

# Μαρία and Μαριάμ in John's Gospel in the *Novum Testamentum Graece*

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Abstract: The name Mary was popular and a number of different women with this name are mentioned in the Gospel of John. The text of the Gospel of John in the *Novum Testamentum Graece* uses in this context the Hellenized and the transcribed form of the name “Mary” rather unsystematically. A scrutiny of the evidence as presented in the manuscripts points to a problem: cases where the transliterated form is used as accusative might be not so much a decision to use a transliterated form but a misspelled form of the Greek accusative—exchange of the nasals is a known phenomenon. That is, the distribution of forms of the name might in part be due to phonetics and incorrect spellings and not to a decision to use one of the two forms of the name. A possible conclusion might be that the Greek text of the Gospel of John should present only the Hellenized form and relegate the transcribed form to the apparatus (which in quite a few instances would accord with the fact that the Hellenized form may be better attested than the transcribed form).

## Introduction

This article arose from work on the Coptic version of the Gospel of John. Within the text of this Gospel—as well as in the entire New Testament<sup>2</sup>—two forms of the Hebrew name Mary (מָרְיָם) coexist in the New Testament: the transliterated form (Μαριάμ) and the Hellenized form

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<sup>1</sup> The research behind this article was conducted within the context of the preparation of a critical edition of the Gospel of John (project P25082-G15, funded by the Austrian Research Fund).

<sup>2</sup> For methodological reasons this article focuses on the Gospel of John. It might well be that the reason for the distribution of the form of the name in the manuscripts of the Gospel of John is different as compared to the manuscripts of other books of the New Testament. For possible implications of the occurrence of this name and its different forms in Rom 16:6 cf. H. Förster, “Der Aufenthalt von Priska und Aquila in Ephesus und die juristischen Rahmenbedingungen ihrer Rückkehr nach Rom,” *ZNW* 105 (2014): 189–227, 218. Statistics seem to support the surmise that the different books of the New Testament need to be evaluated separately. By looking only at the representation of the nominative of the name Mary in the Gospel of Luke one would find that the majority of attestations have the transliterated form (with no variants given in the apparatus); cf. Luke 1:27, 34, 38, 39, 46. This is a very different situation to the Gospel of John where for every single attestation of the nominative and the accusative, manuscripts can be cited which either attest the transliterated or the Hellenized form. There is no occurrence of the dative in the Gospel of John and the only occurrence of the Genitive is in the Hellenized form (cf. John 11:1).

(Μαρία).<sup>3</sup> This name was quite popular in the time of the Second Temple.<sup>4</sup> While the Greek manuscripts of the Gospel of John seem to be undecided concerning the use of either the transliterated or Hellenized form, the Coptic manuscripts have a distinct distribution of the two forms. It has been argued that the Coptic use might be due to standardization within the Coptic manuscript tradition.<sup>5</sup> It may well be, however, that occurrence of the form of the name (giving the impression of standardization<sup>6</sup>) is of importance for narrative purposes.<sup>7</sup> It is further noteworthy, that two important resources for textual criticism of the New Testament differ in their use of the two forms for the Greek text of John's Gospel. The difference between the *Novum Testamentum Graece* and the text presented by the edition of the majuscules of John's Gospel<sup>8</sup> concerning the spelling of the personal name Μαρία is obvious. While the edition of the majuscules uses within the base text only the Hellenized form, the *Novum Testamentum Graece* uses both forms. And it seems to have a predilection for the transliterated form of the name. This is all the more important since the base text presented in the edition of the majuscules is created by a "majority vote": "That is to say, at each unit of variation we have adopted the reading of the majority of witnesses, thus reducing the *apparatus* to the smallest possible compass."<sup>9</sup>

Discussion of this problem seems necessary: in principle the use of either the Hellenized or the transliterated form of a Hebrew name might be intentional, as can be argued for the name of the city Jerusalem as used in Acts.<sup>10</sup> It seems that the hypothesis of a possibly intentional use of the two different forms of the name Mary has also influenced some commentaries on John's Gospel.<sup>11</sup>

