



The Visocica Mountain in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Living in A Sustainable Way

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Abstract

The Visocica Mountain (geographic coordinates: 43°34'46.52"N, 18°11'25.95"E, altitude 1943 m) forms the natural border between Herzegovina and Bosnia. On the eastern side, it is separated from the Treskavica Mountain by the Ljuta river, on the south and southwest by the Neretva river - from Prenj, and on the west and north by the Rakitnica river canyon - from Bjelasnica. The highest peak of the hill is Dzamija (1967 meters above sea level), and the slightly lower peaks are Veliki Ljeljen (1963 m), Mali Ljeljen (1860 m), Vito (1960 m), Subar (1820 m), Veliko brdo (1884 m) and Drstva (1808 m). South of Sinanovici is Puzim (1776 m), one of the most striking peaks of Visocica, slightly separated from the rest of the Visocica massif and attracting attention with its steep cliffs, which are of interest to alpinists. Under the northern slopes of the mountain are the Bobovica, Ozimine, Djulbasici, Pervizi (Donja Tusila) and Sinanovici villages (Upper Tusila). These are typical mountain villages at an altitude of 1150 m to 1300 m. These villages were completely destroyed in the war (1992-1995) and today they have been rebuilt. Under the southern slopes of the mountain there is a large number of villages such as Luka, Jezepasina, Odzaci (Bjelimici), Gradeljina, Svijenca, Argud and southwest Duzani, Blaca, Dudle, Grusca and Prebilje. These villages are also mountainous and are located at an altitude of 950 m to 1150 m.

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1. Introduction

The author visited mountains in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Bjelasnica, Treskavica, Visocica, Vlasic, Vranica, Zvijezda) for rest and recreation. At the same time, he most often visited the Bjelasnica Mountain. Since at the beginning of the 21st century the topic of sustainable development became particularly relevant (in architecture and in all other disciplines), he participated in numerous international scientific conferences and symposia with his works related to Bosnia and Herzegovina [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13]. He covered the topic of bioclimatic architecture in several of his books [14, 15, 16, 17]. The Bjelasnica Mountain first inspired him because of the presence of water, both in nature itself and in people's lives. He covered the Bjelasnica Mountain, in the unity of the fundamental elements of an architecturally defined space (environment-man-boundaries-perspectives) in a separate book. Some other places in Bosnia and Herzegovina, for which the author of this book has a rich history, were the subject of books whose content was based on the same principles and with the same goal. The treatment of Visocica Mountain (Figure 1) was edited by the author according to the same methodology; at the same time, the work on Treskavica was done simultaneously with the works on the Vlasic and Vranica mountains. All these mountains were for the author an ideal basis for confirming his theory of architecturally defined space and, from the original book in which it was first presented, its further deepening. The author created (2003) the study course "Bioclimatic Architecture" at the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Sarajevo, through which he dealt with this topic using examples from around the world. He realized that mountains around the world are the 'mothers of life on Earth' since they are 'cloud catchers' which, then, generate water - rain and snow.

This water partly accumulates in their physical structures, and partly washes down their slopes (streams and rivers), to create more or less flat surfaces - fertile fields - at their foothills. Accumulated water in the physical structures of the mountains, then, springs up on the surface of the mountains, and these places become attractive points and gathering places for people and other living beings. Water is one of the basic prerequisites of life. Huge areas are formed on the mountains where various plants grow and where many animals live. These are the places where man from the earliest times saw resources for his life, and ensured his existence by raising livestock. The life patterns of people in the mountains

have changed over time, but it was, is and will be a fact that the mountain is a generator of life. Following the theory of space (and Architecturally Defined Space), the Visocica Mountain will be treated in this paper as a system, i.e. as an Architecturally Defined Space (ADS) through the elaboration of its four basic elements: environment (natural and social environment), man, borders and perspectives. The simultaneous presentation of these elements will establish their mutual cause-and-effect relationship and nothing important for the formation of an image of this space will be left out ^[1].



Source: Google Earth, Accessed: December 29, 2024.

Fig 1: Geographical location of the Visocica Mountain in Bosnia and Herzegovina

In this sense, he visited the entire area of Bosnia and Herzegovina and collected rich material, which he incorporated for the most part into his books and scientific works ^[1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17]. In this sense, the author visited the entire area of Bosnia and Herzegovina and collected rich material. Bosnia and Herzegovina is an extremely complex area in terms of the natural and social environment and its population. The three most numerous ethnic groups (Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats) live here, and thanks to its rich history, numerous people of different origins: Jews, Germans, Poles, Czechs, Italians, Hungarians... The composition of the population changed over time, but they remained material and spiritual traces of their life in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The complexity of Bosnia and Herzegovina is also visible in its architecture. Hence, for elaborating on the theme of sustainability, the most suitable scientific methodology ^[1] was used, which is covered in his book: Hadrovic, A. (2007) ^[1]. Defining Architectural Space on the Model of the Oriental Style CityHouse in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo and Macedonia, Booksurge, LLC, North Charleston, SC, USA.

2. Environment

By 'environment' we mean every possibility in the space in which man can realize his existence ^[1].

