

## **The Bridge as a Witness to life, Comrade to people and an Essential piece of a city**

**Hulya Sonmez Schaap**  
**Independent**

### **Abstract**

Bridges can have meaning for people beyond their basic functions. These range from saving the life of a person standing on it during flood, being a graveyard for an engineer murdered by angry ferry owners or an artwork printed on souvenirs. Sometimes connecting people and things they need, while separating on other occasions.

This paper collects some selected stories of bridges and their role in people's lives covering the historical timeline of Anatolian lands and modern day Turkey. Engineering facts of bridges are brought together with folk songs, poetry, literature and movies about these bridges.

When Croesus asked the Oracle of Delphi for advice on crossing the Halys river with a bridge, his misinterpretation led him to lose his Empire. That spot is now home to one of the oldest stone bridges, Cesnigir.

Malabadi bridge has been connecting communities and two lovers as we learn from a famous song. The chambers on either side of its world record holding arch have been home for fishers, singers and engineers.

Modern day stories about bridges are not as romantic as the old times. One of the most formidable rivers in Turkey, the Eupharates (Firat) is also named in laments for the people who lost their lives in the river. A movie, titled "Bridge", tells the story of an engineer who lost his sick mother in Firat and dedicated his life to bridging it.

That movie "Bridge" was to be entered in an international film festival. But instead, a movie with the title "Bride" was sent by mistake. In Turkey brides have further connections with bridges, there is a tradition that a bride and her entourage should cross a bridge, stand in the middle and throw an apple into the water. This tradition and a famous folk song of it still survive in Turkey.