

## Appendix II: Identifying the *Urtext* Manuscript

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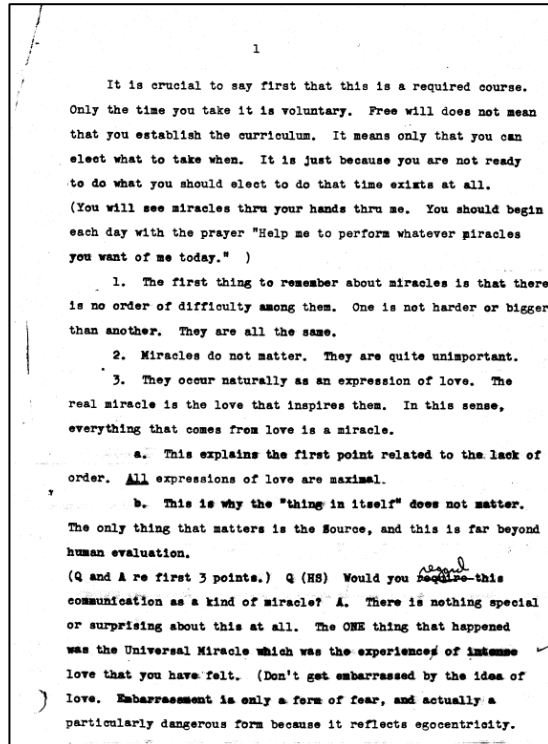


## Appendix II: Identifying the *Urtext* Manuscript

### 1. What is the *Urtext*?

by Doug Thompson

The second oldest manuscript of *A Course in Miracles (ACIM)* we currently have, the *Urtext*, was initially received as the *Thetford Transcript* since the most widely recognized authorities such as Wapnick and FIP had repeatedly asserted that the original transcript was called by the name “urtext.”



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

this very important manuscript.

Within weeks of its release in August of 2000, however, questions began to be raised as to whether or not it really was that original *Thetford Transcript* or a later, edited retyping, or even a combination of parts of several retypings. Further study cast progressively more doubt on the identification of this document as the *Thetford Transcript*.

Now that we can compare much of it with the *Notes* we see that, at least in the early chapters, much of it is in no way a direct transcription of the *Notes*. Nor are many of the differences “inadvertent” discrepancies which could be explained as oral transcription errors. This *Urtext* document is heavily edited in portions and a great deal of it shows clear, in some cases utterly indisputable evidence of being a “retyping” with editing changes and copying errors rather than an original transcript.

The only two serious scholarly analyses of the differences between the “versions” published to date, by Robert Perry<sup>1</sup> and Richard Smolley,<sup>2</sup> have both accepted, without question, the identification of this document as the *Thetford Transcript*. Neither had access to the *Notes*, when they wrote their articles, however.

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. It was some years of investigation the question, and with enormous reluctance, that I finally succumbed to the overwhelming physical evidence and accepted that this is *not* the *Thetford Transcript*.

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

<sup>1</sup> Note Robert’s Article

<sup>2</sup> Note Richard’s Article

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### 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*” published by the Foundation for Inner Peace (FIP) in 1996 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<sup>3</sup>,” a word denoting an original manuscript.”

Wapnick, for his part, offers a slightly more detailed set of observations. The following quote comes from the 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<sup>4</sup>. 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<sup>5</sup>, we used that term to denote what Bill had typed, the original typed manuscript that was based on Helen's notebooks. Helen then retyped 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 version<sup>6</sup> Helen and I edited into the finished copy -- the published copy.”

When they write about the “*Urtext*” they say they are referring to the *Thetford Transcript*. Since it was Wapnick who filed the USCO “*Urtext*” material, it seemed to be a reasonable assumption that he understood what he was filing to be the *Thetford Transcript*. There is no remotely obvious reason for him to intentionally misrepresent the document's identity. If he said it was the *Thetford Transcript* it is probably because he was simply mistaken. Wapnick, who probably had more and better access to a vastly wider range of primary source material than anyone alive, and who knew the Scribes and their work better than anyone, was presumed to know what he was talking about, and thus his statement was widely believed. Indeed, it was only after the evidence of the mistake became overwhelming that I reluctantly concluded that, incredible as it may seem, Wapnick was mistaken on this point.