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 ^[1]. Visocica is located between Herzegovina's Zagorje and the high mountain range in the west ^[19] (Figures 2-10). It is bounded on the west and north by the Rakitnica river with Tusilacki stream, on the east by the river Ljuta, on the south and southwest by the Neretva river. Its northern and western slopes descend towards the Rakitnica river in vertical and almost impassable slopes, while the southern and eastern parts of its massif descend gently into the Bjelemici plateau, which then descends quite steeply into the Neretva valley. One deep and spacious basin (Veliko Jezero or Velika Bara) that starts in the southeast at a height of 1660 m and gently descends to the northwest to 1420 m separates the Visocica massif into the northern and southern parts. The second basin begins in the northeast near Mandina Dol (elevation 1700 m) and gradually deepens and extends to the southeast until it passes into the narrow and steep Kolijevka, which ends near the Luka village (elevation 1200 m). This basin separates the massif into eastern and western parts. The northern complex consists of the ridges Spionik, Kaoci, Vito, Konjic and Toholj (1942 m, the highest in this complex). This circuit is wild and romantic. It is full of sharp ridges and peaks between which narrow valleys overgrown with lush grass run through. On the sides of those ridges there is no forest, not even juniper (*Pinus montana*). The southern part of the massif consists of the Ljeljen ridge, which is also the highest. The highest peak of this ridge is Dzamija 1974 m. There is no tall forest on this ridge either, but it is all overgrown with sod up to the highest peak. Just deep at its foot, on the south side at a height of 1400 m, the tall beech mountain begins. The western sides of the mountain are made up of the forests of Ivica and

Gruscanska Gora. The Ivica forest descends very steeply towards the riverbed of Rakitnica. In a distance of 2000 m, the drop is about 400 m, or 20%. And Gruščanska Gora falls quite steeply towards Rakitnica, in an area of 4000 m it falls by 400 m, or 10%. Ova Gora is permanently inhabited and has several smaller settlements. The east of the mountain consists of ridges: Lucka Gora, Glatko (the highest in this part is 1800 m), Kom, Crveni Kuk and Puzim. This part of the Visocica Mountain differs from the western part in so much that all the mentioned ranges are either wooded or covered with lush pastures from the foot to their highest peak. The only exception is Puzim, whose jagged, craggy and bare peak, viewed from a distance, resembles a large ridge (hober) of domestic oroz. From the peaks of Visocica there is an indescribably beautiful view of the mountains and the surrounding areas. So to the north to Bjelasnica and Hojta, and to the northeast to Treskavica, to the east to Zelengora with Lelija, to the southeast to the Morine plateau and the Dumos Mountain, to the south to Crvanj and Velez, and to the southwest and west to Obrlin, Bahtijejica, Montenegro

and eastern parts of the Prenj Mountain: Osobac, Borasnica, Otis and Cap. All around the mountain there are deposits of phyllite schist in deeply cut valleys of rivers and streams. These shale deposits prevent the rapid penetration of mountain water from the surface limestones and the mountains thus get springs immediately at the foot of the peaks themselves (Figures 11-22). Such are the springs of Mandina Cesma in Mandina Dol at an altitude of 1720 m; several springs in Meko Dol at an altitude of 1650 m, Smajina Cesma on Police at an altitude of 1550 m; spring under Spionika 1800 m and Hotanj Vrelo (Turisova Voda) on the northwestern side of Ljeljen (1540 m). These springs are not strong, but the water in them never dries up. The springs are stronger, located at the very foot of the massif. Thus, on the northern side, there are springs near Gornja Tusila (Upper Tusila), very strong and cold (6.5 °C). On the southern side of the massif, there are many springs around the apartments of Korita, Gostjenjaca, the Luka and Bjelemici villages (Figures 11, 12, 13).

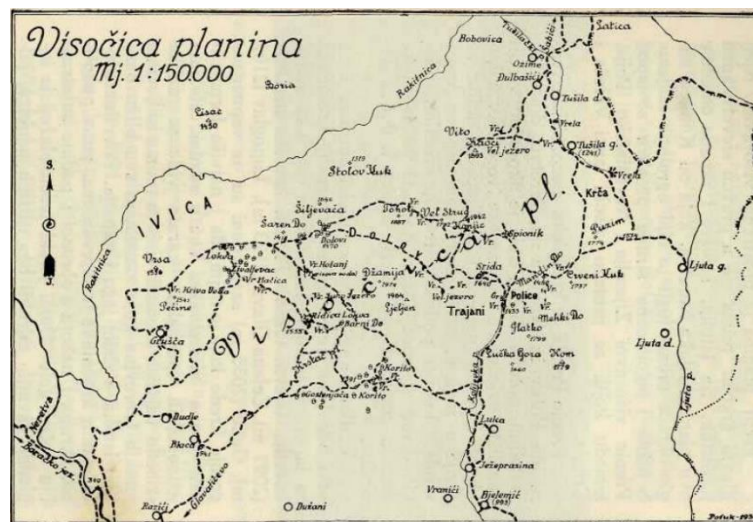


Fig 2: Map of Visocica Mountain at the beginning of the 20th century

Source: Popovic, Jovo (1935) ^[19]. Through the mountains of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mountaineering Associations in Sarajevo, Islamic stock printing press in Sarajevo, Sarajevo, p. 106.



