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## The Kozic Family House in Jasenik Near Konjic

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### Abstract

The Kozic family house is located in the Jesenik village, on the northern edge of the Konjic municipality, 20 km away from Buturovic Polje, and 42 km from the Konjic town. The village is developed on the steep slopes of the Zec mountain which rise from the bed of the river Neretva, with southern and eastern exposure. Although the altitude of the village is quite high (about 1100 m), the climate is favorable, where agriculture, fruit growing and animal husbandry are the main occupation of the people. In its original design, the Kozic family house belonged to the type of two-tract chardaklia with geographical and ambient features of the chardaklia house in the region of Upper Herzegovina. Similar examples of such a house can still be found in the Gorani village near Buturovic Polje. The house is located on a sloping terrain with an eastern exposure. It is developed through the basement, ground floor and first floor. The first level of the basement ('magaza') was developed in the middle of the contour of the ground floor, with one open side (oriented to the east) while the other three sides were buried in the ground. The ground floor level is developed above the basement and the part that is buried in the ground, with the floor on the ground. The floor level was accessed by a staircase, made partly of stone and partly of wood ('basamaci'). The staircase first led to the divanhana space, from here to the anteroom with access to two chardaks. The east-facing chardak was the main room with a representatively made wooden wall battery ('musandera'). Although the subsequent additions to the original of the Kozic family house follow the housing needs of newly formed families, they were not done with the awareness of preserving the enormous architectural-historical and ambient values of this house. The inclusion of this house on the list of national monuments of Bosnia and Herzegovina will eliminate these shortcomings, and the physical structure of the house, since its preservation, will be able to carry the enormous embodied energy of housing culture generated there over a long period, about 240 years.

**Keywords:** Jasenik, Kozic family, chardaklia, architectural heritage

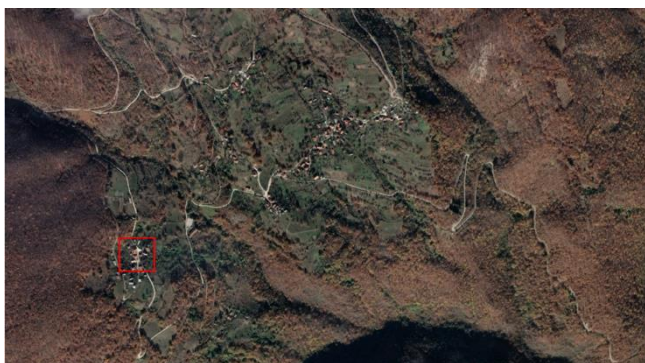
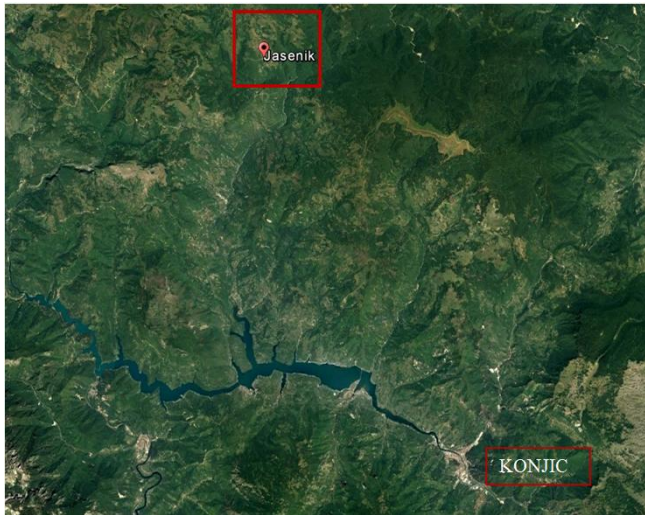
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### 1. Introduction

