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### Water and Man: “Bjeljevine” Near Rudo

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#### Abstract

Complex „BJELJEVINE“ („EXTREMELY GENEROUS WATER“) is located in the Strgacina settlement, in the municipality of Rudo (Geographical coordinates: 43°39'07.29"N, 19°14'13.30"E, elevation: 423). It is about 12 km from Rudo, about 22 km from Gorazde, and about 75 km from Sarajevo (by air). Rudo is the seat of the municipality and is located in the far east of Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to the 2013 census, not a single resident lived in Bjeljevina, and according to the 1991 census, there were 91 residents. The complex „BJELJEVINE“ („EXTREMELY GENEROUS WATER“) is 4 km from the river Lim, i.e. the settlement of Strgačina,

where there is an elementary school, a mosque, a local office, a restaurant and several houses. According to the 2013 census, 43 people, mostly Bosniaks, lived in Strgacina. The aim of this paper is to present a locality in Bosnia and Herzegovina that is known for its wealth of water. The influences of the social environment (1992-1995 war) were extremely destructive for this area, resulting in the displacement of the population. However, the enormous 'embodied mental energy' of the people of this region enlivens this area with occasional, more or less, mass manifestations and thus maintains the continuity of life.

**Keywords:** Rudo, Bjeljevine, Sustainability

#### 1. Introduction

Complex „BJELJEVINE“ („EXTREMELY GENEROUS WATER“) is located in the Strgacina settlement, in the municipality of Rudo (Geographical coordinates: 43°39'07.29"N, 19°14'13.30"E, elevation: 423). It is about 12 km from Rudo, about 22 km from Gorazde, and about 75 km from Sarajevo (by air). Rudo is the seat of the municipality and is located in the far east of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Fig 1). According to the 2013 census, not a single resident lived in Bjeljevina, and according to the 1991 census, there were 91 residents <sup>[1, 2]</sup>. The complex „BJELJEVINE“ („EXTREMELY GENEROUS WATER“) is 4 km from the river Lim, i.e. the settlement of Strgačina, where there is an elementary school, a mosque, a local office, a restaurant and several houses. According to the 2013 census <sup>[1]</sup>, 43 people, mostly Bosniaks, lived in Strgačina. According to the census from 1981 <sup>[3]</sup>, (immediately before the construction of the hydroelectric power plant in Višegrad in 1989), 154 people lived in Strgacina.



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: 7.31.2022., left

Google Earth: Accessed: 8.1.2022., right

Fig 1: Complex „BJELJEVINE“ („EXTREMELY GENEROUS WATER“). 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 [4, 5] 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 topic of sustainability (in this paper using the example of the village of Idbar), the most suitable scientific methodology [6] 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 paper is to present a locality in Bosnia and Herzegovina that is known for its wealth of water. The influences of the social environment (1992-1995 war) were

extremely destructive for this area, resulting in the displacement of the population. However, the enormous 'embodied mental energy' of the people of this region enlivens this area with occasional, more or less, mass manifestations and thus maintains the continuity of life.

**2. Environment**

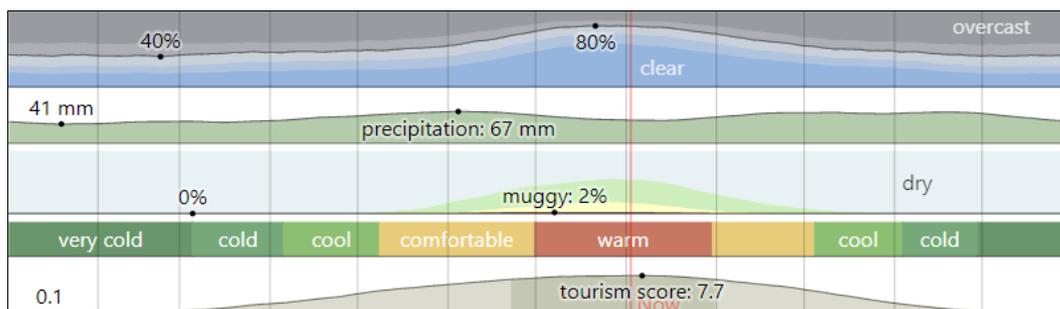
By 'environment' we mean every possibility in the space in which man can realize his existence [6].