I do not know who assembled the *Unpublished Writings* into their current 22 volume form at the USCO, but there are a number of indications that it may have been done long before 1990. To cite one example, the fourth *ACIM* volume is called “*Use of Terms*” in the USCO collection rather than “*Clarification of Terms*.” The earliest copies we have are labelled “*Use of Terms*” but by 1976 it had been renamed “*Clarification of Terms*.” The typed manuscript title page identifier calls it “*Use of Terms*” which suggests that this material, at least, was organized prior to the renaming.

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<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.miraclestudies.net/Errata.html>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.ACIM.org/catalog.html>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.miraclestudies.net/HLV.html>

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The typed *Urtext* manuscript from the USCO was obviously earlier and much larger than any version of *ACIM* widely known when it appeared, and it was labelled “*Urtext of a Course in Miracles and Related Material*” at the USCO.

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 retyped the manuscript of the *Text* twice and the *Workbook* and *Manual* once, and none of these retypings was [sic] ever proofread.”

If the FIP “history” here is at least mostly accurate, 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, that Helen read her *Notes* to him aloud, he typed them up and read them back to her to ensure accuracy.

We’d expect any mortal typist to make some errors, and that would be a reason for this proofreading. We’d expect that proofreading to identify some errors and see pencilled-in corrections but in the *Urtext* document there is very little, if anything, which looks like the corrections we’d expect to see from such proofreading.

While FIP and Wapnick disagree on the number of retypings, they both agree there were *at least two* typescripts, 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 probably relate only to the *Workbook*, *Manual for Teachers*, and *Use of Terms*. At the time FIP did not consider the later volumes to be part of *ACIM* proper. So far, however, we only have a single typescript earlier than the *HLC* for the *Text* and only a single pre-1975 typescript for the other volumes. These are the ones from the USCO labelled “*Urtext*.” From the FIP and Wapnick descriptions, the *Text* “version history” is:

- 1) Notes
- 2) Thetford Transcript (which they mistakenly called the *Urtext*)
- 3) First Retyping(which may actually be the *Urtext*)
- 4) Second Retyping (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:

- 1) Notes
- 2) USCO Urtext (likely one of the retypings)
- 3) HLC
- 4) Criswell/FIP Editions

From the FIP and Wapnick descriptions, the other volumes “version history” is:

- 1) Notes
- 2) Thetford Transcript (which they called *Urtext*)

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- 3) First Retyping(which more likely is the *Urtext*)
- 4) Criswell/FIP First Edition

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

- 1) Notes
- 2) USCO Urtext (and we cannot be entirely certain which retyping it is. Some may be the *Thetford Transcript*)
- 3) Criswell/FIP

According to the evidence from FIP and Wapnick, we are missing at least one retyping for each volume, and possibly more than one for the *Text*. With the other volumes, we have only one typed manuscript later than the *Notes* and earlier than *Criswell/FIP*. Wapnick and FIP disagree with each other on the number of additional retypings, although 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 retyping 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 in the *Notes*. It would appear that some portions were more heavily edited, and perhaps more frequently retyped, 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 *ACIM*.

Wapnick and FIP were really the only published sources from which we could assess what this “*Urtext*” material at the USCO was. They disagree on a key point, that being how many retypings there were. They agree on another key point however, what an “urtext” is. On this point however, it would seem that they are both mistaken.

Wapnick says: “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.”

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.

That word seems largely confined to classical musical scores. It comes from the German for “earlier.” It is a prefix, much like “pre” in English. It does not necessarily refer to a “first” but rather to an “earlier.” In the *Britannica* definition (below) it is describes as something “pieced together” from earlier sources with the intent to reflect the “original” meaning, but that is quite different from “the original autograph.”