The Kozic family house is located in the Jesenik village (Geographic coordinates: 43°49'50.67"N, 17°50'16.62"E, Elevation: 1005 m), on the northern edge of the Konjic municipality, 20 km from Buturovic Polje, and 42 km from the Konjic town (Figures 1, 2) <sup>[1]</sup>. The village is developed on the steep slopes of the Zec mountain which rise from the bed of the river Neretva, with southern and eastern exposure. Although the altitude of the village is quite high (about 1100 m), the climate is favorable, where agriculture, fruit growing and animal husbandry are the main occupation of the people <sup>[1, 2]</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> According to the 1991 census, 364 Bosniaks and 45 Croats lived in the Jasenik village. Today (2017) the population is less than half (from 1991). According to the locals, before the war (1992-1995) there were 200 students in the local school, and only six of them were enrolled in the 2017/2018 school year. A large number of families live in Jasenik: Cosic, Durmic, Grlica, Habibija, Haketa, Jugovic, Kozic, Kupresic, Mujala, Muslimic, Perva, Radmanic, Rustic. The main informant to the Author was Mr. Junuz Kozic (1938), the owner of the house, permanently residing in Mostar. The Author visited the Jasenik village on two occasions (October 8, 2016 and August 7, 2017), where he filmed the Kozic family house.



Sources: Google Earth: Accessed: September 3, 2022

Fig 1: The Kozic family house in Jasenik near Konjic



Source: Author (August 7, 2017)

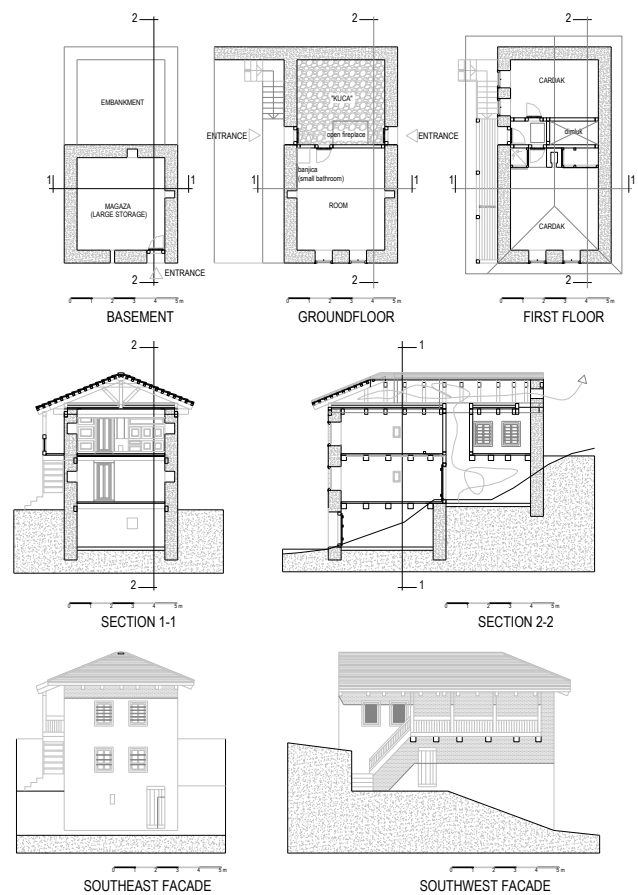
Fig 1: The Kozic family house in Jasenik near Konjic

In the first written sources from the Ottoman time of the rule in Bosnia and Herzegovina, today's Jasenik village is mentioned under the name Sirjani Brezik. The memory of the

inhabitants of this village preserves the name of their ancestor, Omer Kozic, who was educated in Istanbul and died in the middle of the 18th century in Russia under Ozia (Odzakov), where he was buried. On the site of today's mosque (built according to a standard project in 1987, opened in 2010) stood a small mosque with a wooden minaret. This mosque was built (1776) by the Jasenik villagers, as evidenced by the inscription above its front door<sup>2</sup>.

