

Junia, a Female Apostle: An Examination of the Historical Record

DENNIS J. PREATO

Greet Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Jews who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was. (Rom 16:7 NIV)

Romans 16:7 presents two interpretive issues. First, was the person named *Iounian*, the form of the name in Rom 16:7, a man or a woman? Second, what is the meaning of *episēmoi en tois apostolois*: was *Iounian* counted as “highly regarded among the apostles” or only “highly regarded by the apostles”? This article serves two main purposes: First, to summarize in one place the arguments regarding Junia’s sex and apostleship. Second, to update the data relating to these arguments, especially regarding the several English Bible translations made available since scholars such as Bernadette Brooten, Linda Belleville, and Eldon Epp brought the issue to the fore.¹ Over the last few decades, many Bible translations have been published and older ones revised to improve accuracy, replace obsolete words, correct translation errors, or appeal to different audiences. These newer translations, along with a careful examination of the historical record, provide conclusive evidence that Junia was indeed a female apostle.

Support for Junia being a Woman

Part of resolving the first issue is that the name translated Junia(s) appears only once in the Greek NT. Further, the Greek form used in Rom 16:7, *Iounian*, depending on how it is accented, has been understood as referring either to a woman named Junia or to a man named Junias. More specifically, *Iounian* ends with an “n” because in Rom 16:7 it is a direct object and therefore in the accusative case, and no NT occurrence of the name gives us an example in a different case. As a result, accentuation is an important factor. But the oldest Greek NT manuscripts contained no accents (accents did not become common until the ninth century). Paul himself certainly did not include accents in his letters.

Bible Translations Historically Render *Iounian* as Female

Bible commentators prior to the thirteenth century unanimously favor the female name, Junia. Moving forward, an overwhelming majority of Bible translations from the late 1300s through the mid-1800s translate *Iounian* as a woman, not as a man. These Bibles include: Wycliffe (1382, 1390²), Göttingen Gutenberg Bible³ (1454), Erasmus Greek-Latin NT (1519), Tyndale (1525), Coverdale (1535), Matthew (1537), Great Bible (1539–41), Taverner (1539), Geneva NT (1557), Bishops (1568), Spanish “Bear” Bible (1569), Rheims (1582), Geneva Bible (1583–99), Hutter Polyglot (1599), Reina-Valera⁴ (1602, 1858, 1909), King James Version (1611), Giovanni Diodati (1649), Wycliffe NT (1731), Webster (1833), Murdock NT (1852), and Julia Smith (1876).

Early twentieth-century translations that understand Junia to be a woman include: Weymouth (1903), Montgomery NT (1924), Riveduta (1927), Lamsa Bible (1933), and Bible in Basic English (1949). Later twentieth-century Bibles that also present Junia as a woman include:⁵ CJB, GNT, GW, HCSB, ISV, KJ21, NCV, NIRV, NIVUK,

NLT, NKJV, NRSV, NRSVA, NRSVACE, NRSVCE, REB, TMB, WE. Since 2000, there have been at least thirty new translations or revisions that translate *Iounian* as Junia. These include: AENT, BRG, CEB, CSB, EHV, EOB, ERV, ESV, EMTV, EXB, JMNT, JUB, MEV, MOUNCE, NABRE, NET, NMB, NHEB, NIV, NTE, NOG, NRO6, OEB, OJB, OSB, LEB, TNIV, TPT, TLV, WEB.

Revisions of Existing English Translations Now Render *Iounian* as Female

Several Bibles that once read *Iounian* as a male and thus translated it Junias have since revised their translations to read Junia. The 1978 and 1984 New International Version (NIV) originally presented this person as Junias; however, the 2011 revision of the NIV reads Junia, without any footnoted male alternative. This is a meaningful change and acknowledges without reservation that Junia was female.

The 1970 New English Bible (NEB, and its prior 1961 NT) reads, “Andronicus and Junias [Footnote: “Or: Junia; Some witnesses read: Julia, or Julias.”] . . . They are eminent among the apostles.”⁶ Completely revised in 1989 as the Revised English Bible (REB), the text now reads Junia with no alternative offered.

The 1970 Roman Catholic New American Bible reads, “Andronicus and Junias. . . they are outstanding apostles,” with no footnote.⁷ The 2001 revision, New American Bible Revised Edition (NABRE, as well as a prior revision) now reads: “Greet Andronicus and Junia. . . they are prominent among the apostles.” Their footnote states: “The name Junia is a woman’s name. One ancient Greek manuscript and a number of ancient versions read the name ‘Julia.’ Most editors have interpreted it as a man’s name, Junias.” This comment about the prominence of Junias is strange, given that the Catholic Rheims translation of 1582 reads Julia and the vast majority of translations past and present print Junia.

The American Standard Version (ASV) of 1901 reads, “Junias . . . who are of note among the apostles,” and footnotes, “or Junia.” The Revised Standard Version (RSV) is a revision of the ASV. Both the 1952 and 1971 editions of the RSV read, “Junias . . . they are men of note among the apostles,” with no footnote. The inclusion of “they are men” is a biased addition to the original text. Yet the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) of 1989, a complete revision of the RSV, now reads, “Junia . . . they are prominent among.” It footnotes: “or *Junias*; other ancient authorities read *Julia*.” The NRSV translators corrected the gender in the main text but then created confusion by offering an optional male reading.

The English Standard Version (ESV 2001) is another revision of the 1971 RSV. It reads, “Junia . . . they are well known to the apostles.” An ESV footnote reads, “Or *Junias*.” The ESV represents the sex correctly in the main text, but then translates Andronicus and Junia as simply being “known to the apostles” and not “among the apostles” as the RSV and ASV previously did. Why did they do this? Perhaps it is because the ESV is unapologetically complementarian.⁸ While complementarians now accept that Junia was female, apparently many are unable to intellectually support the notion

that a woman could serve as an apostle.⁹ Acknowledging a female apostle would weaken their claim that women are restricted from full ministry in the church.

