

A SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE:

Several scholars have suggested reading the Rahamani Ossuary #710 as: MARIAM H KAI MARA, as an alternative reading. I did consider this possible transcription already when I was writing the paper published on our website and the SBL website. However, in light of the change of scribal hands between MARIAMH and KAI, I rejected this possible reading. In my opinion, the clear change of scribal hands precluded even the need to provide this reading as an option in the article.

It now seems incumbent upon me that I should address this suggested transcription in the body of the article since a few have raised the question. Allow me to do so by presenting several hypothetical, graphic examples. Each is generated using the letter forms of either the first or second scribe. The first example (in blue, below) is the complete transcription generated in the scribal hand of the first scribe who wrote the original MARIAMH.* The transcription would appear as follows, if the entire inscription had been written by the first scribe:



If all words of the inscription were in the standard Greek documentary script (as above) then the inscription could be read either as:

1) *MAPIAMH KAI MAPA: "Mariame and Mara"*

OR, alternatively

2) *MAPIAM H KAI MAPA: "Mariam who is also Mara"*

The second graphic example (in red, below), is how the transcription would appear had the second scribe (who originally wrote KAI MARA) written the entire inscription.



Likewise, if all words were in the Greek cursive script (as above; note especially the form of the cursive eta) then the inscription could be read either:

1) *MAPIAMH KAI MAPA*: "*Mariame and Mara*"

OR, alternatively

2) *MAPIAM H KAI MAPA*: "*Mariam who is also Mara*"

The image shows a handwritten Greek inscription. The first part, 'Μαριὰ καὶ Μάρρα', is written in a standard Greek documentary script in blue ink. The second part, 'ἡ καὶ Μάρρα', is written in a Greek cursive script in red ink. The cursive script is more fluid and compact, with the eta character being notably different in shape from the one in the first part.

However, this inscription clearly was written in two distinct script styles (standard Greek documentary script and Greek cursive script). This being the case, then two scribes were involved in the writing process and we can assume on separate occasions. In my judgment, in order not to do violence to the epigraphic evidence, the inscription should only be read as:

1) *MAPIAMH KAI MAPA*: "*Mariame and Mara*"

* *MAPIAMH* is the preferred Greek word used among the ossuaries for "Mary" (in Rahmani: *MAPIAMH* 5x, *MAPAIAMH* 1x, *MAPIEAMH* 1x, *MAPIAM* 1x, *MAPIA* 1x; from Dominus Flevit *MAPIAMH* 1x, *MAPA* 1x).

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