

# The Historical Town Kresevo

Ahmet Hadrovic

Faculty of Architecture, University of Sarajevo, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Email address: hadrovic.ahmet@gmail.com, ahmet.hadrovic@af.unsa.ba

**Abstract**— Kresevo is a town (with about 1100 inhabitants) located on the banks of the Kresevcica and Dragusnica rivers in central Bosnia and Herzegovina, 55 km from Sarajevo (Geographic coordinates: 43°51'56.27"N, 18°02'27.72"E, elevation: 611). Kresevo was first mentioned in written documents in 1435 as one of the residences of the Bosnian kings. There was a Franciscan monastery here already in the middle of the 14th century. It is known for the metal industry, the production of footwear and leather goods, furniture, carpet weaving, and the exploitation and processing of barite. It is also known for its mineral water springs ('Nevra'). The monastery in Kresevo has an archive, a library, a museum and a memorial room for the Franciscan Grga Martić. In it, among other things, some Ottoman regulations and old chronicles (1765–1817) have been preserved. In the 15th century, Kresevo was one of the capital cities with a royal palace and fortress, under which there was a suburb with a square. It developed as a mining town (iron, copper, silver and mercury), so from the 16th century to the period after 1800 it was, along with Vares, the most important center of Bosnian metallurgy (ore smelters and forges for the manufacture of weapons and jewelry). Kresevo maintained commercial ties, first of all, with Dubrovnik. During the rule of the Ottoman Empire, Kresevo was first mentioned as a nahija in 1469 as part of the Kraljeva Zemlja vilayet ('King's Land vilayet'), and after its abolition at the end of the 15th century as part of the Sarajevo Kadiluk. From the 16th to the 18th century, Kresevo was the seat of the representative of the Sarajevo kadi ('naib'), the commissioner for mining affairs ('emin') and the chief of the local janissaries ('serdar'). Since 1878, Kresevo has been under Austro-Hungarian rule [4].

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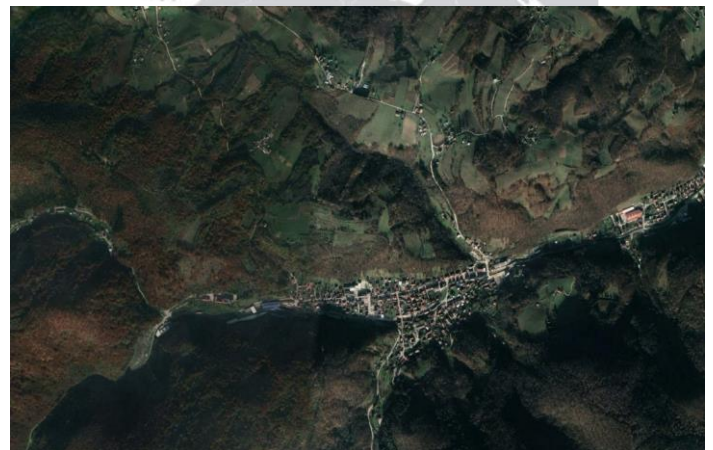


Figure 1. Kresevo. Location

Source:  
[https://visitmycountry.net/bosnia\\_herzegovina/bh/index.php/turizam/27-vmc/geografija](https://visitmycountry.net/bosnia_herzegovina/bh/index.php/turizam/27-vmc/geografija), Accessed: 11.19.2022., left  
 Google Earth: Accessed: 11.19.2022, right

**Keywords**— Kresevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Vrancici village.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Kresevo is a town (with about 1100 inhabitants) [1] located on the banks of the Kresevcica and Dragusnica rivers in central Bosnia and Herzegovina, 55 km from Sarajevo (Geographic coordinates: 43°51'56.27"N, 18°02'27.72"E, elevation: 611), (Figure 1). Kresevo was first mentioned in written documents in 1435 as one of the residences of the Bosnian kings [2,3,4,5]. There was a Franciscan monastery here already in the middle of the 14th century. Kresevo is known for its metal industry, the production of footwear and leather goods, furniture, carpet weaving, and the exploitation and processing of barite. Also, Kresevo is known for its mineral water springs ('Nevra'). The Franciscan monastery has an archive, a library, a museum and a memorial room of the Franciscan Grga Martić [5]. In the 15th century, Kresevo was one of the capital cities with a royal palace and fortress, under which there was a suburb with a square. It developed as a mining town (iron, copper, silver and mercury), so from the 16th century to the period after 1800 it was, along with Vares, the most important center of Bosnian metallurgy (ore smelters and forges for the manufacture of weapons and jewelry). During the rule of the Ottoman Empire,

## II. ENVIRONMENT

By 'environment' we mean every possibility in the space in which man can realize his existence [6].

