

Women and Gender in the Bible and the Biblical World

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Junia – A Woman Lost in Translation: The Name IOYNIAN in Romans 16:7 and its History of Interpretation

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Abstract: The name of the second person greeted in Romans 16:7 is given as IOYNIAN, a form whose grammatical gender could be either feminine or masculine which leads to the question: Is it Junia or Junias – a woman or a man – who is greeted alongside Andronicus as “outstanding among the apostles?” This article highlights early influential answers to this question in the history of interpretation (John Chrysostom’s commentary, the discipleship list of Pseudo-Epiphanius, Luther’s translation, and Calvin’s interpretation) showing that societal perceptions of women’s roles were a factor in how they interpreted IOYNIAN. The article then summarises the last 150 years of interpretation history which saw (a) the disappearance of Junia from the text and from scholarly discussion due to the impact of the short-form hypothesis in the nineteenth century, (b) the challenge to this male interpretation in connection with second wave feminism, and (c) the restoration of the female reading in the ensuing debate. Bringing together the main lines of the argument, it will be shown that there is only one reading supported by the evidence, the female reading which throughout the centuries was the more difficult reading in light of the church’s and society’s perception of women’s participation.

Keywords: Junia, Junias, Romans 16:7, female apostle, history of interpretation, Chrysostom, Pseudo-Epiphanius, Luther, Calvin, short-form hypothesis

1 Introduction

Among the many persons greeted at the end of Paul’s letter to the Romans¹ are Andronicus and Junia (Romans 16:7):

ἀσπάσασθε Ἀνδρόνικον καὶ Ἰουνίαν

τοὺς συγγενεῖς μου καὶ συναιχμαλώτους μου,

οἵτινες εἰσιν ἐπίσημοι ἐν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις,

οἳ καὶ πρὸ ἐμοῦ γέγοναν ἐν Χριστῷ.²

¹ In this article, it is assumed that chapter 16 is an integral part of the letter to the Romans. For a full treatment of both the textual evidence leading to questions about the integrity of Romans and arguments for its 16-chapter form see Gamble’s monograph *The Textual History of the Letter to the Romans*. A shorter but thorough argument for the integrity of the letter can also be found in Lampe, *Christians at Rome*, 153–64.

² The Greek NT text follows the 28th edition of Nestle-Aland’s *Novum Testamentum Graece* (NA²⁸).

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Greet Andronicus and Junia

my fellow-Jews and my fellow-prisoners,

who are outstanding among the apostles,

*who were also in Christ before me.*³

50 years ago, the accentuation of Ἰουνίαν and the translation of this name as “Junia” would have been strongly refuted. The majority view concerning this verse was that the second person could only be a man, namely Junias, which was supported by the form of the name found in the critical text editions of the day which rendered the name Ἰουνιᾶν. It was Bernadette Brooten who challenged this view in her article “Junia [...] Outstanding among the apostles’ Romans 16:7” published in English in 1977 and a year later also in German. A series of articles discussing the gender of IOYNIAN followed, culminating in Eldon Jay Epp’s monograph *Junia: The first Woman Apostle* published in 2005.

Brooten’s article, though short, was a watershed moment for the reading of IOYNIAN, as the tide slowly turned (back) towards a female reading in the ensuing debate. After “Junias” had been the preferred reading for almost 100 years in the English-speaking world and almost 500 years in the German-speaking world, scholars started to re-evaluate the evidence, looking at the reading of the Church Fathers and subsequent interpretations of IOYNIAN, the accentuation of the form in manuscripts, and the use of the name in antiquity. This article after discussing the textual issue, brings together the different pieces of this re-evaluation and highlights influential moments in the history of interpretation: Chrysostom’s Roman’s commentary in which a female Junia is identified as an apostle, the discipleship list of Pseudo-Epiphanius, the only known Greek source mentioning a male Junias, Luther’s influential choice to translate the name masculine, Calvin’s female reading, the impact of the short-form hypothesis gaining momentum in the nineteenth century, and the ensuing debate after Brooten’s challenge to the male reading. It will be shown that in some cases the interpretation of the name gave way to societal perceptions of women at the time of the interpreters. This then will help to understand why Junia was lost in translation at certain points in history, re-found at the time she was, and restored to the text in recent years.

2 IOYNIAN – the textual issue

The issue whether the second person greeted in Romans 16:7 is female or male arises from an ambiguity in the Greek text. The form IOYNIAN found in the unaccented majuscules of the oldest manuscripts can be interpreted in different ways. Depending on the accentuation added, three interpretations are grammatically possible, two of them representing a male name – Junias, one of them representing a female name – Junia.⁴

If the name is rendered Ἰουνιᾶν⁵ with the circumflex on the ultima, the name is assumed to belong to a “type of (hypocoristically) abbreviated names” which were “widespread in Greek.”⁶ The majority of names that might fall into this category in the New Testament end in -ᾶς,⁷ e.g. Πατροβᾶς – Patrobas (a short form of

³ Translation mine.

⁴ Schulz, “Junia or Junias?,” 109; cf. Epp, *Junia*, 23.

⁵ For an overview of the accentuation used in Greek editions of the NT from Erasmus to the 27th edition of Nestle-Aland (in the following abbreviated as NA) and the 4th edition of the United Bible Society Greek New Testament (in the following abbreviated as UBS) cf. Tables 1 and 2 in Epp, *Junia*, 62–3. Newer editions will be discussed below.

⁶ Blass et al., *Greek Grammar*, § 125, 67 (in the following abbreviated as BDF).

⁷ Robertson, *Grammar*, 172.

Πατρόβιος – Patrobios),⁸ Ἑρμᾶς – Hermas (a short form of Ἑρμόδωρος – Hermodoros),⁹ and Ὀλυμπᾶς – Olympas (a short form of Ὀλυμπιοδωρος – Olympidoros).¹⁰ In analogy to these names, IOYNIAN would be the accusative form of the male name Ἰουνιάς – Junias, a short form of Ἰουνιανός¹¹ the Greek transliteration of the Latin name *Iunianus* – Junianus.¹²

Ἰουνίαν with the acute on the penultima is the other possible accentuation. It is understood as a “feminine-accented” form, i.e. the accusative of Ἰουνία, the female name Junia.¹³ Consequently, there is a tendency to make the accent “the [...] determiner of gender”¹⁴ (circumflex = male name, acute = female name).¹⁵ Yet, there is a third option, to read Ἰουνίαν as the accusative form of Ἰουνίας, a first declension masculine noun.¹⁶ Both in Robertson’s grammar¹⁷ and Thayer’s lexicon¹⁸ Ἰουνίας with the acute is the main form given and the contracted form Ἰουνιᾶς is only mentioned as an alternative. Junias would then be a male name in its own right¹⁹ – similar to Ἀνδρέας (Andrew)²⁰ – not a short form of another name.²¹

One form – three possible interpretations of the name. Naturally this ambiguity led and still leads to the question of how to best translate IOYNIAN. The reason why it became a debated issue far beyond the question of mere translation is the context in which it is found. A female name combined with the weighty words “outstanding among the apostles”²² indicates that Paul had no problem to praise a woman for her apostolic ministry, thereby almost in passing affirming the existence of at least one female apostle.

