

Impressions of the Bosnia Pyramids—From One American’s Point of View

By Sharon Prince Wothke

Bosnia, until recently, was one of those countries where US citizens were advised not to travel. Like many Americans, I only knew that Bosnia was located in some faraway place called the Balkans—a place as alien to me as Mars. However, I had this amazing opportunity to visit this exciting, foreign land that most Americans have never experienced. My objective was to learn not only about the Bosnian people and their culture, but also to see the newly discovered Bosnian Pyramids!

Needless to say, I was excited about my upcoming trip and eager to share the news with family and friends. Many people expressed their concerns and asked me if it was safe to go there. Quite frankly, I was concerned about the safety issue myself. As an American, the only thing I knew about Bosnia was its civil war that took place fifteen years ago. The images of violence had been emblazoned into our minds from nightly news reports dating from a decade and a half ago. However, my contacts in Bosnia guaranteed that not only would I be safe, but I would also be very welcome there.

Taking all these preconceived notions into account, it hardly comes as any surprise that few Americans have ever heard about the Bosnia Pyramids. Whenever I mentioned that there were pyramids in Bosnia, I encountered puzzled looks, as if saying those two words in the same sentence was somehow contradictory. People wondered if they had heard me right. I knew how they felt. I had the same reaction at first.

The purpose of my visit was to observe the opening of the excavation season of the Bosnian Valley of the Pyramids, which were discovered three years ago outside of a little town called Visoko (half an hour’s drive from Sarajevo.) The Archeological Park: Bosnian Pyramid of the Sun Foundation was sponsoring a local celebration called “With Hearts for the Bosnian Pyramids (Manifestation).” This event would include live entertainment, a soccer game, and guided visits to these extraordinary pyramids that I would be privileged to see.

I carefully prepared for my trip. I began to do research on Bosnia. I read about its history (which is fascinating) and I went on-line to look at the photographs of its beautiful scenery—lush green mountains, hills, rivers, lakes, and medieval villages. I couldn’t wait to see the architecture and beautiful buildings which were a combination of both Byzantine and Western influences. But one can only learn so much from looking at pictures or reading about a place. In order to understand Bosnia, one has to experience it for one’s self, by interacting with its people and experiencing the sights, sounds and tastes of its culture.

Prior to my visit to Bosnia, I had already done my own extensive research on the Bosnian Pyramids. I could not help but notice that there were a lot of negative things written about the pyramid project and Mr. Semir Osmanagich, the scientist who discovered them. The opponents have been calling this entire project a lot of nonsense, implying that Semir Osmanagich is hoaxing the pyramids. Any open-minded person should not rely on the opinions of those who have never even been to see the archeological sites in question. I had to see them for myself in order to make up my own mind.

The more I delved into the subject, the more surprised I was that the opponents of the pyramid project were so vocal. These opponents haven't hesitated to use any means in their attempt to stop the research of the Bosnian Pyramid project. They went to the extent to make disparaging remarks about Mr. Osmanagich's intentions, integrity, and professional qualifications. Many of these opponents have been signing numerous petitions to stop excavation on the Pyramid of the Sun/Visocica Hill, and accused Mr. Osmanagich of damaging the medieval city which is located at the top of the pyramid. However, Mr. Osmanagich and the Foundation have proved to the authorities that they were not digging near the site; the Bosnian Ministry of Culture conducted their own investigation and confirmed this fact. These opponents never showed any interest in this medieval town prior to Mr. Osmanagich's arrival and the beginning of the archeological research of the pyramids. It is quite surprising that these opponents would be concerned now about a city that they neglected for so many years.

These local opponents have called Mr. Osmanagich "crazy" and have attacked most of the experts who have come to Bosnia to conduct scientific research, confirming that those "hills" are in fact man-made structures. Many opponents have claimed that Dr. Aly Barakat was not a respectable geologist, nor was he really an expert on the pyramids. As it turns out, Dr. Barakat is a highly respected and qualified expert in his field. However, people like Mark Rose and Colin Woodard and others have never apologized for misinforming their readers, nor have they apologized to Mr. Osmanagich or Dr. Aly Barakat.

