



Water and man: the river buna spring in the blagaj

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Abstract

The 'THE SOURCE OF THE BUNA RIVER' ('VRELO RIJEKE BUNE') complex is located in the Mostar municipality (Geographical coordinates: 43°15'24.82"N, 17°54'11.93"E, elevation: 93 m). It is about 12.5 km from Mostar, about 124 km from Dubrovnik, and about 140 km from Sarajevo (by air). 2531 inhabitants live in the Blagaj settlement.

The aim of this work is to present an exceptional geographical area that illustrates the relationship of man to the natural environment and his spiritual heritage, which is expressed by special physical structures: the Old Town-Fortress Blagaj, tekke ('tekke'), Sultan Sulejman's Mosque (Emperor's Mosque), residential complex 'Velagićevina', Kardož-beg bridge, fish farm, many restaurants and a large number of public fountains ('cesme').

The topics are elaborated according to the scientific methodology that is covered in the author's book: Hadrovic, A. (2007). Defining Architectural Space on the Model of the Oriental Style City House in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo and Macedonia, Booksurge, LLC, North Charleston, SC, USA.

Keywords: Mostar, Blagaj, The Buna river source, Sustainability

1. Introduction

The 'THE SOURCE OF THE BUNA RIVER' ('VRELO RIJEKE BUNE') complex is located in the municipality of Mostar (Geographical coordinates: 43°15'24.82"N, 17°54'11.93"E, elevation: 93 m). It is about 12.5 km from Mostar, about 124 km from Dubrovnik, and about 140 km from Sarajevo (by air), (Figure 1). 2531 inhabitants live in the Blagaj settlement ^[1].



Source: https://visitmycountry.net/bosnia_herzegovina/bh/index.php/turizam/27-vmc/geografija, Accessed: 8.1.2022., left Google Earth: Accessed: 8.3.2022., right

Fig 1: The source of the buna river ('vrela Rijeke Bune') complex. Location

In this paper, the author deals with the topic of 'sustainability'. 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 [2,3] and scientific works.

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 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, in this paper, using the example of 'THE SOURCE OF THE BUNE RIVER' ('VRELO RIJEKE BUNE') complex the most suitable scientific methodology [4] was the most suitable, which is covered in his book: Hadrovic, A. (2007) . 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.

The aim of this work is to present an exceptional geographical area that illustrates the relationship of man to the natural environment and his spiritual heritage, which is expressed by special physical structures: the Old Town-

Fortress Blagaj, tekke ('tekija'), Sultan Suleyman's Mosque (Emperor's Mosque), 'Velagicevina' residential complex, Kardjuz-bey bridge, fish farm, many restaurants and a large number of public fountains ('cesme').

2. Environment

By 'environment' we mean every possibility in the space in which man can realize his existence [4].

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 [4]...

Blagaj has a warm and moderate climate (the climate here is classified as Cfb according to the Köppen-Geiger system) [5]. Summer here starts at the end of June and ends in September. The month with the highest relative air humidity is November (78.69%). The month with the lowest relative air humidity is August (56.27%). The month with the largest number of rainy days is April (14.10 days). The month with the least number of rainy days is August (6.80 days). There is significant precipitation in Blagaj throughout the year. Even the driest month still has a lot of precipitation. The average annual temperature in Blagaj is 10.9 °C. The annual amount of precipitation in Blagaj is 1597 mm (Figure 2).