It is, therefore, not surprising that Brooten’s article was published as part of a wider argument for the induction of women priests in the Catholic Church in the late 1970s, a massive challenge to Roman Catholic tradition undoubtedly influenced by the Women’s Liberation Movement.²³ Brooten argues strongly for a female reading of IOYNIAN because the existence of a female apostle “with authority in the church” who

⁸ BDF, § 125, 68, cf. Robertson, *Grammar*, 173; Bauer et al., *Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. “Πατροβᾶς” (in the following abbreviated as BDAG).

⁹ Robertson, *Grammar*, 172; cf. BDF, § 125, 68 assuming it a possibility (“perhaps”).

¹⁰ Robertson, *Grammar*, 172f. giving Ὀλυμπιανός – Olympianos as possible alternative; cf. BDF, § 125, 68 assuming it a possibility (“perhaps”).

¹¹ Robertson, *Grammar*, 172 giving it as a possible alternative (“maybe”) to Ἰουνίας.

¹² BDAG, s.v. “Ἰουνιᾶς.”

¹³ Belleville, “Ἰουνίαν,” 237; cf. Burer and Wallace, “Was Junia really an Apostle,” 76.

¹⁴ Cervin, “Junia(s),” 464.

¹⁵ Among the commentators who mention the feminine meaning of the form with the acute explicitly are Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 894; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 737; Longenecker, *Romans*, 1060; Moo, *Romans*, 921f; Schnabel, *Römer*, 871f; and Schreiner, *Romans*, 769 (2018).

¹⁶ This form is mentioned less frequently in the discussion of Romans 16:7, but is discussed in Epp, *Junia*, 23; Schulz, “Junia or Junias,” 109; and Arzt, “Iunia oder Iunias,” 94.

¹⁷ Robertson, *Grammar*, 172.

¹⁸ Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. “Ἰουνίας” (in the following abbreviated as GELNT).

¹⁹ Schulz, “Junia or Junias,” 109.

²⁰ BDF, § 125, 68, where the name Ἀνδρέας is interpreted as “an old Greek name” rather than an abbreviation.

²¹ Arzt, “Iunia oder Iunias,” 94.

²² The meaning of the phrase ἐπίσημοι ἐν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις is also debated and understood either inclusive as in this article as “outstanding or prominent among the apostles,” i.e. including Junia in the apostolic group (cf. Bauckham, *Gospel Women*, 172–80; Belleville, “Ἰουνίαν,” 242–8; Epp, *Junia*, 69–78) or exclusive as “well-known to the apostles” (cf. Burer and Wallace, “Was Junia really an Apostle,” 76–91; Burer, “Well Known to the Apostles,” 731–55). For a short summary and evaluation of the issue, cf. Mathew, *Women in Romans 16.1–16*, 102–5. For a contextual rather than grammatical approach, cf. Lin, “Junia: An Apostle before Paul,” 191–209, who after evaluating Burer’s second article rightly points out that due to “the ambiguity of ἐπίσημος + ἐν + dative” its meaning in each occurrence “derives from the context, not the construction” (ibid., 197). Though her shift to contextual arguments is to be applauded, her conclusion, that “in mentioning other apostles, Paul claims last, and thereby first, place” among the apostles, rhetorically boosting his own reputation among the Romans (ibid., 208), overlooks that the original audience unlikely made the connection with the Corinthian and Galatian passages Lin bases her argument on (ibid., 206). It is much more likely that what the original audience heard was an acknowledgement of both Andronicus and Junia’s ministry as apostles and their seniority due to their longer involvement in the life and mission of Christian congregations.

²³ Though Swidler, the editor of *Women Priests. A Catholic Commentary on the Vatican Declaration* in which Brooten’s article was published, emphasises in his introduction that “it was long before the birth of the Women’s Liberation Movement [...] that pioneer Catholic women and men began to raise the issue of women priests” (Swidler, “Introduction,” 5).

was acknowledged by Paul supports her wider argument.²⁴ “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.”²⁵ It is clear that for Brooten’s argument to work, Junia *has to be* a woman otherwise she cannot serve as a role model for female priesthood. Thus, it is wise to take it with a pinch of salt.

However, the same can be said about the view Brooten challenged which simply assumed that “a woman *could not be* an apostle” and therefore “the woman who is here called apostle *could not have been* a woman.”²⁶ Brooten’s turn to tradition re-focussed attention to early readings of Romans 16:7 and demonstrated that the majority view among her (male) contemporary colleagues²⁷ actually was a minority view in the history of the church and a relatively recent development, especially in the English-speaking world.

3 IOYNIAN – from Chrysostom to the reformers

John Chrysostom, one of the Greek fathers writing in the late fourth century,²⁸ is the best and earliest evidence in support of the female reading. Concerning IOYNIAN he writes, “Βαβαῖ, πόση τῆς γυναικὸς ταύτης ἡ φιλοσοφία, ὥς καὶ τῆς τῶν ἀποστόλων ἀξιοθῆναι προσηγορίας”²⁹ (*In epistulam ad Romanos* 31.2) [“Oh, how great is the devotion (φιλοσοφία) of this woman, that she should be even counted worthy of the appellation of apostle!”].³⁰ With these lines, Chrysostom, a native Greek speaker “who read an unaccented text and interpreted according to context and forms of the Greek,”³¹ clearly identifies Junia as a woman who is called an apostle. He seems to marvel at the qualities a woman must have had to receive the title “apostle” and he assumes her to be someone with a great “love of wisdom,”³² a quality that is lost in the rendering of his nineteenth century translators. Rather than choosing the natural meaning, they translate φιλοσοφία as “devotion,” a meaning not found in lexica³³ but obviously more appropriate for a woman in their eyes and in their time. They also categorically rule out that the person in Romans 16:7 can be both, female and an apostle, correcting Chrysostom in their comments on his commentary.³⁴ In comparison, Chrysostom almost has a progressive view concerning women and their participation in the propagation of the gospel:

Λεόντων γὰρ θερμότεραι αἱ τότε γυναῖκες ἦσαν, διανεμόμεναι πρὸς τοὺς ἀποστόλους τοὺς ὑπὲρ τοῦ κηρύγματος πόνους· διὰ τοῦτο καὶ συναπεδήμουν αὐτοῖς, καὶ τὰ ἄλλα πάντα διηκονοῦντο.³⁵ (*In epistulam ad Romanos* 31.2)

[For the women of those days were more spirited than lions, sharing with the Apostles their labors for the Gospel’s sake. In this way, they went travelling with them, and also performed all other ministries.]³⁶

²⁴ Brooten, “Junia,” 143.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid., 142 (emphasis mine); cf. Fàbrega, “Junia(s),” 47 who sees an unconscious argument at work.