Fig 3: View from the top of Bjelasnica to Visocica Mountain

Source: Author (July 31, 2017)



Fig 4: View of the Bobovica village on the slopes of Visocica Mountain across the canyon of the Rakitnica river. Treskavica Mountain is in the background

Source: Author (October 25, 2015)



Fig 7: View from the top of 'Crveni kuk' to the Treskavica Mountain (across the canyon of the Ljuta river)

Source: Author (June 22, 2019)



Fig 5: Crveni kuk peak (1773 meters above sea level) on the Visocica Mountain (view from the Sinanovici-Bjelimici road)

Source: Author (June 22, 2019)



Fig 8: View from the top of Crveni kuk on the Sinanovici-Bjelimici road. In the distance is the Prenj Mountain

Source: Author (June 22, 2019)



Fig 6: View from the top of 'Crveni kuk' on the Bjelasnica Mountain

Source: Author (June 22, 2019)



Fig 9: View from the top of Kom towards Sarajevo (Puzim is on the right)

Source: Author (June 22, 2019)



Fig 10: View from the top of Kom on the Visocica Mountain plateau

Source: Author (June 22, 2019)



Fig 11: Fountain with drinking water along the Sinanovici-Bjelimici road

Source: Author (June 22, 2019)



Fig 12 Left: Public fountain in the Luke village at the foot of Visocica. Right: Fountain Ockovica on the Visocica Mountain

Source:

https://lh5.googleusercontent.com/p/AF1QipMw8afE2noPSKOGkykBAZrNZ0IERWmotKQ807O_h720

Accessed: December 29, 2024.

Source:

https://lh5.googleusercontent.com/p/AF1QipNQtkKjN4ezVUfpTdR_jSC1_GrNVrZNarq3XXho=h720

Accessed: December 29, 2024.



Fig 13: A fountain with a trough for watering livestock on Jelenjaca, at the foot of Visocica, above the Sinanovici village

Source: Author (June 17, 2012)



Fig 14: Hair-fountain in the Sinanovici village

Source: Author (May 1, 2008, January 1, 2012, June 2012)



Fig 15: Hair-fountain in the Pervizi village

Source: Author (May 1, 2008, January 1, 2012, June 2012)



Fig 16. Left: Hair-fountains in the Bobovica village. Right: Hair-fountain in the Ozimine village

Source: Author (October 9, 2011)

There are no living (permanent) lakes on the Visocica Mountain. The basins, which hum cattle herders call lakes, mostly collect watersheds from the high surrounding ridges during the melting of snow in the spring, or heavy summer rains. Of these, it is worth noting: Veliko Jezero, north below the peak of Kaoci and Vito in the basin called Kaoci. Then Veliko Jezero (also called Velika Bara) in the basin to the northeast below the peak of Ljeljena and Suho Jezero (Dry Lake) to the southwest below the Dzamija peak ^[19].



Fig 17. Left: Medjedja small river – the left tributary of the Rakitnica river. Right: Brvascak dissolution on the Visocica Mountain

Source:

https://lh5.googleusercontent.com/p/AF1QipPDNFdOTNUnp_BbF_xFM5RhqNa8K_BAOLmYUeY7=h720

Accessed: December 29, 2024.

Source:

<https://lh5.googleusercontent.com/p/AF1QipMph6v6Jxa3qYLc5UWe2Xx2FqRmwKqKnK5gu7Tj=h720>

Accessed: December 29, 2024.



Fig 18. Left: Rakitnica river - border between Bjelasnica and Visocica mountains. **Right:** Ljuta river - border between Treskavica and Visocica mountains

Source: <https://welcometokonjic.ba/en/rakitnica-river/>, Accessed: December 30, 2024.

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=771082996908916&set=pcb.771083233575559>, Accessed: December 30, 2024.



Fig 19. Left: Lake below Vito peak on Visocica Mountain. **Right:** Temporary lake on the Visocica Mountain that forms in the bays during the melting of the snow in the spring

Source: <https://lh5.googleusercontent.com/p/AF1QipMtShK3NSiemxVctHV8aW1iInnMD-WW2BO5G1P=h720>

Accessed: December 29, 2024.

Source: Zehrudin Isaković (2022)



Fig 20 Left: Suho Jezero (Dry Lake) on the Visocica Mountain. **Right:** Temporary lake on Visocica Mountain

Source: https://lh5.googleusercontent.com/p/AF1QipOIQqZOmU0QqO0mIbj1AVGFxe_fQ6kWUEv2-qsd=h720

Accessed: December 29, 2024.

Source: https://lh5.googleusercontent.com/p/AF1QipNEtRzlnIJ4yQMX__XB-McBlhYTN1HsftZsMK-_h720

Accessed: December 29, 2024.



Fig 21: Temporary Jelenjaca lake below Vito peak on Visocica
Source: Author (April 28, 2013)



Fig 22. Left: Waterfall near the Luke village. Right: Medjedja waterfall on the Visocica Mountain

Source: https://lh5.googleusercontent.com/p/AF1QipNW-TBMR5tg4mIg0y8oe50OFDzOji4kz_PMVm5f=w720-h720-pd
 Accessed: December 29, 2024.

Source: https://lh5.googleusercontent.com/p/AF1QipMITBUa4VN8FMol0_4a9cmH0LZK1Xvf21_gYCdU=w720-h720-pd
 Accessed: December 29, 2024.