| | January | February | March | April | May | June | July | August | September | October | November | December |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Avg. Temperature °C (°F) | 0.7 °C (33.3) °F | 1.8 °C (34.9) °F | 5.3 °C (41.5) °F | 9.9 °C (49.8) °F | 14.3 °C (57.8) °F | 18.6 °C (65.5) °F | 21.3 °C (70.3) °F | 21.7 °C (71) °F | 18.2 °C (61.2) °F | 11.7 °C (53) °F | 7 °C (44.5) °F | 2 °C (35.6) °F |
| Min. Temperature °C (°F) | -3.1 °C (26.5) °F | -2.7 °C (27.2) °F | 0.3 °C (32.6) °F | 4.3 °C (39.8) °F | 8.5 °C (47.3) °F | 12.4 °C (54.4) °F | 14.8 °C (58.6) °F | 15.1 °C (59.2) °F | 11 °C (51.9) °F | 7 °C (44.7) °F | 3.1 °C (37.6) °F | -1.6 °C (29) °F |
| Max. Temperature °C (°F) | 4.8 °C (40.6) °F | 6 °C (42.7) °F | 10 °C (50) °F | 14.7 °C (58.5) °F | 19.1 °C (66.4) °F | 23.6 °C (74.4) °F | 26.5 °C (79.8) °F | 27.3 °C (81.1) °F | 21.2 °C (70.2) °F | 16.4 °C (61.6) °F | 11.1 °C (52) °F | 6 °C (42.8) °F |
| Precipitation / Rainfall mm (in) | 143 (5) | 143 (5) | 137 (5) | 158 (6) | 123 (4) | 76 (2) | 53 (2) | 54 (2) | 121 (4) | 178 (6) | 228 (8) | 187 (7) |
| Humidity(%) | 78% | 76% | 73% | 70% | 71% | 68% | 59% | 56% | 67% | 76% | 79% | 79% |
| Rainy days (d) | 8 | 8 | 9 | 11 | 10 | 8 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 10 | 9 |
| avg. Sun hours (hours) | 4.8 | 5.2 | 6.7 | 8.4 | 10.3 | 11.9 | 12.5 | 11.6 | 9.1 | 7.0 | 5.2 | 4.8 |

Source: weather by month // weather averages blagaj

<https://en.climate-data.org/europe/bosnia-and-herzegovina/blagaj/blagaj-221910/>, Accessed: 8.3.2022.

Fig 2: The main climatic elements in Blagaj throughout the year

Along with the favorable climate, the biggest and most important natural resource of Blagaj is water. This fact generated the complete life of people in this area, from prehistory to the present day.

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 [4]. 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) [4].

History of the Buna river source (Vrelo rijeke Bune) locality. On the slopes of Blagajsko brdo there are remains of settlements from the prehistoric and Roman periods. Thus, on the northeastern peak are the remains of a Roman or late antique fortification-observatory Mala Gradina, on the southeastern peak the contours of a prehistoric fortress can be discerned, and on the southwestern peak are the remains of today's medieval Stjepan-grad.

In the 10th century, Blagaj played a major role in the development of Hum or Zahumlje. Its development and importance were greatly influenced by the proximity of the important road that connected the Adriatic Sea with the Bosnian hinterland through the Neretva valley.

Prince Miroslav of Hum resided in Blagaj. Bosnian rulers in Blagaj have been issuing charters since the time of King Tvrtko, and in May 1404, Blagaj became one of the seats of duke Sandalj Hranic, and then of duke Stjepan Vukčić Kosača, after whom the city was popularly named Stjepan-grad.

The continuity of the development of the town of Blagaj near Mostar was not interrupted even in the Ottoman period. It regains administrative and political importance. After the capture of Blagaj in 1466, the Ottoman authorities established a permanent garrison in the fortress headed by a dizdar. With the arrival of the Sharia judge in Podgrade, the formation of the Blagaj kadiluk began, which would exist until 1851, when it was abolished by Omer Pasha Latas. In the first centuries, the Blagaj kadiluk encompassed a large territorial expanse that stretched in the west-east direction, between the Neretva on the one hand, and the Drina and Tara on the other. Around 1470, Blagaj became the seat of the Blagaj vilayet with the same borders as the kadiluk.

Throughout the four centuries of its existence, it is significant as the center of the nahija, kadiluk and vilayet. The folk saying 'sheher Blagaj, and kasaba Mostar' has been preserved as a testimony of the former primacy of the city at the source of the Buna^[6]. The decline in the importance of Blagaj is related, both to the development of Mostar, and to the formation of the Pociteljki kadiluk in 1728, when several villages were taken from Blagaj, Mostar and Stolac and joined to a new administrative unit.

