



Medjugorje in bosnia and herzegovina

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Abstract

Medjugorje is a settlement (with about 2,265 inhabitants) located in the south of Bosnia and Herzegovina, within the Citluk municipality (Geographic coordinates: 43°11'25.04"N, 17°40'38.10"E, Elevation: 164). During ancient Rome, this area belonged to the Naron district. The remains of the late antique basilica date from this time. Medjugorje is first mentioned in historical documents (1599) as an autonomous parish. Today's parish was founded (1892) four years after the Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and was dedicated to St. Jacob, the patron saint of pilgrims. Today's parish church was completed in 1969 and dedicated to St. to Jacob Zebedeev. This settlement became famous after the alleged apparition (1981) of the Virgin Mary to the shepherds. Although the act of apparitions in this place is not recognized by the Holy See, Medjugorje is visited every year by numerous pilgrims from all over the world. This phenomenon has become the backbone of the overall life of people, not only in Medjugorje but also in all of Herzegovina. The settlement itself received a number of new facilities, especially a large number of hotels. The phenomenon of apparitions of Our Lady is an inspiration to many artists: writers, painters, sculptors, musicians.

Keywords: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Medjugorje

1. Introduction

Medjugorje is a settlement (with about 2,265 inhabitants) located in the south of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the municipality of Citluk ^[1] (Geographic coordinates: 43°11'25.04"N, 17°40'38.10"E, elevation: 164), (Figure 1). During ancient Rome, this area belonged to the Naron district. The remains of the late antique basilica date from this time.

Medjugorje is first mentioned in historical documents (1599) as an autonomous parish. Today's parish was founded (1892) four years after the Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and was dedicated to St. Jacob, the patron saint of pilgrims. Today's parish church was completed in 1969 and dedicated to St. to Jacob Zebedee. This settlement became famous after the alleged apparition (1981) of the Virgin Mary to the shepherds. Although the act of apparitions in this place is not recognized by the Holy See, Medjugorje is visited every year by numerous pilgrims from all over the world. This phenomenon has become the backbone of the overall life of people, not only in Medjugorje but also in all of Herzegovina. The settlement itself received a number of new facilities, especially a large number of hotels. The phenomenon of apparitions of Our Lady is an inspiration to many artists: writers, painters, sculptors, musicians ^[2,3].



Source: Google Earth: Accessed: June 24, 2023.

Fig 1: Medjugorje. The location

2. Environment

By 'environment' we mean every possibility in the space in which man can realize his existence [3].

2.1. Natural environment

By natural environment, we mean all those features that nature gave, and on which man (mostly) did not exert his influence: geographical location, geomorphology, watercourses and reservoirs, plant and animal life, available soil, climate [3].

The climate in Medjugorje is mild, mostly warm and temperate. Precipitation is significant, with precipitation in the driest month [4]. The climate is classified as Cfa according to Köppen and Geiger. The average temperature in Medjugorje is 13.4 °C. The annual amount of precipitation is about 1598 mm. The town of Medjugorje is located in the northern hemisphere. Summer days start at the end of June and end in September (Figure 2).

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Avg. Temperature °C (°F)	3.1 °C (37.5) °F	4.3 °C (39.7) °F	8 °C (46.4) °F	12.4 °C (54.3) °F	16.9 °C (62.3) °F	21.5 °C (70.7) °F	24.4 °C (75.9) °F	24.6 °C (76.3) °F	18.8 °C (65.8) °F	13.8 °C (56.8) °F	9 °C (48.2) °F	4.1 °C (39.4) °F
Min. Temperature °C (°F)	-1.3 °C (29.8) °F	-0.7 °C (30.8) °F	2.1 °C (35.8) °F	6 °C (42.8) °F	10.1 °C (50.1) °F	14.3 °C (57.7) °F	16.8 °C (62.3) °F	17 °C (62.6) °F	12.7 °C (54.9) °F	8.4 °C (47.1) °F	4.5 °C (40.1) °F	-0.1 °C (31.9) °F
Max. Temperature °C (°F)	8 °C (46.4) °F	9.4 °C (48.9) °F	13.4 °C (56.1) °F	17.8 °C (64.1) °F	22.3 °C (72.1) °F	27.1 °C (80.8) °F	30.3 °C (86.6) °F	30.9 °C (87.7) °F	24.5 °C (76.1) °F	19.3 °C (66.7) °F	13.9 °C (57.1) °F	8.9 °C (48.1) °F
Precipitation / Rainfall mm (in)	143 (5)	139 (5)	138 (5)	157 (6)	113 (4)	71 (2)	47 (1)	53 (2)	133 (5)	184 (7)	234 (9)	188 (7)
Humidity (%)	77%	73%	71%	69%	68%	62%	54%	53%	64%	75%	78%	78%
Rainy days (d)	8	8	8	10	9	7	5	5	7	8	10	9
avg. Sun hours (hours)	5.0	5.5	7.0	8.8	10.7	12.2	12.7	11.7	9.3	7.1	5.3	5.0