A further problem is, however, that in some inscriptions the final nasal of the Hebrew name

<sup>3</sup> It has been suggested that Μαρία might also represent a transliterated form on the basis of inscriptions which have the name without the final *mem*; cf. R. E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John xiii-xxi* (AncB 29; New York et al.: Doubleday, 1970) 990–1. However, transliterated names are usually not declined and thus, even if transliterated, Μαρία would be perceived as a Hellenized form name; cf. J. Thackeray, *A Grammar of the Old Testament in Greek according to the Septuagint. Vol. I. Introduction, Orthography and Accidence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909) 160.

<sup>4</sup> See I. R. Kitzberger, "Maria, Mutter Jesu," *RGG* 5 (4. Aufl. 2002) 798–9, 798: "M. teilt mit sieben (acht; s.u. II.) anderen Frauen im NT den zur Zeit des Zweiten Tempels häufigsten weiblichen Vornamen."

<sup>5</sup> C. Askeland, *John's Gospel: The Coptic Translations of its Greek Text* (ANTT 44; Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2012) 35: "Name spellings, however, are prone to standardization as is the case with the name Μαρία/Μαριάμ in the Sahidic (typically ΜΑΡΙΑ, rarely ΜΑΡΙΣΑΜ)."

<sup>6</sup> The Sahidic rendering of a name has been of importance also on other occasions; cf. U.-K. Plisch, "Die Apostelin Junia: Das exegetische Problem in Röm 16.7 im Licht von Nestle-Aland<sup>27</sup> und der sahidischen Überlieferung," *NTS* 42 (1996): 477–8.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. H. Förster, "Standardisierung oder literarische Absicht—Der Name Maria und seine graphischen Varianten in der koptischen Version des Johannesevangeliums," in press for *BZ*.

<sup>8</sup> U. B. Schmid with W. J. Elliott and D. C. Parker, *The New Testament in Greek IV: The Gospel according to St. John. Vol. 2: The Majuscules* (NTTSD 37; Leiden/Boston: Brill) 2007.

<sup>9</sup> Schmid, *Gospel according to St. John*, 32.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. J. K. Elliott, "Jerusalem in Acts and the Gospels," *NTS* 23 (1977): 462–9, 463: "The Hebrew form, more to be expected in view of Luke's practice in the Gospel, occurs in contexts where a Jewish speaker is addressing Jews, or where the context places the story in Palestine."

<sup>11</sup> Cf. for example H. Thyen, *Das Johannesevangelium* (HNT 6; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005) 762: "Darauf sagt Jesus in ihrem eigenen Idiom zu ihr: Mirjam (Μαριάμ). Und daran erkennt sie nun in ihm ihren Herrn wieder. [...] Wie er sie mit ihrem hebräischen Namen Mirjam genannt hat, so antwortet sie ihm jetzt in der ihnen gemeinsamen Muttersprache mit der Anrede: ῥαββούνι, was der Erzähler durch die Bemerkung kommentiert, das heißt: mein Meister."

is missing, thereby creating a form which would look in transliteration similar to the Hellenized form of the name Mary.<sup>12</sup> It seems nevertheless probable that an author would—if the differentiation between the two forms of the names were intentional—disregard this problem if writing a Greek text for a mainly Greek speaking audience. An audience that needs translations of Hebrew words—cf. only John 1:41 or 20:16—will have no knowledge whatsoever of inscriptions providing a scholar with a rare spelling of a Hebrew name. Thus, it seems quite probable that the two forms of the name represent either a transliterated or a Hellenized form of the name Mary.

The present article will raise the question of one possible reason for the use of a (seemingly transliterated) form of the name, which might have its roots in some peculiarities of Greek. This, in consequence, might be an argument for a preference of the Hellenized form of the name in the Gospel of John in further editions of the *Novum Testamentum Graece*. For this discussion the question whether the name designates different persons in John's Gospel will be disregarded. This is necessary, since no person can be connected exclusively with one of the two forms of the name. The distribution of the different forms of the name seems to be random—at least at the first glimpse.