Manuscript and Other Ancient Evidence Support Iounian as Female

Based on overwhelming manuscript support, the fourth (UBS4 1998) and fifth (UBS5 2014) editions of the United Bible Societies' *Greek New Testament* read Ἰουνία (Iounían, accented to mean Junia). Indeed, these UBS editions assign this reading the level of absolute certainty in a footnote.¹⁰ *The Greek New Testament: SBL Edition* (2010) and the twenty-eighth edition of the Nestle-Aland edition, titled *Novum Testamentum Graece* (2012), also opt for Ἰουνία (Iounían, Junia). The same is true of the 2005 *New Testament in the Original Greek: Byzantine Textform* and *The Greek New Testament* produced at Cambridge University's Tyndale House in 2017.¹¹ These editions account for essentially all Greek NTs in use today. Support for Junia is not limited to Greek manuscripts; the Latin Vulgate reads: *Salutate Andronicum et Iuniam . . . nobiles in Apostolis*. *Iuniam* is the feminine form of Junia in Latin, and *nobiles in apostolis* means "honorable among the apostles." Thus, it is clear that Junia is supported by an impressive list of manuscripts of various kinds and over the centuries, as well as by the leading scholars who have produced these editions of the NT.¹²

A minority of manuscripts support an alternative female name, Julia.¹³ P46, a papyrus manuscript from AD 200–250, is the earliest witness to Romans. Because it has Julia at Rom 16:7, it represents the earliest testimony in support of a female name. The third-century Coptic, some manuscripts of the fourth-century Latin Vulgate, and certain fifth-century Latin manuscripts provide additional early support for a female name by reading Julia.

Thirty-eight editions of the Greek NT, from Erasmus (1516) to Eberhard Nestle (1920), use the name Ἰουνία (Iounían), indicating feminine gender by accentuation. There is only one exception from those centuries: Henry Alford in the nineteenth century uses the masculine form Ἰουνιάς (Iounián) but also puts the feminine form in a footnote.¹⁴

In the first century AD, the name Junia appears in inscriptions located in Ephesus, Didyma, Lydia, Troas, and Bithynia, as well on tombstones in and around Rome. A prominent real-life example is a woman named Junia, the half-sister of Brutus, the legendary Roman general.¹⁵ Bernadette Brooten writes: "The female Latin name Junia occurs over 250 times among inscriptions from ancient Rome alone. Further, the ancient translations and the earliest manuscripts with accents support rendering *Iounian* as Junia."¹⁶ Peter Lampe made the same claim, and Bruce Metzger agrees that Junia is well attested in ancient literature.¹⁷ The existence of the name Junia in Greek and Latin inscriptions, literature, tombstones, and even as the name of a well-known person, provide convincing evidence supporting the claim that Junia was a common name. The same cannot be said, however, for Junias as a common man's name.

Church Fathers Support Junia as a Female Apostle

John Chrysostom (AD 347–407), bishop of Constantinople, wrote a series of homilies that have been preserved. In commenting on Rom 16:7, Chrysostom praised Junia as an outstanding apostle:

Greet Andronicus and Junia . . . who are outstanding among the apostles: To be an apostle is something great! But to be outstanding among the apostles—just think what a wonderful song of praise that is! They were outstanding on the basis of their works and virtuous actions. Indeed, how great the wisdom of this woman must have been that she was even deemed worthy of the title of apostle.¹⁸

Chrysostom not only praised Junia as a female apostle but also praised the service of other Christian women. Reflecting on Paul's greeting of Mary in Rom 16:6 he wrote:

A woman again is honored and proclaimed victorious! Again, are we men put to shame. Or rather, we are not put to shame only, but have even an honor conferred upon us. For an honor we have, in that there are such women among us, but we are put to shame, in that we men are left so far behind by them. . . . For the women of those days were more spirited than lions.¹⁹

Chrysostom's positive comments about Junia and Mary are particularly convincing and supportive of women who ministered, especially considering his misogynistic views.²⁰ Indeed, the attitude of the church fathers toward women was tragic.²¹

Origen of Alexandria (AD 185–254), a theologian and biblical commentator, understood the name to be feminine (Junia or Julia).²² Complementarians, in an attempt to prove otherwise, suggest that Origen, according to Rufinus's translation of his commentary published by Jacques-Paul Migne, reads the masculine name, Junias.²³ However, one complementarian scholar joins in doubting this claim of a masculine name, noting that Migne's text (produced in the 1800s) is notoriously corrupt and probably in error. He believes Origen apparently read a feminine name, citing the work of Brooten and Lampe.²⁴ In short, Origen acknowledged a female *Iounian* despite his misogynistic statements.²⁵

In addition to Origen and Chrysostom, other Greek fathers and commentators unanimously understood Junia to be a female apostle, including Theodoret of Cyrhus (ca. 393–466); Catena on the Epistle to the Romans 519,32 (fifth century); Oecumenius (sixth century); Chronicon Paschale (seventh century); John of Damascus (ca. 676–749); and Theophylact (1050–1108).²⁶ Latin fathers from the fourth through the twelfth centuries were likewise unanimous in recognizing that *Iounian* was a woman who was notable among the apostles.²⁷

Brooten writes: "To the best of my knowledge, no commentator on the Text until Aegidius of Rome (1245–1316) took the name to be masculine. Aegidius simply referred to the two persons in Romans 16:7 as 'those honorable men' without any explanation."²⁸ Why did he make this change in 1298? Aegidius, a contemporary of Pope Boniface VIII, probably complied with Boniface's desire to limit the power and influence of women in the church.²⁹ Douglas Moo agrees that commentators before the thirteenth century were unanimously in favor of a female translation.³⁰ The evidence for Junia is so compelling that even complementarian scholars are now conceding the *Iounian* in Rom 16:7 is feminine.³¹

Bible Translations Rendering *Iounian* as Male

Reformation-era Bible translations tended to read *Iounian* as female. Luther's 1522 NT stands as an exception and reads masculine, though his translation was based on Erasmus's 1521 Greek NT, which clearly has the female accentuation.³² Perhaps Luther's well-known prejudice against women in ministry affected his translation. Unfortunately, Luther's influence extended to other translations. From that point forward German, Dutch, and French translations of *Iounian* were consistently masculine, while Italian and Spanish remained feminine.³³ Not until the latter half of the 1800s was there a noticeable change in English translations from Junia to Junias. These Bibles included the Revised Version (RV 1881); Young's Literal (1862, 1898 by Robert Young³⁴); DARBY Bible (1890 by John Darby³⁵); Douay-Rheims (DRA 1899 Catholic version); and American Standard Version (ASV 1901).

