

= Isbul =

Isbul (Bulgarian : ?????) (fl . 820s ? 830s) was the kavhan , or first minister , of the First Bulgarian Empire during the reigns of Omurtag , Malamir and Presian I. Appointed to the kavhan office under Omurtag , Isbul was a regent or co @-@ ruler of the underage Malamir and his successor Presian .

Under Malamir and Presian , Isbul headed Bulgaria 's successful campaigns against the Byzantines in southern Thrace and Macedonia , which led to a significant territorial expansion of the Bulgarian realm . As a co @-@ ruler of Malamir , Isbul also financed the construction of a water conduit in the capital Pliska . As second @-@ in @-@ command , Isbul held enormous power and wealth , and was unusually often mentioned beside the name of the ruler in inscriptions . Due to his merits , Isbul has been described as an architect of medieval Bulgarian statehood by historians .

= = Biography = =

The office of the kavhan was a hereditary title in the First Bulgarian Empire , monopolised by the members of the tentatively known " Kavhan family " . In order to accede to that position , Isbul must have belonged to the Kavhan family , which is indirectly evidenced by his Bulgar name . Historian Plamen Pavlov theorises that Isbul may have begun his career under the ruler Krum (r . 803 ? 814) , and by the time of Krum 's son Omurtag (r . 815 ? 831) , Isbul was already an influential noble . As he is referred to as a kavhan and regent of the next ruler , Malamir (r . 831 ? 836) , it is conjectured that he had been appointed to the office at some point during Omurtag 's rule .

The earliest record of Isbul is the stone epigraph known as the Malamir Chronicle , which states that Malamir " ruled together with kavhan Isbul " . Malamir was the youngest son of Omurtag and must have been considered too young to rule by himself , so that a regent had to be appointed . Omurtag specified Malamir as his heir because his eldest son , Enravota , was a Christian . The Byzantines hoped to take advantage of Bulgaria 's instability at the time , caused by the presence of the underage Malamir on the throne , and broke the long @-@ lasting peace established with the Byzantine ? Bulgarian Treaty of 815 , which they had initially reaffirmed upon Malamir 's accession . In 836 , Isbul was in charge of the Bulgarian forces which repulsed the Byzantine invasion and proceeded to raid into Byzantine territory .

As part of this campaign , Isbul and Malamir captured the Thracian fortresses of Probaton (near Adrianople , modern Edirne) and Bourdizon (modern Babaeski) . After conquering these two fortresses , the Bulgarian troops reached Philippopolis (now Plovdiv) . As the defence forces of the city had fled , Isbul and Malamir entered negotiations with the population in order to persuade them to cede the fortress . Pavlov is of the opinion that the war ended with a continuation of the peace of 815 . He believes that Byzantine Emperor Theophilos (r . 829 ? 842) was forced to make concessions to Bulgaria , which may have included the incorporation of Philippopolis and its close surroundings into the Bulgarian Empire .

During his time as co @-@ ruler and kavhan of Malamir , Isbul financed the construction of a water conduit (aqueduct) or fountain in Pliska , which he donated to Malamir . That construction was the occasion for a great feast , which the ruler organised , and for gifts to the nobility , all of it testifying to Isbul 's affluence . In the source about the construction , Isbul is hailed alongside Malamir : " May God let the God @-@ appointed ruler live a hundred years together with the kavhan Isbul " . Normally , such blessings were only directed at the ruler , and this is the only case from the First Bulgarian Empire which references another person . The inscription also mentions Isbul 's old age at the time .

After the surprise death of Malamir in 836 , the Bulgarian throne passed to Presian I (836 ? 852) , who too was likely underage . As evidenced by the Presian Inscription from Philippi , Isbul retained his position as kavhan and his decisive influence in the Bulgarian court . In 837 , the Slavic tribe of the Smolyani (Smolenoi) , who inhabited the lower Nestos (Mesta) River and Western Thrace near Drama , rose against their Byzantine rulers . The inscription of Philippi mentions large @-@ scale Bulgarian activity in the lands of the Smolyani . The Bulgarian forces were led by Isbul , as

well as the ichirgu @-@ boil (commander of the capital garrison) and the head priest . As the inscription is damaged , it is unclear who Presian and Isbul supported in that conflict . However , during this campaign the Bulgarian army conquered most of Macedonia including Philippi , where the inscription was found . From that point on , Isbul disappears from the sources , and there is no information about the date and circumstances of his death .

= = Assessment and legacy = =

In his biography of Isbul , Pavlov underlines his " extraordinary merits for the development of the Bulgarian state " and describes him as " one of the architects of medieval Bulgarian statehood during the years of its rise " . Romanian historian Florin Curta emphasises the similarity of Isbul 's role to that of 8th @-@ century Mayors of the Palace in the Frankish lands under the Merovingian dynasty .

Isbul Point on Livingston Island of the South Shetland Islands , Antarctica , was named in honour of kavhan Isbul by the Antarctic Place @-@ names Commission of Bulgaria . Isbul also features as a character in Aleksandar Raychev 's opera Khan Asparuh , which debuted at the Ruse Opera House in 1981 . In the opera , however , Isbul is erroneously described as the kavhan of the first Bulgarian ruler , Asparuh .