

FEMALE APOSTLESHIP IN ROMANS 16:7

by
Michael W. Harding¹

Willow Creek Community Church, one of the nation's largest and most influential churches, openly enforces egalitarian views on their staff and membership. In a four-page handout entitled, "The Elders' Response to the Most Frequently Asked Questions about Membership at Willow Creek," the church asks that all staff and membership "minimally be able to affirm with integrity...that they can joyfully sit under the teaching of women teachers at Willow Creek...submit to the leadership of women in various leadership positions...and refrain from promoting personal views [in regard to the above] in ways that would be divisive or disruptive."² One of the numerous arguments used by Willow Creek to justify their egalitarian policy is their interpretation of Romans 16:7. In their position paper the church states, "The name Junia has a feminine ending, and thus refers to a woman whom...Paul numbers among the apostles."³

Egalitarian scholars such as Linda Belleville and Eldon Epp have published well-documented journal articles on the identity and vocation of Ἰουνίαν ("Junia[s]") in Romans 16:7.⁴ Their arguments center primarily on the gender of the name. Belleville devotes eleven out of nineteen pages to the gender issue in her journal article. Epp argues for the feminine gender in fifty-five out of the sixty-four pages in his journal article. The clear implication by the authors is that if one can determine the gender of the *hapax* Ἰουνίαν, then the entire issue of female apostleship is resolved.⁵

¹Dr. Harding has served as the senior pastor of First Baptist Church of Troy, MI, since 1985.

²Cited in Wayne Grudem, "Willow Creek Enforces Egalitarianism: Policy Requires All Staff and New Members to Joyfully Affirm Egalitarian Views," *CBMW News* 2 (Dec 1997): 1.

³*Ibid.*, 4.

⁴Linda Belleville, "Ἰουνιᾶν...ἐπίσημοι ἐν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις: A Re-examination of Romans 16:7 in Light of Primary Source Materials," *New Testament Studies* 51 (April 2005): 231–49; Eldon J. Epp, "Text-Critical, Exegetical, and Socio-Cultural Factors Affecting the Junia/Junias Variation in Romans 16:7," *Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium* 161 (2002): 227–91; Eldon J. Epp, *Junia: The First Woman Apostle* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005).

⁵Approximately 85 of Epp's 98 pages in *Junia: The First Woman Apostle* deal with what is largely believed by most scribes, church Fathers, and Bible readers prior to the

Michael Burer and Daniel Wallace have argued, however, that the gender of the name is not the only point of debate in Romans 16:7.⁶ Conceding the probability that Ἰουνιᾶν may indeed be feminine, they suggest as a working hypothesis that the comparative collocation “outstanding among the apostles” would be more accurately rendered with an elative sense, “famous” or “well-known to the apostles.”⁷

In addition, another issue must be resolved—Paul’s use of the term “apostles.”⁸ Precisely what was Paul’s meaning with the term “apostles”? At times Paul uses ἀποστόλοις narrowly in reference to the twelve apostles and his own apostolic ministry to the Gentile churches. But at other times he also uses ἀποστόλοις in reference to traveling missionaries, emissaries, and envoys.⁹ If Andronicus and Junia(s) are simply a traveling missionary couple similar to the apostle Peter who traveled with his wife (1 Cor 9:5) or Aquila and Priscilla, then the egalitarian conclusions of women occupying all levels of leadership in the church become nothing more than special pleading.¹⁰

This article will demonstrate that the case for female apostleship in Romans 16:7 cannot be conclusively supported on the basis of lexical, syntactical, and theological grounds and that the traditional view of male apostleship, including its necessary implications for male leadership in the NT church, best harmonizes with the analogy of Scripture.

TRANSLATION AND CONTEXT OF ROMANS 16:7

Translation

Ἀσπάσασθε Ἀνδρόνικον καὶ Ἰουνιᾶν τοὺς συγγενεῖς μου καὶ

sixteenth century: that the person Paul greets was more than likely a woman called Junia. A mere 13 pages are devoted to the unresolved and far more important questions: Was she an apostle; and, if so, what does the word “apostle” mean in this context?

⁶Michael H. Burer and Daniel B. Wallace, “Was Junia Really an Apostle? A Re-examination of Rom 16.7,” *New Testament Studies* 47 (2001): 78–91.

⁷Ibid., 84.

⁸Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 924.

⁹J. B. Lightfoot, *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians* (reprint, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1957), 95–99.

¹⁰E.g., “A respectable number of women are singled out in the NT for their *ministerial standing* and accomplishments” (231, italics added); “Among the *leaders* recognized at Rome, Junia receives highest marks” (231, italics added); “The burden of proof lies with those who would claim otherwise.... The sole basis is a theological and functional predisposition against the naming of a woman among the first-century cadre of apostles” (248); “That there would be a female leader and church planter of such note in the apostolic ranks of the early church should come as no surprise against the backdrop of such a religio-cultural milieu” (249) [Belleville, “Re-examination of Romans 16:7,” 231–49]. Epp concludes, “that the assumed Pauline restriction on teaching in the church by women has disappeared” (“The Junia/Junias Variation in Romans 16:7,” 291).

συναιχμαλώτους μου, οἵτινές εἰσιν ἐπίσημοι ἐν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις, οἳ καὶ πρὸ ἐμοῦ γέγοναν ἐν Χριστῷ.¹¹

Greet Andronicus and Junia(s), my fellow Jews and fellow prisoners, who are well-known (highly regarded) to (by) the apostles, and they were in Christ before me. (author's translation)

Greet Andronicus and Junia, my compatriots and my fellow prisoners. They are well known to the apostles, and they were in Christ before me. (NET)

Greet Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners. They are well known to the apostles, and they were in Christ before me. (ESV)

Greet Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners, who are outstanding among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me. (NASB)

Greet Andronicus and Junias, my relatives who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was. (NIV)

Context

The last chapter of Romans contains thirty-three names of those to whom Paul was writing, as well as those who were in Corinth with Paul and joined him in sending greetings. Twenty-four of these people were in Rome (vv. 3–16).¹² Nine were in Corinth (vv. 21–24). There are also two unnamed women and an unspecified number of unnamed men. A brief survey of several key female names and their respective commendations will demonstrate that the descriptive roles of these women are consistent with a non-inclusive interpretation of the target phrase in Romans 16:7.

Phoebe

Phoebe is mentioned first as a *διάκονον* of the church and is thought to have delivered the epistle to the Roman church.¹³ More than

¹¹Barbara Aland, et al., eds., *The Greek New Testament*, 4th revised ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993), 564.

¹²The number is 26 if one counts the “households of Aristobulus and Narcissus,” though neither of them are personally greeted by Paul (vv. 10–11).

¹³“If Phoebe ministered to the saints, as is evident from verse 2, then she would be a *servant of the church* and there is neither need nor warrant to suppose that she occupied or exercised what amounted to an ecclesiastical office comparable to that of the diaconate” (John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 2 vols. in 1 [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968], 226). Morris understands *διάκονον τῆς ἐκκλησίας* in this context to be an official title (i.e., “deacons”) given to feminine church workers who assist with matters such as the baptism of women or anything that necessitated contact with women in their homes (Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988], 526). Moo comments that of the 28 uses of *διάκονος* in the NT, only 7 are translated as minister in the NIV and only in 3 of Paul's 20 uses does he refer to a

likely she served the church in Cenchrea and supported the apostle Paul in his missionary work. That she was a “deaconess” is a matter of honest debate; however, there is no substantial evidence that she exercised ecclesiastical authority over men in the church. There are numerous examples of διάκονος describing something other than the official office of deacon in the church: Stephanus (1 Cor 16:15); Archippus (Col 4:17); Timothy (1 Tim 4:6); Apollos (1 Cor 3:5); Epaphras (Col 1:17); Paul (Acts 20:24); the Lord (Rom 15:8); and even secular authorities (Rom 13:14).¹⁴ Phoebe is also addressed as a προστάτις (“helper”) “of many and of myself as well” (Rom 16:2). Egalitarians infer from this statement that she was an official church leader who exercised authority over men in the church.¹⁵ Theologically, however, Paul would not say that Phoebe held a position of authority over him. “He says that about no one except Christ, not even the Jerusalem apostles (Gal 1:6–11).”¹⁶ The feminine noun προστάτις means “protectress,” “patroness,” or “helper.”¹⁷ Paul is using a play on words that the Romans are to “help Phoebe” because she has been a “helper” to many others including Paul.¹⁸

Prisca and Aquila

Paul also commends Prisca and Aquila (16:3). Prisca and Aquila are always mentioned together in the six different references of the NT (Rom 16:3; Acts 18:2, 18, 26; 1 Cor 16:19; 2 Tim 4:19). Priscilla’s name (Latin diminutive form) precedes her husband’s name in four of six instances in the NT. Nothing, however, is proven by her name placement regarding their respective roles in ministry. Aquila and Priscilla privately explained to Apollos the way of God “more accurately” while in Ephesus (Acts 18:26);¹⁹ nevertheless, Luke does not say that

particular church officer (Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:8, 12). Insisting that Phoebe be in an official office of the church is “forced and narrow” (Douglas J. Moo, “The Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:11–15: A Rejoinder,” *Trinity Journal* 2 [Fall 1981]: 208).

¹⁴C. K. Barrett, *The Epistle to the Romans*, Harper’s New Testament Commentaries (New York: Harper and Row, 1957), 282; Ralph Earle, “1 Timothy,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 11, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 368.