During the Ottoman administration, construction activity began to flourish in the suburbs of the medieval fortress. Residential and public buildings are being built, and in the central part, as is usual for settlements and cities of the Ottoman period, there is a bazaar - the trade and craft center of the settlement, a mosque complex with a harem and a school, and a khan. Residential zones are typologically formed as urban hamlets, with buildings oriented towards the courtyard, and rural ones, where construction opens up to the surroundings^[6]. At the beginning of the urbanization of the Blagaja settlement, the mills, created primarily due to the need to grind grain for the army, and the tekke with the musafirhan, played a significant role, the role of which should be seen in terms of the activity of the dervishes among the population. Blagaj was occupied by the Ottomans (1465) when the city became the seat of the Kadiluk. The Ottomans repaired and expanded the city twice, in 1699 and 1827. The Ottoman crew stayed here until 1835^[6].

The architectural, cultural and historical heritage of the Buna river source (Vrelo rijeke Bune) locality. First, the Illyrians built their Gradina here, then the Romans built their fortress, and Byzantium (during the time of Emperor Justinian I, in the period 535-600) built an additional fortress. In the wider area of the Old Town of Blagaj, the Slavs founded the parish of Hum. Prince Miroslav of Hum (brother of Stefan Nemanja) ruled here, and the Bosnian king Stjepan II Kotromanjic (1292-1353) included (1326) this area in the Bosnian state. Several charters were issued by Bosnian rulers in this city, since the time of King Tvrtko I Kotromanic (1338-1391). In May 1404, Blagaj became one of the seats of Duke Sandelj Hranic (1370-1435), and then of Duke Stjepan Vukcic Kosaca (1404-1466), (Figure 3).

Religion. The Buna river source (Vrelo rijeke Bune) area, apart from empirical and physical parameters that are extremely valuable and rare, cannot be fully understood without its spiritual-religious dimension. Tekiyas, according to their basic purpose, are places where especially pious people (dervishes, sufis) express respect for God in the form of prayer known as 'zikr'.

Sufism has its roots in the life of Prophet Muhammad, s.a.w.s. who used to isolate himself in prayer to God. When, in the 12th century, Sufism took on institutional forms of expression and when the first Sufi brotherhoods (tariqats) were created, this phenomenon was also reflected in the emergence of a new architectural form - tekiya. Sufism appears in two forms: eremitic and cenobitic. This second form conditioned the emergence of architectural forms in which the brotherhood practiced the rite and often lived in it. Sufism appeared in all regions of the Ottoman Empire. It left traces in literature, philosophy as well as in the life of the Muslim population itself. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, an architectural building arranged for the practice of Sufism ('zikr') is usually called 'tekija', although the names 'zavija' and 'hanikah' also appear, with a somewhat modified meaning. There were several dervish orders in Bosnia and Herzegovina and they spread throughout its territory, so that at that time there was not a single major place that did not have at least one tekke. One of the oldest known tekijas in Bosnia and Herzegovina is the Mevlevi tekija, which was founded in 1462 by Gazi Isa-beg in Sarajevo in present-day Bentbasa in an earlier building, and which was demolished in 1957.

3. 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. 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^[4]. Together with the rest of the living world, it participates in the process of circulation of matter and energy in nature, sharing the same fate with it, being born and dying against its will. Endowed with reason, will and feelings, he is the only one in the living world who can discover the given laws of the organization of nature.

4. 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 an architectural sense, they enclose, but also include a person in the conditions of a certain environment^[4].

The Old town of Blagaj (also known as Bona and Stjepan-grad) is located on top of a karst hill above the spring of the Buna river. The researches of this city, which were carried out at the end of the 20th century, confirmed that the area of the city was inhabited continuously from the Iron Age to 1835 (Figure 3).



Source: Author (8.14.2011.)

