

= Jacob Svetoslav =

Jacob Svetoslav (Bulgarian : ????? ????????? , Yakov Svetoslav) (ca . 1210s / 1220s ? 1275 or 1276 / 1277) was a prominent 13th @-@ century Bulgarian noble (bolyarin) of princely Russian origin . Bestowed the title of despot , Jacob Svetoslav was the ruler of a widely autonomous domain of the Second Bulgarian Empire most likely located around Sofia . Seeking further independence and claiming the title of Emperor of Bulgaria , he twice changed allegiance from Bulgaria to the Kingdom of Hungary and vice versa , and the Hungarians recognized his Bulgarian royal rank as their vassal and ruler of Vidin (medieval Bdin) .

= = Bulgarian despot = =

Jacob Svetoslav 's exact origin is not clear , though he is known to have been either a Russian noble himself or the son of one . Jacob or his father most likely arrived in Bulgaria with the wave of Russians fleeing the Mongol invasion of Rus ' in the first half of the 13th century . Historian Plamen Pavlov theorizes that Jacob Svetoslav was a descendant of the princes (knyaze) of Kievan Rus ' , and estimates his birth date as being in the 1210s or 1220s . In the late 1250s , Jacob Svetoslav was already an influential noble . He married a daughter of Theodore II Laskaris from his marriage with Tsar Ivan Asen II 's daughter Elena . By 1261 , he had become a despot , a high @-@ ranking noble in the Bulgarian hierarchy . The title was awarded to him probably by his own suzerain , the ruler of Bulgaria , rather than a Byzantine emperor , possibly Constantine Tih . Jacob Svetoslav was close to the Bulgarian court and pledged loyalty to Constantine . Thus , the tsar made him the ruler of a domain usually considered to have been south of the Vidin region in the west of the Bulgarian Empire . Byzantine sources indicate his possessions lay " near Haemus " , thus close to Sofia , between the Hungarian possessions to the north and Macedonia to the south .

In 1261 , he commanded the Bulgarian forces in a war against Hungary near Severin (western Wallachia) , and in 1262 he possibly fought against Byzantium , as a Byzantine army invaded his lands in the following year during an anti @-@ Bulgarian campaign . Jacob Svetoslav 's continuing ties to his Russian homeland are evidenced by his request to the Bulgarian patriarch . Jacob requested the making of a copy of the Nomocanon which was then sent to Cyril III , the Metropolitan of Kiev . It was supplemented by a letter from Jacob in which the noble calls the metropolitan " the bishop of the entire Russian land ... of my ancestors " . The copy finishes with a passage in which Jacob is called a " Bulgarian despot " . He also minted his own coins bearing the imperfect images of Saint Demetrius of Thessaloniki or Jacob himself , dressed as a warrior wearing a helmet and holding a sword .

= = Hungarian and Bulgarian ruler of Vidin = =

In 1263 , the situation in Bulgaria was far from stable , as Constantine was facing both the threat of his predecessor Mitso Asen 's throne ambitions and a large @-@ scale Byzantine invasion . Because Constantine was unable to assist Jacob against the advancing Byzantines , Jacob sought aid from his northern neighbour , Hungarian king Stephen V. The Hungarians drove the Byzantines out of Jacob 's domain and themselves invaded Byzantine @-@ controlled territories . Rescued from the Byzantine threat , Jacob Svetoslav submitted to Hungarian suzerainty . Stephen V placed him as the ruler of the Vidin province on the Danube River , previously governed for Hungary by the then @-@ deceased Rostislav Mikhailovich , and allowed him to retain his lands to the south . Had it not been for the appointment of Jacob Svetoslav as a Hungarian vassal at Vidin , Bulgaria would have re @-@ established control over the city in 1263 .

In 1264 , however , Hungary was precipitated into another civil war between Stephen V and his father Béla IV . Fearing Bulgarian retribution and lack of Hungarian support should Béla IV come out victorious , in 1265 Jacob Svetoslav changed allegiance to Bulgaria and acknowledged the authority of Constantine Tih . The two crossed the Danube in 1265 and raided the Hungarian fortresses north of the river . By the spring of 1266 , however , Stephen V had established himself as the sole ruler of

Hungary , and on 23 June 1266 , conquered Vidin back from Jacob after a brief siege . Two waves of Hungarian raids proceeded to devastate the Vidin province and enter the possessions of Constantine . In spite of Bulgarian resistance , the Hungarians subjugated a number of cities including Pleven . Jacob Svetoslav 's previous defection to Bulgarian suzerainty notwithstanding , the Hungarians restored him as the puppet ruler of the Vidin region . In 1266 , he was even referred to as " Tsar of the Bulgarians " (imperator Bulgarorum) in Hungarian sources , possibly to encourage a rivalry between Constantine and Jacob Svetoslav for the Bulgarian throne or simply to satisfy Jacob 's ambitions .

= = Final submission to Bulgaria and death = =

The death of Stephen V in 1272 meant that he was succeeded by his infant son Ladislaus IV , with the widowed consort and mother of the boy , Elizabeth , as his regent . At the time , Jacob Svetoslav still held Vidin as a Hungarian vassal . Possibly in 1273 , Hungarian rule in Brani?evo , west of Jacob 's domain , was put to an end by two Cuman ? Bulgarian nobles , Darman and Kudelin . Cut off from his Hungarian suzerains and facing the menace of a Bulgarian attack from the east , Jacob Svetoslav once again submitted to Bulgarian rule . He arrived in the capital Tarnovo to negotiate his submission with Constantine 's consort Maria Palaiologina Kantakouzene , who was the dominant figure in the empire at the time due to the Tsar 's paralysis . There , Jacob was formally adopted by the much younger Maria as her second son , after the infant heir Michael Asen II . This adoption solidified Jacob 's ties to the court and meant that he could safely retain his autonomous domain as a Bulgarian vassal . He also harboured hopes to ascend to the throne by ousting Michael when Constantine died . Suspicious of these disloyal intentions of Jacob 's , Constantine 's consort Maria is thought to have poisoned him , and he died in 1275 or 1276 / 1777 , shortly before the Uprising of Ivaylo .

While the fate of the city of Vidin itself is unclear , at least part of Jacob 's possessions were certainly restored to direct Bulgarian rule in the wake of his death . One such territory was the Svrljig region lying southwest of Vidin , which in 1278 was documented as belonging to Bulgaria .