**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 [6] ...

In Rudo, the summers are warm and mostly clear, and the winters are very cold, snowy and partly cloudy [7] (Fig 2). During the year, the temperature usually varies from -4 °C to 26 °C and is rarely below -10 °C or above 31 °C.

The topography within 3 kilometers of Rudo contains very significant variations in elevation, with a maximum elevation change of 574 meters and an average elevation of 528 meters. Within 16 kilometers it contains very significant variations in height (1171 meters). Within 80 kilometers it also contains extreme variations in height (2292 meters).

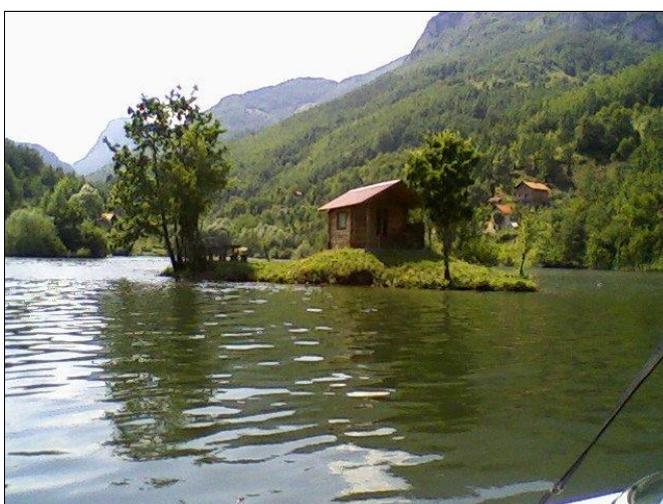


Source: <https://weatherspark.com/y/84442/Average-Weather-in-Rudo-Bosnia-&-Herzegovina-Year-Round>  
 Accessed: 8/2/2022.

**Fig 2:** Climate in Rudo Climate and Average Weather Year-Round in Rudo Bosnia & Herzegovina

The area within 3 kilometers of Rudo is covered by trees (63%), crops (20%) and grassland (10%), within 16 kilometers by trees (78%) and crops (17%), and within 80 kilometers by trees (67%) and arable land (19%).

After the construction (1989) of the 'Visegrad Hydroelectric Power Plant', a lake was created that reached Strgacina along its length upstream of the Drina river, and from Medjedja towards Rudo along the Lim river (Fig 3).





Source: <https://hr.geoview.info/bjeljevine,3271911>, Accessed: 8.2.2022, <https://mapio.net/pic/p-15591488/>, Accessed: 8.2.2022.

**Fig 3:** Lim river-lake near Strgacina

Near the Bjeljevine locality there is a colorful canyon of the Radojna river. Similar to the water source at the Bjeljevine

locality, the Radojna river occasionally dries up, only to reappear (Fig 4).



Source: Author (5.7.2011.), Source: <https://arhiv.stav.ba/pekmezijada-je-nada-da-ovdje-ima-zivota-da-idemo-dalje/>, Accessed: 8.2.2022.

**Fig 4:** Kanjon rijeke Radojne

## 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 <sup>[6]</sup>. It includes both physical structures (various material, more or less organized products of their activity) and the immaterial world that we know with the intellect (science, philosophy, religion, law, morality) through an organized system of abstract symbols (letters, signs) <sup>[6]</sup>.

The area where the „BJELJEVINE“ („EXTREMELY GENEROUS WATER“) complex is located experienced two events that had far-reaching consequences for this

region: the construction of the Višegrad Hydroelectric Power Plant (commissioned on 11.25.1989) and the war (1992- 1995). The settlement of Strgacina along the Lim river was flooded with the construction of the 'Visegrad Hydroelectric Power Plant', and the new settlement was built at a higher elevation, on the shore of Visegrad Lake. From April 21 to 23, 1979, the elementary school in Strgačina was attended by about 300 students, aged from 3rd to 8th grade <sup>[8]</sup>. The war (1992-1995) resulted in the emigration of the population from this area (mainly to Sarajevo). Many minefields remain in the area of Strgacina (Fig 5).