The few mid-twentieth-century (1950–1999) English Bibles that read Junias, excluding those revised to now read Junia,³⁶ include The New Testament in Modern English (1958–1972 by J. B. Phillips); New American Standard Bible (NASB 1960–1995); The Amplified Bible Classic Edition (AMPC 1965, 1987); New Jerusalem Bible (NJB 1985, a revision of the 1966 Catholic JB); The Living Bible (1971 paraphrase by Kenneth Taylor); The Message (1993 by Eugene Peterson); and the Contemporary English Version (CEV 1995). Both the NASB and CEV footnote an alternative translation of Junia or Julia.

Since the year 2000, two translations have rendered *Iounian* as a man: The Voice (VOICE 2012) and the Amplified Bible (AMP 2015, a complete revision of the 1987 AMPC). The AMP text reads Junias; however, two footnotes strongly suggest it should read Junia.³⁷

How Bible Translators Changed the Translation from Female to Male

On what basis did the later 1800s translations suddenly change the gender of *Iounian*? For example, the 1881 RV is a British revision of the King James Version based on the Greek NTs produced in 1881 by B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort and in 1857 by Samuel P. Tregelles.³⁸ Yet those same Greek testaments accented *Iounian* as a woman's name.³⁹ Young used much the same text as used by the KJV for his 1862 translation, and his 1898 revision was based on Westcott-Hort. Darby also used Tregelles, as did the RV. Likewise, the ASV, which was a minor American revision of the RV, kept the status quo by using Westcott-Hort and Tregelles. To be clear, the editions of the Greek NT used as a textual basis for these translations do not support a male reading; therefore, one must question the motives of these English translators. Given the issue of suffrage, which was controversial during this same era, some form of bias against women played a part in how these Bibles came to read Junias rather than Junia.

On a worldwide basis, the right of women to vote was a long, contentious battle that took many decades to resolve. In the United Kingdom, women were barred from voting by the Reform Act of 1832, and it was not until 1928 that women had the same voting rights as men. During this time, the RV, Young's, and Darby's translations were published in the UK. In the United States, women finally earned the right to vote in 1920 after nearly 100 years of advocacy, during which time the ASV was published. For decades,

many argued against women's suffrage, but one voice in the US stood out. Horace Bushnell, an influential American theologian and minister, wrote a rambling book in 1869 in which he argued that women were not created or called to govern. Nor should they have the right to vote. He predicted: "If women started voting, their brains would swell, and they would eventually lose their femininity and their morals."⁴⁰ Other voices argued, among other claims: that it was not their divine prerogative, that mothers should stay in their places doing what God intended for them, that their husbands voted for them, and that women were inferior to men. Such long held prejudice against women from within the church, in society in general, and efforts to prevent women from voting may have contributed to the bias reflected in how those Bible translations changed the gender of *Iounian* from female to male without textual support!

In commenting on the translations from the 1940s to 1970s, Belleville suggests two reasons a shift to the masculine was made: The first is bias, since a "feminine name is consistently found in earlier translations." The second is the change in how modern editions of the Greek NT accented *Iounian* before 1998. Belleville describes how the Nestle-Aland editions from 1927–1993 and United Bible Societies editions from 1966–1993 changed the accentuation, and thus the gender, from the feminine accented Ἰουνίαν (*Iounían*) to the masculine Ἰουνιᾶν (*Iounián*) because of their bias: "The rationale given by the majority opinion in the most recent edition of Bruce Metzger's *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* is the unlikelihood that a woman would be among those styled 'apostles.'"⁴¹ Fortunately, that error was subsequently corrected. The UBS 1998 *Greek New Testament*, fourth revised ed., 3rd printing, correctly accents *Iounian* as Ἰουνίαν (*Iounían*), indicating a female Junia.

Manuscript and Ancient Evidence Supporting a Male Gender is Late

Support for the male name Junias supposedly comes from later manuscripts dated from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. However, these would have accent marks reflecting a scribe's interpretation (opinion) that *Iounian* was a masculine name.⁴² Their reasoning goes something like this: How could a female ever be an apostle? Therefore, *Iounian* must have been a male! But manuscripts from this late date do not provide any justification to support a male reading. Contrary to the impressive list of ancient support for a female name, there is no support for a male reading in the latest Greek NTs. In fact, many scholars, including Brooten, Lampe, Leonard Swidler, Metzger, and Dianne McDonnell, state the male name Junias is unattested in ancient Greek and Latin writings.⁴³

Complementarians John Piper and Wayne Grudem performed a search of early Greek literature and found only three examples of Junia as a woman's name.⁴⁴ This is not surprising since Junia is a Latin name, not a Greek name! Their search was limited, inconclusive, and inaccurate. It does not prove that Junia was not a common name in ancient writings, and it is in opposition to the actual physical evidence mentioned earlier. Belleville performed the same database search and found seven names, not three.⁴⁵ However, the significance of Piper and Grudem's search is

that *they could not cite even one example of a man named Junias*. James Walters agrees: “Researchers have been unable to locate a single example of the male name Junias in ancient literature or inscriptions, either Latin or Greek.”⁴⁶ R. S. Cervin also states that Junias is not found on any inscription, public monument, graffito, or in any literary document.⁴⁷

