

## WAS JUNIA(S) IN ROM 16:7 A FEMALE APOSTLE? AND SO WHAT?

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**Abstract:** *There are cogent reasons to challenge the current consensus that Junia(s) in Rom 16:7 was a female apostle. As suggested by Al Wolters, the name probably did not derive from Latin, but was the Greek translation of the Hebrew masculine name יהוני. Not counting Rom 16:7, apparently no first-century Jewish woman bore the name Junia. Judging from 1 Cor 9:5, Paul regarded apostles as men, and some early Church Fathers viewed Junia(s) as male. The expression “notable among apostles” should preferably be translated “esteemed by the apostles.” First-century Greco-Roman society, the early orthodox church, and even heretical sects all imposed restrictions on the public roles of women. Even Chrysostom, who regarded Junia as a woman apostle, was no exception. In view of uncertainties over the sex and apostolic status of Junia(s), it is inadvisable to appeal to Rom 16:7 as a historical precedent to advocate for equal ministry opportunities for women and men or to charge various Christian leaders and institutions for the alleged “sex change” of the female Junia to a male named Junias due to androcentric bias.*

**Key words:** *Rom 16:7, 1 Cor 9:5, Junia, apostle, first-century women’s names, women’s roles, Paul’s co-workers*

ἀσπάσαθε Ἀνδρόνικον καὶ Ἰουνίαν τοὺς συγγενεῖς μου καὶ συναιχμαλώτους μου, οἵτινές εἰσιν ἐπίσημοι ἐν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις, οἱ καὶ πρὸ ἐμοῦ γέγοναν ἐν Χριστῷ.

“Greet Andronicus and Junia, my relatives who were in prison with me; they are prominent among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was.” (Rom 16:7, NRSV)

To many biblical scholars, there is a growing consensus that the “Junia”<sup>1</sup> mentioned in Romans 16:7 alongside Andronicus is the name of a woman; since the two persons are described as “apostles” by Paul, Junia was clearly a female apostle in her own right.<sup>2</sup> In the following article, I hope to show that this view is

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<sup>1</sup> Since the name of this person in Rom 16:7 is disputable (whether to be rendered Junia or Junias in English), I use the expression “Junia(s)” in this paper except when the context specifies the sex of the person.

<sup>2</sup> R. S. Cervin, “A Note Regarding the Name ‘Junia(s)’ in Romans 16.7,” *NTS* 40 (1994): 464–70; J. Thorley, “Junia, a Woman Apostle,” *NovT* 38 (1996): 18–29; Peter Lampe, “Junias,” *ABD* 3:1127; Richard Bauckham, *Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 165–85; Ray R. Schultz, “Junia Reinstated: Her Sisters Still Waiting,” *Lutheran Theological Journal* 38.3

problematic and that alternative interpretations are worthy of consideration and even preferable.

If this were merely a matter of scholarly debate, it would not have been so controversial. However, the issue has practical implications: Should the church today follow Paul's precedent and likewise affirm leadership and teaching roles for women equivalent to men? As early as 1977, writing in a highly influential article, the Catholic scholar Bernadette Brooten advocated the view that Junia was a female apostle, and concluded by saying, "If the first century Junia could be an apostle, it is hard to see how her twentieth century counterpart should not be allowed to become even a priest."<sup>3</sup> By the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the call has become even louder in Protestant circles. Thus N. T. Wright opined that, with regard to women's ministry in the church, the starting point should not be passages such as 1 Cor 14:33–35 or 1 Tim 2:11–15 that restrict women's teaching of men. Rather, we should begin with the significance of Mary Magdalene as a witness of the resurrection in John 20, and the prominence of Phoebe and Junia in Romans 16.<sup>4</sup> Wright is by no means alone in holding this opinion. In fact, many scholars believe that Romans 16 should serve as a foundational text for the place of women in churches today.<sup>5</sup> Accordingly, it is necessary for us to interpret Rom 16:7 correctly to see what role Junia(s) played according to Paul before we apply the verse to the present church.

Moreover, besides appealing to the apostleship of Junia to argue for women's ordination and leadership today, scholars often castigate the attempts by ancients and contemporaries to treat Junia as a male or deny her apostolic status, viewing such attempts as a typical example and even the "smoking gun" of patriarchal suppression of women's ministry. One scholar even calls this "a sex-change operation by redaction" in history.<sup>6</sup> As for the alleged "villains" of patriarchy, some scholars point to individuals in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries; others accuse Martin Luther and/or the editors of the critical apparatus in certain Greek texts or Latin versions; still others blame some English translations and commentaries. All of them ex-

(2004): 129–43; Linda Belleville, "Ἰουνίαν ... ἐπίσημοι ἐν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις: A Reexamination of Romans 16.7 in Light of Primary Source Materials," *NTS* 51 (2005): 231–49; Eldon Jay Epp, *Junia: The First Woman Apostle* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005); Ben Witherington, "Joanna: Apostle of the Lord or Jail-bait?," *Bible Review* 21.2 (2005): 12–15; Scot McKnight, *Junia Is Not Alone* (Englewood, CO: Patheos, 2011). Among more recent commentators on the book of Romans, the following authors likewise hold this view: M.-J. Lagrange, Leon Morris, John Ziesler, J. A. Fitzmyer, C. E. B. Cranfield, and James Dunn.

<sup>3</sup> Bernadette J. Brooten, "Junia ... Outstanding among the Apostles' (Romans 16:7)," in Leonard J. Swidler and Arlene Swidler, eds., *Women Priests: A Catholic Commentary on the Vatican Declaration* (New York: Paulist, 1977), 142. For another early appeal to Junia's role, see Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Women in the Pre-Pauline and Pauline Churches," *USQR* 33.3–4 (1978): 157.

<sup>4</sup> N. T. Wright, "It's About the Bible, Not Fake Ideas of Progress," *The Times* (November 23, 2012), cited in David A. Shaw, "Is Junia also among the Apostles? Romans 16:7 and Recent Debates," *Churchman* 127.2 (2013): 107.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Brooten, "Junia," 143; "Stephen Croft, "Text Messages: The Ministry of Women and Romans 16," *Anvil* 21 (2004): 91–92; Roger Nicole, "Biblical Egalitarianism and the Inerrancy of Scripture," *Priscilla Papers* 20.2 (2006): 7.

<sup>6</sup> Scot McKnight, *Not Alone*, loc. 91.

press indignation at the “androcentric bias” of the people involved.<sup>7</sup> Since many people in the secular world are already skeptical about the integrity of the church hierarchy, such discussions among modern scholars (many of whom are affiliated with churches) only make matters worse. For this reason, too, it behooves us to examine and assess the view that Junia’s womanly apostolic status was denigrated in history. If the accusation cannot withstand scrutiny, then it is only fair to restore the good name of the people concerned.

In the following, I will first address the sex of Junia(s), then evaluate the two interpretations of the phrase “prominent among the apostles,” discuss the possible ministry and role of Junia (if female) in the first century, and finally address the charge of androcentrism as well as draw out some implications of Romans 16 for the church today.