Source: <https://www.klix.ba/vijesti/bih/deminiranjem-lokaliteta-bjeljevine-kod-rudog-omogucen-proces-ekshumacije/191220147>  
 Accessed: 8.2.2022.

Fig 5: Demining in the Bjeljevine area

**History of the Bjeljevine locality.** Traces of the presence of people in the area of Rudy reach the Neolithic, and traces of the first settlements come from the Illyrian and Roman times, as evidenced by numerous toponyms of Illyrian and Roman origin, as well as material remains. During the time of the Roman emperors from the Flavian and Severan dynasties (1st-3rd century), the settlement in the area of Rudo or its immediate surroundings had the status of a free city<sup>[9]</sup>.

The population of Rudo municipality in the early Middle Ages is evidenced by a large number of toponyms, localities with remains of material culture, fortification ramparts and a large number of stećaks: Crkvina in Obrvena, Brijeg in Gaocici, Ravni Gaj above Plem, Bijelo Brdo on the head of the church, Strpci, Budimlija in Mramorine, Crviste above Bisevici, Omacina-Barica, Grivin, Pazalje, Strgacina and Sahdani.

In the Middle Ages, the area of Rudo was part of the state of Nemanjic, and after the death of Stefan Uros IV Dusan (1308-1355), this area was ruled by the regional lords: Vojislav Vojinovic, and then his nephew, prefect Nikola Altomanovic, whose territory stretched from Dubrovnik to Rudo. From 1373, after the defeat of Nikola Altomanovic, its territory was shared by the Bosnian ban (from 1377 king) Stjepan Tvrtko I Kotromanic (ca. 1338-1391), prince Lazar Hrebeljanovic (1329-1389) and the Balsici. Part of Polimlje (and part of the area of Rudo) then became part of the medieval Bosnian state. After the Battle of Kosovo (1389) where Prince Lazar was killed, and the death of King Tvrtko (1391), the area of Rudo came under the influence of noble families from the house of Kosaca and Pavlovici. They will rule this area until the arrival of the Ottomans, who occupied the area of Rudo by 1465<sup>[9]</sup>.

Rudo was founded in 1558 by the Bosnian sandjak-bey Mustafa Pasha Sokolovic. The road from Užice to Bosnia passed through here, so the need to build a bridge over the Lim river was felt, after which a large number of other buildings were built: an inn ('han'), a large number of shops ('ducan') on the square, two stupas with shops selling leather goods and a mill on Krupa. He wrote a foundation document ('vakufnama') about it on 10.24.1558., according to which all residents of Rudo, regardless of religion, were exempt from taxes<sup>[10]</sup>.

The Ottoman travel writer Evlija Celebi passed through this

area (1664), who noted in his Travelogues, among other things, that there are 100 houses, 50 shops and two inns ('hans') in Rudo<sup>[10]</sup>. During the 1st Serbian uprising (1804), Rudo burned Karadjordje, the leader of that uprising, after which the town slowly recovered<sup>[10]</sup>. In 1879, Rudo had 85 houses with 427 inhabitants, several shops and mills. Only 7 people were engaged in trade and commerce<sup>[10]</sup>.

Rudo achieved significant economic progress with the opening of the Sarajevo-Medjedja-Uvac and Medjedja-Vardiste narrow-gauge railways in 1906. The end of the forty-year rule of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy came after the breakthrough of the Thessaloniki Front, and from December 1, 1918, Rudo was part of the Kingdom of SHS. In the period from 1918 to 1941, the first industrial facilities were built in the Ruda region: Nanic sawmills in the area of Strgacina and Baruh in Rudo, and Rudo became a center for transporting goods and passengers to Montenegro.

From April 1941, Rudo and its inhabitants were attacked by the Ustasha authorities (NDH), who began by persecuting and liquidating prominent Serbs. On September 21, 1941, the insurgent Chetnik units expelled the Ustasha and on September 21, 1941, temporarily took over Mala Gospojina, which was soon replaced by Italian occupation forces (with minor interruptions until September 9, 1943). After the retreat from Užice and the failure of the attack on the Italians in Pljevlje, the partisan units formed the First Proletarian Brigade during their short stay in Rudo on December 21, 1941, and its formation in the post-war period will be celebrated until 1991 as the Day of the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA/YPA).

