



# Life and works of Jovan Andrejević Joles

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## SUMMARY

*The first Serbian anatomist Jovan Andrejević Joles was born in Novi Sad on October 6, 1833 to a priest father. The primary school and the first four grades of the grammar school he finished in Novi Sad, and the seventh and the eighth grades in Timisoara. After finishing grammar school, Andrejević moved to Pest where he started medical studies in 1853. He continued the studies in Prague and Vienna where he received the diploma of a doctor of medicine. During the studies of medicine, this remarkably educated and talented man demonstrated great interest in science. In his research he came to new findings he published through the report of the Vienna Academy of Sciences in the paper titled "On the Fine Structure of the Liver" (Ueber den feineren Bau der Leber), making his mentor, professor Ernest von Brücke, proud. Apart from the scientific work, young Andrejević also translated literature from German and English. His interests also covered photography, art and aesthetics. He actively participated in the work of the United Serbian Youth, which brought him many problems with the ruling regime of the time. At a very early age, Andrejević fell down with tuberculosis and had to stop his scientific work and move back to Novi Sad in 1861 where he began working as a physician. Apart from the medical practice, Andrejević was still in the center of scientific, political, and cultural events. He continued regular correspondence with professor von Brücke who informed him on the success of his scientific results. Apart from a number of texts and critical writings, together with Jovan Đorđević, Andrejević worked hard on the foundation of the Serbian National Theater in Novi Sad. During 1863, his illness aggravated and he died of tuberculosis on July 21, 1864. The memory of the first Serbian anatomist is kept by the Department of Anatomy of the Faculty of Medicine in Novi Sad where the documentation on his life and works is stored. The ground floor hall of the Faculty of Medicine holds the bust of Jovan Andrejević.*

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Known from the 19<sup>th</sup> century as the Serbian Athens, the city of Novi Sad owes that name to a number of highly educated Serbian intellectuals who lived and worked there at the time. Well educated as they were, they invested great efforts to preserve and present cultural values and traditions of the Serbian people to other nations and to bring to their people all the values of Europe and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, where they were schooled, thus contributing to the development of their culture, education and science. At the same time, they used all means at hand to fight for political and religious rights of the largely deprived Serbian people living in this part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which resulted in the foundation of the Patriarchate and the proclamation of Serbian Vojvodina in Sremski Karlovci on 1 May 1848. By doing so, these enthusiasts and admirers of all that is valuable and beautiful changed the wheel of history of Serbian Vojvodina, the Serbian people, and Novi Sad forever. However, as it is often the case, a minor number of these great individuals received the due recognition they earned. Unfortunately, among them is Jovan Andrejević – Joles. For years, the only remembrance of this great man was a small street at the outskirts of Novi Sad, a tombstone and a modest monument at Almaško cemetery erected by his father.

The turmoil that struck the region of Yugoslavia opened the eyes of our scientific public and made some individuals interested in finding out more about the history of their scientific field in the region. Then, quite unexpectedly, to the question whether there was someone here who researched anatomy, Dr. Vasilije Devečerski MD, professor of histology and embryology at the Faculty of Medicine in Novi Sad, not only gave us the positive answer but also provided the name – Dr. Jovan Andrejević – Joles (Figure 1).

Talking to professor Devečerski we also found out that Jovan Andrejević did research in the microscopic structure of the liver and achieved



Figure 1. Jovan Andrejević – Joles

valuable results not only for that time but for the future as well. At the same time, we were informed about the place where Jovan Andrejević was buried. Our question why such an important man of our science was never mentioned at lectures or in scientific collegiums remained unanswered. Even though the data acquired were only sketchy, they were enough to raise our interest in who Jovan Andrejević truly was and to make us try to correct the historical error, be it intentional or unintentional. Researching in encyclopedia and different departments of Matica Srpska archives, we found out more about this talented young man.

The father of Jovan Andrejević, Grigorije – Griša Andrejević, was born in Novi Sad in 1798, but there are no reliable records about his parents. He finished the grammar school in Sremski Karlovci and high school Preparandija in Sombor. Upon completing the studies at the Preparandija, he moved back to Novi Sad and then entered the theological college in Sremski Karlovci. After graduating, he started working as a minister in Bačka Diocese, married Persida, and had a son Jovan (1-3). Jovan Andrejević was born on 6 October 1833 in Novi Sad (4-6). Even though he lost his mother at an early age, he grew up in a sound environment, which enabled him to acquire good education inside the family home. The primary school and the first four years of high school Jovan Andrejević finished in Novi Sad and then moved to Timisoara where he attended the seventh and the eighth grade of high school after which, on 30 July 1853, he was awarded the certificate of *Testimonium maturitatis* (7). On 10 November of the same year, he enrolled at the Medical School of the University in Pest (5). From there, he went to Prague and then to Vienna where he completed his medical studies (2, 8). After finishing the studies, he came back to Novi Sad and on May 16, 1861 filed the following letter to the City Magistrate's office:

"In accordance with the rights bestowed upon me by the Royal University of Vienna with the diploma enclosed here, it is my intention to form an enterprise here in Novi Sad as a physician practitioner. Stating this I hereby ask the honorable Magistrate of the Free Royal City of Novi Sad to inform of this all the parties interested in a legally prescribed manner. Remaining a humble servant of the noble and honorable Magistrate of the Free Royal City of Novi Sad Jovan Andrejević, medical doctor".