Source: Weather by Month // Weather Averages Medjugorje <https://en.climate-data.org/europe/bosnia-and-herzegovina/medjugorje/medjugorje-763809/>, Accessed: June 25, 2023

Fig 2: Climatic parameters for Medjugorje

The greatest natural resource of Medjugorje is the Sun, which with its abundance of radiation extracts energy for people's life from the Herzegovinian karst and air. Grape vines and tobacco were grown on the modest karst plains (Figures 3, 4), while the bare areas covered with the characteristic

vegetation of the Herzegovinian karst were pastures for goats and sheep (Figure 5). Because of the cramped conditions of life in its traditional form (direct relationship with nature), it was traditional here for people to go abroad (from where the well-known metaphor 'belly for bread' comes from).



Source: <https://www.medjugorje-info.com/vijesti-iz-regije/poziv-mladima-na-akciju-spasavanja-biskupijskog-vinograda#itemGallery> Accessed: June 25, 2023.

Fig 3: Vineyards in Medjugorje



Source: <http://www.brotnjo.info/2019/05/28/sjeme-propada-a-proizvodnja-duhana-se-gasi/>, Accessed: June 25, 2023.

Fig 4: Tobacco cultivation in Medjugorje



Source (left): <https://www.medjugorje-info.com/pater-arek-krasicki/o-garavim-sarenim-i-prugastim-ovcama-iv-10-27-30#itemGallery> Accessed: June 25, 2023.

Source (right): <https://www.brotnjo.info/2022/08/22/uzgoj-koza-i-ovaca-za-visestruku-korist/>, Accessed: June 25, 2023.

Fig 5: Breeding of sheep and goats in Medjugorje

2.2. Social environment

By Social environment we mean everything that man has created and that separates him from the world of other living beings. It includes both physical structures (various material, more or less ordered products of their activity) and the immaterial world that we know with the intellect (science, philosophy, religion, law, morality) through an ordered system of abstract symbols (letters, signs)^[3].

Architectural cultural and historical heritage. Everything that is built in Medjugorje is more or less directly related to

religion, whether it is about objects that are directly related to religion or objects for the needs of everyday life. This religious phenomenon began with the construction (1933) of the Cross on Krzevac during the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and was especially strengthened after the alleged apparition (1981) of Our Lady to shepherd children on the hill above the village of Bijakovici near Medjugorje. The cross on Krizevac hill in Medjugorje. On the top of Krizevac hill, a cross was built (1933) on the occasion of the 1900th anniversary of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ (Figure 6).



Source (left): <https://pogled.ba/novosti/prije-88-godina-blagoslovljen-kriz-na-brdu-krizevac-u-medjugorju-izgraden-za-52-dana-zupljani-na-ledima-nosili-materijal/240745>, Accessed: June 25, 2023.

Source (right): <https://www.brotnjo.info/2017/08/25/natpis-mir-brda-krizevac/>, Accessed: June 25, 2023.

Fig 6: The cross on Krizevac hill in Medjugorje. Left: ceremony of the construction of the Cross on Krizevac (1933). Right: The cross on Krizevac today

Church of St. Jakov in Medjugorje. The first church was built (1897), during the Austro-Hungarian administration in Bosnia and Herzegovina. But that church was demolished due to poor construction and subsidence of the terrain. The current Church of St. Jakov in Medjugorje was founded

(1934) during the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and completed (1969) during the SFRY. The church was built as a three-nave basilica, of 'neutral architecture', without any special stylistic characteristics (Figures 7,8,9).



Source: Author (September 16, 2011)

Fig 7: Church of St. Jakov in Medjugorje



Source: Author (September 16, 2011)

Fig 8: Public fountain in the courtyard of the Church of the Holy Virgin in Medjugorje



Source: <https://m.24sata.hr/news/sva-cuda-gospe-izme-ugorjaj-koga-je-izlijecila-kome-pomaze-480103/galerija-445893?page=1>
Accessed: June 25, 2023.

Fig 9: Statue of Our Lady on Apparition Hill above the village of Bijakovići. The statue was installed (2001) on the 20th anniversary of the first apparition of Our Lady

3. Man

Space acquires meaning only if it stands in some relation to man. This relationship ranges from the relations of the already known dimensions of space, through those that can be sensed, to those that are currently beyond the reach of human imagination. In other words, man is a being on the way, a being who continuously learns, a being of open possibilities. The term 'man' is a huge question, the essence of which he himself is trying to decipher within his limits, within the limits of the Earth and the limits of the Universe [3].