### A. 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 [6]...

Kresevo is surrounded by many mountains: Bitovnja, Cubran, Berberusa, Volujak, Lopata, Trebac, Inac and Meorsje. They are 'catchers' of snow and rain that generate many river flows and sources of drinking water. Water and ores are important resources of Kresevo that have generated a rich life over the centuries. The rivers Kresevica and Dragusnica provided the driving energy for many blacksmith workshops ('maidans') and water mills. Kresevo used to have about 20 mills, but now only two are in ruins. In addition, in Kresevo there are vast fertile plains suitable for agriculture and forests (they occupy 70% of the area of the municipality), which are the basis of many economic activities. Kresevo is known for its iron, barite, copper, silver and mercury mines. Above the Vrancij village (which is 2 km from Kresevo) is the Oberska cave (Figure 2) along the Kostajnica stream. The cave is actually a medieval cinnabar (hydrargyrum) mine.



Figure 2. Oberska cave

<https://www.kresevo.ba/index.php/razno/787-u-vrancima-najuredenijem-kresevskom-selu>

Accessed: 5.31.2018.

### B. Social environment

By 'social environment' we mean everything that man has created and that separates him from the world of other living beings [6]. 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) [6].

**Architectural cultural and historical heritage.** A fragment of a Roman stele from Kresevo (today located in the museum collection of the Franciscan monastery in Kresevo) was found in the area of the wider region of Visnjica near Kiseljak, where there was a significant Roman mining settlement [3,4]. This fragment represents the lower right part of the inscription part of the stele with half of the plant. It is broken in the middle of the third line of the inscription, counting from the

bottom, and vertically in the middle of the stele. Only a small part of the inscription has been preserved. This fragment is completely missing the upper and left part of the text and the relief part (Figure 3). The shape of the letters from this fragment is quite close to the inscriptions of the first half of the 3rd century from the interior of Roman Dalmatia, which are characterized by sharp endings. Otherwise, the Kresevo area is located within the central Bosnian mining basin, where iron, arsenic and other ores were intensively exploited during the first few centuries of the Empire.



Figure 3. A fragment of an inscription from Kresevo

Source: Skegro, A.(2003), Roman monuments from Bosnia and Herzegovina, VAMZ, 3.s., XXXVII, pp. 35-164 (in Croatian)

Remains of a medieval city-fort. This was one of the residential fortresses of the Bosnian kings. Here (March 9, 1444) King Stepan Tomas Kotromanac (?-1461) issued a charter to the people of Dubrovnik in the "famous royal city of Kresevo" confirming their trade privileges. Stones from this fort were carried over time, especially to the nearby village of Grad, from which houses and stables were built (Figure 4).



Memorial chapel to Queen Katarina (1425-1478), built more recently.

Figure 4. Remains of the medieval city-fort  
<https://www.kresevo.ba/index.php/razno/787-u-vrancima-najuredenijem-kresevskom-selu>

Accessed: 5.31.2018.

The Franciscan monastery in Kresevo is first mentioned in written documents dating back to the 14th century. The monastery has a library with extremely valuable manuscripts and books that bear witness to its past, the past of Kresevo and Bosnia and Herzegovina as a whole [7,8].

Today's church was built (1963-1970) on the site of an earlier church-three-nave basilica built (1853) according to the project of the architect Karl Parik in the neo-Romanesque style, which was demolished due to the unstable terrain on which it was built (Figure 5).



Monastery church built in 1853  
New monastery church, built (1963-1979)

Figure 5. Franciscan monastery

<http://kresevo.ba/visit/index.php/hr/znamenitosti/13-kulturno-povijesno-naslijede/18-franjevacki-samostan-s-crkvom-sv-katarine>

<https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/91/S-Kresevo.jpg>

Accessed: 6.1.2018.

Hadzi Hasan's mosque. The mosque was built (1709) and has its own endowment, which is kept in Gazi Husref Bey's library in Sarajevo<sup>[9,10,11]</sup>. Next to the mosque there is an old cemetery and a school. After being damaged during the war (1992-1995), the mosque was rebuilt (2003), (Figure 6).