The Visocica Mountain is raked early in the spring, and visitors can therefore access it already in the second half of April. Of course, at that time its northern slopes and bays are still covered with snow and difficult to pass. Its summer residents (shepherds) go to the mountain at the beginning of June, when the mountain is already covered with lush grass, the valleys are decorated with colorful mountain flowers and the forest is in full bloom. The ascent to this mountain early in the spring (before the cattle are driven out) is certainly interesting for mountain herb collectors (while it is still in bloom) and for amateur photographers, while the lakes are still full and the mountain peaks and bays are still covered

with snow. However, it is most pleasant to visit the mountain from June to the end of September. At that time there is also white meat on the mountain: varenika, cheese, kajmak and 'mountain beer': buttermilk, whey and acids, which pamper the tired and thirsty mountaineer and restore his soul. The western, northern and eastern sides of the mountain, up to a height of 1,600 meters, are overgrown with high forest, mostly white birch - beech and maple. The southwestern sides (Ivica and Gruscanska Mountain) are overgrown with conifers - black pine and spruce. The southern slopes end with a hilly, fairly flat plateau, all the way to the Neretva river, with occasional forest - oak, hornbeam, hornbeam and

black pine. Starting at 1,600 meters above, there are no trees on the Visocica Mountain. There is no juniper, mountain spruce, which normally appear on other mountains at heights above 1600 meters. At these heights, mountain plants grow: watercress, Dinaric gentian (*Gentiana acaulis ssp. Dinarica*), medicinal gentian with a yellow flower, lincura (*Gentiana lutea ssp. Symphyandra*), vida (*Gentiana utriculosa*), pansies (*Viola elegantula* and *Viola saxatilis*) in various colors, various carnations; on pastures: star, various types of salep, jagorcina (primula) and many other plants ^[19] (Figures 23-28). In the basins and valleys, as well as in all the lower positions of the mountain, frost, hellebore, nettle, fern, black corn and other plants grow. Many species of animals live in the forests of the northern and northeastern slopes of the mountain: wolf, bear, boar, fox and marten. Game includes roe deer and chamois. The rabbit is distributed in all parts of

the mountain. Of the birds, it is especially worth mentioning the grouse. An entire forest below Puzim was named Gluvača after the name 'gluvač', as the local residents call the grouse. They call the little grouse 'ruževac'. Among the useful birds, the black buzzard is very widespread. There are also partridges. Birds of prey include sparrows, owls, buzzards and buzzards. On the exposed southern and southwestern rocky sides of the mountain, apart from lizards and slijepci, you can also find the occasional poisonous snake - viper and red-headed viper. There are trout in the river Rakitnica and the streams Ljuta and Tusilacki Potok. In the river Neretva, in addition to trout, there is also one type of sapling, called 'glavatica', after which the town of Glavaticevo got its name. The Visocica Mountain can be accessed from different directions ^[19] (Figure 2).



Fig 23. Left: Right: Colorful do on Visocici Mountain Grusacko polje (Grusacko field)

Source: <https://lh5.googleusercontent.com/p/AF1QipNXrWv5wRd0jr06EP5sB9Qmi-lUm9wHFpZQ60l=h720>
Accessed: December 29, 2024.

Source: <https://lh5.googleusercontent.com/p/AF1QipPkC4nRsoGagrMsdm50NhGiKPdBOBKnvXoBi8c6=h720>
Accessed: December 29, 2024.





Fig 24: Mountain flowers on the Visocica Mountain

Source: <https://bracobabic.com/2022/04/10/planinsko-cvijece-1-dio/#jp-carousel-12306>, Accessed: December 30, 2024.



Fig 25: Pastures on the Visocica Mountain

Source: Author (August 9, 2018; June 22, 2019)

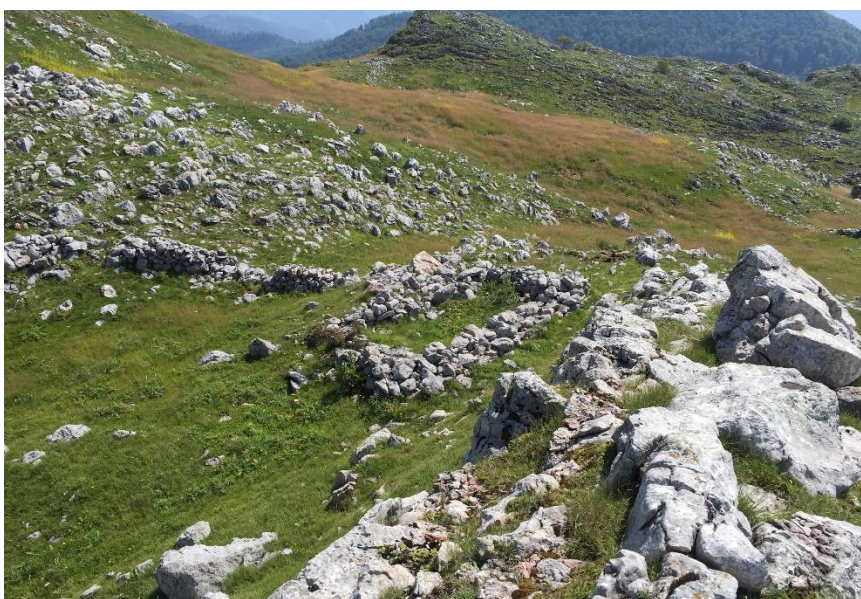


Fig 26: Pastures around Vito peak on Visocica Mountain

Source: Author (August 9, 2018)



Fig 27: View from the top of Vito towards the Sinanovici village

Source: Author (August 9, 2018)



Fig 28: Herd of wild horses on the Visocica Mountain

Source: <https://bracobabic.com/2020/03/07/hrljn-greb-grob-na-visocici/>, Accessed: December 29, 2024.