**Architectural, cultural and historical heritage of the Bjeljevine locality.** The Bjelobrdska parish has a log church dedicated to the Venerable Mother Paraskeva, built in 1935.

The second church was built in 1992 and is dedicated to the same saint. It was dedicated on October 5, 2004. The Strbacka parish has two churches. The old log cabin church in Andzici is dedicated to St. to the prophet Ilija, and was built between 1875 and 1878. The new church in Strpci is dedicated to the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and was built in 1908. Not far from the new church, a memorial ossuary was built for fallen soldiers of the First World War. According to folklore, the log cabin church in the village of Vagan dates back to the Nemanjic era (Fig 6).



**Source:** <https://www.banjaluka.com/aktuelno/crkva-brvnara-urudom-duhovna-oaza-iz-doba-nemanjica/>, Accessed: 8.2.2022.

**Fig 6:** The log cabin ('brvnara') church in the Vagan village, in the Rudo municipality

There are 9 Islamic places of worship in Rudo municipality, in the following places: Strgacina, Strmica, Omacina, Grivin, Ravno Setihovo, Sokolovici, Rudo, Mioce and Medjurjeceje. The most historically significant mosque is in the village of Sokolovici, not far from Rudo, which dates back to the time of the Mehmed Pasha Sokolovic lineage. According to tradition, he erected the vizier as a sign of gratitude to his father who accepted Islam. The mosque in Rudo was built immediately after the flood in 1897 and is one of the oldest buildings in the Rudo settlement. In the settlement of strgačina, a mosque was recently renovated (rebuilt), since the old mosque there was burned in the 1992-1995 war (Fig 7).



**Source:** <https://mapio.net/pic/p-15647499/>, Accessed: 8.2.2022.

**Fig 7:** The mosque in Strgacina on the Lim River

### 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 [6]. 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 the architectural sense, they enclose, but also include a person in the conditions of a certain environment [6].

Strgacina, the central settlement in this area, was submerged by the construction of the 'Višegrad Hydroelectric Power Plant', and the new settlement was raised above the level of the lake. During the war (1992-1995), the Bosniak population was expelled and fled. The mosque was set on fire and burned. The stone walls remain. When the material and other conditions were met, it was renovated and serves its purpose today (Fig 8).



**Source:** <https://mapio.net/pic/p-15647499/>, Accessed: 8.2.2022.

**Fig 8:** The Strgacina settlement on the Lim River

In the Strgacina settlement near Rudo, in the 'Bjeljevina' locality, there are water sources which, with their abundance and some natural phenomena in their appearance, attracted the attention of the inhabitants of eastern Bosnia and beyond to the extent that the locality became a dovište, a place where mass prayers are held, and after it and the typical folk ('teferic'). One part of this dovišt is arranged as a typical picnic area, in which the main place is occupied by a finely arranged fountain with as many as fourteen generous outflows of cold and drinking water of constant flow (Fig 9).



Source: Author (5.7.2011.)

Fig 9: The 'Bjeljevine' locality near Strgacina

The second part of the dovišta has a particularly 'consecrated' meaning, since there is a spring from which water (very abundantly) springs, but occasionally, and only 'if there is a good person next to the spring'. In fact, this temporal source works according to the principle of a physical model known in hydrology as 'tension' (Fig 10). As this spring has a special significance among the people and is valued as a 'holy place', it is specially arranged and

protected from all mechanical 'injuries'.

Wooden kiosks were built next to the protected water source where visitors (whenever they want) can rest and enjoy the rarely seen wealth of natural phenomena that captivate people and mass groups of people with their freshness to the extent that this freshness is perceived as a supernatural phenomenon and gift<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The author and his guide (Mr. Fadil Hujic) stayed in the locality of Bjeljevine (July 5, 2011) and was lucky that shortly before visiting this locality, the water 'boiled' and flowed from the source in full capacity, in the form of a powerful stream.