Evidence for a Male Apostle: A Mistaken Church Leader

Complementarians have stated that Epiphanius, bishop of Salamis, Cyprus (315–403) compiled an *Index of Disciples*, in which he writes: “Iounias, of whom Paul makes mention, became bishop of Apameia of Syria.” According to them, Epiphanius wrote “of whom” using a masculine pronoun, thereby indicating that he thought *Iounias* was a man.⁴⁸ The reliability of this evidence is in doubt because, in the same passage, Epiphanius also thought Prisca (Priscilla) was a man.⁴⁹ Ascribing any importance to what Epiphanius may have thought, even after admitting and footnoting that Epiphanius was also confused with Priscilla’s gender, remains a significant weakness in the complementarian argument. Piper and Grudem, for example, state, “However, we are perplexed about the fact that in the near context of the citation concerning Junias, Epiphanius [sic] also designates Prisca as a man mentioned in Romans 16:3, even though we know from the New Testament that she is a woman.”⁵⁰ Perhaps it is their long-held bias against women in ministry that was controlling their thinking. Certainly, that was the case for Epiphanius himself, who displayed his disdain for women by writing: “The female sex is easily seduced, weak and without much understanding. The Devil seeks to vomit out this disorder through women. . . . We wish to apply masculine reasoning and destroy the folly of these Women.”⁵¹ Epiphanius’s misogynist beliefs about women no doubt colored his thinking and writings.

Support for Junia Being “Among the Apostles”

Bible Translations Historically Render Iounian as “Among the Apostles”

Virtually all English translations have rendered *episēmoi en tois apostolois* as “among the apostles,” meaning they were apostles.⁵² Eighty-three translations, including some non-English translations, are listed below.⁵³

- “Ancient [ancient] Apostles” (Coverdale 1535)
- “Distinguished among the apostles” (Berean Study Bible: BSB)
- “Distinguished among the sent” (Julia Smith)
- “Eminent among the apostles” (ECB, REB)
- “Famous apostles” (Luther 1522)
- “Held in high esteem among the apostles” (AMPC)
- “Highly respected among the apostles” (NLT)
- “Leaders among the apostles” (NIRV)
- “Noble among the apostles” (Wycliffe Bible 1382, 1390, Rheims 1582)
- “Notable among the apostles” (DLNT, Geneva 1583, 1599, Hutter Polyglot 1599, EMTV, MNT 1924, HNV, NHEB, NRo6, WEB)
- “Of note among the legates” (Murdock 1852 Syriac Peshito Version)

- “Noted among the Apostles” (BBE)
- “Noteworthy among the apostles” (MEV)
- “Of note among the apostles” (ASV, BLB, BRG, DRA, Darby, GND 1649, JUB, KJV 1611, KJ21, MKJV, NKJV, OEB, OSB, Rivedu ta, RV, RSV, TMB, WBT 1833, Weymouth, YLT)
- “Outstanding among the apostles” (CSB, EOB, Latin Vulgate, NASB, NIV, NIVUK, OJB, TNIV)
- “Outstanding and well-known apostles” (TPT)
- “Outstanding apostles” (NAB, NJB)
- “Outstanding leaders” (MSG)
- “Prominent among the apostles” (CEB, GW, ISV, NABRE, NOG, NRSV, NRSVA, NRSVACE, NRSVCE)
- “Some of the most important . . . ones Christ sent out” (ERV, footnote: “Literally, the apostles”)
- “Very important apostles” (NCV)
- “Well known among the apostles” (GNB, GNT, Lamsa 1933, NSB, NTE)
- “Well known among the emissaries” (CJB, JMNT, TLV, VOICE, footnote: “Literally, apostles”)
- “Well regarded among the apostles” (NMB)
- “Well taken among the Apostles” (Tyndale, Matthews, Great Bible, Taverner, Juggé’s Tyndale NT, Geneva NT, Bishop’s, all from the 1500s)

Few Translations Render Iounian as “Regarded By” or “Known To”

Only a few Bible translations render the Greek as “well known to the apostles” or some other exclusive phrase. These translations read: “highly regarded by the apostles” (EHV 2017), “noteworthy in the eyes of the apostles” (CSB 2017, a revision of the 2009 HCSB), “well known to the apostles” (ESV 2001, LEB 2012, MOUNCE 2011, NET 2005),⁵⁴ “held in high esteem in *the estimation of the apostles*” (AMP 2015, italics original). The AMP’s translation stands in opposition to its prior 1987 AMPC edition, which included Andronicus and Junias as “among the apostles.”

The majority of the translators of this small number of Bibles have aligned themselves with a complementarian view of Scripture. They reject Junia as being an apostle and are to varying degrees affiliated with conservative groups that oppose women in ministry leadership positions. One example is the EHV, a publication of the Wartburg Project and thus of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, which has a doctrinal statement that, among other restrictions, denies women the right to participate in any gathering which would involve authority over a man.⁵⁵ Therefore, this translation and the other six listed above reflect their complementarian position of excluding women from leadership roles in ministry.

Lexical and Scholarly Support for “Among the Apostles”

The standard NT lexicon provides only one meaning of *episēmoi en tois apostolois*, “outstanding among the apostles.”⁵⁶ The standard lexicon of Classical Greek defines *episēmos* (singular of *episēmoi*) as “having a mark on it” and therefore “notable, remarkable.”⁵⁷ The lexicon by Louw and Nida has “pertaining to being well known or outstanding,” rendering Rom 16:7 as “they are outstanding among

the apostles.”⁵⁸ Most recently, *The Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek* defines *episēmos* as “marked, distinguished, bearing a mark,” and therefore “distinguished, distinct, notable.”⁵⁹

Noted Greek scholar A. T. Robertson (1863–1934) states that the phrase *en tois apostolois* “naturally means that they are counted among the apostles in the general sense of Barnabas, James, the brother of Christ, Silas, and others. But it can mean simply that they were famous in the circle of the apostles in the technical sense.”⁶⁰ J. B. Lightfoot (1828–1889) agrees that the natural way to translate *episēmoi en tois apostolois* is “regarded as apostles.”⁶¹

F. F. Bruce (1910–1990) adds that, not only were they “well known to the apostles,” but they were “notable members of the apostolic circle.”⁶² Charles E. B. Cranfield (1915–2015) states it is “virtually certain” that the phrase means “outstanding among the apostles.” Walters, commenting on Cranfield’s remarks says, “this is the way the phrase was understood by all of the patristic writers and by most all modern commentators.”⁶³ James A. Witmer (1920–2007) explains that *episēmoi* literally means “having a mark [*sēma*] on them,” therefore they are “illustrious, notable, or outstanding” among the apostles.⁶⁴ These definitions describe Andronicus and Junia as people who “bear the mark” of an apostle.