In response to the letter from Jovan Andrejević, the deputy notary of the Magistrate, Jovan Jovanović, later known as Zmaj, wrote:

"Returning to the applicant the enclosed diploma, let him be informed that the same was, as requested, read on the session of the Council on 4/16 May 1861 and entered into the minutes of the session on the same day " (3).

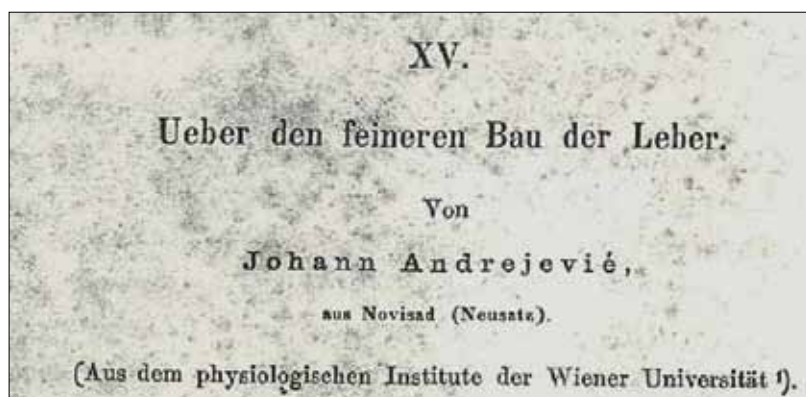


Figure 2. The paper by Jovan Andrejević titled "On the Fine Structure of the Liver"

As early as in his high school days, Andrejević started his literary works, writing also literary criticism and translating from German and English languages (9). He joined the political life very early, supporting the program and work of Svetozar Miletić.

Talent, vast education, language proficiency, and magnificent will to work placed Jovan Andrejević among the best students noticed by professors. The young Serb from Novi Sad was thus noticed by the famous Viennese professor Ernest Wilhelm von Brücke who took him to be his assistant. At the Brücke's Institute Andrejević did scientific research and still as a student presented his paper titled "On the Fine Structure of the Liver" to the experts from the Vienna Academy of Sciences (Figure 2) (10).

In his paper, Andrejević came up with new findings of the bile ducts and found that they do not touch the blood vessels (11). The importance of these findings was great so that they were mentioned in the lectures of professors Eollet from Graz and Kolliker from Wurttemberg, and some, as professor Budge from Graisswald, asked for the copy of the paper so that he could present it in lectures. In his textbook on the subject, Malaschott quoted Andrejević and his findings in the chapter on liver. The textbook, in its fourth edition, was published in Leipzig in 1863.

Even though in 1861 Andrejević went back to Novi Sad and started his own medical practice, his connections with professor von Brücke continued through personal correspondence. The number of letters exchanged by the student, the young doctor from Novi Sad and his mentor professor von Brücke is not known. To date only several of the letters that professor von Brücke wrote to his student remained. In those letters, he, among other things, informed Andrejević of the great interest his discoveries raised with the renowned scientists of the time. Owing to Mr. Vitković, by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (1895) these letters became the property of the archives of the Serbian Medical Association testifying to the rich history of our medical science (12-14).

Coming to Novi Sad in 1863, Andrejević married Jelena – Ilka Bajić, but the marriage bore no children (15). Apart from his great interest in medical practice, Andrejević was endowed with creative enthusiasm and willingness to finish what he started. For the future generations he left a number of literary and artistic works, as well as the first scientific work of photography published in Matica Srpska magazines of the time. Together with Jovan Đorđević, he was one of the founders of the Serbian National Theater. Apart from the significant engagement in political life, Andrejević was also a successful translator. He was the first to try to translate Shakespeare's Richard III into Serbian. The play, in his incomplete translation, was staged in Novi Sad in 1864 celebrating the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Shakespeare's birth (3, 5). During his brief lifetime, he was a friend of Svetozar Miletić, Jovan Đorđević, Jovan Jovanović – Zmaj, Laza Kostić and other prominent Serbs of the time. However, full of life as he was, Andrejević was not given long to live. As a student, he fell down with tuberculosis, which probably made him quit scientific work he craved so much. At the end of 1863, his illness returned and at the age of 31, he was tied to his bed. He died on July 21, 1864 in Novi Sad. In the presence of the bishop Platon, he was buried on Almaško cemetery on the south side of the chapel (8, 16). His intellectual legacy to the Serbian people is great, while his material gains were modest – only 306 forints given by his request to the Novi Sad Grammar School to which Andrejević donated funds all his life.

In the organization of the Serbian Medical Association and the Section for Applied and Clinical Anatomy, on the occasion of 170 years of his birth in 2003, a memorial plaque was placed in Grčkoškolska Street in Novi Sad where Andrejević lived for a time (Figure 3).



Figure 3. The memorial plaque on the house in Grčkoškolska Street in Novi Sad

A print with the image of Andrejević by Dušan Pajantić hangs in the offices of Anatomy Institutes throughout Serbia to preserve the memory of his work and its significance for all Serbian people. The award for the best student work in the field of anatomy, embryology and histology, presented every three years, has also been established.

The 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Jovan Andrejević was celebrated by the provincial branch of the Academy of Medical Sciences and the Medical Faculty in Novi Sad. On this occasion, a monograph titled "Dr. Jovan Andrejević Joles – Life and Works" was published and the bust of Jovan Andrejević, made by our colleague Dr. Vladimir Jokanović, was placed in the hall of the Medical Faculty (Figure 4).



Figure 4. The bust of Jovan Andrejević in the hall of the Faculty of Medicine in Novi Sad

#### Conflict of interest

We declare no conflicts of interest.

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