<http://ljubusaci.com/2014/03/30/imehercegovina-i-blagaj/>, Accessed: 03.06.2018.

Fig 3: The Blagaj Old town at the Buna spring

The Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent (1494-1566) mosque was built (1519/1520) in the name of Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent, as can be seen from the verse inscription carved on a stone slab above the door^[7]. The mosque and its officials supported themselves from the income of the waqf of this mosque, which was subsidized by the state. It is one of the oldest domed mosques in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It used to have a dome, and in the 19th century, when the dome collapsed, reconstruction was carried out and a wooden dome

was made, which rests on an octagonal tambour. The reconstruction was carried out in 1892 according to the project documentation created by the Austro-Hungarian architect Maximilian David (Figure 4). Above the door, an inscription in Turkish verses about the repair of the mosque written in the 'nesh' script is carved in five lines on a 60 x 70 cm stone slab. The building has retained the characteristics of a one-room under-dome mosque^[6, 8].



Source: <https://lh5.googleusercontent.com/p/AF1QipM4hLrk-7AaPiAX5rgwBlqtkp0D5ukSJFzA6TAc=w720-h720-pd>, Accessed: 8.3.2022.
https://www.inyourpocket.com/mostar/sultan-suleiman-mosque_167871v, Accessed: 8.3.2022.
<https://www.klix.ba/lifestyle/putovanja/sultan-sulejmanova-dzamija-u-blagaju-prica-o-najstarijoj-i-najvecoj-hercegovackoj-dzamiji/170829115>, Accessed: 8.3.2022.

Fig 4: The Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent mosque in Blagaj

The tekke ('tekija') at the source of the Buna river in Blagaj was built around 1520, at the beginning of the Ottoman administration in Herzegovina (Figures 5, 6). In written documents, tekke is mentioned for the first time (1664) in the Travelogue (Seyahatnama)^[9] of the Ottoman travel writer Evlija Celebi (1611-1682). Celebi states that the mufti of Mostar built a Halvetian tekke next to the cliffs of the Buna spring, where dervishes hold friendly and scientific discussions. This information probably refers to the mufti of Mostar, Zijudin Ahmed-ibn-Mustafa. He was born in Mostar, where he was later a professor and mufti for about 40 years. He distinguished himself as an excellent expert on Islamic law, and he wrote several important works^[6]. In the tekija, immediately after its construction, respect for God was manifested through the teachings of the dervish order Bekteshija, and from the 18th century (after it was restored

by the Mufti of Mostar, Zikajni Ahmed-ibn-Mustafa) through the teachings of the dervish order Halveti. The tekija was first restored in 1851 by order of Omer Pasha Latas (1806-1871), since then the ceremonies have been held according to the Kaderi dervish order. On that occasion, some elements of the 'Ottoman-Turkish Baroque' (curved lines on the roof of the entrance facade) were given to the tekke building. Today, the rites in this tekija are performed in accordance with the Naqshibendi dervish order (Figures 5,6). Next to the tekke there is a turbe in which there are two graves, which were most likely created after the passage of Evlija Celebija through Blagaj. Today, only the building of the Tekija musafirhana and turba, in which two graves are marked with wooden graves, has been preserved. There is no written information about who is buried here, but according to legend, the long-time sheikh of the mentioned tekija Acik

Pasha (Muhamed Hindija), who became the sheikh of this tekija in 1848, lies there. He pretended to be an Indian, but he was actually sent from Istanbul to spy on the work of Ali Pasha Rizvanbegović and other feudal lords in Herecegovina [7].