Moo, a complementarian, concludes that it is more natural to translate the phrase *episēmoi en tois apostolois* as “esteemed among the apostles” and not “by the apostles” because with a plural object, the preposition *en* often means “among.” Had Paul wanted to convey that they were esteemed *by* the apostles, he would have written “the apostles” in the dative case and not preceded by a preposition, or he would have used the preposition *hupo* followed by “the apostles” in the genitive case. Moo also states that earlier interpreters would argue against Paul referencing a woman because they had difficulty in “imagining that a woman could hold such authority in the early church.”⁶⁵

Complementarian Support and Egalitarian Response for “Highly Regarded by”

Some complementarians have said that Andronicus and Junia were merely “held in high esteem by the apostles.” Piper and Grudem, for example, say they were held in high regard or that they were “of note among the apostles,” meaning they were well known before Paul was converted. No evidence is provided, and they conclude, “we cannot be certain.”⁶⁶ Such remarks are opinions without evidence. Another author has proposed that, if Junia was a woman apostle, then tension would be created because “apostles were the most authoritative messengers of God.” He implies that women could not serve God in this manner. He also states that Rom 16:7 is unclear but makes no attempt to explain why.⁶⁷

Craig Keener expresses serious doubt about any such interpretation, saying:

It is also unnatural to read the text as merely claiming that they had a high reputation with the apostles. Since they were imprisoned with him, Paul knows them well enough to recommend them without appealing to the other apostles, whose judgment he never cites on such matters. Paul nowhere limits the apostolic company to

the Twelve plus himself, as some have assumed (see especially 1 Cor. 15:5–11). Those who favor the view that Junia was not a female apostle do so because of their prior assumption that women could not be apostles, not because of any evidence in the text.⁶⁸

Belleville writes: “To say that Junia was ‘esteemed by’ or ‘prominent in the sight of the apostles’ is to ignore early Greek translations and commentaries. For example, the Vulgate, the standard Latin translation of the Western church, has ‘Junia . . . notable among the apostles (*nobiles in apostolis*).’”⁶⁹

Aída Besançon Spencer and other scholars make the grammatical point that “the Greek preposition *en* which is used here always has the idea of ‘within.’”⁷⁰ Greek textbooks point out that *en* followed by the dative normally means “in, on, among.” For example, *en tois* is translated as “among those” (1 Cor 2:6), and *en tois ethnesin* as “among the Gentiles” (Acts 15:12, 1 Cor 5:1, Gal 2:2, Col 1:27, 1 Pet 2:12). Where *en tois* is followed by a plural noun referring to a group of people, the word *en* is typically translated as “among.” However, that is what some complementarians try to argue against.

Michael Burer and Daniel Wallace argued in 2001 that the more likely meaning of the adjective *episēmoi* with the prepositional phrase *en tois apostolois* is “well known to the apostles” (the exclusive view), not “outstanding among the apostles” (the inclusive view).⁷¹ Three NT scholars have challenged their working thesis: Richard Bauckham in 2002, Epp in 2002 and 2005, and Belleville in 2005. All three scholars point out various serious weaknesses and errors in the evidence presented.⁷² These three evaluations “should put to rest any notion that [Rom 16:7] carried the sense of ‘well known to/esteemed by the apostles.’”⁷³ Belleville insists that, “primary usage of *en* and the plural dative (personal or otherwise) inside and outside the NT (with rare exception) is inclusive in/among and not exclusive ‘to’ . . .” (e.g., Matt 2:6, Acts 4:34, 1 Pet 5:1).⁷⁴ Belleville writes:

Burer and Wallace assume a conclusion not found in the evidence. Despite their assertions to the contrary, they fail to offer one clear biblical or extra-biblical Hellenistic example of an “exclusive” sense of *episēmoi en* and a plural noun to mean “well known to.” Burer and Wallace admit this early on, but then go on to conclude otherwise.⁷⁵

In 2015, Burer responds to the critical analysis and objections previously raised by the egalitarian scholars.⁷⁶ While a detailed analysis of Burer’s paper is beyond the scope of this article, a few observations should be noted. Burer quotes Chrysostom at least five times in his defense. What is quite revealing is Burer’s complete disregard of any patristic evidence and especially those comments from Chrysostom that Junia was an outstanding apostle! Bauckham considers it a “major error” to dismiss such evidence.⁷⁷ So does this writer. After all, Chrysostom and Origen, who gave testimony to Junia, were native speaking Greeks! It is amazing that certain complementarian scholars discount or overlook (purposely or otherwise) the reality that those early church leaders certainly knew Greek and the ancient culture beyond the comprehension of anyone living today. Yet they still

refuse to acknowledge the early church fathers' historical witness that Junia was indeed an outstanding apostle!

The Apostles' Mission

In light of the above arguments about Junia's gender and apostleship, a brief treatment of the nature of the apostolic mission will be helpful. Apostles were called to preach the word of God to the body of Christ. "And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers . . ." (1 Cor 12:28 NIV). Their mission was "to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith . . ." (Eph 4:12-13 NIV).

