

= Ivan Shishman of Bulgaria =

Ivan Shishman (Bulgarian : ????? ?????) ruled as emperor (tsar) of Bulgaria in Tarnovo from 1371 to 3 June 1395 . The authority of Ivan Shishman was limited to the central parts of the Bulgarian Empire . His indecisive and inconsistent policy did little to prevent the fall of his country under Ottoman rule . In 1393 the Ottoman Turks seized the capital Tarnovo . Two years later , they captured Ivan Shishman 's last strongholds and executed him .

Despite the military and political weakness , during his rule Bulgaria remained a major cultural center and the ideas of Hesychasm dominated the Bulgarian Orthodox Church . Patriarch Evtimiy of Tarnovo became the most prominent cultural figure of the country . A number of texts were written or translated and an orthographic reform of the Bulgarian language was issued with synchronised rules . After the fall of Bulgaria , a number of scholars found refuge in the other Orthodox countries and brought the achievements of the Bulgarian culture to them .

His reign was inextricably connected to the fall of Bulgaria under Ottoman domination . Although there exist no historical sources which prove that he took active role in the defence of the country , in Bulgarian folklore Ivan Shishman is portrayed as a legendary and heroic ruler who desperately fought against the overwhelming Ottoman forces . There are numerous sites , geographical features and fortresses named after him throughout Bulgaria .

= = Biography = =

= = = Early life = = =

Born in 1350 or 1351 , Ivan Shishman was the eldest son of emperor Ivan Alexander (r . 1331 ? 1371) and his second wife Sarah ? Theodora , a Jewess converted to the Eastern Orthodox Church . His birth brought up the issue of the succession to the Bulgarian throne . Ivan Shishman had two elder brothers by the Ivan Alexander 's first wife , Theodora of Wallachia . The eldest one , Michael Asen , was proclaimed successor to the throne and co @-@ emperor shortly after Ivan Alexander 's accession to the throne . However , Michael Asen 's early death in battle against the Ottomans in 1355 put forward the question of succession once more . It is likely that Sarah ? Theodora pressured Ivan Alexander to select her own son as his successor , although Ivan Sratsimir would have come next under the majorat system . The issue was decided in Ivan Shishman 's favour because the latter was born in the purple (after his father was crowned) , thus making him eligible as successor . By the end of 1355 , Ivan Shishman had been proclaimed heir to the throne and co @-@ emperor .

These events led to a conflict with Ivan Sratsimir , who was in turn given the rule of Vidin , probably as a compensation . Another indirect piece of evidence for the feud is the fact that Ivan Sratsimir 's portrait not included in the Tetraevangelia of Ivan Alexander , where the whole family of the emperor was otherwise presented . In 1356 Ivan Sratsimir proclaimed himself emperor of Vidin . Together with his father and younger brother Ivan Asen V , Ivan Shishman presided over the church synods at Tarnovo in the late 1360s .

= = = Emperor of Bulgaria = = =

= = = = Reign before 1388 = = = =

In his early twenties , Ivan Shishman was proclaimed emperor after the death of his father on 17 February . Ivan Shishman inherited only parts of his father 's realm : he ruled the lands between the Iskar River and Silistra , the valley of Sofia , parts of the Rhodope mountains and northern Thrace . To the west , the areas centred around Vidin recognised Ivan Sratsimir as emperor of Bulgaria , while to the east , the Principality of Karvuna , encompassing the coastal strip between the Danube

Delta and Cape Emine and under the rule of despot Dobrotitsa , did not recognise the authority of the emperor of Tarnovo either . Contemporary chroniclers such as Johann Schiltberger speak of three regions , all of which were called Bulgaria . Thus , the country was divided on the eve of the Ottoman invasion , despite Ivan Shishman 's claims in his royal charters . In these , he styled himself as a primary emperor in an attempt to emphasise the existence of a hierarchy among the rulers of the three Bulgarias . However , that hierarchy remained only in paper ; to further assert their independence from Tarnovo , both Ivan Sratsimir and Dobrotitsa separated their dioceses from the Bulgarian Patriarchate in Tarnovo . According to Fine , immediately after the death of Ivan Alexander , Ivan Sratsimir tried to conquer the whole of Bulgaria . He was able to capture Sofia and managed to hold the city for one or two years . The rivalry between the two brothers for Sofia had a strong tradition in the Bulgarian historiography since the time of Konstantin Jirek , but it has been dismissed by many modern Bulgarian historians .