## I. The distribution of the Hellenized and the transliterated form of the name in *Novum Testamentum Graece*

The distribution of the two different forms of the name Mary can best be displayed in tabulated form. The following table quotes as separate columns the *Novum Testamentum Graece* and some manuscripts detailing the distribution of the different forms of the name. In summary, all manuscripts which are cited as witnesses for the transliterated form of the name in the apparatus of the 28th edition of the *Novum Testamentum Graece* are added in the last column. Since the majority of the majuscules (as well as of the minuscules) tends to use the Hellenized form it is not necessary to add all witnesses for the Hellenized form separately. The presentation of the witnesses of the transliterated form seems necessary since the attestation is sometimes quite weak. The papyri, 01, 02, 03, 04, and 05 have been selected for separate listing in the tabulation. The selection has some connection to the starting-point of the research, which—as mentioned above—is the Coptic translation of the Gospel of John. All papyri (deriving obviously from Egypt) have been used in the tabulation. 01 is a witness of category I<sup>3</sup> representing the Alexandrian text. 02 is included despite the fact that it is a witness of category III; there, the transliterated form occurs mostly in the accusative (but not in all occurrences of the accusative). 03 is used since it is a category I witness, 04 since it is a witness where a lot of correction occurs between transliterated and Hellenized forms of the name, and 05 since it displays the name in the accusative in the transliterated form and as Hellenized for the other cases. Thus, this selection serves the purpose of the presentation. The results of the tabulation seem to make it possible to draw some conclusions. This can be done after a statistical analysis.

<sup>12</sup> Brown, *John*, 990–1.

<sup>13</sup> For the categorisation of the witnesses cf. K. Aland and B. Aland, *Der Text des Neuen Testaments. Einführung in die wissenschaftlichen Ausgaben sowie in Theorie und Praxis der modernen Textkritik* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2. Aufl. 1989) 167.

Tabulation: The representations of the name Mary in selected Greek manuscripts<sup>14</sup>

	NA <sup>28</sup>	℘ <sup>66</sup>	℘ <sup>75</sup>	01	02	03	04	05	Other papyri	Other witnesses for μαριαμ
11:1	μαριας	μαριας	μαρια[ς]	μαριας	μαριας	μαριας	[—]	μαριας		
11:2	μαριαμ	μαρια	μαρια[μ]	μαρια	μαρια	μαριαμ	[—]	μαρια	μαρια[μ] (℘ <sup>6vid</sup> )	33
11:19	μαριαμ	μαριαν	μαριαμ	μαριαν	μαριαν	μαριαμ	μαριαμ μαριαν C <sup>15</sup>	μαριαμ		019. 037. 038 (l2211)
11:20	μαριαμ	μαρια	μαρια	μαρια	μαρια	μαρια	μαρια	μαρια		038. 33. 565. 579
11:28	μαριαμ	μαριαν	μαριαμ	μαριαν	μαριαμ	μαριαμ	μαριαμ	μαριαμ	μαριαν (℘ <sup>45</sup> )	017. 019. 037. 038. 33. 579. l844
11:31	μαριαμ	μαριαν	μαριαμ	μαριαν	μαριαν	μαριαμ	μαριαμ μαριαν C <sup>216</sup>	μαριαμ		017. 019. 037. 038. 33. 579. l844
11:32	μαριαμ	μαρια μαριαμ C	μαριαμ	μαρια	μαρια	μαριαμ	μαριαμ μαρια C <sup>27</sup>	μαρια	μαρια (℘ <sup>45</sup> )	019. 33. 579. l2211
11:45	μαριαμ	μαριαν	μαρ[ια]μ	μαριαν	μαριαν	μαριαμ	μαριαμ μαριαν C <sup>318</sup>	μαριαμ	μαριαν (℘ <sup>45</sup> ) μαριαμ (℘ <sup>6</sup> /℘ <sup>59vid</sup> )	019. 33. (579). l844. l2211
12:3	μαριαμ	μαρια	[μαριαμ]	μαρια	μαρια	μαριαμ	[—]	μαρια		1. 33. 565. 579. l844. l2211
19:25a	μαρια	μαρι[α]	[—]	μαριαμ	μαρια	μαρια	[—]	[—]		044. 1. 33. 565. l844
19:25b	μαρια	μαρι[α]	[—]	μαριαμ	μαρια	μαρια	[—]	[—]		019. 044. 1. 33. 565. l844
20:1	μαρια	[μαρια]	[—]	μαριαμ	μαριαμ	μαρια	[—]	[—]		019. 032. 1. (33). 565. 579. l844
20:11	μαρια	μαρια μαριαμ C	[—]	μαριαμ	μαρια	μαρια	[—]	[—]		044. 050. f <sup>i</sup> . 33. 565. l844. l2211
20:16	μαριαμ	μα[ριαμ]	[—]	μαριαμ	μαρια	μαριαμ	[—]	μαρια		019. 022. 032. 050. 1. 33. 565. l844. l2211
20:18	μαριαμ	μαριαμ	[—]	μαριαμ	μαρια	μαριαμ	[—]	μαρια		019. 1. 33. 565. l844. l2211