### I. JUNIA(S): MALE OR FEMALE?

Here four lines of investigation will be pursued: (1) the etymology of the name Junia(s); (2) the frequency of the name in the Greco-Roman world of the first century; (3) Paul’s use of the term “apostle”; and (4) references to, and discussions of, Junia(s) in church history.

1. *Etymology of the name.* In terms of textual criticism, it is generally agreed that the correct reading of the name in the Greek manuscripts should be Ἰουλίαν, not the variant Ἰουλίαν. As this noun is the object of the verb “greet,” it naturally bears the accusative case. Since early Greek manuscripts lacked accents, it is not a straightforward matter to determine the nominative case (lexical form) of this noun nor its gender. Conjecture based on evidence is necessarily involved. It seems that up to 2008, scholars almost without exception regarded Ἰουλίαν as a Greek transcription of a Latin name, since Junius was a common Latin *nomen gentilicium* (hereditary surname), and women belonging to this family either by heredity or as a slave or freedwoman often bore the personal name Junia. Scholars also generally agree that the masculine Latin name Junius would be transcribed into Greek as Ἰουνίος with Ἰουνίον as the accusative case and not Ἰουλίαν. It has been suggested that if Ἰουλίαν referred to a male in Rom 16:7, his Latin name might have been Junianus, shortened in Greek as Ἰουνιάς in the nominative and Ἰουνιάν in the accusative.<sup>8</sup> This may be the reason why the United Bible Societies placed Ἰουνιάν in the Greek text in their 1966 to 1993 editions.

However, beginning in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, Greek texts of the NT began to be copied with accent marks,<sup>9</sup> and, without exception, the word in Rom 16:7 appears

<sup>7</sup> For the term “smoking gun” in this paragraph as well as the list of alleged androcentric villains, see Shaw, “Among the Apostles,” 106. For various individuals censured for androcentric bias, see also Brooten, “Junia”; Belleville, “Ἰουλίαν”; Epp, *Junia*; and Dennis J. Preato, “Junia, a Female Apostle: An Examination of the Historical Record,” *Priscilla Papers* 33.2 (Spring 2019): 8–15.

<sup>8</sup> The content of this paragraph may be found in the writings mentioned in nn. 2 and 3, e.g. Brooten, “Junia,” 141–44; Thorley, “Woman Apostle,” 19–29; Belleville, “Re-examination,” 234–40.

<sup>9</sup> The process of adding accents to some existing uncials might have begun earlier. For instance, B<sup>2</sup> (the second correction of Codex Vaticanus) dated to the 6<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> c. already shows Ἰουλίαν as listed in

as Ἰουνιάν and not Ἰουνιάων.<sup>10</sup> This scribal practice obviously contradicts the view that the person's Greek name was Ἰουνιάς. Likewise detrimental to this view is the fact that the Latin Vulgate rendered the name as *Juniam*, since *-am* is generally the Latin accusative ending of transcribed feminine Greek nouns of three syllables or more. If the translator of the Vulgate (generally taken to be Jerome) regarded Ἰουνιαν as masculine, he should have used *Junian* to avoid confusion.<sup>11</sup>

Such arguments seem cogent, and most scholars accordingly concur that the text refers to a woman named Junia.<sup>12</sup> However, the year 2008 saw the publication of an article by Al Wolters titled “*IOYNIAN* (Romans 16:7) and the Hebrew Name *Yēhunnī*” in the *Journal of Biblical Literature* that challenges the consensus.<sup>13</sup> In this article, Wolters raised another possibility, namely, that the word reflects a Hebrew name. His argument may be summed up in three steps: (1) A Hebrew name *yḥwny*, meaning “may he be gracious,” is attested during Paul’s time inscribed on ossuaries. (2) This name would most likely be pronounced *yēhunnī*. (3) In biblical Greek, this name would be Hellenized as the first declension masculine noun Ἰουνίας and its accusative form would be Ἰουνίαν.<sup>14</sup> If so, the fact that accented Greek manuscripts read Ἰουνίαν in Rom 16:7 does not prove that people of that generation understood the name to be feminine. In the end, Wolters does not insist that Ἰουνίαν was derived from a masculine Hebrew name but thinks that his view is as persuasive as the common view of a Latin derivation of the name. After the publication of his article, certain scholars have written in support of his theory.<sup>15</sup>

While Wolters focuses his discussion on the Greek rendering of the Hebrew name *yēhunnī*, we may examine further the rendering of biblical Greek names in the Vulgate Bible. It is interesting to find that such Hebrew-derived Greek names are transcribed as first declension nouns in Latin. Thus Greek masculine names of

UBS<sup>4</sup>. For the dating of B<sup>2</sup>, see Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament* (trans. Erroll F. Rhodes; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 108.

<sup>10</sup> In a paper published in 1985, Peter Lampe stated that all medieval minuscules read Ἰουνιάων, including minuscule 33; see his “Junia/Iunias: Sklavenherkunft im Kreise der vorpaulinischen Apostel (Röm 16:7),” *ZNW* 76 (1985): 132 n. 1. However, he apparently changed his position when he penned the entry “Junia” in *ABD* 3:1127, stating that minuscule 33 actually read Ἰουνιάν.

<sup>11</sup> See Thorley, “Woman Apostle,” 21; Epp, *Junia*, 36–37; Lynn Cohick, *Women in the World of the Earliest Christians: Illuminating Ancient Ways of Life* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 215.

<sup>12</sup> This consensus view on Junia is shared by both egalitarians and complementarians regarding women’s roles. For the former, Linda Belleville and Lynn Cohick are notable examples. For concurring complementarians, see Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), 921–22; Andreas Köstenberger, “Women in the Pauline Mission,” in Peter Bolt and Mark Thompson, eds., *The Gospel to the Nations: Perspectives on Paul’s Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2000), 229.

<sup>13</sup> Al Wolters, “*IOYNIAN* (Romans 16:7) and the Hebrew Name *Yēhunnī*,” *JBL* 127.2 (2008): 397–408.

<sup>14</sup> The wording of this summation follows closely that in Wolters, “*IOYNIAN*,” 407.

<sup>15</sup> E.g. David P. Scaer, “Was Junia a Female Apostle? Maybe Not,” *CTQ* 73.1 (2009): 76. In a recent article, Yi-Jan Lin challenges Wolters’s argument in an attempt to reinforce the consensus view that “Junia” was a well-attested Latin feminine name. See Yi-Jan Lin, “Junia: An Apostle before Paul,” *JBL* 139.1 (2020): 191–209, esp. 193–94. Here we may note that Lin has made three assumptions: (1) Junia was a woman; (2) she adopted a Latin feminine name while in Rome; and (3) a Jewish man would not adopt a Latin or Greek name nearly identical with a feminine Roman name. The first assumption is the very point to be established, and the other two are simply unproven assumptions.

three syllables or more ending in *-τας* are not transcribed with *-an* endings in Latin but with *-am* endings, just like feminine names.<sup>16</sup> Therefore the fact that Latin translations render Ἰουλίαν as *Juniam* is insufficient to prove that the translators regarded the person as a woman.