Source: <https://welcometokonjic.ba/planina-visocica/>, Accessed: December 29, 2024.

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 ^[1]. It includes both physical structures (various material, more or less ordered products of their activities) and the immaterial world that we know with the intellect (science, philosophy, religion, law, morality) through an ordered system of abstract symbols (letters, signs) ^[1]. In several localities on the Visočica plateau, there are medieval necropolises of stećaks (Figures 29, 30, 31). These medieval tombstones are characteristic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and were erected in the 14th and 15th centuries. The necropolis of the stećaks of Poljica is located next to the summer herding settlement of Poljica, on the Visočica mountain (Figure 29). The locality of Poljice - Veliko jezero is located at an altitude of 1691 meters, below the peak of Ljeljen. The necropolis is a national monument of Bosnia and Herzegovina ^[20]. There are 49 stećaks in the necropolis (33 slabs, 10 chests and 6 gables). They are very well sculpted. 11 copies were decorated, including 7 panels, 1 chest and 3 gables. Decorations are: trefoil and slash border, trefoil frieze, twisted ribbon, zigzag border, simple arcades, crescent and original representations of a man holding a child and a man with a staff, with a horse and a bird ^[21].



Fig 29: Stećak necropolis Veliko jezero, northeast of 'Kolecic bara' ('Kolecic pond') on Visocica Mountain

Source: <https://putovanjazapet.com/planinarenje-visocicom-grebenom-domagije/>, Accessed: December 29, 2024.

The locality of Poljica - Dolovi is located on the western side of the road that leads from Gornji Tušil to Odzaci (Bjelimici), at an altitude of 1479 m. The necropolis, together with the stone processing workshop and the landscape, is a national

monument of Bosnia and Herzegovina ^[22]. There are 52 stećaks in the necropolis (24 slabs, 22 chests, 2 gables and 4 crosses). Decorative ornaments are recorded on seven monuments: 4 slabs, 2 gables and 1 cross. Their decorative motifs are: a plain and twisted band, a frieze of twisted vines with trefoils, a band of zigzag and oblique lines, hunting scenes, chariot scenes and specific representations of a woman and a dragon, as well as a woman, a horseman and a dragon ^[21].



Fig 30: The necropolis of stećaks Poljice in the Dolovi locality on the Visocica Mountain

Source: <https://putovanjazapet.com/planinarenje-visocicom-grebenom-domagije/>, Accessed: December 29, 2024.

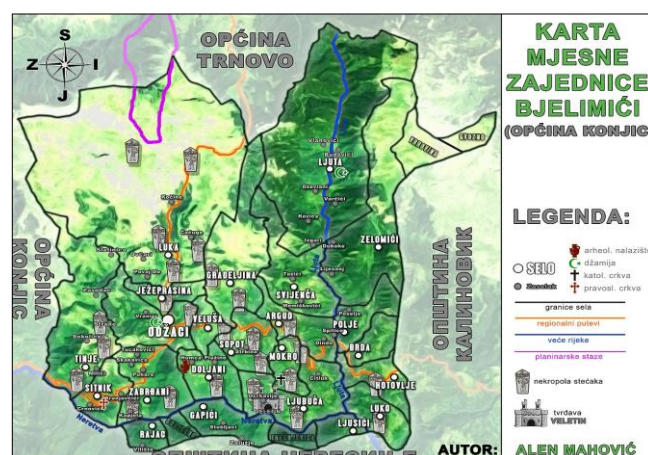


Fig 31: Map of the local community of Bjelimici on the slopes of the Visocica Mountain: places with stećak necropolises are indicated

Source: <https://bs.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bjelimici%C4%87i#/media/Datoteka:MZBJELIMICI.jpg>, Accessed: December 31, 2024.

In addition to the medieval stećak necropolises, there are cemeteries and individual graves from later periods on the

Visočica mountain, which testify to the continuity of life on this mountain (Figures 32, 33, 34).



Fig 32: The grave of an unknown man in 'Boskailo's dol' on the Visočica Mountain (probably the grave of a herdsman)

Source: Author (August 9, 2018)