One has to take into consideration the extent of the hatred and fear that the opponents are displaying toward the ongoing research and Mr. Osmanagich. This is quite pathetic and scary. At this point, even Dr. Nabil Swelim is being called malicious names. Dr. Swelim is a renowned Egyptologist and Archaeologist who has been honored for discovering and excavating four pyramids in Egypt. Dr. Swelim gave an interview to Guy Leigh with Astraea Radio (www.astraeamagazine.com) and it is quite amazing that anyone would call him senile. He is a highly intelligent, well spoken scientist and continues to contribute important work to the scientific community even in his "retirement."

Mr. Osmanagich is bringing in the world's leading experts on the pyramids, from the land of the pyramids—Egypt. He is doing everything right and yet he is being criticized. Obviously, the Egyptian experts know more about the pyramids than any of the opponents, who don't have a clue as to what the properties of pyramids are or how they are built; and yet they criticize these highly respected scientists and professionals.

One has to question the opponents' motives. What are they so afraid of? If the hills in Visoko are really just "hills," one would think that they would not care about the ongoing excavations. Interestingly, the geologists from Tuzla are claiming that these are just natural hills, while Bosnian archeologists are claiming that they are remains dating from the Roman or Illyrian eras. One may wonder how knowledgeable all these professors and opponents are given the fact that they contradict each other. Which brings us to question who are they to tell us that they hold a monopoly on the knowledge of the Visoko area? What are they trying to protect here: the "hill" or their lack of knowledge?

Regardless if people agree or disagree with the existence of ancient pyramids in Visoko Valley, we must admit that Mr. Osmanagich has had the courage to stand behind his theory, against this opposition, proving his theory by using high-tech, scientific methods. I was fortunate to see them with my own eyes and gain firsthand experience of them.

Getting to Bosnia was not hard at all. The members of The Archeological Park: Bosnian Pyramid of the Sun Foundation warmly greeted me when I arrived at the airport in Sarajevo and drove me to Visoko. My hotel was nice and the people who worked there were service oriented. Most of the people I met were genuinely nice and helpful, and spoke decent English. I was relieved to find out that there were other tourists staying at the same hotel.

The next day Mr. Osmanagich gave a presentation to many tourists who were visiting the pyramids and I was impressed to learn that scientists from several countries around the world have contributed to this important scientific research project. An open and reasonable mind cannot ignore the many scientific facts which support Mr. Osmanagich's hypothesis. My agenda that day was to tour three archeological sites: the Ravne Tunnels, the Pyramid of the Moon, and a shrine-like tumulus in Visoko Valley known as Gornje Vratnice.

After the presentation, I headed to Ravne, where a network of underground tunnels has been discovered. As I drove through the quaint town of Visoko, I saw the Pyramid of the Sun for first time. I must admit I was impressed by the sheer massiveness of the Pyramid of the Sun. Its shape is so striking that nobody can ignore it.

The tunnels were fascinating. The walls are made of a conglomerate of stones and adhesive material known as breccia. And it is quite interesting and amazing that Professor Imamovic would claim that these tunnels are actually natural caves. The Foundation is still working on clearing the debris, but as more excavation takes place, the complex passageways that are currently blocked are starting to reveal themselves. The Foundation has already cleared away quite a bit of it and one can actually walk inside of them. So far there are two main passageways, but along the sides of the walls, forking off right and left, there are blocked up entrances that lead to even more tunnels.