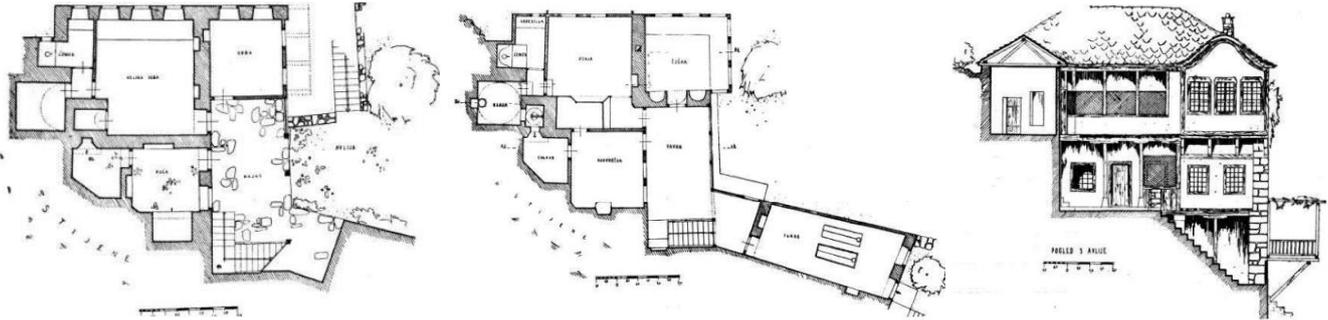
In the second grave, legend says, rests Sari-Saltuk, who mysteriously disappeared near the spring, leaving behind a mace and a saber. The tekija was built in the place where an above-average smart and clairvoyant man ('evlija', 'good man') disappeared, and his grave was placed in the turbet. This story is one of eight, in which Sari-Sultuk is mentioned in a similar way, and is related to the tradition of the Halvetian order [6].

Sari-Sultuk's grave in Blagaj is one of the eight known

Saltuk's graves throughout the former Ottoman Empire. Blagajska tekija has been damaged and rebuilt several times due to rock and bone collapse above the very source and the tekija.

At Acik Pasha's request, Omer Pasha Latas (1806-1871) ordered the first restoration of the tekke, turbet and musafirhana in 1851. Thirty years after the restoration, the tekke was demolished when a rock fell on it (Legend about the Blagaj tekke recorded by Carl Peez in 1891) [6].

The Commission for the Preservation of National Monuments of Bosnia and Herzegovina declared Tekija at the source of the Buna River in Blagaj a national monument of Bosnia and Herzegovina [10].



Source: Celic, Dz. (1953). Musafirhana Blagaj's tekke, Our Antiquities I, Sarajevo, pp. 189-193 (in Bosnian)

Fig 5: Tekke at the Buna river source in Blagaj (architectural drawings)



Source: Author (4.24.2006.)

Fig 6: Tekke at the Buna river source in Blagaj

The Velagic's complex (Velagicevina). The complex is located about 25 km southeast of Mostar. It consists of three basic residential buildings (houses) with associated stables (for riding horses), facilities for food preparation (mutvaci), storage for firewood and inner courtyards (courtyards). Each of the three house units (and thus the complex as a whole) is bordered by massive stone walls on which the 'contact points' with the environment (kanate) are visibly emphasized ^[11]. This complex is located next to the Buna River itself, about

100 meters downstream from its generous mouth source. It should be noted that there is a tekija above the spring itself, which was built in the 18th century. Considering its role in people's lives, we can also understand it as a way in which man wanted to express welcome to water (which comes out of the bowels of the Earth to its surface) and gratitude to God who gives it to people and all living creatures as a gift (Figure 7).



Source: Author (4.24.2006.)

Fig 7: The Velagic's complex (Velagicevina)

The Kardjuz-bey Bridge on the Buna river ^[12] was built (before 1570) by Zaim Hadzi Mehmed-beg, popularly known as Karadjuz-bey ^[1], the largest vakif in Herzegovina. The bridge is located at the point where the (old) road to Stolac diverges from the road Mostar-Blagaj-Bune spring, 700 meters downstream from the spring of the Buna river (Figure 8). It is assumed that this bridge was built at the site of a medieval crossing over the Buna River^[13]. The geometric-shape and engineering characteristics of this bridge are within those common for the stone bridges of the Ottoman Empire: a more or less steep profile of the bridge level, resulting from

the adaptation of the construction to the terrain and water flow, i.e. the size of the arches (vaults) of the bridge construction. This bridge has five arches resting on four piers in the river bed and two piers on the river banks. The piers of the bridge are made of finely hewn stone blocks, with a cross-section that is common for this type of bridge. The radii of the arches increase from the shore towards the middle of the bridge, symmetrically in relation to the middle of the bridge: the end arches (the first from the shore) have a span of 3.90 m, the second 4.90 m, while the middle vault has a span of 6.00 m. The total length of the bridge itself is 33.40 m, or 50