Hrlin greb (Hrle's grave) is located on the pass between Paric peak (1941 m) and nameless elevation 1880 m. It is located at an altitude of 1,775 m, next to the shepherd's path that descends steeply below Podova into the virtuous valley of the Medjedja stream (Figure 33). In the Ottoman period, two stone niches were erected on the mezar (burial site). People say that it was built for a herdsman from Herzegovina who was killed and buried in this place. His name is not known, but his last name is Hrle - originally from Stolac. That's why the place where he was buried is called Hrlin greb (Hrle's grave). Nishans on the grave have been preserved to this day. Even today, many stories are told about that tragic event in the Bjelimici village. The legend tells of how one day Hrle and his herd stopped on the way to Visočica and settled in the pastures in Potkraj below Sirovo gvoz. Hrle did not know that the bey Koldzo Surkovic from Odzak (the largest village in the area of Bjelimici) had forbidden all Herzegovinian herders from staying on his pastures without his knowledge and permission. The next day, when Koldzo bey heard that Hrle had brought cattle to his pastures, he took his rifle and mounted his horse, and went to look for him and drive him off the mountain. They met at the spring in Lokvice and after a short argument, Koldzo bey fired a rifle at Hrle, but it missed. After that, Hrle replied to Koldzo bey Koldzi with these words: "Eh, my bey, let's see if my rifle will fail like yours". He took aim, the rifle went off and the beg was fatally shot and fell from his horse. After killing the Koldzo bey, Hrle fled to the central part of Visočica and hid in a cave in Medjedja. Many zaptia (policemen) went in search of Hrle and soon they found him, but they could not get close to him because he was well armed and determined to defend himself, until they resorted to cunning by sending his brothers from the Mujan family (from Luka) to he negotiates with him, promising him his life if he surrenders, because he killed the Klodzo bey in self-defense. However, the zaptijas broke the agreement and killed Hrle immediately after the surrender [23].

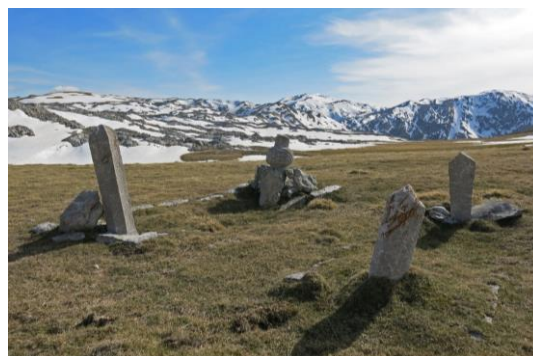


Fig 33: Hrlin greb (Hrle's grave) on the Visočica Mountain

Source: <https://bracobabic.com/2020/03/07/hrlijin-greb-grob-na-visocici/>, Accessed: December 29, 2024.



Fig 34: Old sights at the site of Korita on the Visočica Mountain

Source: <https://bracobabic.com/2020/03/08/uzeir-besirovic-beso-monografija-bosanskohercegovačke-planine-1958-1988/> Accessed: December 29, 2024.

3. Man

Space acquires meaning only if it stands in some relation to man. This relationship ranges from the relationships 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 tries to decipher within his own limits, within the limits of the Earth and the limits of the Universe ^[1]. The inhabitants of the settlement on the slopes of the Visocica Mountain are primarily engaged in animal husbandry and cultivating the land, and on the southern sides, towards the Neretva, they grow fruits and vegetables. They are very bright and sober. They are welcoming and polite to strangers. In the vicinity of all these settlements, there are stone remains of old Bogomil graves in various forms (slabs, chests, gables). Various signs, characters and patterns are engraved on the stećaks. Two such necropolises on the Visocica Mountain itself are interesting. One is located at the northern exit of Kolijevka, near the village of Polica (1507 m) and the other near Veliko Jezera (on Gornje Bare), in the northeast, below the very top of Ljeljen at an altitude of 1660 m ^[19]. Katun in the Poljice locality on the Visocica Mountain (geographic coordinates: 43°34'32.87"N, 18°14'09.92"E, elevation: 1443 m). Katun is owned by Samir and Nezira from Zenica, who have been raising cattle for years, and bring over 150 sheep and a small herd of cows to Visocica (Figures 35, 36).



Fig 35: A herd of sheep on the Visocica Mountain

Source: <https://objavi.ba/visocica-kao-kod-djeda-sa-pasnjaka/>, Accessed: December 29, 2024.



Fig 36: Katun in the Poljice locality on the Visocica Mountain

Source:

https://lh5.googleusercontent.com/p/AF1QipOeqb85aRwzSHDHRs-FATyo9HpLnmmq7U_MGgMR=h720

Accessed: December 29, 2024.

Source: <https://objavi.ba/visocica-kao-kod-djeda-sa-pasnjaka/>, Accessed: December 29, 2024.

The Visocica Mountain, as mentioned earlier, is rich in medicinal plants that are used daily in people's lives (Figure 37).



Fig 37: Collecting mountain medicinal plants (Luke village)

Source: https://www.bistrobih.ba/nova/2013/08/01/foto-selo-luka-podno-visocice-zdravlje-sa-visocice-i-iz-neretve/#google_vignette Accessed: December 31, 2024.

The folk game 'kolo' ('wheel') is a traditional form of fun, joy and getting to know people. The 'cart' motif is common on medieval stećaks, where it symbolizes life, the alternation of life and death (Figure 38).



Fig 38: Folk games ('kolo') in the Bjelimici village. Left: 'kolo'/'wheel' motif on a medieval stećak. Right: 'kolo' ('wheel') in today's Bjelimici village

Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_HiezJA3URw, Accessed: December 31, 2024.

