resurrection witness of women coheres with the information of the Gospels that in his itinerant ministry women disciples accompanied Jesus, contrary to the customs of the time.

6. The most prominent of the women must have been Mary of Magdala, since all four Gospels transmit her name while the names of the other women vary. The Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel according to Mary and the Pistis Sophia understand her leadership as co-equal to that of Peter, who sees her as a rival. The tradition calls her “apostle to the apostles.” This title is accepted by the statement of the Pontifical Biblical Commission: Part III. In my writings I have consistently pointed out the importance of Mary of Magdala: cf. E. Schüssler, Der vergessene Partner (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1964), pp. 57-59; E. Schüssler Fiorenza, “Feminist Theology as a Critical Theology of Liberation,” in W. Burkhardt, ed., Woman: New Dimensions (New York: Paulist Press, 1977), pp. 48-50; “Die Rolle der Frau in der urchristlichen Bewegung,” Concilium, Vol. 12 (1976), pp. 3-9.

7. Their self-understanding and ministry appears to have been patterned after the itinerant ministry of Jesus. Cf. G. Theissen, “Itinerant Radicalism. The Traditions of the Jesus Sayings from the Perspective of the Sociology of Literature,” Radical Religion Reader: The Bible and Liberation (Berkeley, 1976), pp. 84-93.


12. See essay by Mary Ann Getty on synergos, pp. 176-182.

15

“Junia ... Outstanding among the Apostles” (Romans 16:7)

Bernadette Brooten

“Greet Andronicus and Junia... who are outstanding among the apostles” (Romans 16:7): 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.

John Chrysostom (344-407)

Also notable is the case of Junias or Junio, placed in the rank of the apostles (Rom. 16, 7), with regard to whom one or another [exegete] raises the question of whether it is a man.

Pontifical Biblical Commission (1976)

What a striking contrast! The exegesis of Romans 16:7 has practically reversed. Whereas for John Chrysostom the apostle addressed by Paul is a woman by the name of Junia, for almost all modern scholars it is a man, Junias, whom Paul is greeting. The Biblical Commission is quite right in saying that only “one or another” exegete questions the prevailing view that the person named is a man. Most Romans commentators do not seem to be even aware of the possibility that the person could be a woman, and virtually all modern biblical translations have Junias (m.) rather than Junia (f.).

It was not always this way. John Chrysostom was not alone in the ancient church in taking the name to be feminine. The earliest commentator on Romans 16:7, Origen of Alexandria (c. 185-253/54), took the name to be feminine (Junia or Julia, which is a textual variant), as did Jerome (340/50, 419/20), Hatto of Vercelli (924-961), Thaumastyle (c. 1050-c. 1100), and Peter Abelard (1079-1142). In fact, to the best of my knowledge, no commentator on the text until Aegidius of Rome (1245-1316) took the name to be masculine. Without commenting on his departure from previous commentators, Aegidius simply referred to the two persons mentioned in Romans 16:7 as “these honorable men” (viris). Aegidius noted that there were two variant readings for the second name: Juniam and Juliam (accusative in the verse). He preferred the reading Juliam and took it to be masculine. Thus we see that even Juliam, which modern scholars would take to be clearly femi-
nine, has been considered masculine in the context of the title “apostle.”

If Aegidius started the ball rolling, it really picked up momentum in the Reformation period. The commentary which Martin Luther heavily relied upon, that by Faber Stapelusia (Paris, 1512, p. 99b), took the accusative ‘IONIUNIAN to be Junias (m.). Luther’s lecture on Romans (1515/1516: Weimarische Ausgabe 56, p. 150) followed Faber Stapelusia on this and other points. Through Luther the Junias interpretation was assured of a broad exposure for centuries to come. In each of the succeeding centuries the Junias hypothesis gained new adherents and the argument was expanded. To make the Junias interpretation more plausible, some commentators suggested that it was a “short form” of the Latin Junianus, Junianius, Junitus or even Junius. This “short form” hypothesis is the prevailing view in modern scholarship.

The proponents of the new Junias hypothesis were, however, by no means left unchallenged. In 1698, for example, Johannes Drusius (in the Critici Sacri, Amsterdam, 1698, Vol. VII, p. 930) patiently tried to remind his colleagues that Junia was the feminine counterpart of Junius, just as Priscia was of Priscus, and Julia was of Julius. Christian Wilhelm Bose, in his doctoral dissertation Andronicum et Juniam (Leipzig, 1742, p. 5), questioned that Junias is a short form of anything. If that be true, he pondered, then one might just as easily argue that Andronicus is a short form of Andronicus! In our century, the most notable protest against the Junias hypothesis has been M.-J. Lagrange (Paris, 1916; sixth ed. 1930, p. 366). His reason is a conservative one: because the abbreviation Junias is unattested, it is “more prudent” to stick to the feminine Junia. Unlike many of his Protestant colleagues, Lagrange was aware of the Patristic exegesis on this point. Precisely because the Church Fathers took the name to be feminine, Catholic exegesis of the past were generally slower to accept the innovation of Junias. But by now commentators of all confessions take IOWNIAN to be Junias.

What reasons have commentators given for this change? The answer is: simple: a woman could not have been an apostle. Because a woman could not have been an apostle, the woman who is here called apostle could not have been a woman.