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.

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. 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 equal accuracy.

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### 3. How is the word “urtext” used elsewhere?

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, discussed below.

“The word “urtext” is of German origin; “[ur-](#)” means “original”. Occasionally the word “urtext” is [capitalized](#), following German spelling practice.”

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.”

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” 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.

The difference is subtle but crucial. Assuming we had the first and original autographs of both, we’d find them different, even if one was based on the other. And we could do an “urtext” 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.

There are then these two somewhat divergent connotations to the word "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, while 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, and 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 Helen and like me he may have made assumptions about what it meant without checking.

Helen however, who had a hobbyist interest in classical music, may well have run into the term in pursuit of her musical interests and quite possibly applied the term to her "piecing together" of earlier material into an "urtext" which she felt most closely approximated the Author's intent.

For years I have been puzzled by the term. Assuming that Wapnick's definition was correct, and gradually collecting evidence that the "urtext" at the USCO was not the *Thetford Transcript*, I marvelled that they could have mis-identified the material so totally.

It seems the mistake was simply in the use of the word "urtext" which word is sufficiently uncommon that a mistake is very understandable. 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. I never thought its use in the context of *ACIM* had to do with Abraham though!

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 due diligence? Could it be that the actual *Thetford Typescript* 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 the *Urtext* if one had both in one's hands!

### 4. Is the "*ACIM Urtext*" really an "urtext?" ... first impressions

Now Helen Schucman, who was fond of classical music and played recreationally, might well have been familiar with *precisely* what an "urtext" is in the field of music, and may well have adopted that word since it loosely described what she and Bill 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's at the USCO under the name *Urtext*. They'd 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 technical 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 it while it normally applies to musical composition it can be used to refer to a "literary work."



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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 five different internal pagination systems, was typed on at least two different typewriters, contains some duplication, and even pages marked “retyped,” rather proving it wasn’t a “single typing,” and it includes material not in the *Notes* while omitting some material that is in the *Notes*. While this not wholly conclusive by itself, it does raise suspicions about this being the *Thetford Transcript*.

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

It looks just like an “urtext” based on visually copying without proofreading.

So let’s probe the evidence further.

### 5. 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 suspicions but it doesn’t prove anything conclusively.

#### 5.1. *Characteristics of 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 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 Helen had available for her “retyping” 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 the typing pools of corporations and typesetters in publishing firms were doing vast amounts of that all over the world until computers and scanners and OCR technology almost entirely replaced that 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 the *ACIM* manuscripts are riddled with them. 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 almost impossible, from reading the result, to notice the omission. There are many instances of this in *ACIM* from version to version, and this is utterly typical of the most common of visual copy-typing errors.

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In any case, 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 from oral dictation that is pacing itself to your typing speed. We used to do that 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 ensure accuracy.

That "reading it back" will catch missing words and phrases. The kind of errors we get with oral dictation involve words which sound similar and whose substitution sounds plausible. Those errors that are obvious can still get made 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 *ACIM* 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. But in the *Psychotherapy* pamphlet, there are quite a few that were caught, which is precisely what we'd expect in pages typed from oral dictation.

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 Helen's handwriting. "Light" and "Life" sound enough alike that when either "makes sense" in the context, it is an easy "aural error" to make but one which could well be caught in the proofing. This one was caught.

One of innumerable errors 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 the *HLC* manuscript include this sentence, nor does the FIP *First Edition* which was based on the *HLC*.

In this and most 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. The fact that FIP's 1996 proofing identified this as an inadvertent omission which was corrected lends more credence to this conclusion. FIP indicated they checked against the "*Urtext*," they state that they used that word for the first typing, but they also state they checked all retypings and the *Notes*. While we don't know if they too found this in the *Notes*, we do know it is not in the USCO material called "*Urtext*" which is just one reason to doubt that it is that *Thetford Transcript*.

