

Cultural heritage

The cultural heritage of Biokovo has long been recognized as a value in which one should invest, protect and preserve. In the area of the Nature Park Biokovo there are many signs that indicate the former existence of people from the mountain. They still talk about the life of past times, the customs and ways the population adapted to the conditions of life on this beautiful and rugged mountain, and the first notes on cultural property and natural resources of this region were made by Alberto Fortis in the late 18th century.

1. Name of the Mountain Biokovo

Biokovo has changed its name various times during history. Changing the name depended on the individual cultures that surrounded it. Of several names that were given to this mountain, now we know three - which were created over the centuries by the Greek, Latin and Croatian culture. These are the names: Adrion, Mons Slavorum and Biokovo. The Greek term "Adrion" is the oldest known name for the mountain slope, and was recorded by the Greek geographer Strabo of Amasia in Pontus (63 BC - 19 AD). The first known name of our mountain was given to us by the Greek culture, whereas the other name, a thousand years later, was created by the Latin culture, naming the mountain Mons Slavorum, a descriptive name which means hill or Slavic mountain. The third name is the original name of the mountain, which was given to it by the local population, Croats, whose first mention occurred on April 3, 1382 in the document of the Bosnian king Tvrtko I. The original document has not been preserved, even in the transcript, but in the Italian translation, so that the first mention of the mountains in the Croatian language and Croatian script comes from the yearbook "Libretin" by Fr Paul Šilobadovića in 1666. The current name was probably given for its snowy whiteness (Bil, Bilak we, Bilkovo, slope), which is not surprising if one considers that there is an abundance of snow on the mountain most of the year. In the hinterland the mountain is named as a female, Biokovo, while the coastal slope has the name Bjakovo.

2. Cultural and historical monuments and religious constructions on Biokovo

In the area of Biokovo, human presence has a continuity from prehistory to the later periods. Biokovo, especially at the edges, was inhabited in prehistoric times, long before the appearance of any letters. Witnesses to this are numerous archaeological sites where material remains confirm this. The earliest evidence of human presence on the Biokovo area are associated with the Paleolithic period. This is the period when man chooses the cave habitat, and tools and weapons made of stone and bone. A further period of civilization is characterized by production of metal objects, a novelty in this period are the hills and forts, ruins, from which a broad land and sea space could be seen. At the foot of them lived a

population and in cases of emergency they found shelter in them. The most typical is a series of constructions set in the prehistoric communication from Dubac inward. Also, during this period cemeteries, stone tumuli or mounds appeared. The appearance of tumuli shows close roads and their importance. The most numerous group of tumuli are on the outskirts of Biokovo, in the Gornjih Brela, the area between the Staze and Saranča. The period which is coming brings the ethnic touch of the already formed Illyrian population with the Greeks and Romans. Back in the early Roman period, the settlements of the Biokovo area reached the level of civilization and culture to raise religious buildings. Churches were built on prominent peaks, which dominated the area. Particular attention should be paid to the question of worship at St. Jura at the highest top of Biokovo. The church of St. Jura at the top of the same-name peak was first mentioned in 1640 in the travelogue of Fr Paul Pelizzera from Rovinj. Unfortunately, during the construction of TV transmitters in 1965, the church was demolished. The new church was built in the east in 1968. In addition to the church Biokovo has many churches and chapels, such as the new age church St. Ilija which was built in the nineteenth century. The church of St. Nikola was built in the XIV or XV century on a hill in Upper Brela, the church of St. Roko which is on the top above the village of the same parish, and its shape is reminiscent of the demolished church of St. Jura, the chapel of St. Ilija at the top of the same name peak, the chapel of St. Kaja at the site of Nevestinaa mentioned already in 1786, the chapel of the Blessed Virgin Mary at the Dubac pass built before 1870, the chapel of St. Nikola on Staza from the 19th century, etc.. The towers and fortresses in their number and the preservation after churches are the second consecutive cultural monuments in this area. In the previous section we have already mentioned those that have occurred during prehistory and antiquity, while medieval fortress are rare. Those that occurred during and after the Turkish authorities are known and better preserved. Today the remains of the fort can be seen very clearly, as those in the macro above Pirakovih house, Vrčan cave in Veliko Brdo, the large castel in Kotišina etc..

3. Life on Biokovo

Biokvo has been of a breadwinning mountain for centuries, almost a sacred mountain. People have found fertile valleys and cracks which were revived and used for survival. Biokovo is visited frequently, due to growing potatoes and grains, hunting, removing ice, but mostly for livestock. To be able to live normally, plateaux and herd owners have had huts or dwellings on the mountain. Most dwellings were from farmers from the coast, particularly from Podgora and Tučepi, while on the north side of Biokovo there were only three towns with three - Župa, Krstatace and Zagvozd. The biggest and most interesting secondary ranch resort is Podglogovik, with well preserved spatial organization. It is now a deserted village which has located within it housing and economic arrangements, ponds, wells, water tanks, grain store and fruitful valleys. In the past, while this area did not have refrigerators, great significance for the local population had the numerous ice caves in the central part of Biokovo, from which they drew Biokovo ice. Ice blocks lined with beech leaves and wrapped into the fabric of goat hair was transported on donkeys places at the foot of Biokovo, where the ice was used in commercial purposes.