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Locality specifics of tekija-type architecture in Bosnia I Herzegovina

The location of a Bosnian tekija was initially designated according to these seven factors: house, stairs, water (still water and waterfall), cliff, well, tomb and cave. These 7 attributes are connected by the path into a picture of the cosmic order.

The alley, path, represents the base for the orientation and positioning of tekija and a man. The path is not straight and it is defined by 3 routes: entry (forward), downwards and horizontal - which corresponds with the directions of movements during a prayer. The path also demands safety for the traveller and knowledge about the Purpose, where it leads. The path towards the tekija and trough tekija has upstream direction, thus symbolizing the path toward the Beginning of all things and the road which leads from the apparent, material world to the world of unconditional. This relates to the levels or doors of Heart accessed with knowledge of the seven words which are proving the Uniqueness of God.

1. House

House, the central part of tekija, is located on the right side from the mellow upwards the slope of the path. Those who are going to tekija are walking up the steep slope.

The first stop on the way is in front of the house. Than the traveller turns to the right side and facing towards kiblah (*the point, the Kaaba in Mecca, toward which Muslims turn when praying*) and he passes trough the first door. From the doors to the courtyard the way goes down the stairs. The descending symbolizes epiphany, coming down from the world of confusion and the progression towards the Beginning (The One). The house is comprised from a courtyard and a building. The space of the house is secluded with high walls without opening for the path. A court of a tekija, as opposed to the court of a mosque is completely secluded, and the interior of the court is hidden from the outside world. Neither tekija nor its court have function of a public space. Tekija houses are completely turned inwards, separated from the commercial city centre.

All known Bosnian tekijas contain buildings of simple shapes and common architectural elements; built with the materials from their immediate natural surroundings, and that is mostly wood, stone and soil. Both tekijas, tekija on Buna near Mostar and Isa-beg's tekija in Sarajevo, are L-shaped, which is also an attribute of the layout of the Mevlevian tekija in Konja. Apparent total simplicity of the architectural expression of the most valuable buildings of the Bosnian tekijas are leading towards exploring the interior, which contains all the beauty of its purpose and meaning. Orientation of each room, proportions and numerous details expressing their symbolism like wall decorations, shapes of the openings, the relations of light and darkness, connection of floors and ceilings, interaction of outer space and house, presence of colours, reveal the builder, teacher-sheikh, who remembers the Creator trough building the house and its positioning on the specific place recognizable with inner knowledge.

2. Stairway

The stairway as an independent element is appearing twice, suggesting descending. First time it is descending from outer public space of the street to the *avlija* (court of the tekija); the second time it is descending from the *avlija* to the river. Both tekijas (tekija on Buna near Mostar and Isa-beg's tekija in Sarajevo) are placed by the river and are

facing it. The descending towards the river represents the fall into the ephemeral and ever changing world. After that passage, after the cleansing, there is a possibility for climbing. Within descending down the stairway lays the drama of rising.

3. Water

The river lays vertical on the direction of Kiblah, thus the horizontal orientation of the *tekija* is bridging the river. Water of the river represents the continuity of the process of creation and the constant change and renewal. The symbolism of the water flow is contained within the thoughts of Heraclites and Plato on the same river and always different content of water for everyone. On Miljacka as well as on Buna rivers, *dervishes* performed ritual washing, during which ritual the river represented also an obstacle on the way towards the centre of the world before the cleansing, which can be compared with symbolism of *shadrvan* (*water fountain*) within a mosque complex. At the same time the rivers, as "the different water for everyone who enters it", represent the temporary and ever changing – human body. Sometimes there are peaceful rivers where the house and *tekija* reflect, representing the interaction of everything within immeasurable deepness of the Prophecy. On other times, muddy and forceful water, when the clouds are mixing with the foam, when the particles of the deepest wisdom are ascending into the fog of knowledge, when the unstoppable flow of time reflects within the constant shape. In Bosnian *tekijas*, the rivers are populated with numerous species of fish, animals and plants. The fishing was forbidden.

4. Cliff

A cliff is the integral part of a Bosnian *tekija*. It usually towers almost horizontally over the house, symbolizing interaction of human construction with the power of the Eternal. The house is leaning on the rock and partly is cut in it. The rock is covering the house as an umbrella, and thus reinforcing the symbolism of the roof of the world. The river and the rock are a pair that is expressing their self and reflecting each other in their contrast: the firmness and everlasting as opposed to constant flow; the peacefulness as opposed to instability, the quiet opposing the noise. The most unusual and cultivated plants such as lilacs (*Jorgovan*) and Jasmin, figs and pomegranate grow out of the rocks of Bosnian *Tekija*. Next to jasmine and lilacs (*jorgovan*) growing from the rocks of Isa-beg's *tekija*, are numerous different kinds of trees, bushes and herbs and many of those can not be found in any other place. Within the rock of *tekija* on Buna many rear species of birds found their shelter, the eagle is just one of them, representing how the life is integrated with non-living things.

5. Well

The fifth unit is symbolizing the force of the fulfilment. As *Musa* (Moses) forced the water out from the desert rock, in the Bosnian *tekijas* the water is coming out of rocks. The access to the spring of Buna is possible if the body is completely immersed into water; the access to the water on the well Ebu-Hajat in Isa-beg' *tekija* is possible only if the body is lowered on the *sedzda* (*a position of the body during the islamic praying ritual when the body is leaned with the forehead on the floor, touching the floor on seven points*), and leaning on the seven points, each of those points is witnessing the Uniqueness of God. The well is symbolizing the possibilities, providing awareness, since it is the well of the inner life and the reflection of the soul. When it is immersed into water, the confirmation on the wholeness is repeated, on the sum and inclusion of all outer and inner. When the body is lowered on *sedzda*, it is leaning on the seven points representing seven keys for seven levels of meaning of the Whole, connecting to seven parts of the witnessing the God Uniqueness.

6. The tomb

The graves of *Sufi* leaders are placed in the *tekija*, sometimes in the part of the house (Blagaj), and it confirms the changing states and the duration of life. The death is the final return to the Source (Beginning). That is the way the grave symbolizes the full arousal. The graves are places through which the knowledge of new processes is accessed. The tombs of *Sufis* are the places of joy, since they are reminder on the return to the One, to the final destination and the meaning of life.

7. The Cave

The caves in the cliff next to the *tekija* on Buna and the cave on *Seihs korija* in Isa-beg's *tekija*, are the seventh door. The retrieval into the solitary cave represents repetition of the Prophets habit and remembering the beginning of the Announcement. The symbol of the light that was announced in the darkness of the cave in the structure of the Bosnian *tekijas* gives the meaning of the main mihrab (the place that indicates the position of Kiblah in the mosque) of the *tekija* to the cave. Those are the deepest doors behind which a new circle of existence begins. That is the door in front of which the path becomes utterly vertical and ascending. That is the place where deepness and height meet. It is the lowest and the deepest point of the *tekija* where the highest position can be attained. It is a picture of the heart, the place of curves where the world of apparent can be left, and the goal, the capacity for objective understanding can be reached.