²⁷ Cf. for example Michel, *Römer*, 475 (first edition 1955); Barrett, *Romans*, 283f. (first edition 1957); Murray, *Romans* II, 229f. (first edition 1965); Black, *Romans*, 181 (first edition 1973); and Käsemann, *Römer*, 398 (first edition 1973).

²⁸ John Chrysostom lived ca. 347–407, cf. Evans, *Ancient Texts*, 275.

²⁹ Migne (ed.), *Patrologia Graeca* 60:669d–670a (in the following abbreviated PG).

³⁰ Chrysostom, *Epistle to the Romans* 31, in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* 11:555 (in the following abbreviated as NPNF).

³¹ Schulz, “Junia,” 109.

³² Montanari, *The Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek*, s.v. “φιλοσοφία” (in the following abbreviated as GE) which gives “pursuit of knowledge” as alternative meaning.

³³ E.g. BDAG, *GELNT*, and Liddell et al., *Greek-English Lexicon* (in the following abbreviated as LSJ).

³⁴ In a footnote J. B. Morris and W.H. Simcox question the person’s apostolic status in general. They add that if Chrysostom was right about the person being an apostle, the appropriate translation must be Junias, a man’s name, because it “[...] is out of the question [that a woman should have been an apostle]” (NPNF 11:555).

³⁵ PG 60:669c.

³⁶ Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Epistle to the Romans* 31, NPNF 11:554.

Admittedly, the quote above can be interpreted in terms of gender-related tasks, meaning the women were serving the apostles by cooking, washing, mending, etc. or sharing their labour for the gospel by specifically ministering to women who the apostles as men could not reach.³⁷ Nevertheless, including one of these women in the apostolic circle and praising her for her love of wisdom seems to go beyond the accepted gender roles at the time. His own surprise that a woman could be deemed worthy of the title shows that Chrysostom's reading of Romans 16:7 clashes with the "strong tendency to restrict women's roles to those [...] that are gender-related"³⁸ present since the second century and also shaping his thought. This can be seen a few sections earlier in his treatment of Mary (Romans 16:6) where he interprets 1 Timothy 2:12 as not prohibiting women to speak a word of teaching in general, but definitely in any kind of public capacity.³⁹ Considering his own conflicting views regarding women's roles, it would have been easy for Chrysostom to opt for the male reading. Hence, it is all the more significant that he read Romans 16:7 and found himself forced to opt for the female reading despite the fact that it went against his and societal perceptions of women's involvement in the church.

One might, therefore, expect that Chrysostom's stance is singular, the exception among commentators living in a patriarchal world. Surprisingly, this is not the case, the female reading was the main reading within the first millennia of Christian history. Apart from Chrysostom, Fitzmyer lists more than 15 writers from Origen (third century) to Peter Lombard (twelfth century) who understood the second person mentioned in Rom 16:7 as the wife of Andronicus and thereby female.⁴⁰

Origen would be an even older Greek witness to a female reading than Chrysostom, but his commentary on Romans only survived in the Latin translation of Rufinus (fourth/fifth century). Piper and Grudem quote a section of this translation from Migne's *Patrologia Latina* which reads "Junias" in Latin.⁴¹ In their view, under the condition that Rufinus' "ancient translation is reliable," Origen understood Andronicus' partner to be male, which for them is "perhaps *more significant*" than the Greek references to Romans 16:7.⁴² However, they fail to mention that the feminine reading "Junia" is also found in Migne, precisely in the passage referring to Romans 16:7.⁴³ This obviously throws doubt on the reliability of this *nineteenth-century* version of Rufinus' translation. Epp, basing his view on a *modern critical edition* of the translation, comes to a very different conclusion: "we can be confident that Origen read Rom 16:7 as 'Junia,'"⁴⁴ provided that the comment on chapter 16 is not a later addition by his translator Rufinus⁴⁵ in which case an early Greek witness in support of the female reading would be replaced by an early Latin witness.

Another Greek reference to a clearly female Junia is found in the seventh century *Chronicon Paschale*.⁴⁶ Junia is mentioned as part of a list of women who followed the apostles after the ascension, including, among others, also Prisca (and Priscilla), Mary, Tryphaena and Tryphosa, Persis, and Julia, the other named women of the Roman greetings list. "The admirable woman Junia" is also remembered in the menology of Emperor Basil Porphyrogenitus, a tenth-century calendar of saints, as "a consort and a helper in godly preaching" of Andronicus.⁴⁷ Though both sources are late, legendary, and emphasise the leading role of the men, they nevertheless show that within the eastern tradition the female reading was preserved and Junia's sex never questioned.⁴⁸

37 Cf. Käsemann, *Römer*, 397; Stuhlmacher, *Römer*, 219 for women's mission to women.

38 Richardson, "From Apostles to Virgins," 257.

39 PG 60:669a. For an evaluation of Chrysostom's view on women and their roles in the church, including his understanding of the prohibition to teach, cf. Fàbrega, "Junia(s)," 54–6.

40 Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 739f.; cf. Belleville, "Ιουνίαν," 232, footnote 1, for another extensive (and partly overlapping) list of authors for whom a female reading can be assumed.

41 Migne (ed.), *Patrologia Latina* 14:1289a (in the following abbreviated as *PL*).

42 Piper and Grudem, "Central Concerns," 80 (emphasis mine).

43 *PL* 14:1280d.