This kind of error is typical of visual copying but not of proofed oral dictation. It's hard to overlook the fact that a whole sentence is missing when reading aloud and listening but incredibly easy for the eye to skip a sentence when copy-typing. The presence of many such visual errors between the *Notes* and the *Urtext*, strongly indicates that the manuscript in question was not dictated orally and was not proofread against the *Notes*.

### **5.2. Characteristics of oral typing: 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 except for leaving out a whole sentence. But when you read it back, most show up and they will be 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

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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, save for ones that you can't hear.

Since we know that Helen 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 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.

The clincher comes on page 9 of *Psychotherapy*. I will show you the two lines in question, bottom of the second paragraph of section 3 E, *The Process of Illness*.

If you look closely you see that the last words were initially typed “*shadow be except the form.*” That's 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

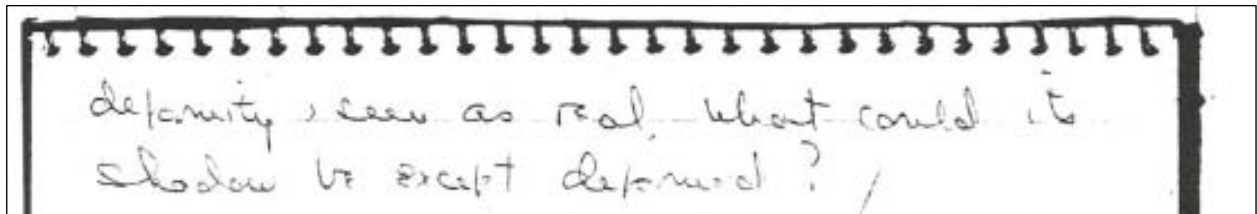


Figure 2 *Psychotherapy* 3 E from the Notes.

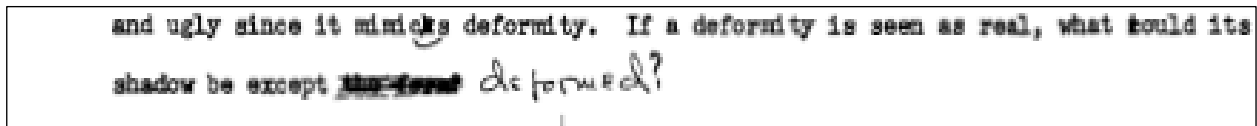
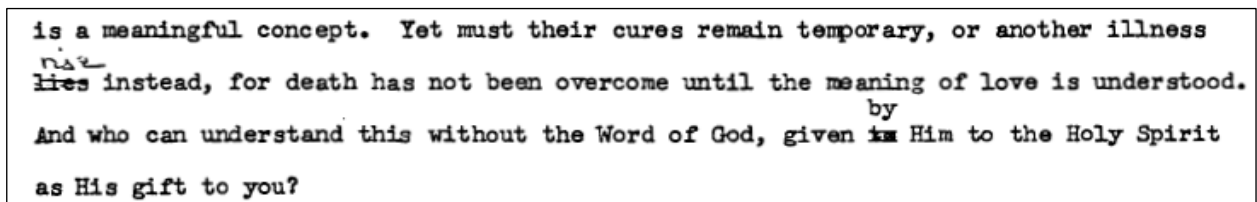


Figure 3 the same words from the *Urtext* manuscript

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! We don't, however, see this kind of mistake and correction 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 Helen. And that is not what we'd expect to see if Bill 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 Helen later. We will probably never know for sure.



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Two more examples of typical “oral mistakes” occur 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 the *Notes* says. But again “rise” and “lies” sound very much alike, these are oral **errors** which we’d expect of a manuscript typed to oral dictation.