Six people from Medjugorje claimed that, starting from June

24, 1981 until today, almost every day, the Blessed Virgin Mary (Our Lady) appeared to them. On that day, allegedly, around 6 p.m., the children Ivanka Ivankovic, Mirjana Dragičević, Vicka Ivankovic, Ivan Dragičević, Ivan Ivankovic and Milka Pavlovic saw a wonderful, young woman with a child in her arms in the area called Podbrdo (on the Crnica hill). They say that she didn't say anything to them that time, but only motioned with her hand for them to come closer. But they, surprised and frightened, still did not approach her closer, although they immediately thought that it was Our Lady. On the second day, June 25, 1981, the children, as agreed, again went at the same time to the place where Our Lady appeared to them the previous day, hoping to see her again. And suddenly a light flashed. The children, they say, "saw Our Lady with him, but without the child in her arms". After the prayer, she started talking to the children. Ivanka first asked her about her mother, who had died some two months before. And Mirjana asked Our Lady for some sign to show that the children were not lying and that they were not crazy, as some claimed. At the end, Our Lady dismissed the children with the words: "Goodbye, my angels"! Before that, when the children asked if he would appear to them again tomorrow, she answered in the affirmative with a bow of her head. All that scene was, according to the testimony of the children, indescribable. On that day, Ivan Ivankovic and Milka Pavlovic were not at Apparition Hill among the children who saw Our Lady the previous day. They were replaced by Marija Pavlovic and Jakov Colo. Since then, as they claim, Our Lady appears regularly to these children.

Although the act of the "apparition of Our Lady" in this place is not recognized by the Holy See, it has become the basis of the consciousness of the people in Medjugorje, on which they "build their being and look into the future".

4. Boundaries: architecture as a framework of life

Boundaries are those places in the environment where the situations encountered are controlled according to very specific human needs. Conditions are all those discovered and undiscovered phenomena in space that have a stimulating or degrading effect on humans. Borders, therefore, have the task of enabling the selection of influences. In the architectural sense, they enclose, but also include a person in the conditions of a certain environment [3]. The backbone of the Medjugorje settlement boundaries is the church of St. Jakov and the 'legend about the apparition of Our Lady'. All activities of people in Medjugorje are related to these two facts (Figures 10,11).



Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Raxqaxlkaw>,
Accessed: June 25, 2023.

Fig 10: Medjugorje today



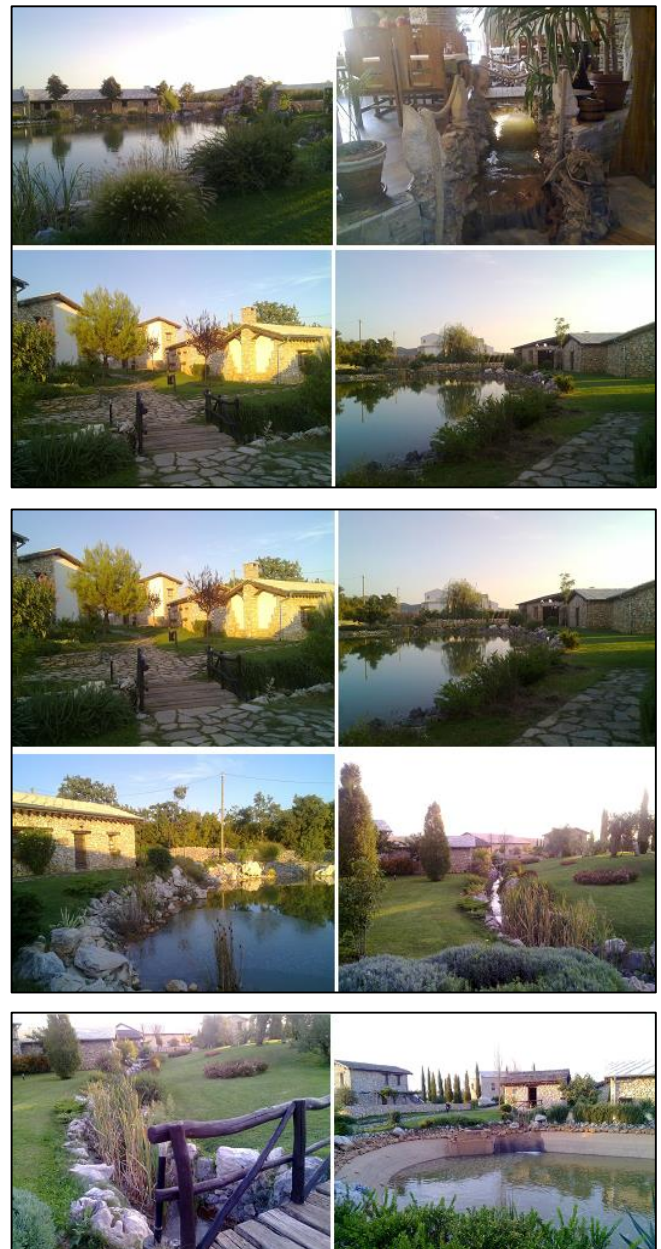
Source: <https://www.booking.com/hotel/ba/jana.hr.html>, Accessed: June 25, 2023.