Who are the named apostles in Scripture? The first apostles were the Twelve that Jesus Christ appointed and sent out to preach, heal the sick, and cast out demons (Mark 3:14-15). However, the title "apostle" is not limited to the Twelve. Paul constantly refers to himself as an apostle and defends his calling throughout his letters, yet he was not one of the Twelve. Others specifically named as apostles include Matthias (Acts 1:26), Barnabas (Acts 14:14), Andronicus and Junia (Rom 16:7), Titus and his unnamed companion (2 Cor 8:23), James the Lord's

brother (Gal 1:19), and Epaphroditus⁷⁸ (Phil 2:25). Paul knew them and the extent of their service for Christ. He would hardly employ the designation "apostle" loosely.⁷⁹

Paul recognized Andronicus and Junia in his personal greeting to the Romans. He calls them his relatives or compatriots, and they were imprisoned together for their devotion to Christ in preaching the gospel. Paul knew Andronicus and Junia well and acknowledged them as exemplary apostles. As apostles, they were called by God, sent to preach, and probably ministered together as husband and wife⁸⁰ much like Prisca and Aquila (Rom 16:3-5a). They may well have been among the seventy(-two) sent out by the Lord (Luke 10:1-20).⁸¹

Concluding Comments

According to Scripture, Junia was a female apostle. The evidence is authoritative, compelling, diverse, and objective. The testimony of early manuscripts, statements of various church leaders through the twelfth century, lexical definitions, grammatical construction, scriptural examples, consistency of Bible translations from the 1300s onward, and extensive contemporary and past scholarship all provide conclusive evidence that Junia was a female apostle.

APPENDIX 1: BIBLE TRANSLATIONS RENDERING IOUNIAN AS JUNIA, IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER (1950-2017)		
Mid-twentieth Century: Eighteen Bibles	Twenty-first Century: Thirty-one Bibles	
Worldwide English New Testament (WE 1969)	Jubilee Bible (JUB 2000)	Names of God (NOG 2011)
New International Version Anglicized (NIVUK 1979)	World English Bible (WEB 2000)	New American Bible Revised Edition (NABRE 2011)
New King James Version (NKJV 1982)	English Standard Version (ESV 2001)	New International Version (NIV 2011)
New Century Version (NCV 1987)	English Majority Text Version (EMTV 2002)	New Testament for Everyone (NTE 2011)
New Revised Standard Version (NRSV 1989)	Orthodox Jewish Bible (OJB 2002)	BRG Bible (BRG 2012)
New Revised Standard Version, Anglicised (NRSVA 1989)	New English Translation (NET 2005)	Lexham English Bible (LEB 2012)
New Revised Standard Version, Anglicised Catholic (NRSVACE 1989)	Today's New International Version (TNIV 2005)	Modern English (MEV 2014)
Revised English Bible (REB 1989)	Easy-to-Read Version (ERV 2006)	Amplified Version (AMP 2015)
New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition (NRSVCE 1991)	Jonathan Mitchel NT (JMNT 2006)	Tree of Life Version (TLV 2015)
Good News Translation (GNT, Today's English Version, second ed. 1992)	Nuova Riveduta (NRO6 2006)	New Matthew Bible (NMB 2016)
21st Century King James (KJ21 1994)	Eastern/Greek Orthodox Bible NT (EOB 2007)	Christian Standard Bible (CSB 2017)
New International Reader's Version (NIRV 1995)	Orthodox Study Bible (OSB 2008)	The Passion Translation (TRT 2017)
GOD'S WORD (GW 1995)	New Heart English Bible (NHEB 2010)	Evangelical Heritage Version (EHV 2017-2018, NT and Psalms)
International Standard Version (ISV 1996)	Open English Bible (OEB 2010)	
New Living Translation (NLT 1996)	Aramaic English New Testament (AENT 2011)	
The Complete Jewish Bible (CJB 1998 by David Stern)	Common English Bible (CEB 2011)	
Third Millennium Bible (TMB 1998)	Expanded Bible (EXB 2011)	
Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB 1999-2009)	Mounce Reverse-Interlinear NT (MOUNCE 2011)	

May the eyes of the church be opened to accept this fundamental truth and its significant implication—women must be allowed to preach, teach, and minister as God calls them. No longer can women be excluded from ministry based on a few problematic and disputed passages. To do so is to deny the full redemptive work of Christ (Gal 3:28).