Only a few months after the ascension of Ivan Shishman to the throne , on 26 September 1371 , the Ottoman Turks defeated a large Christian army led by the Serbian brothers Vukašin Mrnjavić and Jovan Uglješa in the Battle of Chernomen . Although Uglješa had tried to create a broad coalition that would include Bulgaria , Ivan Shishman , who had to strengthen his own authority , did not join . After their victory at Chernomen , the Turks immediately turned on Bulgaria . Ottoman sultan Murad I forced Ivan Shishman to retreat to the north of the Balkan Mountains and conquered northern Thrace , the Rhodopes , Kostenets , Ihtiman and Samokov . Unable to resist the attacks , Ivan Shishman had to negotiate with the Ottomans in 1373 . He was forced to become an Ottoman vassal and to allow his sister Kera Tamara , who was known for her beauty , to become a wife of Murad I. Under this agreement , Bulgaria regained some of the conquered territories such as Ihtiman and Samokov , and began nearly ten years of uneasy peace with the Turks . Despite the vassalage and the peace treaty , Ottoman raids were renewed in the beginning of the 1380s and culminated in 1385 with the fall of Sofia , the last stronghold of Ivan Shishman to the south of the Balkan Mountains .

In the meantime , Ivan Shishman was engaged in a war against the voivode of Wallachia , Dan I , between 1384 and 1386 . There are few details about that war , only a brief note in the Anonymous Bulgarian Chronicle that Dan I died 23 September 1386 after being poisoned . The war was linked to the hostilities between Ivan Shishman and Ivan Sratsimir (Dan I 's uncle) , who had the support of the Wallachian rulers and was married to Anna of the House of Basarab .

=== Fall of Bulgaria ===

In 1387 , the united forces of the Principality of Serbia and the Kingdom of Bosnia managed to defeat the Ottomans in the Battle of Pločnik . Encouraged by the Christian success , Ivan Shishman immediately invalidated his vassalage to Murad I and refused to send troops in his support in 1388 . The Ottomans reacted by sending a 30 000 strong army , under the command of the grand vizier Ali Pasha , to the north of the Balkan Mountains . The Ottoman troops seized the fortresses of Shumen , Madara , Venchan and Ovech . Ivan Shishman left Tarnovo and headed to Nikopol , where he was besieged and forced to ask for peace . The Ottomans requested that he reconfirm his vassalage in addition to surrendering Silistra , at the time the most populous Bulgarian city along the Danube . However , Ivan Shishman , reassured by his neighbours that he would receive support and the preparations of Serbia for war , not only refused to let the Ottomans in the city , but also strengthened its walls . Ali Pasha crossed the Balkan Mountains for a second time to consecutively capture Shumen , Cherven , Svishtov and once again besiege Ivan Shishman in Nikopol . Surprised by the swift Ottoman response and having not received the promised assistance , the Bulgarian emperor had to ask for peace . His pleas were accepted , but the terms were harsher than the original : not only Silistra was to be surrendered , but Ottoman garrisons were to be stationed in other Bulgarian cities , most notably Shumen and Ovech .

After the defeat of the Serbs and Bosniaks in the Battle of Kosovo on 15 June 1389 , Ivan Shishman had to seek help from Hungary . During the winter of 1391 ? 1392 , he entered into secret negotiations with the King of Hungary Sigismund , who was planning a campaign against the Turks .

The new Ottoman sultan Bayezid I pretended to have peaceful intentions in order to cut off Ivan Shishman from his alliance with the Hungarians . However , in the spring of 1393 Bayezid gathered a large army from his dominions in the Balkans and Asia Minor and attacked Bulgaria . The Ottomans marched to the capital Tarnovo and besieged it . The defence of the capital was led by Patriarch Evtimiy because Ivan Shishman was located in Nikopol , presumably for better communication with Sigismund . After a three @-@ month siege , Tarnovo fell on 17 July . According to the contemporary Bulgarian scholar and cleric Gregory Tsamblak , the city was not captured because of the Ottoman military strength but due to treason . The Ottoman campaign of 1393 devastated Bulgaria ; in the wake of that invasion , the lands of Ivan Shishman were limited to Nikopol and several towns along the Danube . Upon his return from Wallachia after the Battle of Rovine in 1395 , Bayezid I attacked and captured Nikopol and , according to the Anonymous Bulgarian Chronicle , murdered Ivan Shishman on 3 June 1395 . A Byzantine chronicle gives the date as 29 October . However , some sources suggest that the Bulgarian ruler was captured and died in prison .