¹⁵“Here is direct evidence for the inclusion of women in ministry ‘offices’ in the church” (Don Williams, *The Apostle Paul and Women in the Church* [Glendale, CA: Regal Books, 1977], 115).

¹⁶Thomas 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: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton: Crossway, 1991), 219.

¹⁷BDAG, 778; Henry G. Liddell and Robert Scott, rev. Henry S. Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), 1:1526–27.

¹⁸BDAG, 778.

¹⁹The verb is from ἐκτίθημι meaning “to convey information by careful elaboration” (ibid., 310).

Priscilla was directly or individually involved in teaching Apollos. Certainly she was respected, active in ministry, and hospitable enough to host the church at Ephesus in her home. None of this, however, constitutes evidence that she exercised an official, authoritative teaching role over men in the NT church in any formal sense. Given the possibility that Andronicus and Junia may have been a husband/wife missionary team working with Paul, Aquila and Priscilla present a similar example of the kind of ministry commended by Paul and highly regarded by the apostles.

Andronicus and Junia(s)

As to the immediate context of Andronicus and Junia(s) in Romans 16:7, Paul commends them as τὸς συγγενεῖς μου καὶ συναϊμαλώτους μου (“my fellow Jews and fellow prisoners” [author’s translation]).²⁰ Apart from the description Paul gives in Romans 16:7, Andronicus and Junia(s) are not mentioned elsewhere in the NT. “Andronicus” was a common Greek masculine name. The name was even borne by a member of the imperial household (Julius Andronicus) and was the name of a Hellenized Jew in Josephus’ writings (*Antiquities* 13.3.4) as the name of a freedman and of a slave.²¹ Paul commends Andronicus and his co-laborer Junia(s) as Christian compatriots who suffered for Christ with him in prison. If indeed Andronicus and Junia(s) were fellow apostles with Paul, it would be natural for Paul to describe them not only as fellow Jews and fellow prisoners, but more importantly as fellow apostles. Though it is an argument from silence, one is puzzled that Paul chooses not to identify them as fellow apostles. Furthermore, Paul specifically mentions, “who also were in Christ before me” (οἱ καὶ πρὸ ἐμοῦ γέγοναν ἐν Χριστῷ); however, he does not mention that these two individuals had become apostles before Paul.

What then would be the intended purpose of Paul’s commendation of Andronicus and Junia(s)? Contextually, Paul intends to visit Rome so that the Roman Christians may help him on his way to preach the gospel in Spain (Rom 15:23–24). Just as he needed the fellowship of the Philippians to support his mission in the East, he also needs Roman sponsorship in the West (v. 24). It is in Paul’s best interest for the believers at Rome to realize that Andronicus and Junia(s), who had suffered with Paul for the cause of the Gospel, are highly respected by the apostles in Jerusalem.²² Such a glowing reputation of Paul’s fellow countrymen, fellow prisoners, and co-laborers would have the effect among the Roman believers of reassuring them of Paul’s own personal

²⁰Andreas Köstenberger says that “kinsmen” more likely means “friends” than it does “fellows-countrymen” or “relatives.” Either way the term does not add or detract from the interpretation of the target phrase (*Studies on John and Gender* [New York: Peter Lang, 2001], 337).

²¹Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1993), 737.

²²Morris, *Romans*, 515, n. 122.

sacrifice and commitment in his pioneer missionary work and thus prepare their minds for the support he would need on his future travels to evangelize the West.

THE GENDER OF ἸΟΥΝΙΑΝ

Textual Evidence

The first question in Romans 16:7 is whether the name Junia(s) is a feminine accusative singular (Ἰουνίαν) or a masculine accusative singular (Ἰουνιᾶν). If Ἰουνίαν has the acute accent over the penult, then it is a woman's name; if, however, a circumflex accent is placed over the ultima, then Ἰουνιᾶν is a man's name. Both names are first declension nouns. Ἰουνιάς (Junias) would follow the same declension as other similar names in the NT such as Patrobas, Hermas, and Olympas (Rom 16:14–15).²³ Since Greek accents were not added to the manuscripts until approximately the seventh century, it will be necessary to examine the morphology of the Ἰουνιᾶν in the textual tradition to help determine the originally intended meaning by Paul in Romans 16:7.

Belleville accuses the editors of the United Bible Societies' fourth revised edition Greek NT of misleading its readers by giving an {A} rating of virtual certainty to a listing of early uncials (a A B* C D* F G P) which are *without accents* in support of the masculine reading Ἰουνιᾶν (circumflex accent over the ultima). She argues that during the seventh to ninth centuries copyists universally added the acute accent over the penult indicating a feminine name.²⁴ It is important to note, however, that the Nestle-Aland 27th edition (1993) clearly indicates in its apparatus (“Ἰουνιᾶν [“Junias”]...*but written without accents*”) that the uncials *are not* factors in this text-critical decision.²⁵ More importantly, the “Jubilee edition” (1998) of the Nestle-Aland text, which contains the fifth printing of the Nestle-Aland 27th edition and the third printing of the United Bible Societies' 4th edition, alters the masculine accenting from the previous editions in Romans 16:7 to a feminine accent (Ἰουνίαν) both in the main body of the text and in the apparatus.²⁶

In response it should be noted that since there are no early uncials with a feminine accent or a masculine accent, then the UBS Committee simply does not know whether Junia(s) is feminine or masculine based on the early textual evidence. Whatever caused the Committee to change its mind in regard to the Jubilee edition, it was not the textual evidence. The UBS Committee explains their reasoning in its textual

²³John Piper and Wayne Grudem, “An Overview of Central Concerns,” in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton: Crossway, 1991), 80.

²⁴Belleville, “Re-examination of Junia/Junias,” 239.

²⁵Aland, et al., eds., *The Greek New Testament*, 564.

²⁶Epp, “Junia/Junias Variation,” 265–67.

commentary on Romans 16:7: “On the basis of the weight of manuscript evidence the Committee was unanimous in rejecting Ἰουλίαν [Julia] (see also the next variant in v. 15) in favor of Ἰουνιαν [no accent], *but was divided as to how the latter should be accented* (italics added).”²⁷ In addition, the UBS Committee insisted that “The ‘A’ decision of the Committee must be understood as applicable only as to the spelling of the name Ἰουνιαν, not the masculine [or feminine] accentuation.”²⁸

Systematic accentuation of the Greek manuscripts became common in the seventh century and more universal with the use of the minuscule in the ninth century.²⁹ Wallace indicates that accents added by scribes in the ninth century and beyond are of limited value in reflecting earlier opinions. Nevertheless, Wallace asserts that these accents are “decent indicators as to the opinion in the *ninth century*. And what they reveal is that Ἰουνιαν was largely considered a man’s name (for the bulk of the MSS have the circumflex over the ultima).”³⁰ Fitzmyer also affirms that “Ninth-century minuscules, fitted with accents, already bear the masculine form Ἰουνίαν, and never the feminine form Ἰουνιᾶν.”³¹ Both Fitzmyer and Wallace, therefore, declare that the *majority* of accented ninth century Greek minuscules bear the masculine accent.

Another significant Greek manuscript is the early papyrus P46 (A.D. 200) variant “Julia” that in Belleville’s opinion points to a feminine subject: “Within the text tradition itself, the only major variation is also feminine—Ἰουλία (Latin *Julia*).”³² Though the variant is clearly feminine and could be reasonably construed to argue for the feminine interpretation of Junia(s) in Romans 16:7, both Cervin and Metzger regard the P46 variant as a clerical error inadvertently transposed from Romans 16:15.³³ Thus, both this variant and the translations which eventually ensued from it carry no textual authority and are discredited witnesses. The textual evidence, at this point, remains inconclusive.

²⁷Bruce M. Metzger, *A Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft and United Bible Societies, 1994), 475.

²⁸Ibid., 466.

²⁹John Thorley, “Junia, A Woman Apostle,” *Novum Testamentum* 38 (January 1996): 24. Thorley comments that ninth century minuscule number 33, often referred to as “Queen” of the minuscules, has the feminine accent. Thorley concludes: “It appears then that there is a strong probability, though not quite a certainty” as to the feminine rendering of Junia(s) (23).

³⁰Daniel Wallace, “Junia Among the Apostles: The Double Identification Problem in Romans 16:7,” (Biblical Studies Press, 1998): 1 (<http://www.bible.org>).

³¹Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 738; for a contrary view see Ray R. Schulz, “Romans 16:7: Junia or Junias?” *Expository Times* 98 (January 1987): 109.

³²Belleville, “Re-examination of Junia/Junias,” 238. Further support for this variant is found in Old Latin a and b MSS. from the 4th and 5th centuries, Vulgate MSS., and Boharic and Ethiopic Versions (Thorley, “Junia,” 19).

³³Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 539; Richard S. Cervin, “A Note Regarding The Name ‘Junia(s)’ In Romans 16.7,” *New Testament Studies* 40 (January 1994): 464.