<sup>14</sup> The forms of the name as given here follow (in principle) the editions of ℘<sup>66</sup> and ℘<sup>75</sup> (cf. P. Bodmer II; P. Bodmer XIV-XV), the collated edition of the Gospel of John on papyri (cf. W. J. Elliott and D. C. Parker, *The New Testament in Greek IV: The Gospel according to St. John. Vol 1: The Papyri* [ed. by the American and British Committees of the International Greek New Testament Project; NTTS 20, Leiden/New York/Köln: Brill, 1995]), the critical apparatus of NA<sup>28</sup>, and Schmid, *Gospel according to St. John*. Where possible the readings have further been checked against photographic reproductions of the respective manuscripts.

<sup>15</sup> It should be noted that according to Schmid, *Gospel according to St. John*, the text is corrected here. NA<sup>28</sup> does not indicate this in the apparatus.

<sup>16</sup> According to Schmid, *Gospel according to St. John*; according to NA<sup>28</sup> C<sub>3</sub>.

<sup>17</sup> According to Schmid, *Gospel according to St. John*; according to NA<sup>28</sup> C<sub>3</sub>.

<sup>18</sup> Correction noted only by NA<sup>28</sup>.

## II. Statistical Analysis

### 1. The Presentation of the Name Mary in *Novum Testamentum Graece* (28th ed.)

The name Mary occurs within the text of John's Gospel 15 times. *Novum Testamentum Graece* chooses the Greek form of the name Mary (Μαρία) in 5 places; on 4 occasions the name stands in the nominative (John 19:25 [twice] and 20:1, 11); there is one genitive of the Greek form of the name (John 11:1); there are also 10 occurrences of the transliterated form (Μαριάμ). These occurrences are distributed as the nominative (5 occurrences: John 11:2, 20, 32; 12:3; 20:18), accusative (4 occurrences: John 11:19, 28, 31, 45), and vocative (John 20:16). The distribution of the forms of the name follows a somewhat interesting pattern. There is, for example, no occurrence of the Greek form of the name in the accusative, while the only occurrence of the genitive attests the Greek form. Thus, the nominative has a distribution of 44% attestations of the Greek form, the accusative has 100% attestations of the transliterated form and the genitive has 100% of the Hellenized form of the name.<sup>19</sup> This is an interesting pattern, since the distribution does not coincide with the designation of any given female person in John's Gospel bearing the name Mary. The distribution becomes even more interesting if the actual attestations and corrections are taken into consideration. There are quite a few corrections to be found in this context, which (interestingly) change the name from the Hellenized to the transliterated form and *vice versa*.

