



Endnotes for “Rescuing Martha: A Response to Elizabeth Schrader Polczer”

Winter 2025 *Bible and Spade*

Notes

¹ Elizabeth Schrader Polczer, “The Mystery of Mary and Martha,” *Biblical Archeology Review* 50, no. 4 (Winter 2024): 66–69.

² Elizabeth Schrader, “Was Martha of Bethany Added to the Fourth Gospel in the Second Century?,” *Harvard Theological Review* 110, no. 3 (July 2017): 360–92.

³ Tommy Wasserman, “Is Martha an Interpolation into John’s Gospel – A Note from the Editor,” *Evangelical Textual Criticism* (blog), September 7, 2019, <https://evangelicaltextualcriticism.blogspot.com/2019/09/is-martha-interpolation-into-johns-7.html>.

⁴ Richard G. Fellows, “Early Textual Variants That Downplay the Roles of Women in the Bethany Account,” *TC: A Journal of Biblical Textual Criticism* 28 (2023): 67–82.

⁵ Maria’s name sometimes appeared as μαριαμ (Mariam) in 11:2, 11:19, 11:20, 11:28, 11:31, 11:32, and 11:45 in some of the earliest manuscripts, but none of these particular manuscripts accidentally switched Maria’s name to Martha in any of these seven verses. Most manuscripts used the spelling *Maria*, and no manuscript spelled Maria’s name as μαριαμ in 11:1, where the inflected genitive form of the sisters’ names appears. In any case, a scribe who would confuse the two names would be likely to do so while penning the fourth letter, prior to reaching the end of the name.

⁶ Schrader Polczer released for peer review her analysis of the data from the 300 manuscripts she studied. The link she provided to her data was included in a 2019 blog post on *Evangelical Textual Criticism* (Tommy Wasserman, “Is Martha an Interpolation into John’s Gospel?,” August 30, 2019, <https://evangelicaltextualcriticism.blogspot.com/2019/08/is-martha-interpolation-into-johns.html>). One of the 300 manuscripts she studied was GA-841, a 15th-century copy of Theophylact’s commentary. In her research, she marked as evidence for her thesis the GA-841 reading *his sister* in John 11:1.

⁷ P66 only spelled Mary’s name μαριαμ in 11:32. See note 5.

⁸ Georgi Parpulov, “K^τ in the Gospels,” in *The New Testament in Antiquity and Byzantium: Traditional and Digital Approaches to Its Texts and Editing; A Festschrift for Klaus Wachtel*, ed. H.A.G. Houghton, David C. Parker, and Holger Strutwolf, *Arbeiten zur neutestamentlichen Textforschung* 52 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019), 203–13.

⁹ Three manuscripts present the names in reverse order, while one scribe misspelled Martha’s name as *Mantha*. Another scribe intending to write *Martha* began to wrongly write *Maria* but caught and corrected his own error after writing *Mari*. Five scribes omitted *Maria* due to homoeoteleuton, while one scribe dropped Martha by the same error.

¹⁰ Four manuscripts from the 12th century or later read nonsensically that *Maria both* went to Jesus and sat in the house, while one 16th-century manuscript reads that *Mary slept* in the house.

¹¹ Also in verse 45, a 15th-century copy of Theophylact’s commentary along with a 12th-century lectionary left *Maria’s* name but *added* Martha. Then a 14th-century manuscript and a 13th-century lectionary read that the Jews came to *the ones around* both Martha and Mary, illustrating how the scribes were influenced by the similar wording of verse 19.

¹² The alleged tension between Mary Magdalene and Peter comes from the Gnostic tradition as found in the Gospel of Mary, the Gospel of Philip, *Pistis Sophia*, and the Gospel of Thomas.

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