

## **The Graffiti from Imaret Mosque in Plovdiv (Critical Comment)**

*Lyubomir Mikov*

(Summary)

The subject of my critical comment is the research of the archaeologist Nikolai Ovcharov devoted to the already non-existing graffiti in the Imaret mosque in Plovdiv (built in 1444–1445). He has documented, described and analyzed 88 graffiti images. They were further represented in an album in the appendix. I would suggest that the documentation and the publishing of the graffiti are among Ovcharov's most prominent contributions.

At the same time, he believes that these graffiti date back from the second half of the 15th century which I find rather disputable. Debatable is also the definite identification of the graffiti pieces, which does not take into consideration the extremely reduced nature of the forms and the nature of the images – utterly generalized, rather conventional, quite unclear and sometimes even unfinished.

In the focus of his attention are the graffiti depicting swimming vessels but they are compared only with the non-Ottoman (West European) ship-models. At the same time, in 15th–16th century the Ottoman fleet was a powerful and prominent factor in the Mediterranean. Thus, I believe that images of swimming vessels in the Imaret mosque actually reflect patterns of the Ottoman fleet.

The most important questions related to the mosque graffiti are questions about their emergence and preservation until 1980s. I would also suggest that their creators most probably were people with mental disorders.

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Lyubomir Mikov  
lubo\_mikov@abv.bg