There are huge megalithic stones with ancient markings on them that line the passageways. These mysterious stones have been lying around in the tunnel for all these years. I was thinking to myself, "These things should be in a museum somewhere!" Maybe one day they will be, but right now visitors have a rare chance to see all the archeological monuments in their natural state and watch as they are being excavated! How many people get to explore an archeological dig as it is taking place, or even better yet, to participate in one? There is another part of the tunnel system called KTK Tunnels, which I did not see while I was there. I understand through my research that this whole area had once been entirely covered by water, so any damage to the tunnels or pyramids, over thousands of years, is quite understandable.

Our next stop was Gornje Vratnice, which is a relatively small archeological site compared to the other monuments, and is a shrine type of ruin. The pathway is made of flat, carved stones that have the most incredible basket weave patterns on top of the stones. The largest monolithic stone is located here and

weighs several tons. One wonders how anyone could have cut and moved a stone this large, even in modern times! This tumulus-shaped shrine is quite fascinating. Anyone who sees these finely carved, patterned stones cannot help but be impressed by the ancient craftsmanship.

My last stop was the Pyramid of the Moon, where I visited at two separate archeological locations. I had seen pictures of the Pyramid of the Moon on the Foundation's website, but not until I saw the excavated stones with my own eyes could I say that I KNOW the pyramids are real! Pictures don't do it justice! You have got to come see them for yourself! The stones are so finely made and laid out so precisely that is incredible to see what workmanship went into them. Did someone just put them there to convince an unsuspecting public? No. Absolutely not! One needs to be there in person to come to the same conclusion.

The following day was the Hearts for the Pyramids Manifestation. All day long there was music and celebration and a soccer game going on. I also had the opportunity to visit the incredible and famous Pyramid of the Sun with a group of journalists. This is the main archeological site but the least amount of excavation has been done there. After the second season, the entire pyramid was declared protected, through the influence of the opponents (including The Bosnian Minister of Culture, Mr. Grahovac, Prof. Lovrenovic, and similar powers that be). This is very unfortunate that the authorities would prevent the Foundation from any further excavation and research as this can only reveal the truth.

The Pyramid of the Sun is a good climb up, but it's worth it. One can see megalithic carved, breccia stones lying at a flat angle with the slope. They have been worn down by weather and time, but one can see enough of their original shape. Also, the overall design of the pyramid pattern can be observed. The whole pyramid was made of many layers of stone blocks lying underneath this top layer of this mysterious structure. There is an excavated pit further up the pyramid where one can see the actual cross section of stone layers.

After I explored the pyramids, I joined the locals at the Manifestation celebration and concert, which was located near the Bosna River. Tents and tables had been set up behind the stage area where some guests sat and were served homemade food by the local women. This was an excellent opportunity to sample the local cuisine and absorb the culture. This Manifestation ended with a fireworks display being shot off the top of the Pyramid of the Sun, which marked the beginning of the new archeological season.

During my visit, I also had the opportunity to see the mysterious stone balls, located in villages in remote areas all over Bosnia. One of the locations I visited was Zavidovici where more than forty stone balls are located in one area, in a creek with a waterfall. They are lying on the banks of the creek and in the stream itself. They are absolutely incredible! I have never seen anything like them! On the same trip I also got to see the beautiful countryside and visit a medieval castle that was set in the mountains in this medieval village. Breathtaking!

I am an educated and reasonable person, with a Master's degree in Science Education and minors in history and biology. I have also traveled quite a bit-- extensively within the United States and

abroad to countries such as Norway, England, Scotland, Holland, Greece, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Canada, and the Caribbean. I have seen my share of the world, but I never imagined I would ever go to Bosnia-Herzegovina, but now I can say that I have experienced something unique—The Bosnian Valley of the Pyramids!

All too soon my visit to Bosnia came to an end. I was sad to leave this great country with its wonderful people and culture. I had been privileged to enjoy the company of some great Bosnians who have become my friends. I am very grateful that I got to see this history making event of the excavation of the Bosnian Pyramids with my own eyes. It is an experience that I will always remember and hold dear. I would encourage everyone to see the pyramids for themselves. It is an experience like no other! I look forward to returning!