

account for all 120 discrepancies by consulting photocopies. In 9 cases the problem was caused by unusual rare Voynich characters not found on the alphabet sheets. In 40 cases Currier's version seemed clearly correct. In 54 cases item 1609's version seemed clearly correct. In 13 cases both versions seemed wrong. In 4 cases the discrepancy seemed to hinge on interpretation of a line end or a very big word space caused by an intruding picture.

Conclusion

The transcription of 1609 is not very accurate*, and should probably be carefully checked and revised before it is used as the basis for statistical investigations. However, because it covers the whole VMS, it has some value as a "base line": if some other transcription of any part of the VMS is produced, it can be compared with 1609, and special attention can be paid to points of difference: wherever the two versions differ, one consults the photostats. This can be done right now with 1613 and with D'Imperio's transcriptions, which would give a fairly automatic way of checking about half of 1609. More precisely: 1609 contains 6030 lines, of which 2882 are covered by the D'Imperio transcription and 527 by the 1613 transcription, which leaves 2621 lines uncovered.

The omission of line ends is now known — because of Currier's findings [D2] — to be a bad mistake. (But editing them in should not be too hard.)

Except for the omission of line ends, the FSG transcription alphabet itself is not bad, and in one respect is superior to Currier's: it has a code for the Voynich character \times which occurs often enough to deserve one of its own.

A curious side light was provided in a personal communication from Prescott Currier, who played a leading role in the Second Study Group of 1962: Friedman kept Currier in the dark about the FSG. Currier was not told what the FSG had accomplished nor did he see any transcribed text from the earlier effort. Is it possible that Friedman was somewhat ashamed of the

*This reflects no discredit on the FSG, given the difficulty of their task and the limited time available to work on it. In my experience proofreading a VMS transcription is harder than making a fresh transcription, and a 5% error rate is not unreasonable.