

ON THE DATE OF JOVAN (JULIJAN) CHOKOR'S DEATH

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Abstract. As I wrote in my paper "Jovan (Julijan) Chokor", there exist, in literature, two different dates regarding his passing away. The place of his burial was also questionable. My leafing through the newspapers "Zastava" and "Narod", of that period, both published in Novi Sad, led me to the Minutes of the "Srpsko-Narodni Sabor" ("Serbian National Assembly"). There I found written that JOVAN (JULIJAN) CHOKOR DIED ON THE 30TH MAY/11TH JUNE 1871 IN SREMSKI KARLOVCI, AND THAT HE HAS BEEN BURIED ON THE 1ST/13TH JUNE 1871 IN THE SAME TOWN. So the dates 10th or 13th June (according to the Julian calendar) are not valid any more! One article, probably written by him, and a report on the Final examination at the Serbian Teacher-Training School, in Sombor, held on the 31st October 1853, where Chokor was the professor, closes this paper.

Jovan (Julijan) Chokor (Baja, Hungary, 21st January/2nd February 1810-Sremski Karlovci, 30th May/11th June 1871) studied philosophy and after that law in Budapest. He also graduated in theology in Sremski Karlovci. From 1836 to 1842 he taught at Serbian Orthodox Gymnasium in Novi Sad. Next, he came to Sombor to the Serbian Teachers-Training School. On 7th/19th October 1853 he became a monk in Kuvezdin monastery and was given the name Julijan. In 1856 he is the director of the Metropolitan-Gymnasium's Typography in Sremski Karlovci. On 24th October 1865 he has been nominated as Archimandrite in the Grabovac monastery, now in Hungary.

Let us count only his chief occupations : typographer (carved letters by himself), astronomical and physical instrument designer and master, pyromaster, clockmaster, designer of two sundials in Sombor. He had his own astronomical observatory in Sremski Karlovci, where he observed the sky. He edited two calendars: for the years 1860 and 1861. In the first one he printed the data on the solar eclipse for the location of his observatory, and in the second he reported his observations on that occasion. In both he described, in detail, the solar System and its members.

In my paper "Jovan (Julijan) Chokor" (Jovanovic B., 1985) I cited two dates concerning his passing away: "As a member of the Serbian National Assembly, he died during the session in Sremski Karlovci, on the 10th/22nd or 13th/25th June 1871, and has been buried in the Cherat cemetery". Another suspicion occurred concerning the location. Some writers mentioned the monastery Grabovac, in Hungary, where

he was the Archimandrite.

I surveyed the "Chronicle Of the Monastery Grabovac", photocopy in the National Library Of Serbia, in Beograd. No trace. Then I visited the monastery itself, spoke with the archipriest Radovan Stepanov, in Mohach, also in Hungary, who is the supervisor of that unique remnant of exceptional value for Serbs, in the neighbouring state. Neither his grave has been found nor there exists any written trace of the end of his life. The visit to the graveyard Cherat, in Sremski Karlovci, brought again no result. In the Protocol of buried persons the page for the year 1871 is missing. So I thought that the date and the place of death, of Jovan (Julijan) Chokor will remain unknown forever!

But, leafing through old newspapers, I found, by chance, the Minutes of the Serbian National Assembly, published thoroughly in newspapers "Zastava" and "Narod", both edited in Novi Sad at that time.

For the session of the 18th/30th May 1871 (** 1871a; ** 1871b), literally, in both, it was written: "...Archimandrite CHOKOR, informs us, from the monastery Grabovac, that, because of his illness, he is not able to attend the Assembly, and that he will, following the Pentecost, immediately leave his home..."

"ZASTAVA" on Friday, the 11th/23rd June 1871, on the page 2, under the title "Serbian National Assembly", Session held on 31st May 1871 brought: "...Following some reports the President announced to the glorious Assembly a sad news that, Mr. Archimandrite CHOKOR, yesterday, here in Karlovci, passed away; so, he invites all members of the Assembly to the funeral, which will take place tomorrow at three o'clock in the afternoon. The Assembly expressed, by rising up, its mourning upon the deceased..."

"NAROD" on Saturday, the 5th/17th June 1871, on the page 4, wrote: "-T- Sr. Karlovci on the 31st May. Yesterday passed away, here in the town, the deputy, Archimandrite JULIJAN CHOKOR, and today will be held his funeral."

Newspaper "NAROD" on Thursday, the 10th/22nd June 1871, published: "Karlovci on the 1st June. - "We buried today the remains of JULIJAN CHOKOR, Archimandrite of Grabovac, who passed away suddenly of a stroke. Chokor spent several years in Karlovci as a director of the Metropolitan-Gymnasium's Typography, so I do not know to what shall I attribute the fact that only a few residents of Karlovci attended the funeral. A day before there was a funeral of dr. Tedich, city physician, and one may say, that the whole town was present..." The reporter does not mention the name of the graveyard!

So, THE EXACT DATE OF JOVAN (JULIJAN) CHOKOR'S PASSING AWAY IS THE 30TH MAY/11TH JUNE 1871, AND THE DATE OF HIS BURIAL IS THE 1ST/13TH JUNE 1871, BOTH IN SREMSKI KARLOVCI. By recalculating the dates, from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar, one must add 12 days - that was the difference in the XIX century.

Leafing through the complete set of "SERBSKIJ NARODNIJ LIST" I found in the No.50, of the 10th/22nd December 1838, an article titled "The Greatest Good Of This World", written by Joan. ChoPor. At that time, our Jovan had not yet got his spiritual name JULIJAN. Is this a printing mistake in his surname? The essence of this article is a letter from Rene Descartes to the swedish queen.

JOVAN CHOKOR was a professor of Hungarian, Pedagogy, methodics, Mathematics and History in the Serbian Teachers-Training School in Sombor, from the year

1842/43 to 1850. From 1847 to 1852 he was its director too. In "SRPSKE NOVINE" of the 31st October/12th November 1853, there was written that he became a monk.

At that time there was published a rather long article (***) 1844 under the title "Report On The Examination Of the Candidates In Sombor". No names, but only initials have been used. One of the professors was Mr.CH. According to the subjects it may be that the reporter, A.S., pointed our JOVAN CHOKOR. There were some problems arisen, concerning the programme; then another year candidate recited a poem written by J.CH. specially on the occasion of the final examinations. It is well known that he wrote odes (***) 1972 for important anniversaries.

So, once more, set forth in Jovanovic (1985), his many-sidedness has been proved!

References

- ***: 1844, *SERBSKIJ NARODNIJ LIST*, VII, No. 33, 258-261.
 - ***: 1871a, *ZASTAVA*, 11th June, VI, No. 67, 2.
 - ***: 1871b, *NAROD*, 10th June, II, No. 66, 2.
 - ***: 1972, *Leksikon pisaca Jugoslavije*, Sveska 1, Matica Srpska, Novi Sad, 502.
- Jovanovic, B.D.: "Život i rad Jovana (Julijana) Čokora", *Zbornik radova Sedme nacionalne konferencije jugoslovenskih astronoma, Publikacije Astronomskog društva "Rudjer Bošković"*, No. 4, Beograd, 99-102.