

**Comments on Dating the Public Ottoman Baths on Bulgarian Lands
(15th–19th C.)**
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(Summary)

It is a difficult task to precisely date the Ottoman public baths. This is due to the fact that most of them do not have building inscriptions. Owing to this reason the dating of the baths in our country was determined mainly by researchers on the basis of architectural and decorative style features of the baths. Or, in other words, the dating is to a great degree approximate within the frames of a century.

There are two baths without inscriptions that require a special comment on their dating. One is Deli hamam in Lovech, and the other is the old bath in Haskovo.

The author's research proves that the now existing Deli hamam in Lovech, mentioned by Evliya Chelebi in the middle of the 17th century as a vaqf of Arab mosque in Galata (Istanbul), is built most probably in the second half of the 16th century.

The conclusions concerning the old bath in Haskovo are two: firstly, for the time present there is no evidence supporting M. Kiel's argument that there was a public Ottoman bath in Haskovo in the end of the 14th century; and there is no evidence that the bath mentioned by Evliya Chelebi is the same one of which M. Kiel argues that it was built in the end of the 14th century and that it was the most ancient Ottoman bath on Bulgarian soil; and secondly, in the 1960s in Haskovo a bath built in the late 19th century has been demolished but not a bath from the 14th century as some Bulgarian scholars have argued until recently.

In conclusion it is stated that the determining of the date of a building is one of the most important component characteristics of cultural and historical profiles of monuments of architecture. The comments on two Ottoman public baths on Bulgarian lands show how difficult is the task to determine their dates when there are no building inscriptions. However, sometimes it is possible to do this on circumstantial evidence or hypothetically. But in other cases the date could be determined only within very broad temporal limits because of the lack of certain evidence of the actual time of their building. Such is the case, for example, of the dating of the old bath in Haskovo, as the time of its building could be from the late 14th century and before the middle of the 17th century if the bath mentioned by Evliya Chelebi is the same one that was demolished in the late 19th century.