= = = Culture and religion = = =

The cultural revival that made the historians call the reign of Ivan Alexander a " Second Golden Age of Bulgarian culture " continued under his son . The most prominent figure in that field during the last quarter of the 14th century was Patriarch Evtimiy of Tarnovo (r . 1375 @-@ 1393) , a disciple of Theodosius of Tarnovo . In 1371 he established the Monastery of the Holy Trinity , a few kilometres to the north of Tarnovo , and turned it into an important cultural center and a major hub of the Tarnovo Literary School . Evtimiy wrote a number of religious works , including hagiographies , praises and letters , but is most famous with the orthographic reform and the standardization of the Bulgarian language , which had an impact in Serbia , Wallachia and the Russian principalities . Evtimiy thought that many of the scholars were not sufficiently prepared , and that the translations of Greek texts in local dialects and peculiarities could lead to misinterpretation of the original and eventually to heretism . The texts regarding the reform did not survive , although its character has been partly recreated by the historians and linguists by analyzing the works of Evtimiy himself and his disciples . The orthography was inspired by the original Old Church Slavonic during the heyday of the First Bulgarian Empire ; the reform also included syntax changes and enrichment of the lexicon with a number of synonyms to avoid repetition . To ensure the success of the reform , all texts had to receive approval before publishing , a move that was supported by Ivan Shishman in his edicts . The capital Tarnovo was the main cultural center at that time . Patriarch Evtimiy wrote about it :

Hesychasm remained the main movement in the Bulgarian Orthodox Church during the reign of Ivan Shishman and the Patriarch was its supporter . Bulgaria was a major center of hesychast ideas along with the Byzantine Empire . Evtimiy was an active opponent to heresies , but it appears that since the mid 14th century the influence of the Bogomils , the most prominent heretic movement in the Balkans at the time , had been greatly reduced in Bulgaria and no document mentions them after 1360 . Other sects , such as the Barlaamites , were also persecuted and repressed . Evtimiy had strict views on moral and took firm positions against divorce and third or fourth marriages for widowers and widows . After the collapse of the Bulgarian Empire , many scholars emigrated to Serbia , Wallachia , Moldavia and the Russian principalities ; they brought Bulgarian cultural achievements , books , and hesychastic ideas to these lands . The Bulgarian influence was so great that is often referred to as a " Second South Slavic influence on Russia " . Some of the most prominent Bulgarian émigrés included Constantine of Kostenets , who worked in Serbia and Cyprian , and Gregory Tsamblak in the Russian lands . The economy was in decline since the loss of the major ports of Messembria and Anchialus to the Savoyard crusade a few years before Ivan Shishman was crowned . After the death of Ivan Alexander and the breakaway of Dobrotitsa 's Principality of Karvuna , Tarnovo also lost its most important port Varna , leading to a reduction in commerce and tax revenues . The persistent Ottoman raids brought devastation , hunger and depopulation which led to a sharp decline in the cultivated lands .

= = Assessment and legacy = = =

Bulgarian historians have had mostly negative assessments of Ivan Shishman . He is often viewed as having intruded onto the throne due to the intrigues of his mother and thus taking the place of the rightful successor , his elder brother Ivan Sratsimir . This eventually resulted in the division of the country on the eve of the Ottoman invasion . There are no direct historical sources to suggest any significant attempts by Ivan Shishman to fight off the Turks . The inconsistent policy of Ivan Shishman has been described as revealing his weakness and inability to cope with the situation . His rule , however , was still remembered in the 16th century . In a treaty signed in 1519 between the Ottoman sultan Selim I and Louis II of Hungary , some of the lands in question were referred to as terra cesaris Sysman , ? the land of emperor Shishman ? .

The memory of Ivan Shishman remained during the first centuries of the Ottoman rule . During the First Tarnovo Uprising in 1598 , the one of the rebels ' leaders , whose name is unknown , claimed to have been a descendent of Ivan Shishman and was proclaimed emperor under the name Shishman III . Almost a century later , in 1686 , a second uprising in Tarnovo was headed by Rostislav Stratimirovic , who also claimed to have belonged to the Shishman dynasty and styled himself as Prince of Bulgaria .

Ivan Shishman is now among the most popular and well known rulers in the Third Bulgarian State . There are a number of works dedicated to him or his rule , including the 1969 film Tsar Ivan Shishman by Yuri Arnaudov and the song " Tsar Ivan Shishman " by the heavy metal band Epizod in the 2004 album " Saint Patriarch Evtimiy " . Shishman Peak on Livingston Island in the South Shetland Islands , Antarctica is also named after him .

= = Legends = =

Ivan Shishman is the most prominent medieval ruler in Bulgarian folklore . His name is heard in a number of legends , myths , tales and songs . He is represented as a heroic ruler who fought and died for his country , facing overwhelming enemy forces . There are a number of places throughout Bulgaria named after the him , ranging from castles and ruins to rocks , caves and localities . That legendary ? geography ? is mainly concentrated in the region of Sofia , Ihtiman and Samokov , though it extends to the Rhodope Mountains , Sredna Gora , Vratsa , Pleven , Prilep , Varna , etc . Near Samokov are the ruins of ? Shishman 's Fortress ? with the emperor 's wells , which reputedly spouted from the ruler 's seven wounds . Further north , along the cliffs and heights of the Iskar Gorge , are ? Shishman 's Holes ? , the caves where he hid while fighting the Ottomans for seven years . Other related toponyms usually associated with the emperor 's last stand are Kokalyane (derived from kokal , meaning ? bone ?) , Cherepish (from cherep , ? skull ?) and Lyutibrod (? Fierce Ford ?) , all thought to be hinting at the fate of the perished Bulgarian troops .

