

ONE OF LJUBLJANA`S SIMBOLS:”DRAGON BRIDGE”

Have you ever wondered if the bridge is originally called the “Zmajski most” Dragon Bridge, what are the dragons made of, how come there are dragons on it, ...Well i will tell you something about it.

German poet Goethe believed that “a beautiful bridge is a symphony” and Ivo Andriæ, Nobel prize winner realised that bridges are logically placed where the most human needs intersect. He also wrote that they are more important than houses and brighter than churches

Lj. has a lot of bridges, each special in its own way. We have first bridge in Eu., that has threes on it. That is in Trnovo. The most imposing is the bridge in the heart of the city called “Tromostovje” meaning 3 Bridges, the work of famous Slovene architect Jože Pleènik. Beside the bridge stands his covered market place. The several-hundred-meter long building is interrupted in only one place, and there stands Zmajski most.

People of Lj. know the Dragon Bridge very well. We are often crossing it on foot rushing to the central Lj market or when we want to climb nearby Castle Hill. It is also well known to tourists because when they are sightseeing the old city, they are bound to cross it.

The bridge is also one of the city`s most important traffic connections. The eye of even the most casual observer will stop for a moment on the 4 dragons guarding the entrances to the bridge. Because the dragon appears in the lj coat of arms, the view of Zmajski most is a popular motif on the postcards, that tourists send home.

We can learn the main technical facts about the bridge from Gorazd Humar`s book who has studied some of Slovenia`s most famous bridges.

Everybody calls the bridge “Zmajski most”, but its true official name is completely different. The real name for it is”Jubilejni most cesarja Frana Josipa 1.” the Jubilee Bridge of Emperor Francis Joseph 1.st, because it was ment to have been constructed in 1888 in honour of the 40.th anniversary of the Emperor`s reign. This information and the name appear on a large bronze plaque on the facade of the bridge.

They wanted to built the bridge in 1888, but many things happened that were decisive for the bridge. First Lj was struck in 1895 by destructive earthquake, then the emperor himself visited Lj and guaranteed considerable help. But most significant of all, the position of mayor was assumed by Ivan Hribar, a young counsellor. Today he holds the reputation of the most distinguished Lj mayor of all times.

Almost everyone who has ever seen the bridge could swear that the dragons are cast in bronze, but who thinks so is wrong. The bridge was designed after the latest

architectural fashion in that time. In accordance with the new stile, the bridge was supposed to be richly decorated with twigs and leafs made from bronze. The entrances the bridge should be adorned with lions; the idea to use dragons came later. Instead of leaves they made relief decorations, while the lions were replaced by dragons, who were made from copper sheets and filled with sand
But Zmajski most is for me still just a bridge and nothing else.