Greek Evidence

Extensive searches of the *Thesaurae Linguae Graecae* (TLG) reveal that outside the NT there are only a handful of Greek references to the name Junia, most of which are fourth century and beyond. Belleville's research produced six extra-biblical references in the Greek language to the feminine name *Junia* and only one reference to the masculine rendering *Junias*. She explains that the name, Junia Tertia, Brutus's half-sister (Plutarch, *Brutus* 7.1–2), originated from the common Latin *nomen gentilicium* Junius.³⁴ The other five references to Junia in the TLG appear in the fourth-century through seventh-century church fathers. In addition to the TLG Junia(s) references, Oecumenius (sixth century) and Theophylact (eleventh century) pay tribute to Junia as a notable apostle.³⁵ Of particular note is the quotation from Chrysostom (c. 347–407) who says: "Oh how great is the devotion of this woman Junia that she should be even counted worthy of the appellation of apostle" (*Homilies on Romans* 31). Theodoret (c. 393–458) and John of Damascus (c. 675–749) give similar comments. Junia is also mentioned in *Catena* (fifth century) and merely listed in the seventh century *Chronicon Paschale* with other notable women of the epistles.³⁶ Apart from these references, there may be another instance in a partially defaced inscription that reads, "[]ia Torquata," possibly referring to a woman whom Tacitus mentions (*Annals*, 3:69)—"Junia Torquata, a Vestal Virgin who lived during the reign of Tiberius (c. A.D. 20)."³⁷ Though the name Junia is quite common in Latin, it is relatively uncommon in Greek. On the other hand, the name Junias, outside of the possible reference in Romans 16:7 and one extra-biblical Greek reference (Epiphanius) in the fourth century, is unattested in the extant Greek literature.

An important reference to the masculine name is the one mention in the extra-biblical Greek manuscripts to the masculine nominative form of Junias. Epiphanius, bishop of Salamis in Cyprus (c. 315–403) who precedes Chrysostom, wrote in his *Index of Disciples*: "Junias, of whom Paul makes mention, became bishop of Apameia of Syria."³⁸ It is clear both by the use of the masculine nominative Junias as well as the masculine relative pronoun (οὗ) that Epiphanius regarded Ἰουνίαν as a man. Belleville dismisses this reference as unreliable on account of the gender confusion by Epiphanius regarding Prisca.³⁹ Bauckham also

³⁴Belleville, "Re-examination of Junia/Junias," 234. Cf. Cervin, "Junia(s)," 466. *Plutarch's Lives*, ed. E. H. Warmington, vol. 6, *Brutus* (Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1918), 138, cited in Belleville, "Re-examination of Junia/Junias," 234.

³⁵J. P. Migne's *Patrologia graeca; Junia: PG* 118, cols. 629–32 and 124, cols. 551–52, cited in Belleville, "Re-examination of Junia/Junias," 234.

³⁶Ibid., 235.

³⁷Cervin, "Junia(s)," 466, n. 13.

³⁸*Index Disciplulorum*, 24.125.19–20, cited in Piper and Grudem, *Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 79.

³⁹*Index Disciplulorum* 24.125.18–19, cited in Belleville, "Re-examination of

questions the authenticity of the reference as “unlikely to be a genuine work of the fourth-century bishop of Salamis.”⁴⁰ Grudem responds, however, by insisting that Epiphanius as an ancient historian claimed specific knowledge regarding the ministry of Junias, unlike Chrysostom and those later patristic writers who simply parroted Chrysostom’s feminine interpretation. Though Grudem admits that the gender confusion of Prisca by Epiphanius is “puzzling”; nevertheless, he believes this reference carries greater weight than Chrysostom on account of its early date and specific knowledge of the ministry of Junias.⁴¹

Latin Evidence

The name Junia appears commonly in Latin literature as a popular name with over 250 entries listed in Rome alone.⁴² Belleville comments, “Also to be observed is the unbroken tradition among the Latin Fathers from Ambrose in the fourth century to Lombard in the twelfth century of a female Julia..or Junia.”⁴³ Patristic commentators who cite a female Junia in Romans 16:7 include Jerome (c. 339–97), Primasius (6th century), Lanfranc of Bec (c. 1005–89), Bruno the Carthusian (c. 1032–1101), Peter Abelard (c. 1079–1142), among others.⁴⁴ But according to Schulz, many of the Latin commentators borrowed from the earlier Latin Fathers, particularly Chrysostom.⁴⁵ This fact alone lessens the impact of the later witnesses.

Origen’s Commentary

As significant as these, perhaps, is Origen’s Latin quotation with reference to the masculine rendering *Junias* in his *Epistle to the Romans*—the earliest extant commentary on this epistle.⁴⁶ Origen (c. A.D.

Junia/Junias,” 235.

⁴⁰Richard Bauckham, *Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 166. Bauckham reasons that “The work in question was apparently attributed to Epiphanius by the ninth-century monk Epiphanius and is also ascribed to Epiphanius in a thirteenth-century manuscript that is one of the nine manuscripts containing the work” (ibid.).

⁴¹Wayne Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism & Biblical Truth* (Multnomah, OR: Multnomah, 2004), 225–26.

⁴²Peter Lampe, *Die Stadtromischen Christen in den ersten beiden Jahrhunderten*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament (Tübingen: Mohr, 1987), cited in J. D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, TX: Word, 1988), 894. Also see William Sanday and Arthur Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1902), 422.

⁴³Belleville, “Re-examination of Junia/Junias,” 234.

⁴⁴Schulz, “Junia or Junias?” 110, n. 2.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Origen’s commentary on Romans, preserved in a Latin translation by Rufinus, c. 345–410, in J. P. Migne, *Patrologia graeca*, vol. 14, col. 1289, cited in Piper and

252), who preceded the other Latin Fathers noted above and who is also well-known as one of the most prolific scholars of the ancient world, says in his commentary that the apostle Paul refers to “Andronicus and Junias and Herodian, all of whom he calls relatives and fellows captives.”⁴⁷ Lightfoot agrees with the masculine interpretation of Junia(s) “as it is taken by Origen (on *Rom.* xvi. 21, T. rv. p. 582D, and especially on xvi 39, ig. p. 686E) and by several modern critics.”⁴⁸ Grudem also agrees with Origen’s interpretation and cites Origen on Romans 16:7 as one who “understood *iounian* as masculine (in Migne 14.1280–81 and 1289).”⁴⁹ Epp, however, dismisses the Origen citation on the grounds that it is an obscure variant in the critical edition of Origen’s commentary published in 1998 by C. P. Hammond Bammel.⁵⁰ According to Bammel there are three references to Andronicus and Junia(s) in *In ep. Ad Romanos* 10.21, II. 1, 10, and 25 with no masculine variants in two subgroups of manuscripts (R and W), and there is also a fourth key reference in 10.39, I. 45. Epp admits that “in this passage [10.39]...the variant *Iunias* (nominative) occurred in two members of the subgroup of which E is a member, namely, f and e, both 12th century manuscripts.”⁵¹ Epp, nevertheless, concludes that the exception can be “dismissed as carrying little if any weight.”⁵² Grudem responds by noting that “The transcriptional error in the text recorded in Migne, if there is one, would have to have occurred in *both places* in Origen’s commentary on Romans,”⁵³ which is an unlikely prospect. In sum, though the name Junia is well-attested in Latin literature, the name Junias is *unattested in Latin and Greek* outside the references by Origen, Epiphanius, and possibly the apostle Paul.

Short-Form Hypothesis

Brooten, among others, discusses the “short-form hypothesis” as a plausible solution to the dilemma encountered by those who interpret Junia(s) with a masculine ending.⁵⁴ *Junius* was a common family name in the Roman world.⁵⁵ Bauckham explains that the Latin masculine

Grudem, *Recovering Biblical Manhood*, 80.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 95.

⁴⁹Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism*, 225, n. 13.

⁵⁰Epp, “Junia/Junias,” 253.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism*, 225, n. 13.

⁵⁴Bernadette J. Brooten, “Junia...Outstanding Among the Apostles’ (Romans 16:7),” in *Women Priests: A Catholic Commentary on the Vatican Declaration*, ed. Leonard Swidler and Arlene Swidler (New York: Paulist, 1977), 142, 148–51.

⁵⁵Cervin, “Junia/Junias,” 469.

name Junius, of which Junia is the female counterpart, would be rendered in Greek as Ἰούνιος of which there are known examples. To counter this observation, the short-form theory proposes that the accusative Ἰουνιᾶν from the nominative Ἰουνιάς could possibly be a Greek hypocoristic⁵⁶ form of the Latin name *Junianus* of which there are over eighty examples in Latin and one in Greek.⁵⁷ Male names in Greek were frequently abbreviated with the ending *-as* with or without the circumflex.⁵⁸ Robertson and Blass give numerous examples of these abbreviated nicknames including several in Romans 16: Ἀμπλιας from Ἀμπλιατος, Ἀνδρεας from Ἀνδρομεδης, Ἀντιπας from Ἀντιπατρος, Ἐπαφρας from Ἐπαφροδιτος, Ἐρμα from Ἐρμαδωρος, Ὀλυμπας from Ὀλυμ-πιανος, Παρμενας from Παρμενιδης, Πατροβας from Πατροβιος, Σιλας from Σιλουανος, and “*Ἰουνιάς may be Ἰουνιᾶς as an abbreviation of Ἰουνιανός*” (italics added).⁵⁹ Blass asserts that “These abbreviated names were widespread in Greek from the earliest times *with great variation in the suffixes* (italics added)...-ης, -ιας, -εας, -υς.” Blass further states that these abbreviated nicknames were sometimes given at birth or in some cases “a foreign name has passed over into the category of Greek abbreviated names.”⁶⁰ Abbreviated names without identifiable full names are not unusual in the NT. Blass suggests at the conclusion of his study that Ἰουνιάς may possibly originate from the Latin name *Junianus*, though he acknowledges that the ancients understood the reference as husband/wife similar to Aquila and Priscilla.⁶¹ Belleville disagrees with Robertson and Blass by insisting that only Greek nicknames, not Latin nicknames, were abbreviations of longer names and secondly that Latin nicknames were lengthened rather than shortened.⁶² However, BDAG acknowledges that Junias “could be a short form of the common Junianus.”⁶³ Furthermore, Paul is writing in Greek, not Latin. Both Robertson and Blass note that the custom of giving nicknames occurred not only with Greek names, but also with foreign names brought into the

⁵⁶A hypocorism (ὕποκορίζεσθαι—“to use child-talk”) is a lesser form of the given name used in more intimate situations as a nickname or term of endearment.