Their presence here in the *Psychotherapy* manuscript is strongly suggestive that this is indeed

**Figure 4** In the second line “lies” is crossed out and becomes “rise” in the *Psychotherapy Urtext* manuscript.

the *Thetford Transcript* and not a later retyping. The fact that such mistakes, common in this document, do not show up 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 two examples, there are many more. We even find corrections written into the *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, during the initial transcription. It’s very rare that we find editing changes in the typed manuscript reflected in the *Notes* that way. Yet it’s actually more than one would expect of oral dictation. This suggests that Helen read it as written, decided at that instant to change it, changed it in her *Notes* and then either asked Bill to change it in the transcript or changed it herself. Of course it is difficult to be certain, but this is plausible and might well be expected in oral dictation and proofing, that Helen would decide to introduce a change after first dictating it, while hearing it read back.

I’ve not seen any other example of visible editing on a typed page being reflected in visible editing on a page of the *Notes*. There may be others but they certainly are not common. The vast majority of editing we see on the typescripts does not show up in the *Notes*. The likely explanation is that it was done some time later, during or after a retyping of the original transcript.

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.

### 5.3. Evidence from the pagination

Further evidence lies in the pagination. The page numbering in the *Text* volume up to approximately the end of chapter 8 is utterly chaotic, starting, stopping, restarting, with some pages having as many as four different numbers written, then crossed out. Abruptly at the end of chapter 8, 382 pages from the start, the page is marked 209 and from that point to the end continues with perfect consistency. However, 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. The last three quarters of the *Urtext* is then 30 pages longer than the *HLC*. The first one quarter is 173 pages longer. Yet *Urtext* 209 is really 382 pages from the beginning. The average chapter length in the *HLC* is 27 manuscript pages. So we have the equivalent of seven and a half chapters cut between the *Urtext* manuscript and the *HLC*

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manuscript, six and half of that from the first eight chapters. Of the 382 pages, 173 are gone. We really need to count words to get a precise measure, since margin width and page length vary and may explain some of the page count difference.

The early manuscripts were stored by the Scribes in three-ring binders, we are told, roughly 8 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 only conclusion one could reach would be that we were missing the first binder, and that we had a copy which immediately preceded the *HLC* and from which most of the “personal” material had already been removed. 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.

There is nothing about this latter three quarters of the material which, if it didn’t bear the name “*Urtext*” would lead anyone to think it 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 no hallmarks of “oral dictation” but does show numerous signs of visual copying errors. There is nothing in this segment of the document to suggest, in any way, that this is the *Thetford Transcript*. There is much to suggest, however, that it really is an “urtext” if that word is used in the *Britannica* sense of “piecing together” something from earlier material.

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 re-typing 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 Helen would skip 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 which probably should have been omitted, as this survives in the *Urtext*. 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 one 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 was first. 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 page numbers may enable us to reconstruct the stages of compilation, if that information is deemed useful.

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The real mystery is how it is that the 382<sup>nd</sup> page bears the number 209! And then that latter numbering system remains perfectly 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.

If this *Urtext* is the "first retyping" that "mystery document" would be the second retyping, and we do have some evidence here then which corroborates 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 copy" of the *Thetford Transcript*.

Somewhere 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 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 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 almost certainly not the original *Thetford Transcript*. But that doesn't mean that all of it necessarily isn't.

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.

With the *Thetford Transcript* and with the "dictated without notes" fragments, Helen may have pieced together the typed pages for small segments from time to time and then retyped 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 few other people. Understandably, when sharing, she'd want a reasonably clean typescript to 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 rough primary drafts.

I say "Helen edited" here but of course we don't know how much Bill participated in that editing. It might have been a great deal, it might have been very little. We have very little information on that.

If we assume that she undertook this kind of process several times with different segments of the first 8 chapters, each time producing a unique document for circulation which was numbered page 1 to whatever, and then later collected these separate edited and retyped segments together, we can perhaps begin to explain the page numbering we do in fact see.

In this theory, they didn't wait until the dictation is finished to edit and retype it. The editing proceeded on previously dictated material as new material is being received. This initial editing produced retyped segments of a chapter or two, from time to time, which segments are initially

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“stand alone documents” with their own specific pagination. Later these several segments are collected together and become what we now know as the *Urtext*.

After collecting two or more such retyped 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 to be repeated several times, we end up with several page numbers on some pages. And that *is* just what we see.