4. Boundaries

'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. Boundaries, 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 ^[1]. There are no permanent settlements on the Visocica Mountain itself. Therefore, in autumn, winter and spring, the mountain is deserted, until the Humnjaci (herdsmen from Hercegovina) come out with their cattle for mountain grazing. Summer

settlements (apartments, hamlets, katuns) are spread all over the mountain. There are 9 of them on the north side: Kaoci and Papratni Do; on the east side Mandin Do, Mehki Do and Police; from the south: Korita and Sirovi Gvozd (Raw Iron); in the middle of Srede and Dolovi Mountains. The tenants are livestock farmers from the Mostar, Stolac, Ljubinje and Ljubinje regions. Of the residential buildings for Bjelimici, more precisely Odzak, or towers, are characteristic. A total of 37 families in Herzegovina owned Beglu complexes larger than 575,000 m², among them the Šurković family. The tower was built in the 17th century and was declared a national monument of Bosnia and Herzegovina ^[24]. Around 1900, there were three towers and several chimneys, whose owners were Ferhad-bey, Sejdi-bey and Hanefi-bey. There were 17 towers on the Bjelimica plateau: Odzaci - seven towers, Jezepasina - two towers, Luka - three towers, Argud - one tower, Svijenca - one tower, Gradeljina - one tower, Doljani - one tower and Mokro - one tower. Today, the most famous example is Surkovic's tower in Odzaci, while other towers were either demolished and their material used for other buildings, or they were reconstructed (Figure 39).



Fig 39. Left: Surkovic's tower in Odzaci, Bjelimici. Right: Water mill in Grusca on the Visococi Mountain

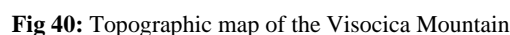
Source:

<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1450332348657906&set=pcb.1450332811991193>, Accessed: December 30, 2024.

Source:

https://lh5.googleusercontent.com/p/AF1QipPuJ4Uh_Z335Xz_d1-pqN82uMdhjltzk2IViSyK=h720, Accessed: December 29, 2024.

From the herder's point of view, the entire Visocica Mountain was once divided into hamlets. At the beginning of the 20th century, there were 9 villages with a total of 86 huts on the mountain. At that time, all villages were inhabited only by Bosniaks, mostly from Podveles. Over 400 inhabitants lived in these villages during the summer. The names of the villages were: Dolovi (Colakovica Do and Saren Do), Srede, Kaoci, Korita, Mehki Do, Mandin Do, Papratni Do, Police and Sirovi Gvozd. It is characteristic of the Visocica Mountain that the mahals and huts were built in the immediate vicinity of the mountain roads that are used to walk around the mountain. Only the Srede, Kaoci and Papratni Do villages were far from the road, in isolated mountain cliffs, while the Mandin Do, Mehki Do, Police, Dolovi, Korita and Sirovi Gvozd villages were built either next to the roads or in their immediate vicinity (Figure 40).



Under the southern slopes of the Ljeljen ridge, there are several permanent settlements at a height of 1000 to 1200 meters above sea level. The most important are: Bjelemici at 993 meters above sea level, Luka (1200 m), Jezeprasina, Vranica (1100 m), Krusevo (1060 m), Duzani, Grusca (990 m), Dudle, Blaca (1200 m), Razici, Crkvine, Glavaticevo (349 m) and Ladjenica. From the north, under the Vitlo and Kaoci ridges, there are settlements: Bobovica, Ozimine, Djulbasici, Donja and Gornja Tusila (Sinanovici and Pervizi,

located at an altitude of 1240 m), and from the east Gornja and Donja Ljuta. All these permanent settlements are inhabited by Bosniaks. Only in those on the southern side are there some Orthodox immigrants. The local community of Bjelimici includes the settlements Odzaci, Jezeprosina, Svijenca, Luka, Vranici, Gradeljina, Argud, Citluk, Gornja Ljubuca, Donja Ljubuca, Mokro, Ocrkavlje, Doljani, Zabrdjani, Tinje, Zavodac and Strane, Sopot, Velusa, Plocnik (Figures 40, 41, 42).



Fig 41: The Bjelimici village on the Visocica Mountain slopes

Source: <https://bjelimici.com/dron-snimak-centra-mz-bjelimici-naselja-odzaci/>, Accessed: December 31, 2024.



Fig 42: The Luke village on the Visocica Mountain slopes

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=2988884444723071&set=a.1895817604029766>, Accessed: December 31, 2024.

The Bobovica village is located on the northern slopes of the Visocica mountain (Geographic coordinates: 43°38'27.83"N, 18°13'47.60"E, elevation: 1306). It belongs to the Trnovo municipality, and it is 17.6 km away from Trnovo as the crow flies. Fifty seven inhabitants live in the Bobovica village today, which is significantly less^[25]. The main resources of the village are its geographical position on the Visocica slopes (on which there are extensive pastures), a lot of arable land, a wealth of sources of drinking water, the proximity of the river Rakitnica (whose power was traditionally used for working watermills) and good transport connections with other villages on the Bjelasnica plateau^[18] (Figure 43).



Fig 43: The Bobovica village on the Visocica Mountain

Source: Author (September 15, 2013)

The Pervizi village is located on the northern slopes of Visocica Mountain (geographic coordinates: 43°37'37.81"N, 18°15'18.27"E, altitude 1196 m), (Figures 44, 45). It belongs to the Trnovo Municipality, and it is 17.5 km away from Trnovo by air. The main resources of the village are its geographical location on the slopes of Visocica (on which there are extensive pastures), the Tusilacki stream (the power of which was traditionally used to operate water mills), a lot of arable land, an abundance of sources of drinking water, the proximity of the Rakitnica river and good traffic connections with other Bjelasnica plateau villages. The Pervizi village was burned in the 1992-1995 war, with rarely preserved traditional buildings. After the war, new houses were built, in new places and next to the ruins of old houses. At the same time, newly built buildings sometimes follow the patterns of traditional construction, but as a rule, they are executed with a modern disposition, design and materialization. After the war, buildings were built that did not exist before.



