

THE OLD BRIDGE WILL EMERGE FOR THE ONE WHO LOVE HIM

Tuesday, 9th novembre, the Old Bridge was destroyed, that news like a flash struck the east part of the town.

On today day, exactly six years ago, at 10 o'clock and 16 minutes, granates have destroyed the Old Bridge. Killed by barbarian, who were affraid of the beauty, the most beautiful and sacred object in Mostar was destroyed and throw into the cold waves of Neretva. As a poet Enes Kišević once said "how long do the savages, who treaded and throw in the abyss the pride of Mostar, need time to erase their disgrace?"

The bridge of unrealistic beauty

The Old Bridge has been kissing, for 427 years, the smargdarian beauty Neretva and with its white sides it has been combining the banks and people. The Old Bridge has always been a young man, whome crossed people, who came from all sides of the world. The bridge was an individua and with its beauty, the greatest travell writter from 17 century Evlija Čelebija, was delighted. He left a precious record in his travel back about the stone bridge, he wrote that he had to that day travelled through sixteen empires, but he never had seen such a high bridge.

The bridge was building the famous architect Hayrudin, who was the student of the more famous architect Sinan. The construction began at 1557 year and lasted for exactly nine years. When the construction was finished the architect Hayrudin had neither the braveness nor the patience top watch the remove of ferries. He run away out of the town,waited for the "newsman" from whose news depended if he will be shorten for a head or if he will make a fortune and become famous. When the ferries were removed, over Neretva appeared a stoned half moon of magnificant and unreal beauty. The bridge was wide 4,5m, high 20, and the stoned arch was long lesser than 30m. From the sides of the bridge were towers Helebija, which were used as a store and Tara was once used as a prison. It's built of stone called "tenelija", which is taken out of the stone-place "Mukaša" near Ortiješ and it is the only bridge in Europa which is built with this kind of stone.

The symbol of one Mostar

According to a legend in construction of the bridge goats hair and egg's shell have also been used, but the lead, in fluid condition has been poured between stoned blockes. The Old Bridge was hollowed and that confirms the information that along the whole length of the arch were passing two tunnels, which enabled transfer of the water. That water was absorbed by the stone "tenelija".

Which the beginning of the war as a target of the extremists was the biggest symbol of the town. The brave people of Mostar were traying to save the bridge of the certain death. Brave jumpers like Jadranko - Alka Finka, Nedžad-Faše Humačkić and Fadil Karić were killed defending the bridge.

A year later, the Old Bridge was again the target of fashists, the bridge, the only symbol of the one Mostar. This bridge they wanted to destroy for eternity.

The granates were constantly falling down on the bridge, on the 8th novembre, began with arranging the death of the Bridge. They have sent over 60 granates on the bridge. Tomorrow, after the thirth granate, Mostar and its people got silent.

On Tuesday, on 9th novembre, exactly at 10 o'clock and 16 minutes, the Old Bridge was destroyed, the news about his destruction, with the speed of a flash, struck the east part of the town. Not looking back on the danger people came to see the place where from the Old Bridge went to history.

Balić: the sadest news in life

Emir Balić is the best jumper of the Old Bridge all times. Thirteen times he has been winning the first places in traditional jumping. He had heard about destruction of the bridge in Zagreb.

- With nearly 14 I have jumped for the first time. During my life the Old Bridge was my best friend. I have never assumed that I'm going to live more than the Old Bridge. That was the saddest news in my life, but I know that the bridge isn't dead. He is going to live in front of my eyes for eternity, Emir Balić.

The reconstruction in 3 phases

A year after the deconstruction the idea about reconstruction of the Old Bridge was born. Safet Oručević started initiative, that the reconstruction of the bridge becomes a project of "international commission of experts for its reconstruction".

The reconstruction of the bridge will be the biggest reconstruction project of 20th century. It will be built with the same technic, which was used in 1566.

Project of the reconstruction is being divided in three phases: building up the bridge and towers, reconstruction of the corded area near the bridge, as well as the part by the bridge. The reconstruction of the Old Bridge and the old core of the town will be finished at the 2004.

- Since the bridge's formation it has combined east and west. Its reconstruction should combine three folk in BiH, told Zijad Demirović director of foundation of nature and culture - historical inheritance of the town Mostar.

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(Translator MARSELA ROGA) 09/11/1999

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