2. *Frequency of occurrence.* Many scholars have noted that the Latin feminine name *Junia* and the corresponding Greek name Ἰουλία appear often (250 times) in texts and inscriptions, whereas there is no attestation for *Junias* as a masculine Latin name, nor Ἰουλίαν as its corresponding Greek name. For this reason, in her book *Women in the World of the Earliest Christians*, Lynn Cohick rejected the argument of Al Wolters, saying,

Recently it has been suggested that *Iouinian* represents a Hellenized version of the Hebrew name *yhwny*. The Hebrew name has been found twice in inscriptions, but the postulated Greek form is not represented in any literary or epigraphic source, making the hypothesis theoretically possible, but at this point, a weak argument from silence.<sup>17</sup>

Actually Wolters had anticipated this kind of rebuttal to his argument and answered it in his article by citing the high incidence of Hellenized forms of biblical names, especially those belonging to the same declension as Ἰουλίαν, that are attested nowhere else apart from their single biblical occurrence. Thus it is premature to conclude that the name Ἰουλίαν never existed in history.

Moreover, since Paul describes Andronicus and Junia(s) as his συγγενεῖς (relatives or compatriots), they were certainly Jews. This being so, our focus should be on the frequency of the Latin name *Junia* or the Greek name Ἰουλία among Jews in the first century and not the overall occurrence of these names in literary texts and inscriptions of the entire Roman empire.

When a search is done from this perspective, the findings are very revealing. According to Tal Ilan's *Lexicon of Jewish Names in Late Antiquity*,<sup>18</sup> there is no evidence of Jewish women named Junia or Julia in literary texts or inscriptions in first-century Palestine. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD, only two inscriptions in Palestine mentioned women named Julia, and the name Junia still did not appear. As for Jews that used Aramaic or Arabic in Syria and Mesopotamia, from 330 BC to AD 650, there is no literary or epigraphical source that mentioned Jewish women

<sup>16</sup> The names I examined included Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ananias, all with at least three syllables in Greek and all having *-am* accusative endings in the Vulgate (see Appendix below). Thus Thorley's rule regarding the transcription of tri-syllabic Greek nouns into Latin clearly does not apply to names derived from Hebrew.

<sup>17</sup> Cohick, *Women*, 215. Her characterization of Wolters's proposal as "a weak argument from silence" is curious, since it is precisely the consensus view that appeals to the "silence" of the Greek name Ἰουλίαν in literary and epigraphical source as proof of its non-existence in history, whereas Wolters is refuting this line of argument.

<sup>18</sup> This set of lexicons comprises 4 volumes (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002, 2012, 2008, 2011), all on names of Jews. Volume I records names from Palestine from 330 BC to AD 200. Volume II continues from AD 200 to 650. Volume III is on Jewish names in the Western Diaspora from 330 BC to AD 650 AD. Volume IV records Jewish names in the Eastern Diaspora for those who spoke Aramaic and Arabic. The three instances of Junia cited by Ilan are listed in Vol. III, p. 591.

named Junia or Julia. However, for the same period of history, Jews in the Western Diaspora apparently had different tastes or rules in naming women: Ilan's database has 29 Jewish women named Julia, some of whom were active in the first century; four were named Juliana. As for the name Junia, three cases were cited by Ilan: (1) in Rom 16:7; (2) on an inscription in Rome from the 3<sup>rd</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> century AD; (3) on an inscription in Rome of uncertain date and doubtful Jewish identity.<sup>19</sup>

Judging from Ilan's database, apart from the "Junia" in Rom 16:7, during the period from 330 BC to AD 650, only one or two Jewish women living in, or associated with, Rome was/were named Junia.<sup>20</sup> As for Jewish women who lived in the first century, apparently none was called Junia or Ἰουνία. By contrast, Wolters is at least able to cite two to three instances of Jewish men in Palestine named Ἰηwhny who conceivably bore the Greek name Ἰουνίας.

3. *Paul's use of the term "apostle."* It is well known that, in the NT, the term "apostle" (ἀπόστολος) refers both to the twelve disciples chosen by Jesus during his lifetime (Luke 6:13) and to a wider group of persons. For instance, according to 1 Cor 15:7, the "apostles" who saw the resurrected Jesus were not confined to the Twelve; at least Paul regarded himself as an apostle (v. 9). In addition, the author of Acts calls Paul and Barnabas "apostles" (Acts 14:14). Paul himself also called the representatives sent by local churches "apostles" (2 Cor 8:23; Phil 2:25). Nevertheless, Paul generally regarded apostles as authoritative figures associated closely with the founding of churches (1 Cor 9:1–2; Gal 1:1; 2:8; Eph 2:20; 4:11–12).<sup>21</sup>

Underlying the consensus view that "Junia was a female apostle" is the assumption that Paul never restricted apostleship to men and that it was purely androcentric bias that later denied Junia's apostolic status on account of her sex. In addition, those who hold this view and who regard Andronicus and Junia as a husband-and-wife team often appeal to 1 Cor 9:5 to prove that, during Paul's ministry,

<sup>19</sup> It is noteworthy that Belleville, "Reexamination," 241, cites two Jewish inscriptions from Rome that mention Ἰουνία as the name of the deceased (*CIJ*, *Judaica* 10.1; 303.1). However, these two inscriptions and all the other cases listed in the *CIJ* Index bearing the name of Ἰουνία or Junia are uncertain: (1) all have lacunae in the name; (2) scholars dispute the name of the first case, one conjecture being Ἀννιανό; (3) the second inscription comes from the time of Diocletian (AD 284–305). Neither of the two cases has been included in Tal Ilan's database.

<sup>20</sup> At the time when Paul wrote Romans, he had never visited Rome. Since he mentioned that Andronicus and Junia(s) had been imprisoned with him previously, it suggests that, like Paul, the two originally ministered in the eastern part of the Roman empire even though they later resided in Rome when Paul wrote this epistle. See Peter Lampe, "The Roman Christians of Romans 16," in Karl Donfried, ed., *The Romans Debate* (rev. and exp. ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 223: "If we were especially picky, we could even state that Andronicus' and Urbanus' activities mentioned took place in the east and not in Rome (*synachmalōtoi mou, hemon*)." If so, it is significant that no Jewish woman was named Junia outside of Rome during Paul's time. To be sure, Richard Bauckham and Ben Witherington hold the view that "Junia" was the Latin name assumed by Joanna after she followed Jesus (Luke 8:3). However, according to Luke 8:3, Joanna's husband was Chuzza. It is special pleading and unpersuasive to claim that she married Andronicus after she was divorced by Chuzza or he died. Also, in view of the prior ministry of Andronicus and Junia(s) in the eastern part of the Roman empire, it is very likely that they bore such names before they resided in Rome.