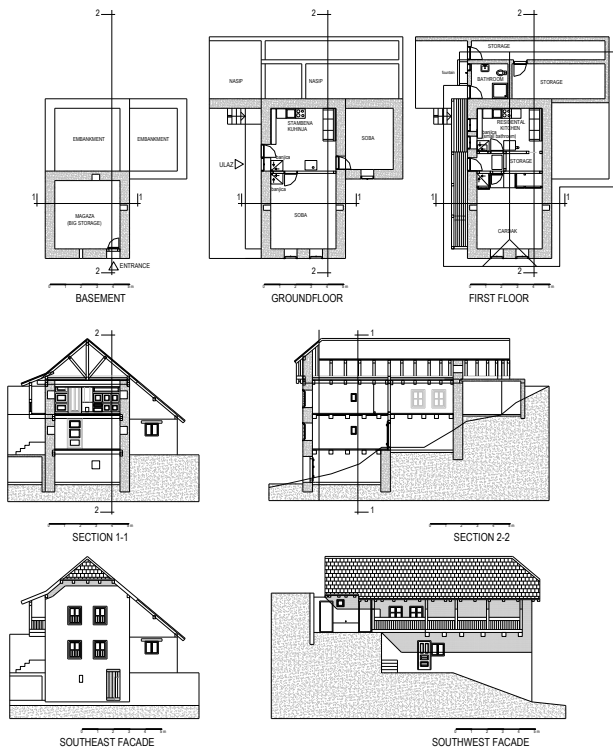
**2. Spatial-form characteristics of the house**

In its original design, the Kozic family house belonged to the type of two-tract chardaklia with geographical-ambient features of the chardaklia house in the region of Upper Herzegovina (Figure 3). Similar examples of such a house can still be found in the Gorani village near Buturovic Polje (the house of the Smajic family, for example) [3,4,5,6,7]. The house is located on a sloping terrain with an eastern exposure. It is developed through the basement, ground floor and first floor. The first level of the basement (magaza) was developed in the middle of the contour of the ground floor, with one open side (oriented to the east) while the other three sides were buried in the ground. The ground floor level is developed above the basement (warehouse) and the part that is buried in the ground, with the floor on the ground.



<sup>2</sup> „El mu'minu fil masjid kes-semeki fil mai, sene 1190” (The true believer feels like a fish in water in the mosque, 1190 AH, 1776). Near Jasenik, in a locality called Crni Vrh, there is a narrower locality which is still called 'near the mosque'. A mosque used to stand on this site, without information about the time of its construction. A certain Mujaga Omerovic (Habibija) from Kruscica told the well-known Bosnian scholar Hivzija Hasandedic (1938)

that the mosque on Crni Vrh, next to the mosque in Gorani, was the most visited in the Neretva river valley, and that the mosque was visited on the main Sunday. Jumu'ah prayer) 70 saddlers came. Source: <http://www.medzlis-konjic.com/index.php/dzematski-odbori-medzlis-iz-konjic/ostali-dzemati-miz-konjic/jasenik>, Accessed: 09.08.2017.



Source: Author (Drawings, 2017)

**Fig 3:** The Kozic family house in Jasenik near Konjic. Left: Reconstruction of the original construction <sup>[3]</sup>. Right: building condition today (2017) <sup>[4]</sup>.

The room on the ground ('kuca') was the central living room. There was a fireplace in it with an opening towards the roof ('dimluk'). This area was entered from two opposite sides, from the south (from the courtyard area) and from the north. The room was developed above the basement. It had two windows on its east wall. The window lintel is designed as a stone arch, with the arch closed on the outside of the wall to give a simple rectangular window profile. In the room, in the corner on the right side of the entrance, there was a small bath ('banjica') and a space where prayer ablution was performed. The floor level was accessed by a staircase, made partly of stone (Figure 12) and partly of wood ('basamac'). The staircase first led to the area of the divanhana (Figure 13), from here to the anteroom with access to two chardaks. The east-facing chardak was the main room with a representatively made wooden wall battery ('musander'). Musandera consisted of three functional compartments: a hamamdzik, a furuna and a mattress ('dusekluk'). Hamamdzik was a home bathroom, the furnace was a brick stove with ceramic pots, while the mattress was a closet for storing bedding. In the thick walls of this room ('chardak') were arranged two niches ('dulaf') closed with wooden shutters of fine workmanship. At the tops of the walls with dulafs, wooden shelves ('rafa') were arranged, which were used for storing books and small household equipment. Above the room of the 'kuca' on the ground floor, on the first floor there is a developed room-chardak. This chardak had two windows on a south-facing wall. Above the open fireplace on the ground floor, on the floor level, there is a fenced rectangular channel ('dimluk'), with a horizontal cross-section of about