44 Epp, *Junia*, 33f.

45 For a critical evaluation of this question, cf. Fàbrega, "Junia(s)," 58–60.

46 Dindorf (ed.), *Chronicon Paschale*, 421.

47 As cited in Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 738.

48 For the commemoration of Junia as a Saint in the Greek Orthodox Church cf. Fàbrega, "Junia(s)," 57f.

The only Greek reference related to Romans 16:7 which mentions “Junias” rather than “Junia” is found in an *Index Discipulorum*, ascribed to the fourth century bishop of Salamis, Epiphanius: “Ἰουνίας,⁴⁹ οὗ καὶ αὐτοῦ ὁ Παῦλος μέμνηται, ἐπίσκοπος Ἀπαμείας τῆς Συρίας ἐγένετο” (Pseudo-Epiphanius, *Index Discipulorum*, 125.19-20) [Junias, the same who Paul also mentions, became bishop of Apameia in Syria].⁵⁰ Though his reference to Junias is strongly emphasised by those questioning whether Junia was a female apostle,⁵¹ the reliability of this *Index Discipulorum* is questionable on two grounds. Firstly, there is doubt about its authorship,⁵² and consequently, it might be a much later writing.⁵³ Secondly, the document seems to be biased against women. Just before Junias, a Πρίσκα (Priscas) is mentioned. Prisca, who is clearly introduced as Aquila’s wife by Luke (Acts 18:2) and the unambiguously feminine nominative form, Πρίσκα, is found in 1 Cor 16:19, is turned into Priscas, a man.⁵⁴ Both Priscas and Junias are listed at the very end of the index (number 63 and 64 of 70),⁵⁵ set apart from those listed who are also mentioned in Romans 16 (numbers 16–30 and 34–42). The list generally follows the order of Romans 16, leaving out all women mentioned (Mary, Tryphaena, Tryphosa, Persis, Rufus’ mother, Julia, Nereus’ sister).⁵⁶ It seems like the author, being aware of Prisca’s and Junia’s sex, first dropped them like the other women of Romans but needed names to fill up his list at the end. Their prominence in the Roman greeting list might have helped them reappear at the end of the index, but likely only because a simple addition of a sigma was enough to create the prerequisites that allowed the author to name them as bishops in a world in which women could not hold that office.

Whether or not the obscuring of gender was deliberately done, Epp is right to conclude that “the credibility of the witness is tarnished.”⁵⁷ The writer of the *Index Discipulorum* was a minority voice in the first centuries of Christian history, but he also was an early example of someone who tried to resolve the discomfort caused by Paul’s mention of a female apostle by adapting a reading that was not just more in line with the church’s patriarchal structure at the time but moreover also seemed to fit better with Paul’s teaching elsewhere. Whereas for Chrysostom his expectations about women gave way to the text, for this author the text gave way to his tradition.

It was only from the thirteenth century onwards that the male reading became more common in the west, starting with Giles (Aegidius) of Rome⁵⁸ who is “commonly credited to be the first to identify Junia as male”⁵⁹ as he refers to Andronicus and Julias⁶⁰ as “these honorable men.”⁶¹

⁴⁹ On its own, as a masculine first declension noun, as well as in its context, followed by a masculine relative pronoun and personal pronoun, the name is unambiguously male.

⁵⁰ Translation mine.

⁵¹ Piper and Grudem, “Central Concerns,” 79f., who give Epiphanius’ male reading more weight than Chrysostom’s female reading due to the extra information identifying him as the bishop of Apameia; and Burer and Wallace, “Was Junia really an Apostle,” 76, who though admitting that Epiphanius’ male reading is probably wrong think it nevertheless important to notice the one occurrence of Junias in the Greek speaking world.

⁵² Though some manuscripts attribute the list to Epiphanius, the majority of witnesses remains anonymous (Guignard, “Greek Lists of the Apostles,” 476).

⁵³ Bauckham, *Gospel Women*, 166f.

⁵⁴ Another example for such a change might be Εὐδοχος (number 59 in the list), a name not found in the NT at least not in its masculine form. Its feminine form Εὐδοσία, however, is mentioned in Phil 4:2.

⁵⁵ Interestingly, Aquila (number 62) and Priscas are still mentioned together, a sign that they were inseparable in tradition. Andronicus (number 17), on the other hand, is mentioned with the other Roman men separated from his partner, a sign that his status among the seventy was so well established that he could not be banished to the end of the list. In later tradition, Andronicus is a fixture in various discipleship lists usually as bishop of Pannonia (cf. Schermann (ed.), *Prophetarum vitae fabulosae*, 120:12, 137:1, 168:17, 174:10, and 180:24).

⁵⁶ It also draws on the greetings at the end of 2 Tim, again leaving out a woman, Claudia.

⁵⁷ Epp, *Junia*, 34; cf. Belleville, “Ἰουνίαν,” 235.

⁵⁸ Wilckens, *Römer* III, 135, n. 647.

⁵⁹ Epp, *Junia*, 35; e.g. by Brooten, “Junia,” 141; Bauckham, *Gospel Women*, 167; Mathew, *Women in Romans 16.1-16, 97*; and Arzt, “Junia oder Iunias,” 84.

⁶⁰ He preferred the variant reading *Iuliam* over *Iuniam*.

⁶¹ As cited by Brooten, “Junia,” 141.

The most significant move towards the male reading, however, was Luther's translation of Romans 16:7 ("Grusset den Andronicon vnd den Junian [...]")⁶² in his *Septembertestament* of 1522. The added masculine article makes the name unambiguously male. Whether this interpretation reflects "Luther's personal disposition against an apostolic attribution"⁶³ or the influence of Faber Stapulensis' commentary,⁶⁴ who thought the accusative *Iuniam* derived from the nominative *Iunias*,⁶⁵ is hard to decide. Either way his translation places him among those who could not imagine a female apostle despite the textual possibility. Luther's translation is based on the second edition of Erasmus' Greek New Testament which reads Ἰουνίαν in Greek and *Iuniam* in Latin.⁶⁶ Epp suggests that Erasmus understood the form as a feminine noun pointing to Erasmus' *Annotations on the New Testament*⁶⁷ (originally published in 1535 after Luther's translation) where he interpreted the form *Iuniam* along the same line as *Iuliam*.⁶⁸ This *Iuliam* is identified in his *Paraphrases on Romans* (originally published in 1517 before Luther's translation) as the wife of Philologus and therefore female.⁶⁹ Whereas the form of the name in Luther's *Septembertestament* of 1522 is ambiguous ("Julian"), in the 1534 *Lutherbibel* it is clearly female ("die Julian") due to the addition of the female article to the name.⁷⁰ Thus, contrary to Faber Stapulensis who read *Iuniam* as Junias and *Iuliam* as Julias,⁷¹ Luther translated the same grammatical phenomenon once male and once female. To see bias against women in official roles here, as Belleville suggests, is therefore far from being far-fetched. Luther did not choose the male name for the otherwise unspecified person in verse 15 but for the person in verse 7 who together with Andronicus is referred to as "berumpte Apostel" ("famous apostles").

This choice is in line with his understanding of women's place in the divine order as reflected in his "traditional and socially conservative picture of Eve" in his *Declamationes* on Genesis (1523–1524),⁷² lectures given shortly after the *Septembertestament* was published and therefore reflecting his understanding at the time of translation. The early Luther understood woman's subjection to man as part of the created order prior to the fall.⁷³ On the basis of Luther's later lectures *Enarrationes* on Genesis (1535–1545), Mattox argues that Luther's view on Eve and her role changed in later years. He understood Eve's subjection no longer as part of the divine order but as result of the fall.⁷⁴ Moreover, he did no longer consider Eve to be Adam's "inferior in terms of her partnership in the rule over creation."⁷⁵ Yet, there was no development in thought concerning the participation of women in the ministry of the church. Luther "did not think of Eve as a partner in her husband's duty to proclaim the Word of God"⁷⁶ as the "office of preaching" was entrusted to Adam alone.⁷⁷ Consequently, he "did not support the ordination of women to the public ministry."⁷⁸ A female Junia partnering in the proclamation of the gospel with her husband Andronicus as a famous apostle would have been unthinkable for him even in his later years.

