



ORNETA'S COAT OF ARMS

## **LEGEND OF THE DRAGON**

No one knows exactly when the occurrences that are mentioned in the legend about the dragon took place. Maybe the dragon never existed or someone else was using this symbol or someone else in this region, not the dragon, was bloodthirsty, terrifying and cruel to people and animals. However, there must have been a reason for rumours about the existence of the belching fire dragon which people fought with in Orneta just like in Cracow or other cities in Poland.

That is why we assume that there was the dragon in Orneta- cruel and dangerous which was killed and introduced as an element of a crest of the town.

The dragon lived in a huge cave hidden deep under the ground in the place where a monumental town hall is now situated. The way out of the cave led to the direction of St. John's Church and its zigzag broad corridor was going deep into the church's basements. Remains of this corridor, although severely damaged and unavailable, exist until today.

Orneta's dragon, commonly called "a monster", was supposedly extremely brutal and greedy. According to the chronicles (Fr. Buhholtz – „Vonnditt”), pigs frequently were its victim, but he also ate people, women, children, elderly people and famous knights who stumbled with armour in their hands. Every day his mouth was dripping with blood. Surprised people, full-grown girls, fat sheep were disappearing in his huge mouth every day and every hour. The existence of this terrible glutton was extremely arduous not only for Orneta's inhabitants, but also all people in the region. The dragon was not choosing or checking anyone- it ate everything he could catch with his sharp claws or enormous tusks. It was not surprising that the dragon was a fright even for many the most courageous people, because the monster had no mercy. When people got enough of suffering and fear, some brave inhabitants started inexorable battle with the dragon. In the end, everyone was fighting against this uncommon and dangerous beast. People were trying to win this battle by all means, using all strange resources. They tried to burn it, poison it, sink it, cover it with mud and stones. Not only a group of mortal men and inhabitants but also excellent knights were fighting in a pointless battle. Every time it resulted in no effect and deaths of brave people who tried fighting against the dragon.

Everything has its ending and the dragon's life had to end too. Finally, when nobody couldn't beat the beast which was becoming more and more cruel, an unknown knight on a horse with an enormous lance in his hand came to Ormeta. From conversations of terrified people he found out that there was a dragon which and hurt inhabitants and devastated the area and that there was no power to stop him. Without hesitation the knight wore his armour, saddled up his horse and went to fight against the beast.

When they were standing face to face, people did not dare to say a word. The dragon showed his head and was opening its terrifying fire- belching mouth. It was staring at the brave man on a horse with its fiery eyes so intensively that people were shivering with fear. They were standing there for a long time, ready for deadly struggle- the unknown knight and the dragon. People who watched it from the concealment had an impression that none of them would start, that the fight would not take place, that the knight would back out; that would be terrible. It was not about an exciting spectacle but about gaining piece. The people were standing there, wishing the knight won the fight.

When people were focusing on the battle, the dragon roused and rapidly attacked the knight. However, the knight wasn't surprised. He immediately took his long lance and stabbed the dragon so accurately that it horribly yelled, rapidly tucked its tail, pulled up and fell down on the ground. Its enormous body was trembling in convulsions for a while. People still could not believed what happened there and were coming closer to the body with fear. Death of that unrivalled blood drinking giant was an extremely important event for the inhabitants of the town and region. It was not surprising that they gathered together in a great crowd to admire dragon's size as well as the bravery of the knight. It was hard to believe how an individual was capable of killing that creature by one stroke which had been impossible for all great knights. The knight silently left the crowd and headed in an unknown direction. When people realised they should search for the knight to repay him for this great favour, he was nowhere to be found.

There are some suppositions that it was commonly admired knight- George who rescued hundreds of people and animals from destruction. Is it true? I don't know. I was not there and believe me- I did not see anything.