115/210 cm, through which smoke passed from the fireplace to the roof space. The roof space was accessed by a ladder, from the foyer between the two chardaks. The roof was a space for drying meat, some types of cheese, and a pantry for nuts.

### 3. Construction and materialization

The materials from which the house is built are natural - stone, wood and earth, taken from the immediate environment.

The outer walls of the house, 60-70 cm thick, part of the staircase to the first floor and the sub-walls were made of blocks of roughly worked stone when arranging the terrain next to the house (Figure 1). The stone slabs were used to make the floor of the 'kuca', the floor in the busiest part of the courtyard and the roof covering.

The ceiling construction was made of hewn oak beams (about 24/24 cm in cross section). The beams are placed at a distance of about 90 cm from each other (Figures 4,5). The beams of the ground-floor ceiling structure are cantilevered outside the contour of the walls by about 100 cm, and on the console there is a sofa, ie an entrance veranda for the floor level (Figure 6).

On the wooden beams, on their upper side, there is a floor made of spruce boards (6-7 cm thick), and on the lower side there is a wooden covering ('shishe') made of beech wood. Beam subframes and wooden ceiling cladding are finely worked, with the application of geometric patterns (Figures 7,11).

Although it was a relatively small span (about 5 m), the roof structure was made as a triple chair, with a central row of vertical wooden columns supporting the top beam and two rows of sloping wooden columns carrying supports, symmetrically placed with respect to the roof top line. Such a robust construction had a justification since the original roof covering was stone slabs (Figure 16).

The soil with the addition of straw and chaff was made as a charge in the ceiling structure, which provided thermal and acoustic insulation, and in the ceiling structure, the floor-ceiling and thermal stability in the summer.

Lime mortar was used as a binder in the construction of stone walls. This mortar is made from slaked lime and sand found in the immediate natural environment. Lime was obtained by firing limestone. Lime mortar was used for the final treatment of wall surfaces, both interior and exterior.



**Fig 4:** Basement interior (left)

<sup>3</sup> The reconstruction was done with the cooperation of the owner of the house, Mr. Junuz Kozic (August 7, 2017)

<sup>4</sup> The recording was made by the Author (August 7, 2017)



Source: Author (August 7, 2017)

Fig 5: Ceiling construction basement (storeroom - 'magaza'), ground floor (right)



Fig 8: Wooden ceiling ('shishe') and shelf ('rafa') of the main room on the ground floor (left)



Fig 6: Console with sofa (left)



Source: Author (August 7, 2017)

Fig 9: Detail of the wooden ceiling of the main room on the ground floor (right)



Source: Author (August 7, 2017)

Fig 7: Main room on the ground floor (right)



Fig 10: Wooden ceiling ('shishe') in the room created by the adaptation of the 'kuca' (left)



Source: Author (August 7, 2017)

**Fig 11:** Flue opening from the stove to the roof space. The opening is in the new ceiling arranged above the former open fireplace in the 'kuca' (right)



**Fig 14:** Place of exit of the wooden part of the staircase ground floor-first floor on the (original) divanhana and subsequent extension of the divanhana-veranda (left)



**Fig 12:** Stone steps of the former staircase from the courtyard of the house to the floor level (left)



Source: Author (August 7, 2017)

**Fig 15:** Subsequent bathroom and storage at the floor level. In the foreground is a courtyard with a retaining wall and a fountain of a new residential unit (right)