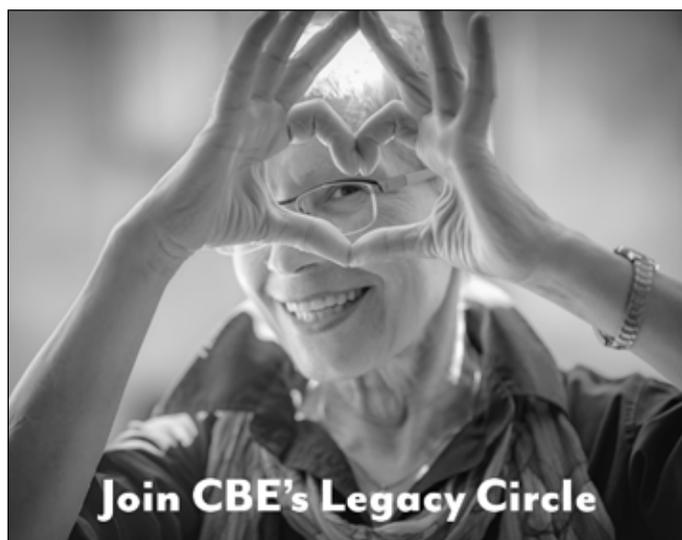
Notes

1. Bernadette Brooten, “Junia . . . Outstanding among the Apostles (Romans 16.7),” in *Women Priests: A Catholic Commentary on the Vatican Declarations*, ed. Leonard Swidler and Arlene Swidler (New York: Paulist, 1977); Linda Belleville, “Ἰουνίαν . . . ἐπισήμοι ἐν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις: A Re-examination of Romans 16.7 in Light of Primary Source Materials,” *NTS* 51, no. 2 (Apr 2005): 231–49; Eldon Epp, *Junia: The First Woman Apostle* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005). This article builds on the author’s earlier publication: Dennis J. Preato, “Junia, A Female Apostle, Resolving the Interpretive Issues of Romans 16:7,” *Priscilla Papers* 17, no. 2 (Spring 2003): 23–25.
2. Most of the translations listed from the 1390 Wycliffe to the 1731 Wycliffe are available at <http://bibles-online.net/>. The 1390 First English NT (Wycliffe) is written in Chaucer-style English. Wycliffe used the Vulgate (probably fourth century, which read Julia) as his translation basis.
3. The Göttingen Gutenberg Bible is available at <http://www.gutenbergdigital.de/gudi/eframes/>. Rom 16:7 is in fol. 255v.
4. Available at <https://www.biblegateway.com>.
5. The full titles for all abbreviations in this paragraph are given in Appendix 1.
6. Available at <http://katapi.org.uk/katapiNSBunix/NEB/NEBTextByBC.php?B=306&C=16>.
7. *Saint Joseph Edition of The New American Bible* (New York: Catholic, 1970), 194, approved by the Vatican, Sept 18, 1970. Unfortunately, Epp and Belleville incorrectly list the NAB (1970) as reading Junia when in fact it reads Junias. Cf. Epp, *Junia: The First Woman Apostle*, Appendix B, Table 3; Belleville, “Re-examination,” 237n.24.
8. “Literary ESV is Unapologetically Complementarian,” <https://cbmw.org/uncategorized/literary-esv-is-unapologetically-complementarian> (Feb 24, 2018).
9. E.g., Wayne Grudem, John Piper, Thomas Schreiner, Michael Burer, and Daniel Wallace.
10. Specifically, in 1998 the 3rd printing of the fourth edition made the change to Ἰουνίαν (*Iounían*, accented to mean Junia). The shared text of UBS5 and NA28 is available at <http://bibelwissenschaft.de/online-bibeln/greek-new-testament-ubs5/lesen-im-bibeltext/> and at <http://nestle-aland.com/en/read-na28-online/>.
11. Maurice A. Robinson and William G. Pierpont, eds., *The New Testament in the Original Greek: Byzantine Textform* (Southborough: Chilton, 2005); Dirk Jongkind and Peter Williams, eds., *The Greek New Testament, Produced at Tyndale House, Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).
12. UBS5 lists B² D² Ψ^{vid} 0150 33 81 104 256 263 365 424 436 459 1175 1241 1319 1573 1739 1852 1881 1912 1962 2127 2200 *Byz* [L] *Lect* Chrysostom (*without accents*: ⋈ A B* C D* F G P).
13. Namely, P⁴⁶ 6 it^{arb} Vulgate^{mss} cop^{bo} Eth Jerome.
14. Epp, *Junia: The First Woman Apostle*, 62–63.
15. Linda A. Belleville, “Women Leaders in the Bible,” in *Biblical Equality: Complementarity without Hierarchy*, ed. Ronald W. Pierce, Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, Gordon D. Fee, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2005), 117.
16. Bernadette Brooten, “Junia,” in *Women in Scripture*, ed. Carol Meyers (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 107.
17. Walters, “Phoebe and Junia(s),” 186.
18. Brooten, “Junia . . . Outstanding among the Apostles,” 141. Source: *In Epistolam ad Romanos*, Homilia 31, 2 (PG 60:669f.).
19. Leonard Swidler, *Biblical Affirmations of Woman* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1979), 299. Source: PG 51:668f.
20. Swidler, *Biblical Affirmations*, 343.
21. Ronald L. Dart, “The Christian Woman,” <http://borntowin.net/articles/the-christian-woman-article> (Feb 24, 2018). An excellent source of early church fathers’ misogynistic statements towards women.
22. Brooten, “Junia . . . Outstanding among the Apostles,” 141. Source: *Commentaria in Epistolam ad Romanos* 10, 26 (PG 14, 1281B); 10, 39 (PG 14, 1289A). The text printed in PG has *Junia* emended to *Junias*, but the manuscripts have *Junia* or *Julia*; Stanley Grenz, *Women in the Church: A Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1995), 95; Belleville, “Re-examination,” 235.
23. PG 14:1289; John Piper and Wayne Grudem, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, ed. Piper and Grudem (Wheaton: Crossway, 1991), 73.
24. Douglas Moo, *Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT 6 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 922.
25. Cf. Dart, “The Christian Woman.” Source: Origen, *Selecta in Exodus xviii.17*, PG 12:296f. See also J. Kevin Coyle, “The Fathers on Women and Women’s Ordination,” in *Women in Early Christianity* 14, ed. David M. Scholer (New York: Garland, 1983), 142.
26. Richard Bauckham, *Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 166; Belleville, “Re-examination,” 232.
27. Belleville, “Re-examination,” 236. Latin fathers included: Ambrose of Milan (339–397), Jerome (340–419), Primasius (d. after 552), Haymo of Halberstadt (d. 853), Rabanus Maurus of Mainz (c. 780–856), Sedulius-Scotus (fl. 848–858), Claudius of Turin (d. 927), Gullelus Abba (1085–1147/48), Hatto of Vercelli (924–961), Bruno of Querfurt (974–1006), LaFranc of Bec (1005–1089), Peter Abelard (1079–1142), Herveus Burgidolenis (c. 1080–1150), and Peter Lombard (c.1100–1160); see also Joseph Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB33 (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 737–38.
28. In *Epositio in Epistolam ad Romanos* 5 (PL 178, 973C), cited in Brooten, “Junia . . . Outstanding among the Apostles,” 141.
29. Dianne D. McDonnell, “Junia, A Woman Apostle,” <https://godswordtowomen.org/juniamcdonnell.htm> (Feb 24, 2018). This article discusses how Junia became known as a male during the papal reign of Boniface VIII.
30. Moo, *Epistle to the Romans*, 922.
31. Belleville, “Women Leaders in the Bible,” 117.
32. Cf. Erasmus’s 1521 Greek NT and Luther’s September 1522 German NT, <http://bibles-online.net>.
33. Belleville, “Re-examination,” 237.
34. Robert Young (1822–1888) was a Scottish publisher self-taught in various languages with no formal education.
35. John Darby (1820–1882) was a British scholar, a Calvinist, and an advocate of Dispensationalism.
36. Omitted are any Bibles that originally read Junias, but their revision now reads Junia, e.g., the 1966 TEV revised by the GNT in 1992), NEB (1961, 1970, by the REB in 1989), NAB (1970, by the NABRE), NIV (1984).
37. The AMP’s footnotes read: “a) Or Junia (feminine). There is a higher probability that the name is feminine; no masculine forms found in this or near time periods. b) The Greek and larger context favor this understanding; Andronicus and Junia are not identified as apostles here.”
38. Michael D. Marlowe, “English Revised Version (1881–1895),” <http://bible-researcher.com/erv.html>.
39. Epp, *Junia: The First Woman Apostle*, Appendix B, Table 1–2.
40. Horace Bushnell, *Women’s Suffrage: The Reform against Nature* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1869), 134–63.