### 2. Statistics and Their Value

#### 2.1. Statistical Observations

Tabulation of the occurrences of the name Mary in John's Gospel which included attestations in the papyri<sup>20</sup> and important Greek manuscripts makes it possible to visualize a problem which might have been overlooked since these occurrences have not yet been discussed in connection with each other. The information concerning the correctors of 04 differs in the *Novum Testamentum Graece* and in the edition of John's Gospel according to the majuscules. The distribution of the two forms of the name in the nominative can be seen as following a statistical distribution which gives almost equal weight to both forms. The attestation in the accusative shows a definite preference for the transliterated form.

If the manuscripts and papyri are looked at directly this becomes even more evident:

℘<sup>66</sup> has on all occasions of the accusative the Greek form of the name.

℘<sup>75</sup> has on all occasions of the accusative the transliterated form of the name. Thus, these two papyri alone seem to point at the possibility of a preference for the form of the accusative determined by something besides a special form of the name. This is even more evident if the fact is taken into consideration that the nominative in ℘<sup>75</sup> has once the Hellenized (11:20) and once the transliterated (11:32) form of the name.

01 has on all occasions of the accusative the Greek form of the name.

02 has on three out of four occasions of the accusative the Greek form of the name.

03 has on all occasions of the accusative the Greek form of the name.

04 has at all occasions of the accusative the transliterated form of the name. Correctors seem to have worked at three instances of the transliterated form in the accusative in this manuscript.

05 has on all occasions of the accusative the transliterated form of the name.

<sup>19</sup> A transliterated name—if one were to see Μαρία as a transliterated form of the name (cf. above)—would be indeclinable and could therefore not produce a Greek genitive.

<sup>20</sup> For the papyri cf. also Elliott and Parker, *Gospel according to St. John*.

Out of the papyri  $\mathfrak{P}^{45}$  attests twice the Hellenized form of the name. Two other papyri have the transliterated form of the name in the accusative.

### 2.2. *The nasals mu and nu*

The attestation of  $\mathfrak{P}^{75}$  in particular raises questions since it only has the transliterated form of the name for the accusative while the nominative has both the transliterated and Hellenized forms. The nasals *mu* and *nu* seem to be phonetically closely related and seem to show this in their occurrences in the papyri. Concerning this linguistic problem in the Greek used in Egypt in Roman and Byzantine times Gignac comes to the following conclusion: “Final *-v* normally remains *-v* before every consonant, as in modern editorial practice; but it is sometimes assimilated in writing to  $\mu$  before another  $\mu$ , before a labial stop, and also improperly before another consonant or vowel or *in pausa*.”<sup>21</sup> The importance of this observation is not that an assimilation of *mu* and *nu* is supposed for the passages in question; rather, Gignac's observation shows that the two nasals are so similar to each other that exchange is attested in cases where it is not expected and deemed to be “erroneous.” To put it differently: in principle it seems possible that the two final nasals *mu* and *nu* are phonemes which are phonetically close enough to be interchanged erroneously—this happens also in the Sahidic dialect.<sup>22</sup> And it seems to be the opinion of the corrector of  $\mathfrak{O}4$  that such an interchange has to be corrected towards the Hellenized form of the name. This observation seems to be in line with fundamental principles of textual criticism.<sup>23</sup>

### 2.3. *Statistics, Predispositions and Interchange of Nasals*

There seems to be a certain predisposition among the editors of *Novum Testamentum Graece* to use the transliterated form. At least for John 11:20—a nominative—it does not seem possible to agree with the decision of the editors to prefer the transliterated form of the name over the Hellenized form. The table shows quite clearly that the transliterated form, which is used here, is only attested in late manuscripts and in very few manuscripts attesting text of John's Gospel. The attestations start in the 9th century: 038. 33. 565. 579. At least in this instance it seems that the statistical distribution of the forms of the name in the manuscripts did not influence the decision as to which form of the name should be used. Furthermore, the attestation of the transliterated form in 11:2 seems to be not as well attested as the Hellenized form—to put it mildly.