Source: Author (August 7, 2017)

**Fig 13:** View of the entrance to the ground floor and upstairs from the upper courtyard (right)



Source: Author (August 7, 2017)

**Fig 16:** Roof construction and roof space

#### 4. Doors and windows

At the Kozic family house in Jasenik, only a few elements of the opening have been preserved to this day: a door on the first basement ('magaza'), a door on the main chardak and two windows on the main chardak. In its original design, the door was built so that the frame was first made of beams with a cross section (about) 14/14 cm and fixed in the opening of the stone wall. The dimensions of the light door opening were relatively small (about 84/145 cm on the storeroom to 84/175 cm on the ground floor and first floor). The door frame was carried by a door leaf made of wooden planks about 4-5 cm thick tied with three wooden bars (on the inside of the door leaf). On the outer surface of the door leaf, in the contour of their contact with the door frame, as well as on the compositions of the boards, slats were placed which acted as seals. The door hinges are made of wrought iron. Depending on the place where the door was placed, the level of processing of the door jambs and doors was different, from rustic (Figure 17) to fine (Figure 19), with the application of geometric decoration.



**Fig 17:** Basement door (left)



**Source:** Author (August 7, 2017)

**Fig 19:** Doors on the chardaks



**Source:** Author (August 7, 2017)

**Fig 18:** Entrance door and living room window on the ground floor (right)

The windows have relatively small dimensions, about 70/80 cm. The window openings in the stone walls are made so that the arched construction of the window opening is visible from the inside, while the opening is reduced to a rectangular shape from the outside, where oak beams are made as a lintel in the opening (Figure 20). The rectangular window solution is simpler, and therefore cheaper, than the arched solution. The windows themselves are double-leafed, with single glazing. The graphic design of the wooden window frames was done with the visible intention of achieving a 'beautiful', but also with an emphasis on rationality, since less glazed surfaces are safer than possible glass breakage.



Source: Author (August 7, 2017)

Fig 20: Window in the main room on the ground floor

### 5. Specific elements of home equipment

Similar to the Bosnian chardaklia house in the whole area of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in the case of the Kozic family house in Jasenik, we encounter specific elements of household equipment: wall niches ('dulaf'), built-in wall closets ('musandera'), wooden shelves ('rafa'), small bathrooms ('banjica'), low seating ('minderluk') and elements of mobile furniture: wooden chests ('sehara'), low round dining tables ('sinija'), (Figures 21, 27, 30, 32).

The appearance of a built-in wall battery ('musandera') in rural houses is a rarity, regardless of the fact that these are the houses of rich people. This element of the interior of the house is the specifics of the town house of oriental type (in Bosnia and Herzegovina). In the case of the Kozic family house in Jasenik, the musandera was made as a result of happy circumstances: the wealth of its owner and his sense of the physical and spiritual beauty of man <sup>[5]</sup>.

Wall niches ('dulaf') are made of thick walls, made of stone or brick. They can be open and closed. In the houses we meet in extremely rural areas (Lukomir, Cuhovici), the dulafs are usually open, while in the houses whose owners are in frequent contact with the city, the dulafs are closed. In this case, dulafi, in addition to its purposefulness, have a particularly emphasized aesthetic dimension, as a decoration in the atmosphere of the living space. Similar to the wall niche ('dulaf') and wooden shelves ('rafa'), except for their purposefulness, they have an accentuated and aesthetic dimension. The shelf is used for storing small household equipment (tools), books <sup>[6]</sup> and dishes. The low round dining table ('sinija') is mostly stored in the kitchen ('mutvak'), ie in the central living space ('kuca'). For hygiene reasons, it is mostly hung on the ceiling beam or on an iron wedge anchored in the wall. A wooden chest ('sehara') is, as a rule, an element of furniture that the bride brings in her luggage ('ruho') from her parents' house. It contains valuables (jewelry, embroidered napkins, scarves, expensive clothes). In the past, seharas were examples of exceptional artistic achievements in woodcarving.