62 Luther, *Das Neue Testament Deutsch*, urn:nbn:de:bsz:24-digibib-bsz3517275746.

63 Belleville, "Ἰουνίαν," 237.

64 Brooten, "Junia," 142.

65 Epp, *Junia*, 35f.

66 Erasmus, *Novum Testamentum omne*.

67 Epp, *Junia*, 27f.

68 Erasmus, *Annotations of the New Testament*, 434.

69 Erasmus, *Paraphrases on Romans*, 88.

70 Luther, *Biblia*, urn:nbn:de:gbv:32-1-10016175488.

71 Epp, *Junia*, 335f.

72 Mattox, "Luther on Eve," 459.

73 Ibid., 459f.

74 Ibid., 462.

75 Ibid., 465.

76 Ibid., 465.

77 Ibid., 462. However, Luther allowed for situations in which women could preach in public, e.g. in women gatherings or in context where no qualified male preacher was available (Ibid., 469).

78 Ibid., 471.

This inability to allow the text to challenge his perceptions led to the disappearance of Junia from the text, especially but not only in the German-speaking world, because “through Luther the *Junias* interpretation was assured of a broad exposure for centuries to come.”⁷⁹ Yet, other Reformers retained the female reading.

Calvin translates *Iuniam* as “Junia” in his commentary on Romans⁸⁰ even though he considers women’s subjection as part of the created order and women’s silence in church as prescribed by Scripture and both, therefore, “not open to change.”⁸¹ Considering that he was convinced “that women cannot occupy any leading positions in either the church or in the public sphere,”⁸² it is surprising that he describes *both* Andronicus and Junia as apostles “who not only *teach in one Church*, but also spend their labour in *promulgating the gospel everywhere*.”⁸³ Calvin, therefore, alongside Chrysostom, is another example of an interpreter who – even though his thoughts “were [...] embedded in the patriarchal and hierarchical thought of his time”⁸⁴ – opted for the female reading.

It does not surprise that the *Geneva Bible* which “had begun as a project of the Marian exiles residing in Geneva under the protective wing of John Calvin”⁸⁵ followed his lead and also reads “Junia.” The fact, that the *Authorized Version* of 1611 also favoured “Junia” over “Junias,” ensured that the female reading was the only English reading for the next 200 years.

4 Ἰουνιά – the short-form hypothesis

The final shift towards the male reading occurred in the nineteenth century when the short-form hypothesis gained momentum. The view of Junias as a hypocoristic form of Junianus can be traced back to the seventeenth century,⁸⁶ and it had its opponents from the very beginning. Brooten lists examples from different centuries, e.g. Johannes Drusius (seventeenth century), Christian Wilhelm Bode (eighteenth century) and M.-J. Lagrange (1916), and shows thereby that the view was not held unanimously.⁸⁷ Nevertheless, in the second half of the nineteenth century it became so prominent that it made its way into lexica,⁸⁸ and commentaries,⁸⁹ and even into one Greek New Testament.⁹⁰ Most influential for the English-speaking world was Lightfoot’s understanding of “Ἰουνίαν (or Ἰουνιά)” as a man’s name (“Junias contracted from Junianus”).⁹¹ Already mentioned in his Galatians commentary, this understanding was also underpinning the translation of the name as “Junias” in the New Testament of the *Revised Version* (1881).⁹²

An active female apostle proclaiming the gospel in the streets of Rome was unthinkable in a century in which “true womanhood” was defined by the “four cardinal virtues” of “piety, purity, submissiveness and

⁷⁹ Brooten, “Junia,” 142.

⁸⁰ Calvin, *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans*, 541 and 545.

⁸¹ Vorster, “Calvin on the Status and Role of Women,” 201.

⁸² Ibid., 204. Similar to Luther, Calvin allows for exceptions based on extraordinary women found in Scripture who “God in his providence” called “to shame men” (Vorster, “Calvin on the Status and Role of Women,” 202). A similar line of thought can be found in Chrysostom’s comment on Romans 16:6: “[...] again a woman is honored and proclaimed victorious! Again are we men put to shame” (Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Epistle to the Romans* 31, NPNF 11:554).

⁸³ Calvin, *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans*, 546 (emphasis mine).

⁸⁴ Vorster, “Calvin on the Status and Role of Women,” 203.

⁸⁵ Danner, “Contribution of the Geneva Bible,” 5.

⁸⁶ Arzt, “Iunia oder Iunias,” 85.

⁸⁷ Brooten, “Junia,” 142.

⁸⁸ E.g. *GELNT* from 1898.

⁸⁹ E.g. the first edition of Sanday and Headlam’s *Romans* commentary from 1895 who in support of the thesis point to the other contracted forms in Romans 16:14–5, Patrobas, Hermas, and Olympas (mentioned above), 422f.

⁹⁰ Alford (1852), cf. Epp, *Junia*, 61f.

⁹¹ Lightfoot, *St Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians*, 96.

⁹² Epp, *Junia*, 25f. and 67.

domesticity.”⁹³ Thus, it could be expected that Junia would disappear from the text in a time in which the propagated ideal of womanhood limited women to the private sphere of their own houses, as “passive, submissive responders”⁹⁴ working “in silence, unseen.”⁹⁵ Preato might well be right to see in the change from Junia to Junias also a reaction against the suffragette movement⁹⁶ endangering the concept of “true womanhood” and thereby the “order of the Universe” as intended by God.⁹⁷

The impact of the short-form hypothesis reached its climax with the inclusion of the form Ἰουνιᾶν (without any hint to an alternative reading) into the thirteenth edition of the Greek New Testament by Erwin Nestle (published in 1927). This finally sounded the death knell for Junia for decades to come. Subsequent critical editions of the New Testament up to the end of the twentieth century used this form in the main text.⁹⁸ As a consequence, the female reading either disappeared completely from the scholarly discussion⁹⁹ or was dismissed as impossible.¹⁰⁰

Brooten’s article ushered in a new era for the interpretation of IOYNIAN. In the wake of her article the short-form hypothesis was no longer simply reiterated but challenged on philological grounds. In her argument against “Junias” as the short-form of a Latin male name, Brooten points out that hypocoristics (“terms of endearment or diminutives”) of Latin names usually lengthen rather than shorten,¹⁰¹ Πρίσκα (Prisca)¹⁰² for example becomes Πρίσκιλλα (Priscilla).¹⁰³ Yet, she overlooks that there are Latin names in the New Testament that have been abbreviated in the same way as Greek names. Λουκᾶς (Luke),¹⁰⁴ an abbreviation of Λούκιος (Lucius), Λούκανος (Lucanos)¹⁰⁵ or the more common Λουκιανός (Lucianus),¹⁰⁶ is one example; Σιλᾶς (Silas)¹⁰⁷ is another if understood as the short-form of Σιλουανός (Silvanus).¹⁰⁸

Another argument that has been invoked against the short-form hypothesis by Belleville is that it was “not Paul’s habit to use nicknames [...] or shortened forms.”¹⁰⁹ This is true in the case of Prisca and, assuming he is the same person as Silas, also Silvanus,¹¹⁰ but Paul uses the short form Λουκᾶς in

⁹³ Welter, “The Cult of True Womanhood,” 152. Welter’s analysis is based on American magazines, but the same thoughts are found on the other of the Atlantic as well. As DeGroot and Taylor point out for this period “the developments in Great Britain and the United States are not completely parallel but are similar enough to be studied together” (DeGroot and Taylor, “Recovering Women’s Voices,” 3).