41. Belleville, "Re-examination," 237–38. See also Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: United Bible Societies, 1994), 475.
42. Moo, *Epistle to the Romans*, 922.
43. Walters, "Phoebe and Junia(s)," 186.
44. Using the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* database; Piper and Grudem, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 72.
45. Belleville, "Re-examination," 234.
46. Walters, "Phoebe and Junia(s)," 186.
47. Catherine Clark Kroeger and Mary J. Evans, eds., *The IVP Women's Bible Commentary* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001), 645.
48. Piper and Grudem, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 72.
49. Moo, *Epistle to the Romans*, 922.
50. Piper and Grudem, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 84.
51. Dart, "The Christian Woman." Source: Epiphanius, *Adversus Collyridianos*, PG 42:74of.
52. Walters, "Phoebe and Junia(s)," 186.
53. Every translation listed above was reviewed. An excellent online source of historical Bibles starting with a handwritten 1390 English NT can be found at <http://www.bibles-online.net>. The 1841 English Hexapla compares all six of the most important ancient (1380–1611) English translations of the NT with the original Greek along the top. English words were spelled differently from today; "well" was spelled "wele" or "wel" and "among" was "amonge" or "amoge" (e.g., Tyndale 1525, etc.).
54. Their footnotes provide alternative translations: Or *are outstanding among* (HCSB, LEB), *they are noteworthy among the apostles* (CSB), Or *messengers* (ESV), Or "prominent, outstanding, famous" and "among the apostles" (NET). The HCSB and CSB are published by Holman Bible Publishers, which is affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention.
55. See their "Scriptural Principles of Man and Woman Roles," items 17 and 18, at <https://wels.net/about-wels/what-we-believe/doctrinal-statements/man-and-woman-roles/>.
56. BDAG 378.
57. LSJ s.v.
58. L&N s.v.
59. *The Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), s.v.
60. A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, vol. 4: *Epistles of Paul* (Hiawatha: Parsons, 1997), electronic edition.
61. Walter Schmithals, *The Office of Apostle in the Early Church*, trans. John E. Steely (New York: Abingdon, 1969), 62.
62. F. F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 298, 388.
63. Walters, "Phoebe and Junia(s)," 186.
64. John A. Witmer, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary, An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty: New Testament* (Hiawatha: Parsons, 1997), electronic edition.
65. Moo, *Epistle to the Romans*, 923.
66. Piper and Grudem, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 73.
67. Thomas R. Schreiner, "The Valuable Ministries of Women in the Context of Male Leadership: A Survey of Old and New Testament Examples and Teaching," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 221.
68. Craig S. Keener, *Paul, Women and Wives* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1992), 242, quoted in Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, *Good News for Women: A Biblical Picture of Gender Equality* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997), 195.
69. Belleville, "Women Leaders in the Bible," 118.
70. Aída Besançon Spencer, *Beyond the Curse* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1985), 104; F. F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 298, 388.
71. Michael H. Burer and Daniel B. Wallace, "Was Junia Really an Apostle? A Re-examination of Rom 16.7," *NTS* 47 (2001): 76–91.

72. Bauckham, *Gospel Women*; Epp, *Junia, The First Woman Apostle*; Linda Belleville, "Re-examination."
73. Epp, *Junia: The First Woman Apostle*, 78.
74. Belleville, "Re-examination," 243.
75. Belleville, "Re-examination," 244–45.
76. Michael H. Burer, "Episēmoi en tois Apostolois in Rom 16:7 as 'Well Known to the Apostles': Further Defense and New Evidence," *JETS* 58, no. 4 (2015): 731–55.
77. Bauckham, *Gospel Women*, 179.
78. Epaphroditus historically has been referred to as "your apostle," not "your messenger," e.g., Wycliffe (1380), Coverdale (1535), Matthew (1537), Taverner (1539), Great Bible (1541), Bishops (1568), Rheims (1582), Giovanni Diodati (1649) Wycliffe NT (1781), DRB (1898), YLT (1898), NAB (1970), WEB (2000).
79. Epp, *Junia: The First Woman Apostle*, 70; Bauckham, *Gospel Women*, 180.
80. Epp, *Junia: The First Woman Apostle*, 32.
81. Belleville, "Re-examination," 236. Belleville comments and footnotes that certain Latin authors, Haymo, Rabanus Maurus, Hatto of Vercelli, Bruno of Querfurt, Herveus Burgidolensis, speculated that "notable among the apostles" refers to the group of seventy-two that Jesus sent out.

DENNIS PREATO earned an MDiv from Bethel Seminary in San Diego, California. He has published and presented various articles on gender-related topics. He wishes to thank his wife, J. B. Preato (MDiv Summa Cum Laude from Bethel Seminary, MBA from Arizona State University), for her time reviewing and editing this article.



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