<sup>21</sup> For the concept of apostleship and its relationship to the Twelve, see, e.g., "Apostle," by D. Müller and the supplementary note by Colin Brown in *NIDNTT* 1:126–37; see also *NIDNTTE* 1:365–76.

there were indeed missionary teams consisting of Christian couples.<sup>22</sup> What is surprising, however, is that few scholars (whether in support of, or in opposition to, Junia's apostleship) have paid close attention to Paul's exact words in 1 Cor 9:5. What Paul actually said was, "Do we not have the right to be accompanied by a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?" (NRSV). Those who brought their believing wives along on their travels were of course men: the brothers of the Lord and Cephas were men; Paul and Barnabas were likewise men. It follows naturally that the "other apostles" were men.<sup>23</sup> If the apostles really included such a prominent woman as Junia when Paul wrote 1 Corinthians, it is inconceivable that he would refer to their travels this way. Since Romans was penned no more than 4–5 years after the writing of 1 Corinthians, we have ample reason to take the "apostles" in Rom 16:7 as men. Consequently, if Paul really included Junia(s) among the apostles (see Section II below), he was thinking of a male, not a female.

4. *References to Junia(s) in church history.* Another strong argument used to support the consensus view is that, prior to the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, the church throughout the centuries consistently took Junia to be a woman, and the well-known 4<sup>th</sup>-century Church Father Chrysostom spoke highly of her as a female apostle. Since this is how a native Greek-speaking Chrysostom understood Paul's words in Rom 16:7, who are we non-Greeks to disagree?<sup>24</sup>

Indeed, even if we disregard the reading of Ἰουνία in Greek manuscripts and the rendering of *Juniam* in Latin versions and do not count them as evidence for the name being feminine, it is still true that many learned persons in church history referred to the name Junia and/or took this to be a woman, the wife of Andronicus.<sup>25</sup> On the other hand, scholars who hold the consensus view admit that the work *Index Discipulorum* supposedly written by the 4<sup>th</sup>-century Church Father Epiphanius (AD 310–403) who preceded Chrysostom and Jerome in time, gave the name as Ἰουνίας and stated that he became the bishop of Apameia. Moreover, it is acknowledged that certain manuscripts of Rufinus's (AD 340–410) Latin translation of the Greek commentary on Romans by Origen (AD 185–254) gave the name as *Junias*. However, to such scholars, Epiphanius's statement is untrustworthy since he made Prisca a male too and said that he became the bishop of Kolophon, but Prisca/Priscilla was clearly the wife of Aquila (Acts 18:2).<sup>26</sup> As for Latin translations

<sup>22</sup> Thus Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza in "Women in Pauline Churches," 157; idem, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (London: SCM, 1983), 47, 172–73.

<sup>23</sup> This was clearly how Clement of Alexandria interpreted 1 Cor 9:5. See his *Stromateis* 3.6.53.3–4 and our discussion in Section III.

<sup>24</sup> See, e.g., Bauckham, *Gospel Women*, 179; Epp, *First Woman Apostle*, 289–90.

<sup>25</sup> For instance, Jerome (c. 345–419), Rabanus Maurus (780–856), Hatto of Vercelli (10<sup>th</sup> c.), Theophylact. For the citation of the sources and other examples, see J. A. Fitzmyer, *Romans* (AB 33: New York: Doubleday, 1993), 737–38; Belleville, "Reexamination," 232.

<sup>26</sup> On the basis of Epiphanius's statement in *Index Discipulorum*, a few contemporary scholars treat Junia(s) as a male. See, e.g., John Piper and Wayne Grudem, eds., *Rediscovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991), 79. For the view that *Index Discipulorum* is untrustworthy as a historical source, see Bauckham, *Gospel Women*, 166–67; Belleville, "Reexamination," 235; Epp, *First Woman Apostle*, 34–35; Cohick, *Women*, 215 n. 61. Among them,

of Origen's commentary on Romans, some scholars consider the manuscripts with the reading of *Junias* less reliable than those that render the name as *Junia* since they came later in time (12<sup>th</sup> c.).<sup>27</sup>

Obviously Epiphanius's information on Priscilla in his work *Index Discipulorum* was erroneous. But this does not necessarily imply the falsehood of his description on Junia: Judging from his detailed description of all sorts of heresies, he seems to have had wide knowledge of the early church, and it was at least conceivable to him that *Ἰουίας* denoted a male, like *Πρίσκαας*. As for the second reference to *Junia(s)* in Origen's commentary on Rom 16:11, a decision on Rufinus's rendering of the name (whether *Junia* or *Junias*) does not rest on the date of the manuscripts alone, for we should also find out what Origen said regarding the rest of Rom 16:7. In fact, Origen gave two possible interpretations for the phrase "prominent among the apostles," and the second interpretation was that Andronicus and Junia might have been among the 70 or 72 disciples sent out by Jesus in his lifetime. If we keep an open mind and not initially decide on the sex of Junia (whether male as Wolters suggests, or female on the consensus view), Origen's second interpretation may imply that he regards Junia(s) as a male.<sup>28</sup> My reasons are as follows:

First, Origen evidently confined women's teaching to other women, for he cited 1 Tim 2:12 and said that it is inappropriate for women to teach men and exert authority over men. Second, he repeatedly stated that female prophets of old (such as Deborah, Huldah, and the daughters of Philip) never spoke publicly in assemblies.<sup>29</sup> Third, Origen regarded the apostles as the basis for church tradition and authoritative teaching.<sup>30</sup> For such reasons, it is hard to imagine that Origen would regard Junia(s) as possibly one of the 70 or 72 disciples/apostles sent out by Jesus if he knew she was a woman.

Actually, the early Church Fathers either stated that they did not possess a list of the 70 or 72 disciples sent by Jesus (e.g. Eusebius)<sup>31</sup> or treated them as male. For instance, one such list from Pseudo-Hippolytus only recorded male names (including Andronicus but not Junia); *Clementine Recognitions* compared these 70 disciples to

Bauchham and Belleville claim further that this work originated in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, not from Epiphanius in the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>27</sup> Epp, *First Woman Apostle*, 33–34.

<sup>28</sup> This was also the view of Fàbrega regarding Origen's second interpretation. Since Fàbrega agreed that Origen actually wrote the feminine name Junia, he seemed to be surprised that Origen did not clarify his self-contradiction; see Valentin Fàbrega, "War Junia(s), der hervorragende Apostel (Rom 16.7), eine Frau?" *JAC* 27 (1984): 60.

<sup>29</sup> See Origen's *Sixth Homily* on the book of Isaiah, his interpretation on 1 Cor 14:34–35 and his attacks on female Montanist prophets cited in Roger Gryson, *The Ministry of Women in the Early Church* (trans. Jean Laporte and Mary Louise Hall; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1980), 27–28. See also Andrew Chapman, "Origen on 1 Corinthians 14.33–35 (Part 1: the Montanists)," at <http://womeninthechurch.co.uk/2015/03/16/origen-on-1-corinthians-14-re-montanists>.

<sup>30</sup> Origen, *On Principles*, Preface 3 (ANF 4:239).