⁹⁴ Ibid., 159.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 160.

⁹⁶ Preato, “Junia, a Female Apostle,” 10.

⁹⁷ Welter, “The Cult of True Womanhood,” 159.

⁹⁸ Cf. table 2 in Epp, *Junia*, 63.

⁹⁹ Barrett, *Romans*, 283f.; Black, *Romans*, 181; Murray, *Romans* II, 229f.; and Käsemann, *Römer*, 398 do not even mention a female alternative in their commentaries. “Ἰουνιᾶς” is also the only entry found in Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 93.178 (first edition 1988).

¹⁰⁰ This view is already explicitly expressed in Lietzmann, *Römer*, 125 (first edition 1906) who states that the name *must* be *male* due to the following statements (“[...] muss wegen der folgenden Aussagen einen Mann bezeichnen.”), undoubtedly thinking about the description of the pair being “outstanding among the apostles.” It is also found in Michel, *Römer*, 475 (first edition 1955) who mentions the possibility of a female reading only to steadfastly reject its use in this verse, by saying – without explaining this statement – one *must not think* about a feminine form (“An eine weibliche Form (Julia oder Junia) ist nicht zu denken.”).

¹⁰¹ Brooten, “Junia,” 142f.; cf. Schulz, “Junia,” 109.

¹⁰² Rom 16:3, 1 Cor 16:19, 2 Tim 4:19.

¹⁰³ Acts 18:2, 18, 26.

¹⁰⁴ Col 4:14, 2 Tim 4:11.

¹⁰⁵ BDF, § 125, 68; cf. Robertson, *Grammar*, 172; BDAG s.v. “Λουκᾶς.”

¹⁰⁶ Belleville, “Ἰουνιᾶν,” 239; cf. GE which lists Λουκιανός as entry but not Λούκανος.

¹⁰⁷ Silas is only mentioned in Acts (first mention in 15:22 and last mention in Acts 18:5). This form of the name with the circumflex on the ultima is found in the NA²⁸.

¹⁰⁸ GELNT, s.v. “Σιλᾶς;” cf. Robertson, *Grammar*, 173. Alternatively, it could be a transcription of a Semitic name (Σίλας) as found in Josephus (BDAG, s.v. “Σιλᾶς or Σίλας;” cf. BDF, § 125, 68).

¹⁰⁹ Belleville, “Ἰουνιᾶν,” 239; cf. Arzt, “Iunia oder Iunias,” 85.

¹¹⁰ 2 Cor 1:19, 1 and 2 Thess 1:1.

Philemon.¹¹¹ “Luke” then is an example of a shortened Latin name found in one of Paul’s undisputed letters and thereby a close analogy to “Junias.” Consequently, it needs more than the arguments above to dismiss Ἰουνιᾶν as a possible form.

Thorley provides such an additional argument by taking a closer look at the formation of hypocoristic names ending in -ᾶς.¹¹² In almost every case the ending is added to a consonant (e.g. Λουκ-ᾶς, Πατροβ-ᾶς). If there is an iota in the long form that might become part of the stem of the short form, it is usually dropped (e.g. Λούκ-ι-ος/Λουκ-ι-ανός = Λουκᾶς; Πατρόβ-ι-ος = Πατροβᾶς). Thorley mentions Ἰουλᾶς (Julas) as an example, a name found in the papyri. It is probably derived from Ἰουλιανός (Julianus), a name very similar to Ἰουνιανός (Junianus), the assumed long form of Ἰουνιᾶς (Junias). The problem is obvious. If the pattern above is applied, the correct short form of Ἰουνιανός would be Ἰουνᾶς (Junas) not Ἰουνιᾶς.

Moreover, neither of these two short-forms is found in Greek literature,¹¹³ nor is there any “empirical evidence whatsoever”¹¹⁴ of a shortening of Junianus outside of Romans 16:7. This is the reason why Cervin strongly opposes the idea of a short-form Ἰουνιᾶς by mere analogy to other shortened names in the New Testament. “It is [...] the *actual* existence of a nickname, not its supposed existence, which is crucial.”¹¹⁵

A look at the manuscript evidence also shows that even in Romans 16:7 itself Ἰουνιᾶς has nothing more than a “supposed existence.” After an analysis of the most important manuscripts, Arzt comes to the conclusion that the circumflex accentuation must be a later invention; the only accent found in both, the later added accentuation of the majuscules and the accentuation of the minuscules, is the acute on the penultima.¹¹⁶ He further concludes that the inclusion of a form with no textual support into a text-critical edition might raise suspicions about the influence of ideological motives behind the decision.¹¹⁷ It can be inferred from a comment of Metzger in the Companion Volume to the UBS⁴ (1993) that such motives were present among Committee members working on this critical text edition of the New Testament. Concerning the accentuation, he writes that “some members, considering it unlikely that a woman would be among those styled ‘apostles,’ understood the name to be masculine Ἰουνιᾶν.”¹¹⁸

This “theological and functional predisposition against the naming of a woman among the first century cadre of apostles”¹¹⁹ seems to have led to the invention of the short-form Ἰουνᾶς making up for the lack of evidence for the name Junias in the sources but ignoring the fact that the form is unsupported in the manuscripts. Considering the form Ἰουνιᾶν specifically rather than the male reading in general, Epp’s harsh criticism seems justified. This form might be called “the figment of the wishful imagination of some influential white European, British and American male scholars, caught up in but actively abetting a culturally shaped bias that wished to exclude women from leadership positions in the church.”¹²⁰ However, it also needs to be admitted, if the charge of bias wants to be avoided, that both grammar and manuscript evidence, while not supporting a short-form, allow for a male reading for Ἰουνῖαν.

¹¹¹ One reason for this might be to differentiate this Lucius/Luke from the Lucius in Romans 16:21 whose identification with Luke is deemed very unlikely by most commentators, cf. Cranfield, *Romans II*, 805; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 748; Jewett, *Romans*, 977; contra Dunn, *Romans*, 909 and Stuhlmacher, *Römer*, 224, for whom an identification with Luke seems possible.