⁵⁷I. Kajanto, *The Latin Cognomen* (Societas Scientiarum Fennica: Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum) 36/2 (Helsinki: Helsingfors, 1965), 32–35, cited in Bauckham, *Gospel Women*, 168.

⁵⁸F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. R. W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 67, sec. 125.

⁵⁹A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman, 1934), 172.

⁶⁰BDF, 67, sec. 125.

⁶¹Ibid., 68, sec. 126.

⁶²Belleville, “Re-examination of Junia/Junias,” 240.

⁶³BDAG, 480.

Greek.⁶⁴ Moulton concurs and states that Junias “is probably a contracted form of *Junianus*, which is common in the inscriptions.”⁶⁵ Shreiner adds that no lexicon or grammar takes the view that Junias “could not be a shortened form of the man’s name *Junianus*, and all who comment on it (Robertson, BDF, BAGD [BDAG], Thayer, and Moulton & Milligan) say not only that it could be but that it probably or possibly is a man’s name.”⁶⁶

Regarding the omission of *Junias* in Greek and Latin literature outside of the references previously noted, it must be remembered that if *Junianus* had previously been a slave, then slaves frequently would be granted “manumission” as a reward for excellent service.⁶⁷ In manumission the freed slave would take his master’s family name with the ending modified to “-as”—in this case any male slave freed by a dominus named *Junius* would take the name *Junias*.

Summary

The textual evidence is inconclusive. Since the early uncials do not bear any accent and only the ninth century minuscules bear the masculine accent with the exception of minuscule 33, then neither the uncials nor the minuscules can prove with certainty the masculine or feminine understanding of *Junia(s)*.

The Greek evidence lends itself toward a feminine rendering of *Junia(s)*. *Junia* is not commonly attested in Greek; nevertheless, the extant evidence for the feminine attestation is six to one. The one reference by Epiphanius to *Junias* is questionable on account of the author’s confusion regarding the gender of *Prisca*. The reliability of the text is also in question, though neither side has proven its case.

The Latin evidence attests the feminine name *Junia* and only Origen as translated by Rufinus attests the masculine name *Junias* in his *Romans* commentary. However, the manuscripts containing Origen’s attestation are late and conflict with his rendering of the name in another section of his commentary.

The “shortened-name” theory where *Junias* is considered to be a contracted form of the lengthier *Junianus* remains a valid option and is perhaps the best argument for a masculine rendering. This theory is held by noted scholars and commentators who make a credible case for

⁶⁴Robertson, *Grammar*, 171; BDF, 68 (125 [2]).

⁶⁵James H. Moulton and George Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament* (reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 306.

⁶⁶Schreiner, *Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 506, n. 17. Moo considers the shortened-form theory a legitimate option and compliments the scholars who hold it, including William Sanday and Arthur Headlam (*Romans*, 422–23); Otto Michel (*Der Brief an die Riser* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966], 379); Heinrich Schlier (*Der Romerbrief*, 2nd ed. [Freiburg/Basel/Vienna: Herder, 1979], 444–45); cited in Moo, “Interpretation of 1 Tim 2:11–15,” 208.

⁶⁷Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 738.

its acceptance.

The probability that Ἰουνιαν is feminine appears more likely. Nevertheless, since neither side can prove its case with certainty, “to use Junias, who may be male or female, as an example of a ‘woman preacher’ or ‘woman elder’ would be unreasonable. Other more clear texts must guide our decision.”⁶⁸

THE SYNTAX OF ἘΠΙΣΗΜΟΙ ἘΝ ΤΟΙΣ ἈΠΟΣΤΟΛΟΙΣ

The Inclusive Interpretation

Most English versions translate the phrase ἐπίσημοι ἐν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις inclusively: “of note among the apostles,” “outstanding among the apostles,” “notable among the apostles,” or “respected among the apostles” in an implied comparative sense (KJV, RSV, NIV, NRSV, NASB, NLT).⁶⁹ *Inclusive* means that the notable individuals are included in the group of apostles.⁷⁰ Respected commentators such as Cranfield, Fitzmyer, Dunn, Käsemann, Moo, Barrett, Lightfoot, Sanday and Headlam, among others, take the inclusive position as do egalitarian writers such as Cervin, Belleville, Epp, and Bauckham.⁷¹

The term *inclusive* means that the individuals being discussed are included within the category indicated in the following prepositional phrase. In this case, the apostles are the whole of which Andronicus and Junia(s) are a part. Sanday and Headlam give three reasons for the inclusive translation: (1) Virtually all patristic commentators understood the phrase inclusively; (2) The key word ἐπίσημος has the root idea of “stamped” or “marked” meaning in this case those who are most distinguished among the apostles; (3) This rendering is in accordance with the broader use of ἀπόστολος for traveling Christian missionaries.⁷²

Rengstorf argues for the inclusive interpretation explaining that the comparative adjective ἐπίσημος lifts up a person or thing as distinguished or marked in comparison with other representatives of the same

⁶⁸James B. Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 122.

⁶⁹See printed translations cited above.

⁷⁰Cervin, “Note Regarding the Name ‘Junia(s),’” 470.

⁷¹Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 738; Cranfield, *Romans*, 789; Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 2:890; Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 423; C. K. Barrett, *The Epistle to the Romans* (New York: Harper & Row, 1957), 280; Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 411; Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 96, n. 1; Cervin, “Note Regarding the Name ‘Junia(s),’” 464; Belleville, “Re-examination of Romans 16:7,” 246; Bauckham, *Gospel Women*, 172; Epp, “Junia/Junias Variation in Romans 16:7,” 284. Dunn argues that Andronicus and Junia both belong to the “closed group of apostles appointed directly by the risen Christ in a limited period following his resurrection” (*Romans*, 2:895).

⁷²Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 423.

class, in this instance with the other apostles.⁷³ The Latin equivalent is *honoratus*, the acknowledgment of the distinction and honor earned by another.⁷⁴ Ἐπίσημος sometimes refers to a badge distinguishing one shield from another, a flag to identify one particular ship from others in the same fleet, or the device stamped on a coin to distinguish it from other coins. Josephus utilizes ἐπίσημος when he describes Mary of Bethzuba as “*remarkable* by reason of family and fortune.”⁷⁵ Bauckham concludes that the inclusive, comparative sense of ἐπίσημος is “more likely.”⁷⁶

In further support of the inclusive position, the prepositional phrase ἐν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις is interpreted by Blass as a locative use of the dative;⁷⁷ whereas the instrumental use of the dative with the article usually occurs in Romans with verbals plus *impersonal objects* (e.g., 1:9, 10, 27; 3:4; 5:9, 10; 10:9; 15:30).⁷⁸

Murray acknowledges that the collocation may indicate that the couple were apostles themselves. If so, then the word “apostles” would be used in a general sense of messenger (2 Cor 8:23; Phil 2:25).⁷⁹ Murray believes, however, it is more probable that they were well known to the apostles and were being recognized for their outstanding faith and service.⁸⁰ Though Moo also argues for the inclusive interpretation, he believes that the term “apostles” is being used in a “looser” sense to denote a “messenger,” “emissary,” or “commissioned missionary,” similar to Peter and his wife (i.e., 1 Cor 9:5).⁸¹

⁷³TDNT, s.v. “ἐπίσημος” by Karl Heinrich Rengstorff, 7:267–68.

⁷⁴Robert Jewett, *Romans*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 963.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Bauckham, *Gospel Women*, 179.

⁷⁷BDF, 118. C. F. D. Moule overviews the uses of ἐν with the dative in *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 75–79. “The person by whom (not for whom) an action is explicitly said to be done is put in the genitive with ὑπο” (Herbert W. Smyth, *Greek Grammar* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954], 844).

⁷⁸Brooks and Winbery explain that “The word in the instrumental indicates the person(s) or thing(s) which accompany or take part in the action of the verb.... Others justify the inclusion of the idea of association in the instrumental case by explaining that the second party furnishes the means by which association takes place...this category would be known as the dative of association or dative of accompaniment” (James A. Brooks and Carlton L. Winbery, *Syntax of New Testament Greek* [Lanham: University Press of America, 1979], 47).

⁷⁹Murray, *Romans*, 229.

⁸⁰Ibid., 231. “They were Christians before Paul and, no doubt, were associated with the circle of apostles in Judea if not in Jerusalem” (ibid.).

⁸¹Moo thinks it is more “natural” to translate the *collocation* “esteemed among the apostles” (*Romans*, 923–24).