One of the most famous legends is about Shishman 's final battle . The Ottomans camped at Kostenets , near the origins of the Maritsa river , while the Bulgarians were near Samokov , on a hill . After a fierce battle , Ivan Shishman was wounded seven times and retreated to the fortress , where he died ; on the battlefield seven springs appeared , one for each of the emperor 's wounds . He is also said to have fought in the Balkan mountains at Shishkin grad (" Shishman 's town ") , between Sliven and Kazanlak , where he killed 10 @, @ 000 janissaries in a huge battle . The 18th century Bulgarian enlightener Paisius of Hilendar wrote in his Istoriya Slavyanobolgarskaya that during the siege of Tarnovo Ivan Shishman managed to reach Sofia with his boyars . He hid his treasury in the Iskar gorge and fought against the Turks for seven years before dying in battle . Some versions suggest that Kokalyanski Urvich remained the last fortress to fall and before Shishman died he buried treasure under the castle and tried to escape by cutting a passage through the mountain . The repeating motif of the treasure is a sacral symbol of the Bulgarian statehood and the usual locations of the imperial jewellery are monasteries , lakes or hideouts under rivers . Being undiscovered by the invaders , the treasure symbolises the sovereignty and power of the Bulgarian Empire and its inevitable resurrection . There are also a number of parallels between the legends

about Ivan Shishman and the hagiography of saints , especially John of Rila , including the almost identical route of the emperor , Tarnovo @-@ Sofia @-@ Samokov in Rila , and the route of the return of the relics of Saint John of Rila to the Rila Monastery in 15th century ? Tarnovo @-@ Sofia @-@ Rila , and also the motif of the immortal rulers who foresees the restoration of the country .

Extract of a folklore song , collected by the Miladinov Brothers .

Ivan Shishman is one of the few rulers to be mentioned in the Bulgarian folklore songs and , as in the legends , is a subject of mystification . His figure can even be seen in Christmas carols , where he is presented either as a saint in the role of protector or as a hero fighting dragons and oppressors , usually presented as Tatars because of the resemblance with the Tartarus . The songs about Ivan Shishman contain many parallels with nature and collocations which are typical of Bulgarian folklore . In a song from the region of Sliven , the death of the emperor brings chaos to nature and rivers of " black blood " (typical folklore collocation) start flowing .

The place of Ivan Shishman in the Bulgarian legends and folklore is most likely attributed to the fact that he was the last Bulgarian emperor in Tarnovo . There are many similarities with his contemporary King Marko , the ruler of Prilep , who did little to resist the Ottoman invasion but later became the most popular character in the Bulgarian folklore . The people desired to berhyme the image of the " ideal emperor " , a defender and protector , whose strength they needed to survive under Ottoman domination , and not the actual historical personality . As time passed the mystification deepened and the legends became more distant from the actual events during his rule . During the Bulgarian National Revival the tales about Ivan Shishman began to increasingly include patriotic elements .

= = Family = =

Ivan Shishman was married first to a Bulgarian named Kira Maria , who died in the early 1380s . His second wife was Dragana Lazarevi? , a daughter of Prince Lazar of Serbia and Milica Nemanji? and kin to the previous Serbian dynasty . His eldest son Alexander converted to Islam under the name Iskender , and died as governor of Smyrna in 1418 , while his second son Fruzhin participated in revolts and campaigns against the Ottomans , trying to liberate his father 's realm , and died in Hungary after 1444 . It has been speculated by historians , such as Plamen Pavlov , that Patriarch Joseph II of Constantinople was an illegitimate son of Ivan Shishman . The claim is based on a Byzantine text which says " They said that he [Jozeph II] was an illegitimate son of the emperor Shishman . "

= = Timeline = =

1350 or 1351 ? Ivan Shishman was born

By 1355 ? Proclaimed heir to the throne and co @-@ emperor

17 February 1371 ? Succeeds his father as Emperor of Bulgaria in Tarnovo

1373 ? Becomes Ottoman vassal in return for some previously conquered lands

1378 ? Issues the Rila Charter

1385 ? Fall of Sofia

1384 to 1386 ? War against Wallachia

1388 ? The Ottomans invade eastern Bulgaria and conquer a number of towns

17 July 1393 ? Fall of Tarnovo

3 June 1395 ? The Ottomans capture Nikopol and Ivan Shishman is executed