¹¹² Thorley, “Junia,” 24f.; cf. Belleville, “Ἰουνῖαν,” 239.

¹¹³ A search of the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae corpus reveals that the long form Junianus is also absent from first-century Greek literature. One needs to turn to Latin to find proof for the existence of the name; the 21 times *Junianus* is found in inscriptions of the city of Rome shows that it was a common Latin name (Lampe, *Christians at Rome*, 176).

¹¹⁴ Cervin, “Junia(s),” 466.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 467.

¹¹⁶ Arzt, “Iunia oder Iunias,” 87–94.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 98.

¹¹⁸ Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 475.

¹¹⁹ Belleville, “Ἰουνῖαν,” 248.

¹²⁰ Epp, *Junia*, 65f.; cf. Jewett, *Romans*, 962, who, using a similar drastic language, states that “the name ‘Junias’ is a figment of chauvinistic imagination.”

5 Ἰουνίαν – Junias or Junia?

Ἰουνίαν without any other grammatical pointers (article or pronouns clarifying the grammatical gender) can be feminine or masculine and usually there is no indication of how a scribe interpreted the form.¹²¹ The same ambiguity is found in all early translations (Latin, Coptic and Syriac).¹²² Yet, a closer look reveals that “Junia” is a much likelier option than “Junias.” In all three early translations the natural reading of the form is the female reading, the male reading is possible but less likely.¹²³

Another indicator that the person in question was assumed to be female is the only attested variant reading Ἰουλίαν,¹²⁴ a transcription of the common Latin name Julia which is so widely attested as a female name¹²⁵ that there is generally no doubt about its gender.¹²⁶ Ἰουνία, on the other hand, is rare in Greek literature. Outside of the context of Romans 16:7 there is only one mention by Plutarch referring to Junia, Cassius’ wife and Brutus’ sister (Plutarch, *Brutus* VII.1.). To assume, as Moo does, that “Ἰουνία was *not* a popular name”¹²⁷ can only be held if the search of the Greek form is limited to literary sources, widening it to epigraphic sources changes the picture. Belleville lists several first-century examples of inscriptions from Asia Minor and Rome in which the Greek form appears as a female name.¹²⁸ Also worth considering is the first-century inscription to Junia Theodora, a female benefactor residing in Corinth.¹²⁹ Winter even discusses whether the Junia of Romans could be identified with this Junia Theodora but concludes “that the arguments on the present evidence are weighted against the identification of Junia Theodora and Junia.”¹³⁰

Including the Latin evidence, it becomes clear that *Iunia* was a common female name in Roman antiquity. It is found, for example, in Cicero (*Letters to Friends* XV.8), Pliny the Younger (*Letters* VII.19), Suetonius (*Gaius Caligula*, IV.12), and Tacitus (*Annals* III.76). In addition to its presence in Latin literature, the female name also appears more than 250 times in Latin inscriptions found in Rome.¹³¹ Junia might not have been a popular Greek name but it certainly was a popular Latin name,¹³² usually given to a family member or slave/freedwoman of the *gens Iunius*,¹³³ “a distinguished Roman

¹²¹ Exceptions are the following manuscripts: MSS 1962, 1908, and 1942 (eleventh–twelfth century) all add Chrysostom’s comment to the verse identifying the person clearly as a woman (Arzt, “Iunia,” 89–91).

¹²² Thorley, “Junia,” 20.

¹²³ Ibid., 20–3; cf. Arzt, “Iunia oder Iunias,” 94f; for Latin cf. Epp, *Junia*, 36–8; for Coptic cf. Plisch, “Die Apostelin Junia,” 477–8.

¹²⁴ The variant is found for example in one of the oldest papyri P⁴⁶, and in MSS 606, 1718, and 2685, as well as in many Latin translations and the translation into the Coptic dialect Bohairic (Arzt, “Iunia oder Iunias,” 87–95).

¹²⁵ E.g. Julia, the daughter of Caesar (Plutarch, *Caesar*, XIV.7.), Julia Augusta, the wife of Augustus (Philo, *Embassy*, 319.), and several other female members of the Julio-Claudian dynasty.

¹²⁶ Fàbrega, “Junia(s),” 49; cf. Plisch, “Die Apostelin Junia,” 477; Jewett, *Romans*, 950; contra Aegidius of Rome (cf. footnote 59) who read the name male in the context of Romans 16:7 showing the same scruples concerning a female apostle as his nineteenth and twentieth century successors.

¹²⁷ Moo, *Romans*, 922.

¹²⁸ Belleville, “Ἰουνίαν,” 241.

¹²⁹ Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows*, 183–91.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 200–4.

¹³¹ Lampe, *Christians at Rome*, 176.

¹³² Looking at the numbers (250 occurrences compared to 21) much more popular than the name *Iunianus* (cf. footnote 96) and also better supported than the Hebrew name *Yēhūnnī*, a name proposed by Wolters as the background of IOYNIAN (Wolters, “IOYNIAN and *Yēhūnnī*,” 407). Though his hypothesis that IOYNIAN is the Hellenised transliteration of *Yēhūnnī* is well argued, there seems to be no reason to prefer this rarely attested male name over the widely attested female name Junia, especially not as it is “nearly identical and in some cases indistinguishable from a feminine Roman name” (Lin, “Junia: An Apostle before Paul,” 194, n.13). Paul, as a Roman citizen familiar with the Roman naming conventions and writing to Rome, would have avoided to use a transliteration of a male Hebrew name which by the addressees of the letter could be easily confused with a female Latin name.

¹³³ Lampe, “Iunia/Iunias,” 132f.

family.”¹³⁴ Junia, therefore, was a natural reading for a first century audience, not just for those who knew the person but also for those who were not familiar with her. Moreover, as the example of Junia Theodora has shown, “ancient readers were familiar with a variety of forms of leadership of women”¹³⁵ despite the restrictions placed on women in society. So, contrary to later interpreters, there was no need for a first century audience to adjust the name due to role the person is given in the context.