What can a modern philologist say about Junias? Just this: it is unattested. To date not a single Latin or Greek inscription, not a single reference in ancient literature has been cited by any of the proponents of the Junias hypothesis. My own search for an attestation has also proved fruitless. This means that we do not have a single shred of evidence that the name Junias ever existed. Nor is it plausible to argue that it is just coincidental that Junias is unattested since the “long forms” Junianus, Junianius, Junitus, and Junias are common enough. It is true that Greek names could have abbreviated forms ending in -as (e.g., Artemas for Artemidoro); such names are called “hypocoristica” (terms of endearment or diminutives, e.g., Johnny for John, or Eddie for Edward). Latin hypocoristica, however, are usually formed by lengthening the name (e.g., Priscilla for Priscus) rather than by shortening it, as in Greek. The Junias hypothesis presupposes that Latin names were regu-

larly abbreviated in the Greek fashion, which is not the case. The feminine Junia, by contrast, is a common name in both Greek and Latin inscriptions and literature. In short, literally all of the philological evidence points to the feminine Junia. What does it mean that Junia and Andronicus were apostles? Was the apostolic charge not limited to the Twelve? New Testament usage varies on this point. Luke, for example, placed great emphasis on “the twelve apostles.” In fact, with one exception (Acts 14:4, 14; both Paul and Barnabas are called “apostles”), Luke does not honor Paul with the title “apostle.” Paul, on the other hand, never uses the term “the twelve apostles.” He himself claimed to be an apostle, though he was not one of the Twelve, and he also called others, such as James the brother of the Lord (Galatians 1:19; cf. 1 Corinthians 15:7), “apostle.” This does not mean that Paul used “apostle” in an unrestricted, loose sense. Precisely because of the seriousness with which he defends his own claim to apostleship (he says that he received his call from Christ himself: Galatians 1:1, 11; 1 Corinthians 9:1), we must assume that he recognized others as apostles only when he was convinced that their own apostolic charge had also come from the risen Lord (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:7; the risen Lord was seen by all the apostles). For Paul the category “apostle” was perhaps of even greater import than for other New Testament writers, because it concerned authority in the church of his own day and did not refer to a closed circle of persons from the past, i.e., a restricted number which could not be repeated.

From this and from Paul’s description of his own apostolic work in his letters, we can assume that the apostles Junia and Andronicus were persons of great authority in the early Christian community, that they were probably missionaries and founders of churches, and that, just as with Paul, their apostleship had begun with a vision of the risen Lord and the charge to become apostles of Christ. In light of Romans 16:7 then, the assertion that “Jesus did not entrust the apostolic charge to women” must be revised. The implications for women priests should be self-evident. If the first century Junia could be an apostle, it is hard to see how her twentieth century counterpart should not be allowed to become even a priest.

Notes

1. The following comments summarize briefly the results of a comprehensive study of the history of interpretation of Romans 16:7 and of the inscriptive evidence for the name IOWNIAN. The reader interested in more complete documentation is referred to that study, which will be published in the near future.

2. In Epistolam ad Romanos, Homilia 31, 2 (J.P. Migne, Patrologiae cursus completus, series Graeca [=PG] 60, 669f.).
4. Commentarium in Epistolam ad Romanos 10, 26 (PG 14, 1281B); 10, 39 (PG 14, 1289A). The text printed in Migne has Junia emended to Junias, but the manuscripts have Junia or Julias.
6. In Epistolam ad Romanos 16, 7 (PL 134, 282A).
7. Expositio In Epistolam ad Romanos 114 (PG 124, 552D).

16

Innocent III and the Keys to the Kingdom of Heaven

E. Ann Matter

It should be noted first of all that this portion of the Declaration is not an argument based on Scripture, nor does it have much to do with the Blessed Virgin Mary. There is, of course, a biblical passage to which Innocent III here alludes: Matthew 16:19, the promise of the keys to the kingdom of heaven and the power of binding and loosing to Simon Peter, the disciple who first witnessed that Jesus was "the Christ, the Son of the Living God." But any reference in this verse to the priesthood as a whole is derivative—in the opinion of tradition—from the institution of the papacy through that one disciple, Peter.

The power of the Church in general, and of the papacy in particular, was a special concern of this thirteenth century occupant of the Holy See. The power was clearly understood to be political and temporal as well as spiritual and eternal, following Christ's promise "whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." As one modern historian has pointed out, the pontificate of Innocent III stands at the apex of the quest for secular power among the popes of the medieval Church. Of a series of popes who claimed such power, "Innocent III alone made good the claim. He not only ruled the Church, but he was a greater force in the secular politics of Europe than either emperor or national king."

But without any doubt Innocent III ruled the Church as well. In fact, the quotation in the Declaration is the concluding sentence of a letter written to two Spanish bishops regarding the behavior of abbesses in their region:

Recently certain news has been intimated to us, about which we marvel greatly, that abbesses, namely those situated in the dioceses of Burgos and Palencia, give blessings to their own nuns, and they also hear confessions of sins, and, reading the Gospel, they presume to preach in public. This thing is inharmonious as well as absurd, and not to be tolerated by us. For that reason, by means of our discretion from apostolic writing, we order that it be done no longer, and by apostolic authority to check it more firmly, for, although the Blessed Virgin Mary surpassed in dignity and in excellence all the Apostles, nevertheless, it was not to her but to them that the Lord entrusted the keys to the kingdom of heaven."
WOMEN PRIESTS
A Catholic Commentary on the Vatican Declaration

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