

= Aldimir =

Aldimir (Bulgarian : ???????) or Eltimir (???????) (fl . 1280 ? 1305) was a Bulgarian noble of the 13th ? 14th century . A member of the Terter dynasty and a younger brother of Tsar George I Terter , Aldimir was an influential local ruler as the despot of Kran . Aldimir rose to that position under his brother George , though as Smilets assumed the throne he was forced into exile . At the turn of the 14th century , Aldimir returned to Bulgaria as an ally of the regent widowed consort Smiltsena . He did not oppose the accession of his nephew Theodore Svetoslav and even assisted him in ousting his contenders . However , he was promptly eliminated by Theodore Svetoslav when he betrayed him to ally with the Byzantines .

= = Under George I and Smiltsena = =

Just like his brother George , Aldimir was of Cuman origin . Bulgarian historian Plamen Pavlov is of the opinion that Aldimir and George 's ancestors had sought refuge in Bulgaria after 1241 , when they left the Kingdom of Hungary amidst sedition . The brothers must have originated from the Cuman royal dynasty Terteroba , and the ruler Köten was probably their relative or even direct ancestor . Pavlov also interprets Aldimir 's name as originating from the Cuman @-@ language expression for " heated iron " .

Aldimir rose in importance with the accession of his older brother George (r . 1280 ? 1292) to the Bulgarian throne in 1280 . He must have been conferred the high noble title of despot during George 's reign , and American historian John Fine believes Aldimir was granted his appanage at that time . Pavlov , however , conjectures that Aldimir 's domain dates to 1298 , long after George 's reign .

Unlike the neighbouring principality of Smilets at Kopsis , Aldimir remained loyal to the Bulgarian government and ensured that his domain retained its ties to the capital Tarnovo . Fine describes Aldimir 's lands as spanning the region from modern Sliven in the east to Kazanlak or Karlovo in the west , just south of the Balkan Mountains . His capital was the fortress of Kran in the Rose Valley .

After George 's abdication in 1292 , Aldimir had to flee into exile . He may have followed his brother as a refugee in the Byzantine Empire , though he certainly settled in the Golden Horde not long thereafter . Perhaps with Tatar approval , Aldimir returned to Bulgaria in 1298 , after the reign of Smilets (r . 1292 ? 1298) was over and the empire was in the hands of the child Tsar Ivan II and his mother , the widow of Smilets tentatively known as Smiltsena . Aldimir pledged his loyalty to Smiltsena , who either granted him the domain south of the Balkan Mountains or restored him to his former appanage . To consolidate that union , Aldimir married Smiltsena 's daughter , the princess Maria , possibly in late 1298 .

With Aldimir 's appointment as despot of Kran , Smiltsena ensured that his lands were better protected from Smilets ' brothers Radoslav and Voysil who , as émigrés in Byzantium , held aspirations for the Bulgarian throne or at least their former domains . During Smiltsena 's regency , Aldimir was one of the most influential people in Bulgaria ; indeed , Byzantine statesman Theodore Metochites refers to the " Scythian [i.e. Cuman] venturer " , as he calls Aldimir , as the queen 's right @-@ hand man . Aldimir 's leading position leaves little doubt that he was involved in the fruitless anti @-@ Byzantine negotiations between Bulgaria and Serbia in 1299 . Pavlov even goes as far as to suggest that the proposed anti @-@ Byzantine union was the brainchild of Aldimir .

= = Under Theodore Svetoslav = =

In 1299 , George 's son and Aldimir 's nephew Theodore Svetoslav (r . 1300 ? 1322) , the legitimate successor to the Bulgarian throne , invaded Bulgaria along with Tatar troops . The news of that invasion was enough to force Smiltsena and Ivan to flee to the despotate of Kran even before Theodore Svetoslav 's troops had reached the capital . Aldimir gave refuge to Smiltsena and Ivan , though he was clearly not opposed to his newly crowned nephew . In 1300 , Smilets ' brother sebastokrator Radoslav headed a Byzantine @-@ supported campaign against Aldimir en route to the capital . However , the attack had disastrous consequences to Radoslav . He was captured by

Aldimir , blinded and forced back to Thessaloniki , while his Byzantine generals were sent as captives to Theodore Svetoslav . With this act , Aldimir pledged his allegiance to Theodore Svetoslav , who rewarded him with an extension to his appanage . The despotate of Kran was enlarged to the east to include the fortresses of Yambol and Lardea near today 's Karnobat .

While Aldimir was nominally loyal to Theodore Svetoslav , the presence of Smiltsena and Ivan at his court would have been seen by the Bulgarian emperor as a threat . In addition , Aldimir perhaps harboured a desire to accede to the throne himself . After Theodore Svetoslav 's victory over Byzantium at Skafida in 1304 , the Byzantines approached Aldimir with a proposal for an anti @-@ Bulgarian alliance . Aldimir initially remained adamant and was hostile to the Byzantine forces which entered his domain in 1305 . However , by the end of that year Aldimir had switched sides to the Byzantines , as Theodore Svetoslav took back the fortresses that he had granted to Aldimir . Shortly thereafter , Theodore Svetoslav restored his direct power over Kran by reconquering and annexing the appanage .

Aldimir may have been murdered during this campaign , as no activity of his is mentioned in later sources . His widow Maria and his son Ivan Dragushin managed to escape to Serbia , where Maria 's sister , Theodora , was married to the prince Stephen De?anski . Having become a Serbian subject , Ivan Dragushin was installed by his first cousin King Stephen Du?an as a local ruler in the region of Macedonia . Donor 's portraits of Maria and Ivan Dragushin exist in the Polo?ko Monastery near Kavadarci , where Ivan Dragushin was buried before 1340 .