

ABSTRACT
Junia as an Apostle
Text-Critical and Exegetical Approach of Rom. 16:7

Regarding the question of Paul's greetings at Rom. 16, 7 being addressed to a man named "Junias" or to a woman by the name of Junia, this study takes the view that the latter is correct. It bases its position on the following observations:

1. In the manuscript tradition of the New Testament, especially the miniscule manuscripts which are accentuated, we find the reading Ἰουνία (Junia). The particular contribution of this study consists in the examination of a large number of lectionaries, given that the excerpt from Rom. 16, 1-16 is a liturgical reading in the Orthodox Church. The lectionaries are unanimous in presenting the reading Ἰουνία. Besides, from as early as the first printed editions of the NT by Erasmus (1516) through to the critical editions of the 19th century and even the first editions by Eberhard Nestle in the first quarter of the 20th century, the reading Junia is dominant.

2. In their interpretations, the Greek and Latin fathers of the Church adopted the feminine form of the name and lauded Junia as the first female apostle, understanding the term "apostle" as this is actually used in the NT, in the broader sense, not as being restricted to Jesus' twelve disciples.

3. There is no evidence for the masculine name Junias in any contemporary source of the NT, in contrast to the feminine Junia, which is to be found in numerous Greek and Latin literary sources.

4. The first time the masculine reading of the name at Rom. 16,7 is encountered is in the 13th century, in Aegidius (Giles) of Rome and later in Luther's translation of the NT (16th century). It may be that these two sources influenced many later European translations.

5. The ancient Latin, Syriac and Coptic translations all testify to the feminine form of the name, as do many of the more recent ones, from 1970 onwards. The preference of certain exegetes and editors of the NT for the masculine name had to do with the interpretation of Paul's phrase at Rom. verse 16, 7: "ἐπίσημοι ἐν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις". The prevailing interpretation is "outstanding among the apostles"; hence it was thought that the appellation 'apostle' was inappropriate for a woman. They therefore either took Iounias as masculine, or, if they accepted that the name was feminine, translated the controversial phrase as "well known to the apostles".

Finally, detailed study of the sources indicates that we should accept the feminine form of the name, Junia, as being correct. This preference is clear in the most recent reprints of the two most widely recognized critical editions today. In the 3rd reprint of the 4th edition (1998) of *The Greek New Testament*, as well as in the 1998, 5th, corrected Jubilee edition of the *Novum Testamentum Graece* by Nestle-Aland (on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of E. Nestle's first edition), the reading Ἰουνία is adopted, while the masculine Ἰουνιάς is not even mentioned in the critical apparatus.