Source of this photo: Fadil Hujic (5.7.2011.)



Source: Author (5.7.2011.)

Fig 10: 'Bjeljevine' source and fountain in Strgacina near Rudo

Along the local road Bjeljevina-Strgacina-regional road Ustipraca-Rudo, a fountain is located on the bank of the river which, upstream from this locality, flows through the locality of Bjeljevina. The location of the fountain in the

shade of the trees and its arrangement seem, especially from a great distance, as if it were the living room of a private house, which good people gave to all passers-by to use (Fig 11).





Source: Author (5.7.2011.)

Fig 11: Hair fountain in Strgacina

The details of the fountain's design, and especially the inscription carved into the black granite slab, complete the first impression of the welcome:

HAIR PODIGAO	HAIR RAISED
RAŽANICA	RAZANICA
REŠO SEBI I SAJMI	RESO YOURSELF AND SAJMA

At first reading, the content of the inscription seems like a humorous gesture by a gentleman for whom the time of construction of the fountain, 'great truth and wisdom', 'message for future generations' is not important, but an extremely simple human message, i.e., short information about the fountain and its builder. Fully aware that the construction of the fountain is a 'good deed', its builder does it, and the content of the inscription on the fountain says just that. Other readers of this inscription will conclude that the builder of the fountain wanted to show his love for 'his Fair' in this way.

### 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“ [6]. 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 [6].

The Bjeljevine area of near the Strgacina settlement, i.e. its inhabitants, survived forced displacement from their homes and estates at the end of the 20th century (1992-1995 war). However, the 'embodied energy' that has accumulated over centuries in the being of their ancestors has shown its strength even today, with good prospects for the future as well. In the locality of Bjeljevina, prayer is still held today, in the mosque in Stragičina (prayer) and folk festivities (Fig 12).



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rTK\\_mprBdS8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rTK_mprBdS8), Accessed: 8.2.2022.

Fig 12: Folk celebration ('teferic') in the Bjeljevine locality (8/5/2021)

Since 2018, there has been a mass event called 'Pekmezijada' - the traditional preparation of a sweet made from apple and pear juice ('pekmez') and plum 'bestilj', organized by the 'Association for the return to Polimlje' and

the Mufti of Gorazde, i.e. the Majlis of the Islamic Community. In 2019, about 200 people participated in the 'Pekmezijada' (Fig 13).





Source: <https://arhiv.stav.ba/pekmezijada-je-nada-da-ovdje-ima-zivota-da-idemo-dalje/>, Accessed: 8.2.2022.

Fig 13: 'Pekmesijada' in Strgacina

Intercultural camp RUDO - STRGACINA (September 8, 2017) is a gathering place for elementary school students from Bosnia and Herzegovina (Sarajevo, Rudo, Strbac, Visegrad, Tesanj, Sije...). The first day of this gathering usually takes place in a working and fun-sports atmosphere. The participants of this camp spend the following days in various activities and excursions. In 2017, the camp was supported through the project "Strengthening the role of local communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina", which is a

joint initiative financed by the governments of Switzerland and Sweden, and implemented by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in cooperation with the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Ministry of Justice of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Ministry of Administration and Local Self-Government of the Republika Srpska, the Government of Brčko District and entity associations of municipalities and cities (Fig 14).



Source: <http://www.opstinarudo.com/2017/08/interkulturalni-kamp-rudo-strgacina/?lang=lat>, Accessed: 8.2.2022.

Fig 14: Interkulturalni kamp RUDO – STRGAČINA (8.9.2017.)

In Strgacina, since 2010, manifestations of the mass preparation of goulash, the 'Gulasijada', have been organized. As Strgacina is located on the tri-border of

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, people from these three countries gather at this event (Fig 15).



Source: <https://avaz.ba/vijesti/bih/393737/osma-gulasijada-u-strgacini-kod-rudog-gulas-s-tromede-jeo-bi-i-napoleon#&gid=1&pid=1> Accessed: 8.2.2022.

Fig 15: 'Goulasiada' in Strgacina

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