<sup>31</sup> *Hist. Eccl.* 1.12.1 (NPNI<sup>2</sup> 1:98); 2.1.1; 2.1.4; 3.24.5; cited in David Huttar, "Did Paul Call Andronicus an Apostle in Romans 16:7?" *JETS* 52.4 (2009): 772.

the 70 elders chosen by Moses, and these elders were certainly men (Exod 24:1).<sup>32</sup> By the 4<sup>th</sup> century, Epiphanius explicitly stated that the apostles were male. As for Eusebius, though he did mention the names of some biblical women, he never mentioned Junia nor suggested that there were female apostles.<sup>33</sup>

In this kind of tradition, we have cogent reasons to believe that Origen (and his translator Rufinus) held Junia(s) to be one of the 70 apostles because they took this person to be a man. If so, why did expositors such as Chrysostom and Jerome regard Junia as a woman? My conjecture is that people such as Origen, Rufinus, the 13<sup>th</sup>-century Aegidius (Giles of Rome), and the 16<sup>th</sup>-century Jacques LeFevre d'Étaples might have noted that the Jewish men mentioned in the Greek Bible frequently bore names ending in *-ας*, and so they did not take Junia(s) to be a woman. On the other hand, Chrysostom and Jerome regarded *Ἰουλίαν* as derived from Latin, and so took it to be a female name, and because of their far-reaching influence (especially Chrysostom), people after them often adopted their views.

## II. WAS JUNIA(S) AN APOSTLE?

In the above section, I have attempted to prove that Junia(s) might not have been a woman as claimed in the consensus view. In the following, we shall address the question whether this person was regarded by Paul as an apostle by examining the phrase “prominent among the apostles” from three angles: (1) grammar; (2) the immediate context; and (3) past interpretations of this phrase.

First, in 2001, in an article titled “Was Junia Really an Apostle? A Re-examination of Rom 16.7,”<sup>34</sup> M. H. Burer and D. B. Wallace cited extrabiblical evidence in an attempt to demonstrate that the phrase may be rendered “well-known to the apostles,” implying that Andronicus and Junia were not regarded by Paul as apostles themselves. This position is often characterized as the “exclusive” or “non-inclusive” view as opposed to the “inclusive” view held by most scholars. The article was met with strong criticism from scholars such as Richard Bauckham,

<sup>32</sup> For the list in Ps.-Hippolytus, see *ANF* 5:255. For the analogy in *Clementine Recognitions* 1:40, see *ANF* 8:88. For the standpoint of Epiphanius, see Gryson, *Ministry of Women*, 77–78. Indeed, during Jesus’s life, it was hard for a Jewish woman to talk to a male stranger about the gospel, for Jewish men generally did not converse with female strangers (*m. Qidd.* 4:12, 14; *m. Aboth* 1:5; *m. Keth.* 6:6; cf. John 4:27); men and women were probably segregated in the synagogue or on other social occasion (*b. Kid.* 70a; *b. Ber.* 51b; Philo, *Contempl.* 32–33; cf. Mark 6:22, 24), and women’s testimony was generally deemed untrustworthy (*b. B. B.* 159a; cf. Mark 16:11). Moreover, Jewish girls married early and women’s place was inside the home. See Tal Ilan, *Jewish Women in Graeco-Roman Palestine* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1995); Esther Ng, *Reconstructing Christian Origins? The Feminist Theology of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza: An Evaluation* (Paternoster Biblical and Theological Monographs; Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2002), 62, 81–83. In addition, the 70 disciples sent by Jesus risked their gospel being rejected by local residents (Luke 10:10–12) unlike believers in the early church who could expect hospitality from other believers (e.g. Acts 21:7, 8, 16; 3 John 7, 8). Under such conditions, it is highly unlikely that there were women among the 70 disciples sent out by Jesus.

<sup>33</sup> Anne Jensen, *God’s Self-Confident Daughters: Early Christianity and the Liberation of Women* (trans. O. C. Dean Jr.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 17.

<sup>34</sup> M. H. Burer and D. B. Wallace, “Was Junia Really an Apostle? A Re-examination of Rom 16.7,” *NTS* 47 (2001): 76–91.

Linda Belleville, and Jay Epp, and much of the evidence cited by Burer and Wallace was discounted or interpreted differently. Some would claim that, while ἐπίσημοι may mean “well-known, acknowledged,” had Paul wished to say that Andronicus and Junia were well-known to the apostles, he would have used the Greek preposition ὑπο followed by the genitive τῶν ἀποστόλων, and not ἐν followed by the dative τοῖς ἀποστόλοις. Moreover, the phrase ἐπίσημοι ἐν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις has consistently been interpreted by Church Fathers in an inclusive sense. Thus there is no valid reason not to translate the phrase as “prominent among the apostles.” Some of these scholars go on to claim that the attempt to interpret the phrase as “well known to, and acknowledged by, the apostles” stems from a theological bias in order to deny or downplay the fact that women once served as apostles.<sup>35</sup> However, in two subsequent scholarly articles published in 2009 and 2015 by David Huttar and M. H. Burer respectively,<sup>36</sup> the authors cited further extrabiblical texts that used similar words and similar grammatical constructions and made a strong case that it is plausible to render ἐπίσημοι ἐν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις in Rom 16:7 as “well known to the apostles.” The paper by Burer also demonstrated that Paul would have said ἐπίσημοι τῶν ἀποστόλων had he wanted to say that Andronicus and Junia were themselves prominent among the apostles. Here I will make no attempt to adjudicate between the two views. My objective is merely to point out that the common rendering of “prominent among the apostles” is not unassailable truth.<sup>37</sup>

Second, in addition to appealing to external evidence, Huttar in his 2009 paper also approached the question from the literary context in Romans 16, in order to show how the non-inclusive view is preferable to the inclusive view. For instance, Huttar points out that if the inclusive view were true, Paul would have placed the most prominent feature of the two persons (their apostolic status) before all other descriptors, and not as a third item in a list of four. Furthermore, on the inclusive view, the apostles were ranked by Paul here, and this seems inconsistent with Paul’s practice elsewhere. In addition, if Andronicus and Junia were esteemed apostles, the house churches in Rome would have known them already and it would be unnecessary for Paul to introduce them in this way. On the contrary, if the two were

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<sup>35</sup> Thus Belleville concludes by saying, “The sole basis is a theological and functional predisposition against the naming of a woman among the first-century cadre of apostles.” See her “Re-examination,” 248. It is nonetheless noteworthy that neither Bauckham, nor Belleville, nor Epp could deny that there were indeed instances cited by Burer and Wallace that can support the non-inclusive view. Belleville merely discounted the evidence as too early (!) to be relevant (247).

<sup>36</sup> David Huttar, “Did Paul?”; M. H. Burer, “ΕΠΙΣΗΜΟΙ ἘΝ ΤΟΙΣ ἈΠΟΣΤΟΛΟΙΣ in Rom 16:7 as ‘Well Known to the Apostles’: Further Defense and New Evidence,” *JETS* 58.4 (2015): 731–55. In his article, Burer broadened his search of similar Greek constructions in extrabiblical texts, answered the rebuttals of his critics, and laid an even stronger foundation for the “non-inclusive” view. He also cited other scholars who agreed with his position.