The Exclusive Interpretation

The NET Bible and the ESV both translate ἐπίσημοι ἐν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις exclusively—“well-known to the apostles.” *Exclusive* or *non-inclusive* means that Andronicus and Junia(s) are non-apostles.⁸² Burer and Wallace have pioneered an important case for the exclusive translation. They focus their attention on the syntax of ἐπίσημος with its adjuncts of ἐν plus a noun in the dative case. They understand ἐπίσημος in an elative sense, indicating that Andronicus and Junia(s) are well-known to the apostles *without an implied comparison* between the two groups.⁸³ Since ἐπίσημος can be used with or without a comparative nuance, the question that Burer and Wallace attempt to resolve is whether the collocation of ἐπίσημος, plus ἐν, plus a noun in the dative case is comparative or elative.

Burer and Wallace’s line of reasoning is that comparative adjectives are generally followed by genitives rather than datives. They state their “working hypothesis” as follows: “Since a noun in the genitive is typically used with comparative adjectives, we might expect such with an implied comparison too.”⁸⁴ After presenting the evidence for their hypothesis from the *TLG*, they conclude: “Repeatedly in biblical Greek, patristic Greek papyri, inscriptions, classical and Hellenistic texts, our working hypothesis was borne out. The genitive personal modifier was consistently used for an inclusive idea, while the (ἐν plus) dative personal adjunct was almost never so used.”⁸⁵

The authors discuss twenty-two passages in the main body of the article and seven more passages are referenced in the footnotes for a total of twenty-nine samples. Several key examples are presented by Burer and Wallace in order to prove their hypothesis. First, in 3 Maccabees 6:1 the text reads, “Eleazar, a man prominent among the priests of the country.” The inclusive sentiment is clearly comparative and the genitive is used for the implied comparison (τῶν ἱερέων). Second, in *Pss. Sol.* 17:30 the text says that the Messiah would “glorify the Lord in a prominent [place] in relation to all the earth” (ἐν ἐπισήμῳ πάσης τῆς γῆς). Burer comments that “The prominent place is a part of the earth, indicated by the genitive modifier.”⁸⁶ Burer and Wallace cite four additional papyri examples of the inclusive use of ἐπίσημος with the comparative genitive: (1) “the most important [places] of the nomes [a province, tract of country]” (τοῖς ἐπισημοτάτοις τῶν νομῶν); (2 and 3) “the most conspicuous places in the villages” (τοῖς ἐπισημοτάτοις τόποις τῶν κωμῶν); (4) “the well-known places of the nome” (τοῖς ἐπισήμοις

⁸²Cervin, “Junia(s),” 470.

⁸³Burer and Wallace, “Was Junia?” 84.

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵Ibid., 90.

⁸⁶Ibid., 86.

τοῦ νομοῦ τόποις [P. Oxy. 1408, 2108, 2705 respectively]). In each of these cases “that which is ἐπίσημος is compared to its environment with a partitive *genitive*.”⁸⁷

“When, however, an elative notion is found,” states Burer, “ἐν plus a personal plural dative is not uncommon.”⁸⁸ They cite *Pss. Sol. 2:6* where the writer indicates that the Jewish captives “were a *spectacle* among the Gentiles” (ἐν ἐπισήμῳ ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν). The parallels include people as a referent of the adjective ἐπίσημος, followed by ἐν with the dative plural, and the dative referring to people where the first group is not part of the second group (i.e., Jewish captives not part of the Gentiles).⁸⁹ Their conclusion is that even as the negative notoriety of the Jews existed among the Gentiles, so in a parallel grammatical fashion the fame of Andronicus and Junia(s) existed among the apostles as opposed to the pair being members of the group.⁹⁰ Burer and Wallace state the conclusion from their examples as follows:

To sum up the evidence of biblical and patristic Greek: although the inclusive view is aided in some impersonal constructions that involve ἐν plus the dative, every instance of personal inclusiveness used a *genitive* rather than ἐν. On the other hand, every instance of ἐν plus personal nouns supported the exclusive view, with *Pss. Sol. 2:6* providing a very close parallel to Romans 16:7.⁹¹

Huttar presents a slightly different perspective on *Pss. Sol. 2:6*. He translates ἐν ἐπισήμῳ ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν by emphasizing agency in the collocation. Nevertheless, he agrees with the interpretation that *Pss. Sol. 2:6* grammatically supports a parallel with the non-inclusive translation of Romans 16:7:

Perhaps better would be to see the last phrase continuing the first ἐν phrase and take ἐπισήμῳ either in apposition to σφραγίδι or as attributively modifying it. We may then come out with either the translation “in a seal...in a thing visible among the gentiles” or “in a seal...in one visible among the gentiles.” Either way we seem to have a situation where the Gentiles are thought of as seeing agents...it is the neck of the inhabitants of Jerusalem that is the object of the Gentiles’ perception, rather than those inhabitants directly.... All in all, the passage appears to fit the pattern of the ἐν phrase expressing agency.⁹²

⁸⁷Burer and Wallace, “Was Junia?” 87.

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰Ibid.

⁹¹Ibid.

⁹²David Huttar, “Did Paul Call Andronicus an Apostle in Romans 16:7?” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 52 (December 2009): 752. For additional evidence that the ἐν phrase can be used instrumentally expressing agency with other passive elements, see Mark 6:4 “a prophet is without honor...among his relatives” (dishonored by his relatives); 1 Corinthians 6:2 “the world is judged by (ἐν) you”; 6:4 “judges, men of

John 7:12 presents an instance where a similar prepositional construction, namely an adjective plus ἐν and a personal object in the dative case, is somewhat parallel to Romans 16:7 and non-inclusive: καὶ γογγυσος περὶ αὐτοῦ ἦν πολλὴ ἐν τοῖς ὄχλοις (“and the grumbling concerning Him was great among [by] the crowds”).⁹³ Though the parallel with Romans 16:7 is not exact, in this instance ἐν has an instrumental idea of *agency*.⁹⁴

Regarding the target phrase, it is possible that Junia(s) was “respected,” “well-known,” “highly regarded” or “esteemed” *by* the apostles. Hodge adds that since the word “apostles” has the definite article, then the collocation can be rendered “highly respected by the apostles.”⁹⁵ Burer disagrees with the instrumental use of ἐν by explaining that something being known *by* someone else does not necessarily imply agency, because the “action” implied may actually be the *passive reception* of some event or person....⁹⁶ Burer continues, “Such an idea can be easily accommodated in Romans 16:7: ‘Well known to/by the apostles’ simply says that the apostles were recipients of information, not that they actively performed ‘knowing.’”⁹⁷ Burer and Wallace are minimizing any verbal action in ἐπίσημος in order to support their viewpoint—“the *passive reception* of some event or person.”

In addition to the papyri examples, an idiom from the inscriptions is even more relevant to the exclusive pattern. The inscription describes a man who is “not only foremost in his own country, but also *well known* to the outside population” (ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν τῷ ἔθνει ἐπισήμου

little account in (ἐν) the church” (lightly esteemed by the church); 1 Timothy 3:6 “believed on *in* the world” (by the world); 2 Thessalonians 1:10 “to be marveled at *among* all those who have believed”; 2 Corinthians 2:15 “we are to God the aroma of Christ *among* those who are being saved and those who are perishing” (The apostles are recognized by the senses of the saved and lost); Luke 16:15 “highly valued *among* men”; Hebrews 13:4 “Marriage should be honored by (ἐν) all”; Romans 2:24 “God’s name is blasphemed *among* the Gentiles.”

⁹³Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Epistle to the Romans*, 2 vols., trans. John Moore and Edwin Johnson, rev. and ed. William Johnson (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1884), 2:372–73.

⁹⁴Wallace states, “if ἐν plus the dative is used to express agency, the noun in the dative must not only be personal, but must also be the agent who performs the action” (Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996], 373; cf. 163–66). Williams defines the dative of agency as denoting, “the agent (personal) by whom something is done...agency is personal” (P. R. Williams, *Grammar Notes on the Noun and the Verb and Certain Other Items*, rev. ed. [Tacoma, WA: Northwest Baptist Seminary, 1988], 18). Brooks and Winbery state, “The word in the instrumental indicates the person(s) or thing(s) which accompany or take part in the action of the verb (*Syntax of New Testament Greek*, 47).”

⁹⁵Charles Hodge, *The Epistle to the Romans* (reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 449.

⁹⁶Burer and Wallace, “Was Junia?” 85.

⁹⁷Ibid.

[*TAM* 2.905.1 *west wall. coll.* 2.5.18]). Here, ἐν plus the dative personal noun is employed to indicate a man who is well known to a group of which he does not belong.⁹⁸ Though Burer draws stronger conclusions than the statistical examples allow;⁹⁹ nevertheless, the examples cited justify the rationale for similarly interpreting a parallel construct in Romans 16:7, yet without the confidence that Burer and Wallace claim.

The evidence given by Burer and Wallace presents a legitimate case for the exclusive interpretation of Romans 16:7. Nevertheless, as their critics point out, the evidence is not nearly as strong, consistent, or dogmatic as its proponents insist. Bauckham points out several legitimate flaws: (1) The examples are too few; (2) Some examples can be either exclusive or inclusive depending on the context; (3) There are contrary examples in the NT which are overlooked by Burer and Wallace (e.g., Matt 2:6); (4) Burer and Wallace dismiss the evidence from the patristic interpreters who understood the syntax inclusively.¹⁰⁰

At this point it will be helpful to examine ἐπίσημος and ἐν independently as to their lexical and grammatical usage. Lexically, ἐπίσημος means “well-known, prominent, outstanding, famous, notable, notorious.”¹⁰¹ Thayer indicates that ἐπίσημος should be rendered “marked both in a good and bad sense...of note, illustrious...notorious, infamous.”¹⁰² Liddell and Scott assign this term the definitions of “distinguishing mark,” “generally [to] *applaud, signify approval,*” “disapprove,” “notable, remarkable,” and “conspicuous, notorious.”¹⁰³ Friberg describes ἐπίσημος as “well-known” in a positive sense and “notorious, infamous, having a bad reputation” in a negative sense.¹⁰⁴ Louw and Nida explain that ἐπίσημος pertains “to being well known or outstanding, either because of positive or negative characteristics,” and they cite Matthew 27:16 as an example of one being well-known for infamy: εἶχον δὲ τότε δέσμιον ἐπίσημον λεγόμενον [Ἰησοῦν] Βαραββᾶν. (“at that

⁹⁸Ibid., 88.