Fig 44: Arable fields-meadows-pastures in the Pervizi village (in the background is the Visocica Mountain). Pervizi village: resources

Source: Author (February 1, 2020)



Fig 45: Fruit gardens right next to the houses in the Pervizi village
Source: Author (February 1, 2020)

5. Conclusion (Perspectives)

By the term 'perspectives' in the framework of the theory of architecturally defined space (ADS), we mean „that dynamic relationship that connects now - future, existing - possible, achieved – desired“^[1]. The emergence of a settlement (hamlet, village) or architectural-engineering structure is never accidental, but is the result of synergy between the natural and social environment-man^[1]. As for the continuity of the traditional way of life on the Visocica Mountain itself, and in the settlements on its slopes, it almost completely disappeared after the 1992-1995 war. Households raising livestock are rare, and if there are such cases, it is only in the summer season^[18] (Figure 46). Almost all the owners of the villages on the northern slopes of Visocica (Bobovica, Ozimine, Pervizi, Sinanovici) built houses (or bought apartments) in the area of Sarajevo, mostly in Hrasnica.



Fig 46: The Bobovica village. Upleft: The slopes of Visocica. Upright: Meadows with a view of the Rakitnica canyon. Downleft: Public ('hair') fountain by the access road to the village. Downright: fields and levdas with a view of the coast

Source: Author (February 12, 2012)

One of the 'most frequent' hiking trails on the Visocica Mountain is „Bivouac Zoran Simic - Paric peak - Djetelas peak - Vito peak“ which on its way frequents valleys, where the play of stones and flowers is like the most beautiful theatrical performance, a ridge from which the views reach into the distant expanses towards Treskavica, Bjelasnica and Prenj, and the panoramic view of the Rakitnica canyon evokes special respect and joy for the moments spent on this mountain. Mountain lodge „Vrela“ is the first mandatory point on the way to the center of the Visocica Mountain (and towards Treskavica Mountain, too). It only takes about 40 minutes from Sarajevo via Bjelašnica to get to the center of the Visocica Mountain. On the way to the Sinanovici village,

you will come across the „Vrela“ mountain lodge, an essential point for all visitors to Visocica. Mountain lodge „Vrela“ is one of the most decorated lodges in Bosnia and Herzegovina with a capacity of 30 beds (Figure 47).



Fig 47: Mountain lodge „Vrela“ in Tusila (geographical coordinates: 43°37'17.98"N, 18°15'18.29"E, altitude 1214 meters)

Source: Author (February 1, 2020)

From the “Vrela” mountain lodge, the road climbs along the Jelenjaca valley to the pass, and then descends towards the Bjelimići village (Figure 48). After a distance of about one kilometer, on the right side of the road you will see a hiking sign that leads to the bivouac “Zoran Simic” (Figure 49). About 300 m before the parking lot, on the left side of the road to Bjelimići, there are two fountains with cold drinking water. The bivouac was built in 2017 and according to the magazine “Design Boom” it is one of the 10 best architectural projects in the world for the year 2020 and is already one of the symbols of this mountain and an ideal place for the first break and rest. The bivouac or shelter is an open type that can comfortably accommodate nine people, and in case of emergency, up to 12 people. To the right of Bivko you can see a ridge and on it a well-trodden path that leads to the first of the three peaks, the Paric peak, 1941 meters above sea level. It takes about 30 minutes to walk from the bivouac to the Paric peak, from where there is an open view towards the Vito peak.



Fig 48: Mountaineers' ascent to the peak of Vito from the mountain lodge "Vrela"

Source: <https://miruhbosne.com/uspon-na-vito-visocica-foto/>, Accessed: December 29, 2024



Fig 49: “Zoran Simic” bivouac on the Visocica Mountain

Source: <https://putovanjazapet.com/planinarenje-visocicom-grebenom-domagije/>, Accessed: December 29, 2024.

As new paved roads were built (from Sarajevo via Bjelasnica to the foothills of Treskavica and Visocica), tourism revived in this area, and people (those with roots there, as well as businessmen in general) began to build hospitality facilities - restaurants and lodgings - where they serve traditional food, mostly from raw materials produced in the area of the Treskavica, Visocica and Bjelasnica mountains (Figure 50).



Fig 50: Restaurant with apartments in the Tusila village (geographical coordinates: 43°37'16.11"N, 18°15'14.37"E, altitude 1220 meters)

Source: Author (February 1, 2020)

Similar to the Bjelasnica and Igman mountains, the Visocica plateau is a favorite vacation and recreation destination for the residents of Sarajevo and the wider region. Particularly attractive are the places on the right bank of the Neretva river (Figures 51, 52).



Fig 51: The author (left) with friends on vacation along the Neretva river, below the Bjelimići village

Source: Hajrija Selimovic (July 28, 2024)



Fig 52: Summer vacation on the Visocica Mountain. Caravan as accommodation

Source: Author (June 22, 2019)

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