<sup>37</sup> In my opinion, the following extrabiblical texts cited by Huttar and Burer strongly support the non-inclusive view:

Euripides, *Hipp.* 103 (Huttar, “Did Paul,” 750); inscription Asia Minor FdXanth VII 76.6 (Burer, “Further Defense,” 741); Lucian, *Harm.* 1.17 (Burer, “Further Defense,” 742–43); Ephraem Syrus Theol. *Ad imitationem proverborum*, p. 187, line 6 (Burer, “Further Defense,” 749); *Prolegomena de Comoedia, De comoedia*, line 22 (Burer, “Further Defense,” 750).

not themselves apostles but were longtime believers, well recognized by the apostles, and on familiar terms with Paul, they would help the Roman churches to accept Paul who had never been to Rome and support his missionary plans.<sup>38</sup> Such contextual arguments by Huttar may not be entirely persuasive but they are at least worth consideration. In her recent article on Junia, Lin likewise attempts to shed light on the question of Junia's apostleship by attending to the context of Paul's rhetoric. In her opinion, given Paul's ambivalence toward others' estimation of his apostleship as indicated in Gal 1:16–17; 2:6; 2 Cor 10:12, "it seems highly unlikely that, in Rom 16:7, Paul would mean Andronicus and Junia are 'esteemed *by* the apostles.' Such reliance on human approval contradicts every indicator of Paul's stance on human judgment."<sup>39</sup> However, this objection to the non-inclusive interpretation is not cogent, since Paul did appeal to his acknowledgment by, and agreement with, those reputed to be leaders and pillars in the church at Jerusalem (Gal 2:2, 9). Moreover, in "the less directly agonistic relationship Paul has with the Roman audience," it is not unlikely at all that Paul would commend Andronicus and Junia(s) as being "esteemed by the apostles."

The second point raised by Lin regarding the apostleship of Andronicus and Junia depends on her interpretation of the clause "and they were in Christ before I was (οἱ καὶ πρὸ ἐμοῦ γέγοναν ἐν Χριστῷ)." To her, "Paul's reference to chronology and order of calling here is ... indicative of their apostleship," since Paul consistently emphasizes his place as the last and eschatological apostle, and also because "the only other time Paul uses πρὸ ἐμοῦ is in Gal 1:17, in reference to other apostles" who were before him.<sup>40</sup> However, as reflected in virtually all translations of this verse, it is far more likely that this clause introduced by οἱ καὶ is dealing with a new attribute of the two individuals, namely their earlier conversion, rather than their calling as apostles prior to Paul's. The πρὸ ἐμοῦ in Gal 1:17 (τοὺς πρὸ ἐμοῦ ἀποστόλους) is also not a real parallel since it is used adjectivally and clearly refers to the apostles. In short, Lin's two contextual arguments for Junia's apostolic status are unpersuasive.

Third, it is necessary to examine further the various historical discussions on the apostolic status of Junia(s). To many scholars today, the early church almost without exception regarded Junia(s) as a prominent apostle. Is this view correct? In his paper published in 2009, David Huttar analyzed this matter in detail and showed that some early Church Fathers indeed adopted the inclusive view and regarded Junia(s) as an apostle. Examples include Chrysostom, Origen (in his second interpretation of the Greek phrase), and also Theodoret. However, Huttar concluded that Origen's first interpretation (regarded as more probable by Origen himself) was a non-inclusive view which claimed that Andronicus and Junia were esteemed by, and well known to, the apostles, and this was also the view of Ambrosiaster and

<sup>38</sup> Huttar, "Did Paul," 756–60. For the special features and purpose of the greetings at the end of Romans, see Jeffrey A. D. Weima, *Neglected Endings: The Significance of the Pauline Letter Closings* (JSNTSup 101; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 116–17, 216 (point 3).

<sup>39</sup> Lin, "Junia," 202–4.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 205, 208.

Pelagius. In Huttar's opinion, though Chrysostom was famous and influential in his preaching, he was in terms of exegetical prowess inferior to Origen and Ambrosiaster as commentators. If so, we should not be constrained by Chrysostom's interpretation of Junia's sex and apostolic status today if the contrary evidence is strong.<sup>41</sup> Interestingly, among scholars in the Reformation era, some regarded Junia(s) as male (e.g. Martin Luther), some viewed Junia as the wife of Andronicus but not an apostle herself (e.g. Peter Martyr Vermigli adopted the non-inclusive view), while Theodore Beza stated explicitly that Junia(s) was not an apostle (broadly interpreted as those sent in Christ's name).<sup>42</sup>

### III. THE ROLE OF JUNIA (IF FEMALE) IN THE FIRST CENTURY

In order to appeal to biblical precedents in support of women's leadership in the church today, scholars frequently point out that the descriptions used by Paul for male leaders of churches were likewise applied to certain women (e.g. "co-worker," "laborer," "apostle," "deacon"). They then conclude that such women played similar roles as their male counterparts.<sup>43</sup> In her book published in 2009, Lynn Cohick stated as a matter of principle and a reasonable assumption the following:

As with Jewish women above, the approach must be to assume, unless warranted otherwise, that a title carries the same meaning and responsibilities whether attached to a man or a woman. This means that a female apostle or deacon would share the same responsibilities and authority as her male counterparts.<sup>44</sup>

However, we should bear in mind that titles in communities of the Jewish Diaspora sometimes were more honorary than denoting actual responsibilities.<sup>45</sup> Apart from

<sup>41</sup> Concerning Origen's two explanations of Rom 16:7, see Huttar's detailed analysis ("Did Paul," 763–71). While Lin recently tried to refute Huttar's non-inclusive interpretation of Origen's first explanation ("Junia," 199), the counter-interpretation she offers had actually been analyzed by Huttar already and found wanting. It is also noteworthy that Origen's two explanations differ regarding the clause *καὶ πρὸ ἐμοῦ γέγοναν ἐν Χριστῷ*: the first explanation treats it as an independent description of Andronicus and Junia(s) (had believed before Paul) before mentioning their esteem among the apostles; the second explanation mentions their being among the 72 as apostles themselves, cites this as the reason for their esteem, and then remarks that they were apostles before Paul. This difference seems to favor Huttar's non-inclusive interpretation of Origen's first explanation.

<sup>42</sup> For various views of reformers on Rom 16:7, see Philip D. W. Krey and Peter D. S. Krey, eds., *Romans 8–16* (Reformation Commentary on Scripture, NT 8; Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2016), 246–47.

<sup>43</sup> In his article "Women in the Pauline Mission," Köstenberger points out two fallacies often found in such arguments: (1) filling in gaps to magnify the contributions of the women in question; and (2) assuming the same ministry when two persons are given the same descriptors (225–26).

<sup>44</sup> Cohick, *Women*, 214. Some scholars hold similar views. For example, Christoph Stenschke states, "Readers of Luke's gospel would have expected the women of 8:1–3 to be among the 70/72 disciples who were commissioned by Jesus in 10:1–20." See his "Married Women and the Spread of Early Christianity," *Neot* 43 (2009): 150.