Fig 11: Some of the hotels in Medjugorje

5. Conclusion (Perspectives)

By the term 'Perspective' (in the framework of the theory of Architecturally Defined Space) we mean „that dynamic relationship that connects now-future, existing-possible, realized-desired“ [3]. One of the best ways in which natural and cultural-historical heritage is placed in the perspective of future life is demonstrated by the „Herceg“ ethno-village. It is a hotel-tourist complex opened at the end of 2008 [5]. The complex consists of a large number of facilities: a restaurant („Herceg“), a hotel, a village with about ten houses (with shops for traditional handicraft products), a congress hall with an amphitheater, a chapel, and a vineyard with local grape varieties (Zilavka and Blatina). There are also stables for domestic animals with open pens, and lawns for children to play. Several artificial reservoirs (lakes) within the complex appear completely natural, since the water has a

natural flow from higher level lakes to lower level lakes. Around the lake and watercourse are plants (and animals) in an authentic natural environment. Within the village there is also a chapel hand-painted with paintings by the famous Italian painter Elisabeth Zocca. This is one of the ways to preserve the authentic values of the material culture of Bosnia and Herzegovina directly, with more or less successful replicas of the original buildings. Here, water is the central part of the ethno-village, which connects other contents in a more or less direct way (Figure 12).



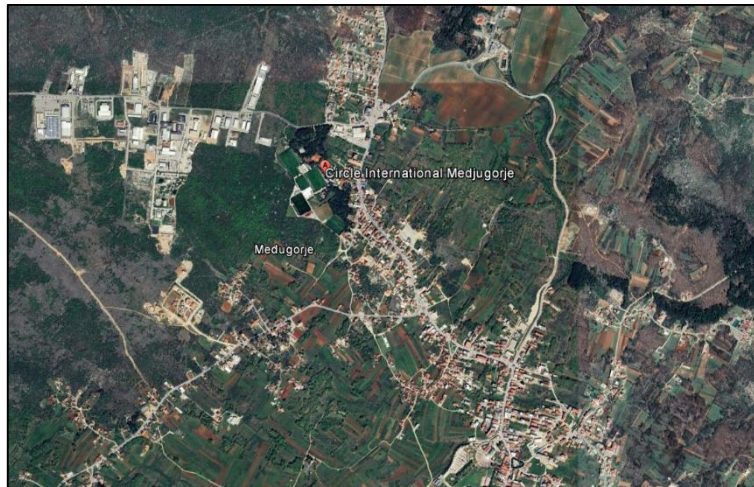
Source: Author (September 16, 2011)

Fig 12: Herceg ethno-village (Geographic coordinates: 43°11'45.88"N, 17°39'42.87"E, Elevation: 157)

Sport Center Medjugorje is a modern sports and recreation center located on more than 100,000 square meters that offers top facilities for the preparation of professional athletes as well as recreational athletes. The Sport Center contains football pitches, swimming pools, a health and relaxation department with complete contents from sauna and solarium to hydro and sports massage to tennis courts and a fitness

track. The Sport Center is located in a mild and dry Mediterranean climate that ensures a very large number of beautiful and sunny days suitable for outdoor training. All the facilities of the Sport Center are available to professional

athletes who come to us for training. The accommodation facilities of the Grande Casa hotel and bungalows offer high comfort, and the La Casa restaurant provides balanced and tasty food for all visitors to the center (Figures 13, 14).



Source: Google Earth: Accessed: June 24, 2023

Fig 13: Sports Center Medjugorje location (Geographic coordinates: 43°12'17.70"N, 17°39'57.18"E, Elevation: 190)





Source: <https://www.booking.com/hotel/ba/bungalovi-sport-centar.hr.html>, Accessed: June 24, 2023.

Source: https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g608695-d3340747-Reviews-Sport_Centar_Circle_International-Medjugorje_Herzegovina_Neretva_Canton_Federatio.html#/media-atf/3340747/?albumid=-160&type=0&category=-160
Accessed: June 24, 2023.

Fig 14: Sport Centar Medjugorje

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