But what about the masculine form Ἰουνίας/*Iunias*, could this name have been a natural reading as well? Apart from the mention in Pseudo-Epiphanius, this name does neither appear in Greek or Latin literature, nor in inscriptions or papyri.¹³⁶ As the name is unknown outside of the context of Romans 16:7, “the Junias theory is an argument from silence.”¹³⁷ The likelihood that evidence for the male name Junias will ever be found is extremely slight due to the existence of a male counterpart of *Iunia* in Latin, the very common name *Iunius*,¹³⁸ also found frequently in its Greek transliteration Ἰούνιος.¹³⁹ Thorley is adamant that in light of the name Junius Ἰουνίαν cannot be a male name;¹⁴⁰ it must be, as Bauckham states, the “feminine equivalent of Junius.”¹⁴¹

6 Conclusion

In summary, it can be said that of the three grammatically possible forms of IOYNIAN found in the history of interpretation

- one (the masculine short-form Ἰουνιᾶν) was a theoretical construction reiterated by scholars (especially in the nineteenth century) dealing with the lack of evidence for a male name Junias and struggling with the concept of a female apostle due to the generally accepted views on women’s roles at their time;
- another (the feminine form Ἰουνίαν) is the Greek transcription of a very common female Latin name, namely *Iunia* connected to the *gens Iunius*; as well attested as a variety of leading roles of women in the first century,
- the third one (the masculine form Ἰουνίαν) is an otherwise unattested Greek name or, if understood as Latin name, a redundant construct as there is a common and well-known male equivalent of *Iunia* in Latin, namely *Iunius* assumed by interpreters for whom women in leading positions were unthinkable (Pseudo-Epiphanius, Luther).

Both male interpretations lack evidence to support their existence. The female form, on the other hand, is widely attested outside of the New Testament and, consequently, is not just the wishful reading of female scholars like Brooten but the most natural reading of the text. In light of this evidence, there is not just no good reason to replace the known female name Junia for a hypothetical male name Junias,¹⁴² there is not even the slightest reason to even mention a male alternative to Junia. To quote a famous fictional detective, “when you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, *however improbable*, must be the truth.”¹⁴³ The truth in this matter is, *however improbable* it still

¹³⁴ Lampe, *Christians at Rome*, 176.

¹³⁵ Hylan, *Women in the New Testament World*, 165.

¹³⁶ Arzt, “Junia oder Iunias,” 83.

¹³⁷ Schulz, “Junia or Junias,” 109.

¹³⁸ The *Oxford Classical Dictionary* lists 19 men named *Iunius* living between 100 BCE and 100 ACE (765–7), most famous among them Iunius Brutus Marcus who “joined, and *ex officio* took the lead in, the widespread conspiracy that led to Caesar’s assassination” (766).

¹³⁹ Most prominently in Plutarch’s *Lives*.

¹⁴⁰ Thorley, “Junia,” 24.

¹⁴¹ Bauckham, *Gospel Women*, 167.

seems to some,¹⁴⁴ considering all the evidence at hand, that *the only possible interpretation of IOYNIAN* is to read it as the female name Junia.¹⁴⁵

There might not yet be “universal” agreement on the “Junia” reading as Lin suggests but she is right to point out that even “dissenting voices” have changed their opinion in recent years,¹⁴⁶ swayed by the evidence not a change in their perception of women’s roles. This can be exemplified by the different evaluation of the IOYNIAN issue in the first and second edition of Schreiner’s *Romans* commentary. Despite already leaning towards the female reading in his first edition, Schreiner still emphasises that concerning the gender question “*certainty is impossible*.”¹⁴⁷ 20 years later, considering developments after his first edition, he concludes that “it is *almost certain* that Junia was a woman,” though he still doubts that she was an apostle having “the same level of authority” as the Twelve or Paul.¹⁴⁸

Significant changes have also been made in critical texts and more importantly translations which enables a wider public to (re-)discover Junia. Though the male reading still is found both in the main text and as alternative in footnotes,¹⁴⁹ the short form is no longer part of the main text in critical New Testament editions and the female reading has become the main reading in various translations:

- The SBL Greek New Testament (2010) has Ἰουνίαν in the main text though it still mentions the unattested form Ἰουνιᾶν in the footnotes. The name is rendered Ἰουνίαν in the Tyndale House Greek New Testament (2017) and no footnote is given. The latest editions of the UBS (fifth edition) and the NA (twenty eighth edition) have Ἰουνίαν in the main text and the female variant reading Ἰουλίαν in the footnote.
- The Today’s New International Version (TNIV) published in the same year as Epp (2005) already reads “Junia,” as does the latest edition of the New International Version (NIV, 2011). Three other English translations not yet included in Epp, the English Standard Version (ESV, first published 2001, latest edition 2016), the New English Translation (NET, first published 2005, latest edition 2017), and the Revised New Jerusalem Bible (RNJB, 2019) have “Junia” in the main text and “Junias” in the footnotes.
- Even more significant is the change that happened in German translations. From 1522 up to the 1984 edition, “Junias” was the only reading of the *Lutherbibel*. “Junia” made her entrance into a footnote in its 1999 revision, and is now the only reading of the latest edition (2017). The *Zürcher Bible* going back to Zwingli reads “Junias” from 1531 up to the 1931 edition which was the standard version until the latest edition (2007) which reads “Junia.” The *Einheitsübersetzung* has changed from “Junias” in its 1980 edition to “Junia” in its 2016 edition. The two newest German translations the *Neue Genfer Übersetzung* (2011) and the *Basisbibel* (2012) both have “Junia” in the main text, and the *Neue Genfer Übersetzung* mentions “Junias” in the footnote.¹⁵⁰

142 Stuhlmacher, *Römer*, 219.

143 Sherlock Holmes in Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Sign of Four*, chapter 6.

144 Piper and Grudem conclude concerning the gender question that “the evidence is indecisive” clearly favouring the male reading as they refer to the person as “Junias” throughout the paragraph on Romans 16:7 (Piper and Grudem, “Central Concerns,” 79–81) and there are only slight concessions to the growing consensus that Junia in fact was a woman in the 2016 reprint of their article – the evidence is now deemed “inconclusive” and the person is referred to as “Junia(s)” (Piper and Grudem, *50 Questions*, 58).

145 Even if evidence for one of the masculine forms was found, the female reading would still be much more likely.

146 Lin, “Junia: An Apostle before Paul,” 193.

147 Schreiner, *Romans*, 796, 1998 (emphasis mine).

148 Schreiner, *Romans*, 769f., 2018 (emphasis mine); cf. Burer and Wallace, “Was Junia really an Apostle,” 78; and Köstenberger, “Women in Mission,” 231, who as critics of an interpretation of Junia as a female apostle nevertheless acknowledge that “Junia” is a more likely reading than “Junia.”

149 The male reading is the only reading given in the Revised Standard Version (RSV) and the New Jerusalem Bible (NJB), it is found in the main text of the New American Standard Bible (NASB) with “Junia” given as alternative in a footnote, and it is mentioned in footnotes of the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) and the New Living Translation (NLT) as an alternative to the female reading given in the main text.

150 The male reading is still found in the latest edition of the *Schlachter* (2000) without the feminine alternative and in the *rev. Elberfelder* with the feminine alternative in its 2006 edition.

It seems that after centuries of absence or banishment to footnotes, Junia who was lost in translation, slowly regains her place in the text, and rightly so not because of a shift in the perception of women's role in the church or in society but because of conclusive evidence.

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