<sup>45</sup> It is true that in the Jewish Diaspora, certain women were titled "rulers of synagogues" (*ἀρχισυνάγωγοι*; for their male counterparts, see Acts 13:15). However, this title was also applied to children. Evidently certain persons bore such a title as a sign of honor only. See Tessa Rajak and David

this consideration, it is also conceivable that such vague descriptions as “co-worker” and “laborer” may refer to different forms and recipients of ministry when applied to different sexes and different individuals.<sup>46</sup> As for the designation of “apostles” and “deacons,” they certainly refer to more specific types of ministry. However, did gender make a difference in the nature of their work? To answer this question without being anachronistic, rather than assuming there was no difference, it seems better to examine how the Greco-Roman world at the time of Paul and the early church regarded women in general. It is only against this historical backdrop that we can correctly interpret the statements on Junia’s ministry by Paul, the Church Fathers, and subsequent writers.

With regard to distinctions between male and female roles and status in the Roman Empire during the first century, it is certainly difficult to generalize, since women in different eras, locations, and social strata differed greatly with respect to their roles, social status, and influence outside the home. Nevertheless, one may still say that the general ethos was patriarchal: men exerted dominance over women, men were active outside the home while women were in charge of domestic affairs, women rarely spoke in public to address men in their audience, etc.<sup>47</sup>

To be sure, some scholars adduce certain literary texts, statues, and inscriptions in the Roman empire and claim that wealthy women in the first century were involved in a “New Woman” movement characterized by immodest clothing and licentious sexual activities on a par with men.<sup>48</sup> However, this view seems to be based on slender evidence and does not represent the thinking of most scholars.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, while certain prominent wealthy women indeed participated in public affairs and were held in high esteem, this does not imply that there were no con-

Noy, “*Archisynagogoi*: Office, Titles and Social Status in the Greco-Roman Synagogues,” *JRS* 83 (1993): 75–93; Riet Van Bremen, *The Limits of Participation: Women and Civic Life in the Greek East in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods* (Amsterdam: Gieben, 1996); Lee Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 390–402, and 406 (on the title “Mother” [*Mater*] of synagogues).

<sup>46</sup> Thus Ollog concludes that “die Mitarbeiter in ihrer Arbeit keine bestimmten, festgelegten Aufgaben wahrnahmen, die zu bestimmter ‘Ämtern’ hätten gerinnen können, sondern daß sie jeweils unterschiedliche und wechselnde, durch die verschiedenen Missionssituationen und -erfordernisse bedingte Funktionen ausübten.” Wolf-Henning Ollrog, *Paulus und seine Mitarbeiter* (WMANT 50; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1979), 79.

<sup>47</sup> Numerous works describe this general phenomenon. See, e.g., Ramsay MacMullen, “Women in Public in the Roman Empire,” *Historia* 29 (1980): 208–18; Gillian Clark, *Women in the Ancient World* (Greece and Rome: New Surveys in the Classics 21; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); Carroll D. Osburn, ed., *Essays on Women in Earliest Christianity*, vol. 1 (rep. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2007), chaps. 2–4 on the Jewish, Greek and Roman context; Ben Witherington III, *Women and the Genesis of Christianity* (ed. Ann Witherington; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), chaps. 1–3, pp. 3–26, 251–54; Pieter W. van der Horst, “Einige Beobachtungen zum Thema Frauen im antiken Judentum,” *BTZ* 10 (1993): 77–93. See also n. 32 above.

<sup>48</sup> See, e.g., “The ‘New Women,’ Representation and Reality,” in Elaine Fantham, et al., eds., *Women in the Classical World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 280–93; Bruce Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows: The Appearance of New Women and the Pauline Communities* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).

<sup>49</sup> See, e.g., critical reviews on the book by Bruce Winter: Susanne Dixon, *JTS* (2005): 558–61; James R. Wicker, *Southwestern Journal of Theology* (2005): 252. See also Preston T. Massey, “Is There a Case for Elite Women (‘New Women’) Causing Division at Corinth?,” *RevBib* 118 (2011): 76–93.

straints on account of their sex. Thus women, like slaves of either sex, could not vote, and there is literary evidence that women in Roman society were forbidden to plead cases for others in court, serve as judges, or take part in administration.<sup>50</sup> It was considered improper for women to talk to other women's husbands, and for men to talk to other people's wives.<sup>51</sup> Where women occupied public roles as magistrates, gymnasiarchs, etc., their contribution was primarily in material donations. There is no evidence of such women being described as *grammateus* or ever addressing the people.<sup>52</sup> This scenario was also true in the early church: While men and women were equally children of God (Gal 3:26–29), yet church ministries normally had men at the helm. Thus in his comment on Paul's statement in 1 Cor 9:5, Clement of Alexandria (2<sup>nd</sup> c.) took it to mean that the apostles brought their wives along on missionary travels because the wives could have access to women's quarters and preach the gospel to them without arousing scandal; Clement did not refer to these wives as apostles.<sup>53</sup>

In fact, in order to counter the female prophets and leaders in Montanism and Marcionism, a number of early Church Fathers (such as Origen, Hippolytus, Didymus the Blind, Epiphanius) appealed to Paul's words in 1 Cor 14:34–35 and/or 1 Tim 2:12 and stated that women never publicly taught men historically and should not do so at any time. Even the famous Church Father Tertullian who turned to Montanism stated that a female prophet who often saw visions in his church would only relate to the church leaders in private after the service concerning what she actually saw. Similarly certain church manuals or orders restricted the sphere of the ministry of women (including widows, virgins, and deacons), such as serving women alone, or leaving to male leaders the responsibility of teaching deeper doctrine.<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, even in apocryphal writings outside the orthodox church, the ministry of certain prominent women was still carried out within constraints. For instance, Thecla in the *Acts of Paul* apparently only preached to women, such as the rich woman Tryphaena and her maidservants.<sup>55</sup> As for Gnostic writings

<sup>50</sup> *Digest* 3.1.1.5; 50.17.2, cited in Eva Cantarella, *Pandora's Daughters: The Role and Status of Women in Greek and Roman Antiquity* (trans. Maureen B. Fant; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 165; *Digest* 5.1.12.3, cited in Clark, *Women*, 9. See also Ng, *Reconstructing*, 51–52, 106–11.

<sup>51</sup> In a speech of Cato reported by Livy, women talking to other people's husbands was seen as a scandal. See Mary R. Lefkowitz and Maureen B. Fant, *Women in Greece and Rome* (Toronto: Samuel Stevens, 1977), 134–36. For customs regarding banquets, see Kathleen E. Corley, *Private Women, Public Meals: Social Conflict in the Synoptic Tradition* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993), 28–48.

<sup>52</sup> See MacMullan, "Women in Public," 215–26; Clark, *Women*, 29; James G. Sigountos and Myron Shank, "Public Roles for Women in the Pauline Church: A Reappraisal of the Evidence," *JETS* 26.4 (1983): 283–95 (on teaching as an unacceptable public role for Greco-Roman women).

<sup>53</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 3.6.53.3–4.

<sup>54</sup> See Jensen, *Self-Confident Daughters*, 25, 59; Gryson, *Ministry of Women*, 36, 55. For Tertullian's case, see *An.* 9.4, cited in Gryson, *Ministry of Women*, 9. It is true that the church manuals may have reflected later practice, but a division of ministry along gender lines was already seen in the Shepherd of Hermas (*Herm. Vis.* 2.4.3) where the prophecy was to be written in two books, one to send to Clemens to forward to foreign countries, and the other to a woman named Grapte who will admonish the widows and the orphans, while Hermas himself was to read the words in the city, along with the presbyters who preside over the church; here women's teaching was clearly restricted to its target group.