Figure 6. Hadzi Hasan's mosque. The mosque with the memorial fountain in front of the mosque

Source: Author (8.26.2016.)

### III. 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<sup>[6]</sup>.

In the memory of the residents of Kresevo, there are many individuals whose work illuminated this city (and much beyond) and which turned into the 'embodied energy' of its present and future generations. Fr. Danijel Ban is counted among such exceptional individuals.

Fr. Danijel Ban (1857-1939) is a well-known chronicler, Franciscan and provincial of Bosnia Srebrena, and was born in Kresevo. After his education in Kresevo and Djakovo, Fr. Danijel Ban<sup>[12]</sup> attended postgraduate studies in Vienna (1882-1887). He received his doctorate with the biblical

theme 'Evangelium quartum, ejus auctor, argumentum et scopus' ('The Fourth Gospel, its author, theme and purpose'). Later, he was a seminary professor in Kresevo and Livno (1887-1890), a clergyman in the central prison in Zenica, an educator of Bosnian theological youth in Pécs (1897-1898), a definator (1898-1900), a guardian of Kresevo (1900-1903, 1910-1916), provincial (1903-1906), parish priest in Podhum (1906-1910) and Kiseljak (1918-1921) and director of the Franciscan classical high school in Visoko (1917-1918). From 1921 until his death, he lived in Kresevo. In 1898, Ban founded the National Reading Room in Kresevo (in 1901, called the Croatian Reading Room), of which he was the president (1900-1903, 1911-1915). Thanks to his efforts, the Croatian Home was built in Kresevo in 1912. Year In 1918, he was elected president of the People's Council in Kiseljak. Together with Fr. Dobroslav Ostojic, he collected women's folk songs for the edition of Matica hrvatska. Contributions from the folk and Franciscan past, especially about the character of Friar Grga Martić<sup>[12]</sup>. His Chronicle, which contains valuable information of historical, ethnographic and cultural significance, remains in manuscript (it is kept in the Franciscan monastery in Kresevo).

### IV. 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<sup>[6]</sup>. Kresevo is a special settlement in Bosnia and Herzegovina where the spatial organization from the Middle Ages has been preserved to this day. The bazaar from the Ottoman period of this city (the central street of Fr. Grga Martić) has preserved the character of the residential and business zone of the settlement until today<sup>[7,8]</sup> (Figure 7).

The Roman bridge in the Vrancı village is located on the route of an ancient mining road, the remains of which were found at a distance of about 400 m from the bridge. According to the principles of construction, it is evident that the existing bridge originates from the time of the administration of the Ottoman Empire in this area (Figure 2). Similar to the Roman bridge at the site of Plandište on Vrelo Bosne, it is possible that the name 'Roman' was retained on the rebuilt construction in the Ottoman period<sup>[7,8]</sup>.



Fr. Grga Martić Square today



Figure 7. The historical town Kresevo

Source: Author (8.26.2016.)



Roman Bridge

Fountain next to the Roman Bridge

Figure 8. Roman bridge in the Vrancı village

Source: Author (9.18.2016.)

The Vrancı village is located not far from Kresevo, 2 km upstream of the Kresevica river. The place is known for its rich tradition of iron processing in workshops-maidans. The village has preserved several examples of autochthonous houses [7,8] (Figure 9).



The bosnian chardaklia house in the Vrancı village



House of the Medic family



Order a belfry with a wooden board, "ta'te".

Figure 9. The Vrancı village

Source: Author (9.18.2016.)

## V. 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"<sup>[6]</sup>.

The past, present and future of the historical town Kresevo were defined primarily by its natural environment, iron ore deposits (and its processing). Until today, iron (and its processing) was a strategically important resource that had an extremely important place in the national economy, which attracted merchants from the wider and further surroundings (in the case of Kresevo, merchants from Dubrovnik played a particularly important role). The 'traffic of people' from different parts of the world necessarily resulted in cultural exchange in a wide variety of its manifestations. In addition, people from Kresevo went to study in the largest European centers (Vienna, for example), and with their activities in Kresevo, they raised the civilizational and cultural level of life of the indigenous people. The wide openness of the historical city of Kresevo towards other people and cultures, and the tendency of its people towards business, over time has become a huge 'embodied energy' of this city that will encourage the life of its people in the future as well.

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