

DISSERTATION SUMMARY

Revision and Reference: The Transformations of the Biblical Text of Chrysostom's *Homilies on Romans* and Their Significance for the Transmission of the New Testament¹

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The significance of Chrysostom's *Homilies on Romans* (RHom) for our understanding of the transmission of the biblical text has long been recognised, but thus far an appropriate methodology for dealing with such a massive and complex manuscript tradition has been lacking. This dissertation intends to meet this need by providing a new paradigm for the use of Chrysostom's exegetical homilies in New Testament textual criticism. It is composed of seven chapters.

Chapter 1 begins with an introduction to the RHom, which originated as a series of exegetical homilies preached to a late fourth-century congregation in the city of Antioch. It continues with a survey of the use of Chrysostom in the textual criticism of the New Testament. Unfortunately, while the majority of Chrysostom's biblical citations are found in his major exegetical series (such as the RHom), no adequate critical editions of any of these series have yet

1. Peter J. Montoro IV, 'Revision and Reference: The Transformations of the Biblical Text of Chrysostom's *Homilies on Romans* and Their Significance for the Transmission of the New Testament' (PhD Diss., University of Birmingham, 2024). Primary supervisor: Prof. H. A. G. Houghton. A revised version of this dissertation has been published as Peter J. Montoro IV, *Chrysostom's Homilies on Romans and the Textual History of the New Testament*, NTTSD 69 (Brill, 2025), <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004741034>.

been published, necessitating the approach provided in this dissertation. This approach is organised around four fundamental research questions.

- First, what is the Romans text of the Homilies on Romans (chapters 2–4)?
- Second, how has this text been made the object of textual revision (chapter 5)?
- Third, how has this text been used as a source of textual reference (chapter 6)?
- Fourth, how should New Testament text critics use the Homilies on Romans and similar works (chapter 7)?

In the absence of an adequate critical edition, methodologically sound analysis of the biblical text of the RHom must begin with a consideration of the manuscript tradition of the work as a whole. After obtaining full images for each of the 39 primary witnesses to the direct tradition (involving more than 20,000 manuscript pages), each witness was fully indexed, using a new approach developed for this dissertation. This indexing served as the basis for the systematic survey of the contents and paratextual features of each of the witnesses found in chapter 2.

Chapter 3 focuses on determining the stemmatic relationship between these witnesses. An initial phylogenetic analysis based on extensive test passages revealed the presence of eight distinct textual clusters within the thirty-nine primary witnesses. After selecting sixteen representative witnesses from these clusters, additional test passages and further analysis, using both phylogenetic and common-error approaches, enabled the discovery of extensive block mixture in the early tradition of the work, which made possible the production of a preliminary stemma of the direct tradition of the RHom. In order to keep the analysis of revisions to the biblical citations found in chapter 5 from becoming circular, the final stemma was based exclusively on textual variations within the text of the commentary itself, not the biblical citations it contains.

Chapter 4 provides a full collation of every sentence in the RHom that contains a biblical citation, in each of the sixteen selected witnesses. This is divided into two apparatuses. The second apparatus is a simple collation of textual variation in citations taken from books other than Romans. The first apparatus – the heart of this dissertation – goes further. In addition to providing a critical reconstruction of the initial text of the Romans citations found in the RHom, it also provides a reconstruction of the Romans texts of each of the sixteen selected RHom witnesses. When paired with the stemmatic work in chapter 3, this enables the analysis of the revisions of these citations over the course of the transmission of the RHom undertaken in chapter 5. It also systematically compares the readings of each of these RHom witnesses with the readings of the 164 full-text transcriptions of Romans produced by

the International Greek New Testament Project (IGNTP) for the forthcoming *Editio Critica Maior* (ECM) of Romans. This forms the basis for the analysis of repeated reference to the RHom over the course of the broader transmission history of Romans provided in chapter 6.

Building on this foundation, chapter 5 provides a detailed examination of all revisions to the biblical citations of the RHom found in both the stemmatic nodes identified in chapter 3 and in each of the sixteen selected witnesses individually. It begins by introducing the high entropy dataset, a list of 257 variation units where at least 15 of the 164 IGNTP transcriptions of Romans differ from the rest of the tradition in non-orthographic ways. The IGNTP witnesses were supplemented by the addition of the text of Romans as found in the initial text of the RHom, the text of Romans as found in each of the sixteen selected RHom witnesses, and the editorial text of the NA28, SBL, THGNT, and RP editions of Romans. Subsequent investigation, using both percentage-based comparisons and phylogenetic analysis, resulted in several discoveries. First, there is an enormous amount of textual variation between the individual manuscripts of the RHom – one or more of the sixteen representative witnesses differed from one or more of the others in almost two-thirds of the high entropy variation units derived from the much larger group of IGNTP transcriptions. Second, despite this variation, although the reconstructed initial text of the RHom is relatively close to the Byzantine text (77.39 per cent agreement in the high entropy data set), not one of the sixteen selected RHom witnesses has a higher percentage of agreement with the Byzantine text than did the initial text of the RHom. This challenges the widespread assumption that patristic citations were almost always increasingly conformed to the Byzantine text over the course of their transmission. Third, and perhaps most importantly, it was demonstrated that the S3 stemmatic node – the most comprehensive attempt to revise the biblical text in the transmission history of the RHom – has systematically and substantially revised away from Byzantine readings and toward the reading of the ATEXT (defined as the consensus of the NA28, SBL, and THGNT editions), raising additional challenges for the widespread assumption that the journey to the mature Byzantine text was more or less unidirectional.

While chapter 5 investigates textual revisions *in* the manuscripts of the RHom on the basis of comparison with other New Testament witnesses, chapter 6 considers textual change in New Testament witnesses on the basis of influence *from* RHom witnesses. Seven test cases were considered, two of which were particularly significant. First, based on their divergence from the Majority Text, a large number of manuscripts of Theophylact's commentary

on Romans have been selected for inclusion in the ECM. However, this chapter demonstrates that an overwhelming majority of the early readings found in these Theophylact manuscripts are the result of influence from the S3 revision of the RHom on the original composition of Theophylact's commentary. Without the influence of the RHom, few, if any, Theophylact witnesses would have been selected for transcription. Second, not only does the Harklean group have a text closely related to that found in the RHom, but it also seems to have been influenced by the distinctive readings of the RHom, including some likely to have been created by Chrysostom in the course of the initial delivery of the RHom. Taken together, the seven test cases show that the manuscripts of the RHom were at times a source of textual influence, not only on other commentary witnesses, but also on continuous-text witnesses of Romans.

After summarising the contributions of the previous chapters, chapter 7 turns to the fourth and final research question, demonstrating significant inconsistencies in current approaches and proposing methodological improvements for the use of patristic exegetical material in the work of New Testament textual criticism, with particular reference to the ECM. The dissertation concludes by highlighting the way that the *transformations* of the biblical text found in the manuscript tradition of the RHom – the patterns of revision and reference it identifies – have the potential to shed new light on the broader transmission history of the New Testament as a whole.