<sup>55</sup> Esther Ng, "Acts of Paul and Thecla: Women's Stories and Precedent?," *JTS* n.s. 55 (2004): 1–29.

such as the *Gospel of Mary* and *Pistis Sophia*, their heroine Mary, who thoroughly understood the teachings of Jesus and excelled over the male disciples, did not go out to preach herself but rather exhorted the apostles (all men) to go and preach.<sup>56</sup>

With regard to Paul's commendation of Junia's ministry, we should examine more closely his purpose for writing Romans 16. It is clear from verse 1 that one of his purposes was to recommend Phoebe to the churches in Rome so that they would extend hospitality to her. With this in mind, he naturally hoped that the women there (especially those renowned for their labor in ministry) would lend her a hand. It is understandable and not surprising, therefore, that of the twenty-six persons greeted by Paul, nine were women, and he stressed that several of them had labored in the past. If Junia were a woman, Paul likewise would place his hopes on her. To be sure, Chrysostom later in the 4<sup>th</sup> century considered Junia a remarkable female apostle. Yet when he explained the ministry of Phoebe, Priscilla, and Mary, and also when he interpreted 1 Corinthians, 1 Timothy, and Titus, he pointed out that, according to Paul, women should not preach from the pulpit or make speeches in public, but may teach at home, encourage, and give advice in private.<sup>57</sup> Evidently, even early Church Fathers holding the "inclusive" view did not treat the apostolic ministry of Junia as identical with that of male apostles.

#### IV. CONCLUSION AND APPLICATION

In summary, for over 30 to 40 years, scholars have reached a virtual consensus that Ἰουλιαν in Rom 16:7 refers to a woman, since Ἰουλιᾶ was a common feminine name in the Roman empire derived from Latin, unlike the hypothetical masculine name Ἰουλίᾱς or Ἰουλιᾶς which appears nowhere else in literary texts or inscriptions. However, Al Wolters has since 2009 raised another possibility, namely that Ἰουλίᾱς may have been the Hellenized transcription of the Hebrew masculine name *yhwny*. His arguments are persuasive and can explain the reading of the name in accented Greek manuscripts and the rendering in Latin versions. Moreover, after a detailed analysis of the database collected by Tal Ilan, I have found no incidence of Jewish women using the name of Ἰουλιᾶ or *Junia* in the first century. Furthermore, judging from a natural reading of 1 Cor 9:5, Paul thought of apostles as men. There is also evidence that certain early Church Fathers regarded Junia(s) as a man. As for the phrase "prominent among the apostles," judging from extrabiblical Greek usage, the context of Rom 16:7, and the interpretation of certain Church Fathers, it does not necessarily indicate that Andronicus and Junia(s) were themselves apostles. Rather, it is possible to take the phrase to mean that the two persons were well known *to* the apostles. Finally, whether it was the Greco-Roman

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<sup>56</sup> Ng, *Reconstructing*, 177–78.

<sup>57</sup> See Chrysostom, *Homily 31* on Rom 16:6 (NPNF<sup>1</sup> 11:554), with regard to the labor of Mary; Gryson, *Ministry of Women*, 81–84; Shaw, "Among the Apostles," 116–17. Similarly, in his exposition on Rom 16:6, Origen referred to Mary's labor along gender lines (alluding to Titus 2:4–5; 1 Tim 5:10) as follows: "Nam et laborant, cum docent adolescentulas sobrias esse, diligere viros, filios enutrire, pudicas esse, castas, domum bene regentes, benignas, subditas viris suis, hospitio recipere, sanctorum pedes lavare, et caetera omnia, quae de officiis mulierum scripta referuntur, in omni genere castitate."

world of the first century, the early orthodox church, or fringe and heretical groups, women were restricted in their public roles, and even the Church Father Chrysostom who took Junia to be a female apostle was no exception.

Since it is uncertain that Paul thought of Junia(s) as a woman or as an apostle, the appeal to the precedent of Junia to advocate ministry opportunities of women equal to those of men is an attempt built on shaky foundations. Further, it may be calumny to state that Junia was forced to “undergo a sex change by redaction” as a result of the androcentric bias of church leaders. This is not to say that the church has never discriminated against women. Neither is this to say that women cannot or should not toil hard for Christ and for the church, since Paul commended Priscilla and Mary for doing precisely this in Romans 16. However, instead of urging that Christian women must, or need to, fight for equality in all aspects of church life, it seems better to study more carefully the biblical precedents and teachings and apply them more thoughtfully in different cultures and contexts in order to glorify God, build up the church, and lead people to Christ.

## APPENDIX: TRANSCRIPTION OF BIBLICAL NAMES

Name in English	Greek (LXX)		Latin (Vulgate)		Examples of biblical references
	Form	Case	Form	Case	
Elijah	Ἠλίας	nominative	Helias	nominative	Matt 11:14; Mark 6:15; Luke 4:26; John 1:21; Jas 5:17
	Ἠλία	dative	Heliae	dative	Matt 17:4
	Ἠλίαν	accusative	(ad) Heliam	accusative	Mal 4:5; Luke 9:19
Isaiah	Ἠσαΐας	nominative	Esaias	nominative	2 Kgs 19:6; Isa 1:1; Matt 15:7; John 1:23; Rom 9:27
	Ἠσαΐα	dative	(in) Esaia	ablative	Mark 1:2
	Ἠσαΐου	genitive	(per) Esaiam	ablative	2 Chr 26:22; Matt 3:3; Acts 28:25
	Ἠσαΐαν	accusative	Esaiam	accusative	Acts 8:28, 30
Jeremiah	Ἱερεμίας	nominative	Hieremias	nominative	2 Chr 35:25; Jer 19:14
	Ἱερεμιά	dative	(ad) Hieremiam	accusative	LXX Jer 45:19; 50:2 Vg Jer 38:19; 43:2
			Hieremiac	dative	LXX Jer 51:15 Vg Jer 44:15
	Ἱερεμίαν	accusative	(ad) Hieremiam	accusative	Jer 1:1; 11:1; 52:1
	Ἱερεμίου	genitive	(ab/per) Hieremiam	ablative	Jer 26:13; 33:20, 24 / Matt 2:17
Hananiah	Ἄνανίας	nominative	Ananias	nominative	Acts 5:1; 9:10; 23:2
	Ἄνανία	vocative	Anania	vocative	Acts 5:3; 9:10
	Ἄνανίαν	accusative	Ananiam	accusative	Acts 9:12
Junia(s)	Ἰουνίας (?)	nominative	Junias	nominative	Origen, <i>ad Romanos</i> 10:26 (some MSS)
	Ἰουνίαν (?)	accusative	Juniam	accusative	Origen, <i>ad Romanos</i> 10:21
	Ἰουνίᾳ (?)	dative	(de) Junia	ablative	Origen, <i>ad Romanos</i> 10:21