<sup>5</sup> The Author was told about this (August 7, 2017) by the current owner of the house, Mr. Junuz Kozic. According to Kozic, his grandfather (at the end of the 19th century) saw a musander in the house of his business friends in

Visoko, after which he invited craftsmen from Visoko to make this element of equipment in his house as well.

<sup>6</sup> Among the books, the Mushaf (printed version of the holy book, the Qur'an) has a special place.



Source: Author (August 7, 2017)

Fig 21: Residential kitchen upstairs





Source: Author (August 7, 2017)

Fig 22: Main room (chardak) upstairs



Source: Author (August 7, 2017)

Fig 24: Detail of the wooden ceiling ('shishe') and musandera in the main room (chardak)



Source: Author (August 7, 2017)

Fig 23: Musander in the main room ('chardak') upstairs



Source: Author (August 7, 2017)

Fig 25: Details of space equipment: dulaf, musandera, embroidered headscarves





**Fig 26:** View from the main veranda towards the front door, hallway and living kitchen (left)



**Source:** Author (August 7, 2017)

**Fig 29:** Subsequent bathroom on the first floor (right)



**Source:** Author (August 7, 2017)

**Fig 27:** View through the window of the main chardak (right)



**Fig 30:** Low dining table - 'sinija' (left)



**Fig 28:** Cover in the ceiling floor-roof for exit to the roof space (left)



**Source:** Author (August 7, 2017)

**Fig 31:** Wooden chest - 'sehara' in the main chardak (right)



Source: Author (August 7, 2017)

Fig 32: Wooden chest ('Sehara') in a residential kitchen upstairs

## 6. Discussion

### Today's condition and purpose of the house

The Kozic family house in Jasenik near Konjic has undergone significant changes in its disposition since its construction (1776), following the changes in the way of life and living culture of its owners. The first significant changes occurred by removing from the function of an open fireplace ('ognjiste'), or by turning the space of the 'kuca' into a room. This led to the closure of the channel for the removal of smoke from the hearth ('dimluk'), ie its reduction to a much narrower profile<sup>7</sup>. The growth of families and the division of one family into several new, independent families, results in the need for new housing, and the division of the once unique space of the house into a larger number of independent housing units. In the case of the Kozic family house, one residential unit is arranged on the ground floor level and the other on the first floor level. At the same time, the residential unit on the ground floor level was expanded with an extended room next to the existing space of the 'kuca' (north side of the house). The residential unit on the first floor is extended by the space of a modern bathroom dug into the ground, on the west side of the house. Next to the bathroom, as a 'buffer' zone towards the ground of the notch, there is a storage room. The wooden part of the staircase ('basamaci') that connected the ground floor and the first floor of the once unique living space has been removed. As over time, due to the uneven subsidence of the building, cracks appeared in the stone walls, the owners, with the aim of 'facilitating' the object, replaced the stone slab covering with a tile covering. At the same time, the slope of the roof is increased, and thus the volume of the roof space. In part of the courtyard ('avlija'), on the level of the first basement, the new owner built a garage for a car. The reinforced concrete slab of the garage roof follows the elevation of the terrain of the former courtyard. The new housing unit organized on the ground floor was still oriented to the nearby village fountain with a trough, in the immediate vicinity of the house, while for housing in a residential unit arranged on the first floor, a new fountain was built (Figure 15), along the south wall oriented to the newly renovated home courtyard ('avlija').

## 7. Conclusion

Although subsequent additions to the original the Kozic family house follow the housing needs of newly formed families, they were not done with the awareness of preserving the big architectural-historical and ambient values of this house. The inclusion of this house on the list of national monuments of Bosnia and Herzegovina will eliminate these shortcomings, and the physical structure of the house, since its preservation, will be able to carry the enormous embodied energy of housing culture generated there over a long period, about 240 years.

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<sup>7</sup> Closing the chimney results in the construction of a masonry flue (chimney).