¹ Mehmed-beg Zaim Karadjuz (?-1564) is the brother of the much more famous Rustem Pasha (cca. 1500-1561), grand vizier and son-in-law of Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent (1494-1566).

m, including access ramps. The width of the walking plane of the bridge is 2.68 m, while the total width of the bridge (including the bridge) is 2.98 m. The walking surface of the bridge is treated as cobblestones. The arches of the bridge are emphasized by pulling their front arches (about 3 cm) in

relation to the plane of the walls, while the korkaluk (fence) of the bridge is a wall of hewn stone, separated by a thin cornice (a protruding row of stone blocks) from the main body of the bridge.



Source: Author (5.1.2013.)

Fig 8: The Kardjoz-bey Bridge on the Buna river

The Heroic's fountain ('Gazijska česma') in Blagaj near Mostar. The fountain is located next to the strong stone wall of the old cemetery, on the outside, on the edge of the widened sidewalk, which is used by a large number of pedestrians every day, at any time of the year. In the future, it is the road that leads to Buna spring and Tekke on the Buna river spring. Before the pedestrian approaches the fountain

heading towards the Buna river spring, he will see the silhouette of the medieval fortress-city (the city of Herceg-Stjepan Vukcic) silhouetted high against the sky. In this way, this fountain, apart from its distinct expediency, became part of a complex picture-mosaic of the life of the city of Blagaj, which we will rarely see in the world (Figure 9).



Source: Author (5.1.2013.)

Fig 9: The Heroic's fountain ('Gazijska česma') in Blagaj near Mostar

5. 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“^[4]. The emergence of a settlement (hamlet, village) or architectural-engineering structure is never accidental, but rather the result of a synergy between the natural and social environment-man^[4].

As the tekija at the Spring of the Buna River is the main

architectural and religious feature, a mass religious ceremony ('mevlud') is held there every year - commemorating the birth of the Prophet Muhammad, s.a.w.s. Just like the usual activity in tekija, this mass manifestation is basically an expression of people's gratitude for this great gift of Nature - water, as the beginning of life. This ceremony is accompanied by other forms of socio-economic life: trade, renewing friendships between people, meeting young people (Figure 10)...



Sources: <https://medzlistmostar.ba/u-uzem-krugu-vjernika-prouceni-tradicionalni-mevlud-u-blagaju/>, Accessed: 8.3.2022.
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/184309854@N02/51194971964/in/album-72157719290086335>, Accessed: 8.3.2022.
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Fig 10: Religious ceremony ('mevlud') at the tekke at the Bune Spring - commemorating the birth of the Prophet Muhammad, s.a.w.s.

Water in an attractive natural environment has generated people's lives for centuries, and as long as it was there, it will continue to happen in the future, in accordance with the social environment of the time.

The water also generated the birth of the family residential complex of the wealthy Velagić family ('Velagićevina'),

which is today a tourist destination where guests, while getting to know this complex, can enjoy traditional Bosnian cuisine.

Many modern restaurants host visitors from all over Bosnia and Herzegovina and the wider region every day, throughout the year (Figures 11, 12).



Source: Author (5.1.2013.)

Fig 11: A fish farm and one of the restaurants at Buna River spring in Blagaj



Source: Architect Haris Bradić (4.23.2006.)

Fig 12: Students of the Faculty of Architecture in Sarajevo during one of the workshops at Bune river spring in Blagaj

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