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## **Bobovac**

Emir Iovic

An infographic guide to Bobovac, the nest of kings of Bosnia [...]

# AN INFOGRAPHIC GUIDE TO BOBOVAC

THE NEST OF THE KINGS OF BOSNIA

written and illustrated by Emir Isovic



**The northern settlement**

**Branč**, a three-story stone watchtower built on the Vis elevation. It was used to control approaches to the town from the north. Its walls were as thick as up to 4 metres at the bottom.

**The northern towngate** had a huge stone watchtower above it. Its walls were 2 metres thick.

**The northern ditch** was 3 metres wide and 2 metres deep. A wooden drawbridge led the way over it to the towngate.

**A detached watchtower**

**The inner settlement**

**Outbuilding with a wooden stable**

**Franciscan palace**

**The foundation of a great church**, its construction was never finished.

**The Royal mausoleum** is holding the tombs of Bosnian kings Otoka, Otoka, Tvrtko I, Tomislav, the queen Doroteja and some other dynasty members. The tomb raiders plundered the mausoleum long before its discovery by the archaeologists who still managed to find some valuable items.

**The round tower** was the central tower used to control both upper and lower parts of the town.

**The main street** stretched from one end of the town to the other. It was about one metre wide and at some parts carved into the rocks.

**THE CLIFFS AND CITY WALLS**

The royal town of Bobovac was the capital city of the medieval Bosnian Kingdom. Built on steep, rocky cliffs 700 metres above the sea level, the town had a perfect defensive position for its time. Its high cliffs and walls made it really impregnable. The deep canyons of the Mijakovska River from the east and Bukovica River from the west kept the town secure from both sides. The confluence of these two rivers is just at the southern tip of the town, thus making the north side the only access to the town. Therefore, the defenders had built not one but four defensive towers, high curtain walls and a three-metre-wide ditch there.

Before Bobovac, the palace of Bosnian rulers was located in Mošćina, in Viskio Valley, some 20 kilometres south from here. However, as the attacks of the enemy armies increased, Bosnian king **Stjepan II Kotromanić** moved his court to Bobovac around 1300 a.d. where it was much easier to defend.

Since then until the fall of Bosnian Kingdom in 1463, Bobovac had been the capital of the Bosnian state. It held the royal court with various offices, the state treasury and archives, the royal treasury, the crown and all the other elements of a capital city. After the Ottoman conquest in 1463, the town lost its strategic importance and was pulled down and abandoned.

**WALLS AND TREASURE**

Bobovac was surrounded by more than **1,100 metres** of curtain walls and it had **11 stone towers**. In the river canyon south the town, the defenders had set up a chain of **check points**. Along a huge mass of water was kept in a **dam** to be released upon an advancing enemy army.

The wooden settlements north, south and within the town contained up to **200 wooden houses**. There were 3 cisterns, a number of windmills down on the river, one manual wheat mill inside the upper palace, at least 3 blacksmith shops, stables, kitchens, a dungeon etc. Also, farmers, armors, shield makers, masons, carvers, seal makers, bakers, woodcarvers and potters lived and worked in the Royal Town.

The state treasury of Bobovac kept the royal crown, state archives and all the wealth of Bosnian Kingdom. When the Ottomans entered the city on 22 May 1463, they captured a huge amount of gold and silver and **more than a million ducats**.

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDINGS**

Unfortunately, all the wealth and treasures of Bobovac were plundered by the armies that conquered and ruled it in the centuries afterwards. As it wasn't enough, the town was also plundered by tomb raiders led by famous local legends of a buried royal treasure somewhere inside the town. Still some valuable items were found by the modern archaeologists. Today most of these findings are kept in the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo.

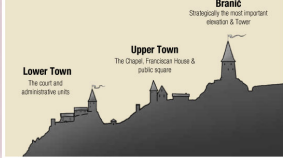
**This window arc fragment** was part of the magnificent interior design of the royal palace.

**This relief fragment** of an eagle belonged to the interior ornaments of the lower royal palace.

**Porcelain lanterns** like this one, were produced and used widely in Bobovac.

**Utensils** used by leather craftsmen in Bobovac.

**BOBOVAC, CROSS SECTION**



**HOW TO GET THERE?**

You can travel to Bobovac via Kakarj and Kraljeva Sutjeska or via Brezja and Vares. Take the easy scenic route which is asphalted, except some ten kilometres of macadam. You will need a car to get there since no public transportation is available.



**WHERE TO STAY?**

We cordially recommend you the **Berisimovic Country Household**. Located only one kilometre away from the Royal Town in a magnificent natural environment and providing a genuine Bosnian cuisine, your vacation there will be an unforgettable one. For information call +387 62 259 198 or visit [www.cvariboskruze.org](http://www.cvariboskruze.org)

**The inner ditch**

**The west curtain wall**

**The inner settlement** had the largest number of houses in the royal town. Almost all the houses were one-story wooden structures, not exceeding 4 metres in length and width. They had stone foundations and roofs made of oak tree battens.

**The main gate with a drawbridge**

**blacksmith**

**granaries**

**The forecourt** held a blacksmith and a farmer's shops and other similar wooden structures.

**Southern settlement**

**The Main Tower** was the oldest and most dominating object of the town. It had three stories and held a cistern. The Bosnian flag fluttering proudly on top of it must have been a great sight!

**The upper palace** had the private royal chambers, a small courtyard and a small attached watchtower.

**The additional palace (annex)** held the rooms where the official seal maker and royal engraver worked.

**The Lower Palace** of the Royal Court was a huge four-story building. It contained the main hall with the royal throne, the state archives and the treasury where the royal crown was kept. According to the evidence, this was the most decorated palace in the town. The inner walls were covered with expensive tapestry. The floral and animal figures were carved onto the walls and the columns were painted in golden colour. Stained glass in various colours was used for the windows and beautifully decorated porcelain heating stoves were found in almost every room.

**The Bosnian Royal Crown**  
(a reconstruction based on archaeological evidence)

**The main courtyard** had a blacksmith shop and a rooked cistern. A staircase carved into the cliff led to this courtyard.

**The Lower Palace Portal**



**COURTIERS**

Many of the courtiers lived and worked at the Royal Court. These were the court clerk, court magistrate (judge), chamberlain, treasurer, knights, clerks, artists, carvers, maidens, cooks, horsekeepers, coin keepers and many other servants.

**a court duke**



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