⁹⁹Ibid., 89. Burer states, “Thus, the inscriptions, like biblical and patristic Greek, supply a uniform picture of ἐπίσημος with personal nouns: when followed by ἐν, the well-known individual is *outside* the group.” Belleville asserts that the Lucianus example is wrongly documented (“Re-examination of Romans 16:7,” 246).

¹⁰⁰Bauckham, *Gospel Women*, 179.

¹⁰¹Ibid., 84. BDAG says, “of exceptional quality, splendid, prominent, outstanding...notorious” (378).

¹⁰²Joseph H. Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (reprint, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), 242. Also see William D. Mounce, *Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 208, who renders ἐπίσημος as “eminent” and “notorious”; G. Abbott-Smith, *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1937), 173—“notable” and “notorious.”

¹⁰³Henry G. Liddell and Robert Scott, rev. Henry S. Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), 655–56.

¹⁰⁴Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, and Neva Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 166.

time there was a notorious prisoner named Jesus Barabbas”). Louw and Nida conclude that “the meaning of ‘outstanding’ may be rendered in some instances as ‘well-known for being important,’ while ‘notorious’ in Mt. 27:16 may be rendered in some languages as ‘well known for being bad.’”¹⁰⁵ Newman and Nida translate ἐπίσημος, “they are *well known* among the apostles.”¹⁰⁶ “Among” could easily carry the idea that the good reputation of Andronicus and Junia(s) existed among the apostolic band without the individuals being part of the whole.

In addition to the above, Huttar has done a helpful exegetical study on ἐπίσημος and he points out that there are over two dozen meanings associated with the term, including non-inclusive meanings such as *esteemed, well known, recognizable, highly-regarded, and respected*.¹⁰⁷ It is unfortunate that BDAG limits the possible meanings of ἐπίσημος to the inclusive meanings such as *prominent* or *outstanding*.¹⁰⁸ Huttar lays out several key parallel constructions to the target phrase in Romans 16:7 that reference a person who is described by ἐπίσημος followed by an ἐν phrase. The most prominent construction is from Euripides’s *Hippolytus* 103. The phrase reads, σεμνός γε μέντοι κάπσημος ἐν βροτοῖς (“yet she’s a holy goddess, and fair is her renown through-out the world”).¹⁰⁹ Huttar translates the key phrase literally, “renowned among mortals,” and cites other corroborating translations to demonstrate the non-inclusive sense of κάπσημος ἐν βροτοῖς. Huttar states, “Actually, there is no translation problem here, as all translators seem to have the same sense: ‘far renowned on earth’ (Coleridge, 1891), ‘famous among men’ (Hadas and McLean, 1936), ‘famous among mortals’ (Kovacs, 1995), ‘honored in the world’ (Lucas, 1954), ‘Men honor her’ (Sutherland, 1960).”¹¹⁰ Cypris, who is the recipient of the human admiration, is clearly not a mortal and therefore is not renowned as a mortal. Rather, she is renowned in the estimation of mortals—a clear demonstration of the non-inclusive grammatical interpretation.

Huttar offers a second example of a *thing* or *idea* described by ἐπίσημος followed by an ἐν phrase. In Euripides *Hec.* 379 the Chorus (or its leader) says: δεινός χαρακτῆρ κάπσημος ἐν βροτοῖς ἐσθλῶν γενέσθαι (“to be born of nobles is a strange feature and [yet] esteemed

¹⁰⁵Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, 2 vols., 2nd ed. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989), 1:338.

¹⁰⁶Barclay M. Newman and Eugene A. Nida, *A Translator’s Handbook on Paul’s Letter to the Romans* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1973), 292.

¹⁰⁷Huttar, “Andronicus,” 747–48.

¹⁰⁸BDAG, 378.

¹⁰⁹Translation in David Grene, ed. *Three Greek Tragedies in Translation: Prometheus Bound, Oedipus the King, Hippolytus* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947).

¹¹⁰Huttar, “Andronicus,” 750.

among mortals”).¹¹¹ Again, several other translations corroborate the non-inclusive translation of the key phrase *κἀπίσημος ἐν βροτοῖς*: “‘unmistakable...among mortals,’ (Kovacs, 1995), ‘of credit among men’ (Hadley, 1955), and ‘visible among mortals’ (Mitchell-Boyask, 2006).” In this case, the subject of the action, “to be born of nobles,” is a thing or idea; nevertheless, the phrase *κἀπίσημος ἐν βροτοῖς* is naturally interpreted with a non-inclusive rendering—“men are the ones in whose eyes the stamp of noble birth is ‘unmistakable,’ ‘visible,’ ‘of credit,’ or ‘conspicuous.’”¹¹² The net result is that the *ἐν* phrase carries the idea of agency or the locative idea of sphere in which the information is transferred to its recipients. “To be born of nobles” is an idea to be esteemed by mortals, credited by men, and seen by them.

Second, from a lexical analysis the preposition *ἐν* is known for its versatility. It is used 2,698 times in the NT. The unusual versatility of *ἐν* has even contributed to its ultimate disappearance from modern demotic Greek on account of “the extremely diversified use of *ἐν* in Hellenistic Greek.”¹¹³ The frequency of usage-overlap regarding *ἐν* is much greater in biblical Greek than Hellenistic Greek. For example, in one NT Greek sentence *ἐν* has over twenty different uses (2 Cor 6:3–7).¹¹⁴

A corollary to the versatility of *ἐν* is its ambiguity. Harris says that “Sometimes all the exegete can do is to reduce the number of possible meanings of *ἐν* by examining the context,” and he thereby suggests that *ἐν* in Romans 16:7 may be a sphere of reference (an exclusive idea).¹¹⁵ Robertson indicates that the disappearance of *ἐν* from modern demotic Greek resulted from the fact that it had “become too vague as a ‘maid of all work,’” citing Moulton for confirmation of that idea.¹¹⁶ Robertson further states that *ἐν* denotes an expression of location, “among,” and can merely be used as a dative. He summarizes his view by saying that “In simple truth the only way to know the resultant meaning of *ἐν* is to carefully examine the context. It is so simple in idea that it appears in every variety of connection.”¹¹⁷ BDAG lists one of the usages of *ἐν* as a “marker denoting the object...by which something is recognized, *to*, *by*,

¹¹¹Ibid., 751.

¹¹²Ibid. Belleville agrees that the example of *Euripides’ Hippolytus* 103 is exclusive (Belleville, “Re-examination of Romans 16:7,” 247).

¹¹³M. J. Harris, “Appendix: Prepositions and Theology in the Greek New Testament,” in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. Colin Brown, et al., 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 3:1191.

¹¹⁴Ibid.

¹¹⁵Ibid., 1191–92.

¹¹⁶Robertson, *Grammar*, 586.

¹¹⁷Ibid., 588–89. BDAG comments regarding *ἐν* that “The uses of this prep. are so many and various, and oft. so easily confused, that a strictly systematic treatment is impossible. It must suffice to list the main categories, which will help establish the usage in individual cases” (326).

in connection with” (italics added).¹¹⁸ Porter comments that ἐν has been “widely used to reinforce the function of the dative case, the only case with which it occurs.”¹¹⁹ He adds that “There are many related senses which this preposition may take depending upon its use in a particular context.”¹²⁰

The grammars concur with the versatility and contextual necessity of translating ἐν properly. They indicate that ἐν can function as a simple dative. In light of the above, one should avoid building theological absolutes in obscure passages on such a versatile and sometimes ambiguous preposition. It is clear that ἐν can be translated with an indirect sense as “to,” an instrumental sense of agency such as “by,” or generally “with reference to,” “in connection with”—all of which harmonize well with an exclusive view of the target phrase in Romans 16:7.

Though a legitimate case can be made for the inclusive interpretation, a valid case can also be made for the exclusive interpretation. Ultimately, it is the near and wider contexts that determine the meaning. If “A” is well known, eminent, or notorious among “B,” the collocation can either mean that “A” is a member of the class of objects “B” or that “A” is not a member of “B,” but is either reputable or notorious among them. In order to make a determination one would need information external to the proposition itself. For example, one could say that Alexander the Great is “notable, well-known, and notorious among historians” or, on the other hand, that “Josephus is notable, well-known, and notorious among historians.” In the first case the statement would be exclusive (Alexander is not an historian) and in the second case the statement would be inclusive (Josephus is an historian) based on the external information about Alexander and Josephus respectively.¹²¹

The Scriptures are completely silent about these “most distinguished apostles” other than this brief mention (Rom 16:7) in the middle of a long list of names. The only external information in the Scriptures available to properly interpret ἐπίσημοι ἐν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις regards the gender of the twelve apostles of Christ, the replacement of Judas with Matthias, the appointment of missionary apostles, the references to church apostles who acted as emissaries and envoys, the biblical requirements for leadership in the church, and the biblical restrictions on female ministry. Those subjects would require a lengthy treatment by themselves; yet, they all point in the opposite direction of an inclusive interpretation.

