just as any of us could be and all of us have been wrong a times; a simple misunderstanding which was never checked and so never corrected.

The weight of evidence then is on the side of this being for the most part a later re-typed, edited manuscript rather than the original *Thetford Transcript*. I do not consider the question resolved however and it probably won't be until all relevant surviving documentation has been very thoroughly scrutinized.

I think it is beyond doubt that ***some*** of the *Urtext* is not the original transcript, but rather a later retyping. I'm reasonably convinced that

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some of it is likely the original transcript and I'm entirely uncertain about some portions of it.

9 Why it is important to determine the provenance of these manuscripts

There are some who are thinking “so what?” What makes it important to know whether this is a first or second or even third typed copy?

First off if we are going to claim, as many have done, and are still doing, that this is the “original” unedited dictation then we should know that the evidence does not really support that claim and in making that claim we are asserting what is almost certainly a falsehood. Eventually the truth generally comes out and it serves no one's real interests to propagate disinformation. It certainly feeds the reservations of sceptics when they find out that they haven't been told the truth. However “innocent” the reasons for a misunderstanding are, the suspicion will always haunt the minds of some that there has been some deliberate dishonesty and deception.

The credibility of the Course generally is hurt when falsehoods are propagated. The credibility of the Course is also hurt when the most “primary” of the primary sources are unavailable. How can we be certain that the later copies are “right” when we can't check the originals and we know that there are some inadvertent copying mistakes? And how can we expect people not to wonder what we're trying to hide when we won't allow inspection of the primary sources?

If we are going to make claims about provenance it behooves us to do more than believe the claims, we should also exercise due diligence to verify them!

That's one of the jobs of scholarship, check all the sources and evidence, look for mistakes, and correct the mistakes.

Another importance involves the work of transcribing the original *Shorthand Notebooks*. Bill Thetford's original transcript would be of enormous value in those areas where legibility is a problem in the *Notes*. Legibility is problematic sometimes because of bad photocopies, missing pages, and pages out of order but also because much of it is shorthand and abbreviations. In the later case some abbreviations can be expanded in more than one way and still be good grammar. The shorthand isn't always unambiguous. Looking to any later copy can certainly give us clues as to what Schucman intended but any later copy is more subject to

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possible copying mistakes than the original transcript would be. That original transcript then has more “authority” as a tool to interpret the *Notes* than any later copy or indeed than all later copies. We could have a higher degree of confidence that what’s in the original transcript is what was originally intended than with any subsequent copy.

Even if it should prove that the later copies are *always* identical to the *Thetford Transcript* in areas of uncertainty, that original transcript is still useful in ways that the later copies aren’t. With it we can *know* whether it is the same or different. Without it we can only wonder. And wonder about the motives of those who possess copies but refuse to let us see them.

In some ways that *Thetford Transcript* would enable us to “ask Helen what she meant” where the reading in the *Notes* is ambiguous and ask her within days of her first writing the material down. We do know that her idea of what she meant changed sometimes over time and became very different from it had been originally. Whatever you make of her later editing changes, knowing what she originally intended to commit to paper has some value and the original transcript can be expected to help us there in ways and with a degree of confidence no later retying can.

Finally, if we think we have a copy of the *Thetford Transcript* then we won’t go looking for it. If we think we don’t have a copy and we recognize any importance to it, then we might go looking for it. According to several sources Thetford made multiple photocopies of his original transcript plus at least one carbon copy. At one time then there were several copies in existence. While I have no evidence indicating that any have survived it seems quite possible that at least one might have and that continued searching might eventually locate it.

In closing I would say, with Jesus in the *Urtext* that getting every word right is not crucial, but it is meaningful!

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