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.

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*.

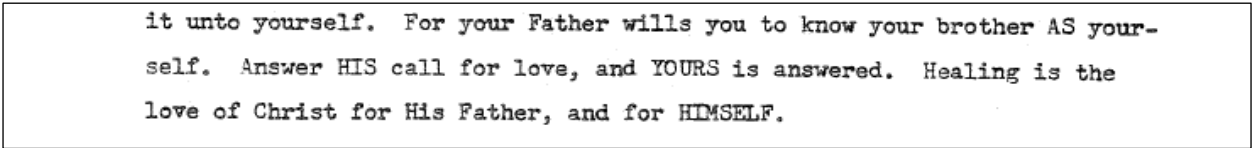
I don’t know how it came to appear as it does, obviously, but at least I can visualize *some* plausible means of processing which would explain what we see. It is not impossible that in this process some of the original *Thetford Typescript* pages were used without retyping. Just because we can be quite sure some of the material is a later edited retyping doesn’t prove that all of it is.

### 5.4. *Idiosyncratic errors*

Bill 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 “characteristic errors.” There are none in the rest of the “*Urtext*” material that I’ve spotted. I admit it’s hard to find them because they would likely have been corrected in all the e-texts as “obvious typos” and these minor spelling errors are also very easy to miss. Their absence tells us that the *Urtext* manuscript itself is a re-typed copy in which those sorts of errors were not, of course, reproduced but were instead corrected. In some senses this is 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.

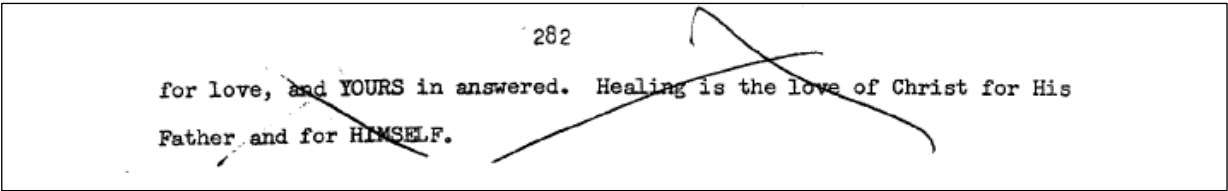
### 5.5. *Duplications*

In the *Urtext* manuscript we find several instances where the same material is typed twice, not spare copies of the same page, but the same words typed on different typewriters, or with different line endings or on different parts of the page, but otherwise exactly the same words. Where



it unto yourself. For your Father wills you to know your brother AS your-self. 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

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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 following example, we see evidence which is more consistent with visual retyping than with aural 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 282-282) we see the last two sentences of page 454 repeated on 455 and then crossed out by hand.

It is perhaps impossible to be entirely sure of what’s 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 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 copying, not aural copying. It also suggests a tired or inattentive or distracted copy typist.

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 retyped 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 evidence.”

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

### 6. Conclusion: The *Urtext* is not the Thetford Transcript

None 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*. All is consistent with our having bits and pieces of several different retypings made after the *Thetford Transcript*. 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 expect not 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 suggests both inadvertent *visual* copying errors *and* intentional editing.



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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 Abridgements*, there is still a good deal 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 this USCO material filed as *Urtext* in one or more critical ways. The reservations are so numerous and serious in nature that it must be considered unlikely that this is the *Thetford Transcript*. Its identification as the (or one of the, or a combination of two or more of the) later retyping(s) by Schucman is far more likely.

My best guess is that the first 381 pages are Helen’s first re-typing and the second 677 pages are her second re-typing, assuming that Wapnick’s statement that there were two re-typings is correct. Whether the first one went past chapter eight is open to question. Wapnick did say the material was retyped twice, but he didn’t specify that all of the *Text* volume was retyped twice. That is implied, but that is not stated. That the second 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.

There is strong 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 only 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 there, that’s not at all what the word “urtext” necessarily means!