¹¹⁸BDAG, 329.

¹¹⁹Stanley E. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 156.

¹²⁰Ibid.

¹²¹For a more complete argument along these lines, see John Hunwicke’s review of Eldon Epp’s *Junia—The First Woman Apostle*, titled, “Junia among the Apostles: The Story behind a New Testament Saint & the Egalitarian Agenda,” *Touchstone: A Journal of Mere Christianity* 8 October 2008, 3–8.

THE MEANING OF APOSTLE IN ROMANS 16:7

Survey of Different Meanings

Brooten claims that “we can assume that the apostles Junia and Andronicus were persons of great authority in the early Christian community.”¹²² Grenz reasons that “Because the weight of the evidence favors interpreting Junia as an *authoritative apostle* (italics added), Paul’s greeting sufficiently opens the possibility that women served in this capacity.”¹²³ Dunn summarizes, “We may firmly conclude, however, that one of the foundation apostles of Christianity was a woman and a wife.”¹²⁴ These assertions fail, however, to recognize the diverse use of the term “apostle” in the NT, the fact that all other NT apostles were male, the requirement of a *man* to replace Judas, and the observation that the reference to Andronicus and Junia may simply commend a fellow missionary couple who had served with Paul.

As Clark demonstrates, “Paul did use the word ‘apostle’ in at least three different senses.”¹²⁵ The term ἀπόστολος originally meant “messengers without extraordinary status” such as “delegate, envoy, messenger,” and “ambassador” (cf. John 13:16; Phil 2:25; 2 Cor 8:23; 1 Kings 14:46, LXX).¹²⁶ However, ἀπόστολος carried various nuances regarding the status of these men in the NT.¹²⁷ The term appears eighty times in the NT, thirty-five times in the Pauline corpus,¹²⁸ and is used to denote at least three groups of people: (1) Restricted use—Peter (Apostle to the Jews), the rest of the Twelve,¹²⁹ Paul (Apostle to the Gentiles; e.g., Matt 10:2; Mark 3:14; Luke 6:13; Acts 1:26; 2:42; 4:33; 6:6; 15:2; 1 Cor 9:5; 1 Pet 1:1; 2 Pet 1:1; Rev 21:14; 1 Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11; Gal 1:1, 11–2:10), and possibly James (Gal 1:17; 1 Cor 15:7),¹³⁰ all of whom

¹²²Brooten, “Junia,” 143.

¹²³S. J. Grenz and D. M. Kjesbo, *Women in the Church: A Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 96.

¹²⁴Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 895.

¹²⁵Andrew Clark, “Apostleship: Evidence from the New Testament and Early Christian Literature,” *Vox Evangelica* 19 (1989): 62.

¹²⁶BDAG, 122. “The Jewish idea that man’s officially appointed representative (*shaliach*) stands in his place is also used in the Synoptics to explain Jesus’ own authority and that of his disciples (Matt 10:40)” [Kevin Giles, “Apostles before and after Paul,” *Churchman* 99 (1985): 242].

¹²⁷BDAG, 122.

¹²⁸P. W. Barnett, “Apostle,” *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 45.

¹²⁹“The qualification of those numbered amongst the twelve apostles is clearly set out by Luke. They must have accompanied Jesus from the time of his baptism until his death and be a witness of his resurrection (1:21–22)... Luke does not draw them as missionaries” (Giles, “Apostles,” 245).

¹³⁰Bauchham offers an excellent discussion of James’ authority in the NT church and argues that it was comparable with the authority of the Twelve: “The leadership of

were eyewitnesses of the resurrected Christ;¹³¹ (2) Broader use—other missionary leaders who were commissioned by the NT church to preach the Gospel and plant churches, such as Barnabas (Acts 14:4, 14; 1 Cor 9:1–6; cf. Gal 2:9), Silas and Timothy (2 Cor 1:19; Acts 15–18; 1 Thess 2:7),¹³² and possibly Apollos (1 Cor 4:9);¹³³ (3) Broadest use—those apostles of the churches who assisted the first group of apostles by serving as messengers, envoys, and emissaries to local churches, such as Epaphroditus (Phil 2:25) and the two unnamed brothers (2 Cor 8:23; cf. John 13:16).¹³⁴

There were several qualifications for the gift of apostleship in the restricted, narrow sense of the term: (1) Personal contact with Jesus Christ during his thirty-three years on earth (Acts 1:8, 21–23); (2) Eyewitness of Jesus' resurrection from the dead (Acts 1:21–22; Luke 24:48; 1 Cor 9:1–2); (3) Direct appointment to this office by Christ himself (Luke 6:13–16; 1 Cor 15:8–9); (4) Performance of signs, wonders, and miracles that were emblematic of apostleship (cf. Rom 15:15–19; 2 Cor 12:12).¹³⁵ When these men spoke, they spoke as Christ's appointed representatives to the body of Christ as a whole. Their apostolic appointment and related gifts provided recognition to the NT books as the authoritative writings for the NT church.

Paul, in particular, refers to himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ, implying a direct commission from Christ giving him authority over the

James the Lord's [half] brother held James to be not only the head of the Jerusalem church but also the central authoritative figure for the whole early Christian movement" (Richard Bauckham, "James and the Jerusalem Church" in *The Book of Acts in Its Palestinian Setting*, ed. Richard Bauckham, vol. 4 of *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995], 423; cf. 416–79).

¹³¹With reference to Galatians 1:1; 1:11–2:10, Lightfoot comments that "in the first clause he [Paul] distinguishes himself from the false apostles, who did not derive their commission from God at all; in the second he ranks himself with the twelve, who were commissioned directly from God" (*Galatians*, 71).

¹³²Interestingly, Paul distinguishes himself as an apostle from Timothy whom he addresses as a brother in 2 Corinthians 1:1 and Colossians 1:1. So Paul both recognizes Timothy as an apostle and yet distinguishes himself from Timothy as an apostle. This implies both a narrow and broad view of apostleship in Paul's mind.

¹³³The existence of a class of missionary apostles is increased by Paul's reference to his opponents in Corinth as "false apostles" (2 Cor 11:13). The reference to "other apostles" in 1 Corinthians 9:5 could be understood as a class of itinerant missionaries who were not included in the Twelve (Clark, "Apostleship," 60). Giles lists qualifications for this second group of missionary apostles as (1) having seen the risen Lord (1 Cor 15:6), (2) having brought a church into existence (1 Cor 9:1–2; cf. 1 Cor 3:1–2; 2 Cor 12:11), (3) and suffering endured in the service of Christ (2 Cor 11:16–33; cf. 1 Cor 4:8–13) (Giles, "Apostles," 248).

¹³⁴There is no record of these individuals doing missionary work *per se*. Barnett adds that this third use of "apostles" as envoys was most likely borrowed by Paul from Jewish practice and applied to the churches (e.g., 1 Kings 14:6, LXX) ("Apostle," 46–47).

¹³⁵Robert Thomas, *Understanding Spiritual Gifts*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1999), 175.

churches (cf. 1 Cor 14:37; 2 Cor 2:9; 13:2; Phil 2:12). In Romans Paul's self-awareness of his apostleship to the Gentiles is quite clear (Rom 11:13). As Clark comments, "There were before and alongside him other missionaries to the Gentiles who also called themselves apostles (2 Cor 11:3). But their commission did not have the universal scope of the task."¹³⁶ Paul links his Damascus road experience with the experiences of the Twelve to attest the legitimacy of his apostleship (1 Cor 15:3–11; e.g., 15:8). Paul sees himself and his apostolic colleagues as commissioned by God and ambassadors for Christ (2 Cor 2:17). Clark states that the "The essence of the apostolic task is to preach the gospel in virgin territory (2 Cor 10:14–16; cf. Rom 15:20)."¹³⁷

The Various Options Applied

Though no one argues that Andronicus and Junia(s) were members of the Twelve *per se*, egalitarians insist that a woman occupied the ranks of an authoritative, foundational apostle of the early church.¹³⁸ The debate centers on whether or not they were members of any group of apostles (exclusive view) or that they were members of the first group of authoritative apostles, second group of church planting missionaries, or possibly a third group of official envoys to the churches (inclusive view).

Burer and Wallace have interpreted the collocation exclusively and thereby understand τοῖς ἀποστόλοις as referring to the apostolic leaders in the Jerusalem community (e.g., 1 Cor 9:5; 15:7; Gal 1:17–19).¹³⁹ First, they argue that it "makes good sense," psychologically speaking, to recognize that the fame of Andronicus and Junia(s) exists among the most prestigious leaders of the NT church. Second, the narrow understanding of "apostles" correlates best with Paul's use of the articular τοῖς ἀποστόλοις.¹⁴⁰ Third, Andronicus and Junia(s) are listed among a litany

¹³⁶Clark, "Apostles," 52.

¹³⁷Ibid., 56.