However, an additional problem has to be addressed. The high incidence of corrections of attestations connected with the accusative seems to point toward special problems with that case, and one of these might be the phonetic relation between *mu* and *nu*. There is right now no agreement as to whether manuscripts were dictated or visually copied.<sup>24</sup> There are even

<sup>21</sup> See F. T. Gignac, *A Grammar of the Greek Papyri of the Roman and Byzantine Periods. Vol. 1: Phonology* (TDSA 55; Mailand: Istituto Editoriale Cisalpino-La Goliardica, 1976) 166.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. P. E. Kahle, *Bala'izah. Coptic Texts from Deir el-Bala'izah in Upper Egypt. Vol. 1* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954) 117 (§ 85).

<sup>23</sup> Cf. also E. J. Epp, “Traditional “Canons” of New Testament Textual Criticism: Their Value, Validity, and Viability—or Lack Thereof,” in *The Textual History of the Greek New Testament. Changing Views in Contemporary Research* (SBL Text-Critical Studies 8; eds. K. Wachtel and M. W. Holmes; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011) 79–127, 125: “Paramount is the need for extensive knowledge of and experience with both the immediate textual contexts of a variation unit and the broader contexts of the writing in which a variant reading is found, such as the rest of the New Testament, other early Christian writings, the socio-cultural environment of Christianity, and even the Roman world more broadly.”

<sup>24</sup> For an overview over this question cf. T. C. Skeat, *The Use of Dictation in Ancient Book-Production*

contributions concerning the production of manuscripts which do not touch upon the question as to whether the manuscripts were copied visually or by dictation.<sup>25</sup> A process of (early) manuscript production which involved dictation would explain why for example ο3 has the transliterated form in all cases of the accusative but not in all occurrences of the nominative. This raises the question whether a different distribution of the forms of the name Mary should be suggested for *Novum Testamentum Graece*.<sup>26</sup>

## Conclusion

It seems that the *Novum Testamentum Graece* has a predilection for the transliterated form of the name Mary, which is not in line with the statistical attestations of this form of the name in the manuscripts. Furthermore, the tendency of the accusative to have the transliterated form might be due to a phonetic problem. This could have occurred during transmission of the manuscripts if they (or some of them at least) were dictated and not copied visually. When compared to the use of other names which might have Hellenized and transcribed forms, the current distribution does not seem to follow a rationale—that is to say no given person is assigned a specific form of the name Mary within John's Gospel. Given that there may be a phonetic reason for the distribution of forms of the name observed in the manuscripts, following the text as presented in the edition of the majuscules might be justified. This would mean that the transliterated form of the name is relegated to the critical apparatus.

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(London: Oxford University Press) 1956. A. W. van der Louw, "The Dictation of the Septuagint Version," *JBL* 39 (2008): 211–29. P. Petitmengin and B. Flusin, "Le Livre antique et la Dictée. Nouvelles recherches," in *Mémorial André-Jean Festugière. Antiquité païenne et chrétienne* (Cahiers d'Orientalisme 10; ed. E. Lucchesi; Genève: Cramer, 1984) 247–62.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. for example M. J. Kruger, "Manuscripts, Scribes, and Book Production within Early Christianity," in *Christian Origins and Greco-Roman Culture* (eds. S. E. Porter and A. W. Pitts; Social and Literary Contexts for the New Testament; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2013) 15–40.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. D. Trobisch, "The Need to Discern Distinctive Editions of the New Testament in the Manuscript Tradition," in *The Textual History of the Greek New Testament. Changing Views in Contemporary Research* (SBL Text-Critical Studies 8; eds. K. Wachtel and M. W. Holmes; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011) 43–48, 43: "The role of printed critical editions of literary works written and published in antiquity is twofold. On the one hand, they are expected to present a scholarly reconstruction of the initial text, and, on the other hand, they have to document the manuscript evidence used to reconstruct the initial text."