¹³⁸The phrase "All the apostles" in 1 Corinthians 15:7 is most likely a reference to the narrow usage of the term. Murphy-O'Connor states: "it is inconceivable that he should be using 'apostle' in the very wide meaning well-attested in his letters. There would be no sense, particularly in this context, in a claim to be less than people like Silas...or Barnabas. Moreover, it is highly unlikely that Paul would have introduced the clear contrasts in vv. 10–11...where he uses 'apostle' in a sense that included his own closest collaborators. Hence, Paul must be claiming to be an 'apostle' in a special limited sense, and this forces us to think in terms of the equality with Peter, James, and the other apostles who were also called directly by Christ" (Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "Tradition and Redaction in 1 Cor 15:3–7," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 43 [1981]: 587). Godet affirms that "the expression 'all the apostles' does not naturally express the idea of a circle larger than the twelve" (*1 Corinthians*, vol. 2, 336, cited in Clark, "Apostleship," 62): "The emphasis is on a strictly limited circle, *whereas other Pauline references to apostles in the sense of itinerant missionaries (e.g., Rom 16:7) give the impression of an open, large group*" (italics added; Clark, "Apostleship," 62).

¹³⁹Burer and Wallace, "Was Junia?" 90.

¹⁴⁰Ibid. Hodge argues, "The word *apostle*, unless connected with some other word,

of twenty-four individuals and two households of the Roman church to whom Paul extends greetings. Paul mentions Phoebe, Prisca and Aquila, among several others before he even addresses Andronicus and Junia(s). Such literary treatment seems incongruent with the status of those who would be considered outstanding members of the authoritative apostolic community.¹⁴¹ Furthermore, Junia(s) is mentioned second to Andronicus suggesting that he/she may have been less prominent than Andronicus regardless of Andronicus' vocation.

If Junia, however, is indeed the wife of Andronicus, as some complementarians and egalitarians surmise, and if one interprets the collocation inclusively, then the reference in Romans 16:7 could simply refer to a husband/wife missionary team where the husband performs all the public, authoritative teaching and preaching.¹⁴² Since Paul refers to the "apostles" in the third person, then this fact could suggest that Paul did not consider himself a part of the broader designation of apostles. Thus, Paul may be addressing Andronicus and Junia as a husband/wife missionary team who belong to the broader group of married missionary teams similar to Peter and his wife or Aquila and Priscilla.

As to the third category, it is unlikely that Paul has apostolic

as in the phrase, 'messengers (apostles) of the churches,' is very rarely, if ever, applied in the New Testament to any other than the original messengers of Jesus Christ" (Hodge, *Romans*, 449).

¹⁴¹Burer and Wallace, "Was Junia?" 90.

¹⁴²The requirements for male leadership in the church are clear. 1 Timothy 2:11–15 and 1 Corinthians 14:33–35 forbid any woman from being in an official, authoritative teaching or preaching position over men in the church (see Samuel A. Dawson, "A Difference in Function: The Role of Women in Relationship to Men in the Context of the Local Church [1 Timothy 2:11–15]," Th.M. Thesis, Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary [Allen Park, Michigan, 1992]; Andreas J. Köstenberger, T. R. Schreiner, and H. S. Balwin, eds., *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9–15* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995]); James E. Bordwine, *The Pauline Doctrine of Male Headship: The Apostle Versus Biblical Feminists* [Vancouver, WA: Westminster Institute, 1996]; Douglas J. Moo, "The Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:11–15: A Rejoinder," *Trinity Journal* 2 [Fall 1981]: 198–222; D. A. Carson, "'Silent in the Churches': On the Role of Women in 1 Corinthians 14:33b–36," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, ed. J. Piper and W. Grudem [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991], 140–53). Male apostleship was a requirement for the replacement of Judas in Acts 1:20–24. In addition, male leadership is a requirement for both pastor and deacon in 1 Timothy 3:1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 11 and Titus 1:5–6.

Interestingly, Eldon Epp dismisses and/or ignores the passages that conflict with the egalitarian interpretation of Romans 16:7. Epp says in his conclusion that "Junia is referred to as an apostle in Rom 16:7 and that 1 Cor 14:34–35 is likely a *non-Pauline interpolation* (italics added) into Paul's letter.... Then it is no longer Rom 16:7 that is out of place in this threesome of passages, but 1 Tim 2:8–15, which, from the customary critical standpoint, is the composition of a later Paulinist, one of whose thrusts is the subordination of women, a trend begun already in the earlier deuterio-Pauline letters of Ephesians 5:22–24 and Colossians 3:18. Numerous scholars will accept such decisions regarding the three passages and will declare that the assumed Pauline restriction on teaching in the church by women has disappeared" (Epp, "Junia/Junias," 291). One can only wonder why Epp does not apply his "customary critical standpoint" to Romans 16:7.

emissaries in mind. Clark comments,

For a woman to work on her own as an apostle, given first century cultural attitudes would have been virtually impossible. The question remains as to the sense in which “apostle” should be understood. In the light of the fact that they have shared one of Paul’s imprisonments, it is more likely that they were itinerant missionaries. Moreover, it is difficult to conceive of a class of “messengers” among whom Andronicus and Junia were outstanding.... The almost casual way in which they are introduced in the middle of a greetings list, however, suggests that they did not possess great authority in the church.¹⁴³

Though Epaphroditus and the two unnamed brothers are called apostles, they were not apostles in any formal sense of the term. Paul and the NT writers usually reference apostles of Christ in either the narrow sense of the twelve or the broader sense of church planting missionaries. It is unlikely that Paul would address the courier apostles of the churches with the definite article.

The best conclusion is that Andronicus and Junia(s) are well-known to and therefore highly regarded by the authoritative male apostles of the NT church with allowance for Paul and possibly James, the half-brother of Christ, to be included in that select group. However, if Andronicus and Junia(s) are included in the apostolic designation, this is simply a reference to the itinerant missionaries *sent out* (ἀποστέλλω) by the churches. In this case Junia is afforded missionary status by virtue of her marriage with Andronicus—a scenario quite common today among the conservative churches who hold to the complementarian position.

CONCLUSION

The combined Latin and Greek evidence substantiating the use of the feminine name Junia is strong but not as overwhelming as its proponents insist. Nevertheless, the lack of attestation to the masculine name Junias in the extant Greek and Latin literature, other than the possible references by Epiphanius and Origen, lessen the probability that the ambiguous reference in Romans 16:7 is masculine. The “shortened-name” theory is valid; yet, there is no hard evidence that it actually occurred with Junias.

If for the sake of argument one should concede that Junia(s) is feminine, then one must determine whether Andronicus and Junia were well-known to the apostles in the sense of being highly-regarded by the apostolic authorities in Jerusalem or as outstanding apostles among the apostles. Though according to the grammars and lexicons both translations are valid, the near and far contexts better support the former interpretation. Burer and Wallace as well as Huttar have established the legitimacy of the exclusive translation—“highly regarded by the apostles”; nevertheless, the evidence presents at the very least an even playing field for the exclusive interpretation over against the inclusive

¹⁴³Clark, “Apostles,” 59.

translation. Furthermore, when one considers the testimony of the patristic commentators, it is reasonable to say that the probability has shifted in favor of the exclusive interpretation.

Assuming, therefore, the exclusive translation of this collocation, Paul considers the apostles in Romans 16:7 to be the authoritative, foundational apostles of the NT church in the restricted sense of the term. If, however, one accepts the inclusive translation, as many conservative commentators do, then Paul is referencing the band of missionaries such as Barnabas, Silas, Timothy, Apollos, and others of whom Andronicus and Junia were well-known as a missionary husband/wife team, following the pattern of Peter and his wife or Aquila and Priscilla. In this scenario, Junia, similar to Peter's wife or Aquila's wife, not only lacked apostolic, pastoral, or church planting authority, but more importantly could not possess such authority as Paul makes clear in 1 Corinthians 11:3–16; 14:33–35 and 1 Timothy 2:11–15 (cf. 1 Tim 3:1–13; Titus 1:5–9). Ecclesiastical authority would have rested completely with Junia's husband, Andronicus. Subsequently, in neither the inclusive nor the exclusive cases is there to be found strong support for the egalitarian position.

In response to the egalitarian affirmations of female apostleship and its pastoral implications, based upon their interpretation of a difficult and somewhat obscure reference in Romans 16:7, perhaps the words of Winston Churchill summarize their arguments the best: "Seldom has so much been made of so little." A more serious issue, however, is at stake. When considering the total witness of Scripture to a given subject, one must integrate all the data of Scripture and correlate all biblical truth into a cohesive, non-contradictory, doctrinal testimony. Whatever conclusion one comes to regarding Romans 16:7, one must interpret the obscure passage in light of clear passages, without resorting to desperate attempts of interpolations and deutero-authors, so as to be in harmony with the larger picture of biblical teaching. In this particular case, Osborne's instructions are both informative and ominous:

While there is always a plethora of possible interpretations to sift through, this does not make it impossible to make a probability decision as to the "meaning" that best fits the original context. Moreover, all the "possible meanings" are not equally valid, and there is no necessity to surrender and accept a multiplicity of possibilities. At times I have the feeling that a new "final authority" operates for many critical theologians, namely that of the *contemporary context resulting in relativism and radical pluralism*. The Bible itself demands we understand it on the basis of the author's intended meaning. Therefore, we have a responsibility to seek that interpretation which best fits this goal.¹⁴⁴

This article demonstrates that the case for female apostleship in

¹⁴⁴Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 290, emphasis added; cf. Grant R. Osborne, "Hermeneutics and Women in The Church," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 20 (December 1977): 337–52.

Romans 16:7 cannot be conclusively supported on the basis of lexical, syntactical, and theological grounds. In light of these deficiencies, the traditional view of male apostleship posited here, including its necessary implications for male leadership in the NT church, best harmonizes with the analogy of Scripture.