Monarchs’ Names and Numbering in the Second Bulgarian State*

In modern historiographical practice, Bulgaria’s rulers over the ages are assigned consecutive ordinal numbers without distinction between monarchs who reigned under different titles, for example: Boris I (852–889), Boris II (969–977), and Boris III (1918–1943), or Simeon I (893–927) and Simeon II (1943–1946). Such numeration has only been assumed formally by modern rulers, reigning after 1878. Its application to medieval monarchs is convenient and relatively unexceptional when compared with historiographical practices in other modern societies. There are, however, certain inconsistencies that have been introduced into the names and numbering of monarchs due to a combination of oversight and misunderstanding. Names like Ivan II Asen, Mihail II Asen, Georgi I Terter, Ivan IV Smilec, and Mihail III Šišman, which are found commonly in the historical literature, are inaccurate or inconsistent in various ways. A re-examination of the subject, focusing on double names, yields a regularized and improved naming and numbering system with only minor effective emendation.

* Although the editorial board follows the principle of Anglicizing/Latinizing the personal and family names of historical figures, their spelling in this text has been left unaltered at the special insistence of the author [Editors’ note].

1 Of these, Boris I was a king (rex in papal letters, although the old generic term for monarch used in contemporary Bulgarian sources, knjaz, subsequently came to designate the usually non-sovereign title of prince), Boris II was emperor (car/tsar), and Boris III was king (roi des bulgares in diplomatic usage, although he used the traditional medieval title of tsar); Simeon I was king and then emperor, and Simeon II, king. This is not the place to discuss the titles of Bulgarian monarchs at length, and the usage has been based on comparisons to that in the contemporary diplomatic languages (Greek and Latin in the Middle Ages); compare note 138 below. Names are provided in standardized modern forms in the various vernaculars (e.g., Ivan, not Ioann), including, for non-Latin-based alphabets, forms in scientific transliteration (e.g., Теодора for Theodora, Теодора for Θεοδώρα).

2 The only possible attestation of a similar numbering in a medieval Bulgarian source might be found in a Bulgarian gloss to the Middle Bulgarian translation of the Chronicle of Kônstantinos Manassēs, where the duration of Byzantine domination in Bulgaria was qualified as extending even to the emperor of the Bulgarians Asen, the first (дажи и до първия царът към българите) [in:] М.А. Салмина et al., Среднеболгарския перевод хроники Константина Манасси в славянских литературах, София 1988, p. 234.
I. Basic Typology of Names

After Bulgaria’s conversion to Christianity in the 860s, Bulgarian rulers bore personal names that can be categorized according to three basic types, not including names assumed when taking holy orders:

1. Secular names drawn from the folk traditions of Bulgars and Slavs, like Boris, Vladimir, Presian, Boril, and Smilec;

2. Baptismal names drawn from the Biblical and Christian traditions current in contemporary Byzantium, like Mihail, Simeon, Petăr, Roman, Samuil, and Ivan;

3. Double names usually formed by pairing two names from the other two types with each other, like Gavril Radomir, Ivan Vladislav, Todor Svetoslav, Ivan Sracimir, and Ivan Šišman. In such cases the Christian baptismal name precedes the secular folk name.

Such double names are not confined to monarchs, and can be found among nobles and commoners alike. This phenomenon is also well-attested in Serbia.

In Kievan Rus’ double names were also common until the late 13th century, but they

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3 On double names see Н. Ковачев, Двойни лични имена в българската антропонимия, БЕ 31/4, 1984, p. 367–371, and also the remarks of П. Ников, Българо-унгарски отношения от 1257 до 1277 година, СБАН 11, 1920, p. 53, an. 2.


5 Among the Serbian nobility, for example Jovan Dragaš, Grgrur Preljub, Jovan Uglješa; there are also the several royal names compounded with Stefan (although in at least some of the cases this might have been a name specifically assumed upon accession to the throne), like Stefan Radoslav, Stefan Vladislav, Stefan Uroš, and Stefan Dušan.
are not found paired together in the same text very often, and the narrative sources tend to prioritize the secular/folk name elements⁶. In the rare cases where modern Russian historiography indicates the baptismal names, they are placed after the more familiar secular names, probably for convenience (for example, Vsevolod-Dmitrij instead of Dmitrij Vsevolod⁷). It might be noted, however, that double names do not seem to have been common among women of any class in medieval Bulgaria⁸, although they are attested in Kievan Rus⁹.

A rare and apparently late variation of Type 3 is a double name composed of two names both derived from Type 2. Among Bulgarian monarchs, this is attested in the cases of Ivan Stefan (1330–1331) and Ivan Aleksandar (1331–1371). The first of these deviations can be explained by the desire to advertise the descent from the Serbian Nemanjic kings, each of whom had or assumed the name Stefan by itself or paired with another. The second deviation is perhaps best explained with the lasting fascination with Alexander the Great inherited from the Greco-Roman past, although by this time the name had acquired suitable Christian antecedents¹⁰. Double names with two Christian elements also occur in Russia, but

⁶ For example, see the Testament or Admonition (poučenje) of Vladimir II Monomakh in the Russian Primary Chronicle, where he identifies himself as having been named Vasilij in baptism (and known) by the Russian name Vladimir (нареч(ен)ъ в кръпъмъ вън Василий, Русъкъмъ имение Володимиръ) [in:] Полное собрание русских летописей, vol. I, ed. Е.Ф. Карский, Ленинград 1926–1928, col. 240; The Russian Primary Chronicle, trans. S.H. Cross, Cambridge Mass. 1930 [= HSNPhL, 12], p. 301. On princely names in Kievan Rus’ see the voluminous study of А.Ф. Литвина, Ф.Б. Успенский, Выбор имени у русских князей в X–XVI вв., Москва 2006.

⁷ А.Ф. Литвина, Ф.Б. Успенский, Выбор имени..., p. 505.

⁸ The occasional designation of women by two names in Bulgarian historiography almost always indicates doubt as to the actual name due to contradiction or ambivalence in the sources: for example, Anna or Teodora (not Anna Teodora), a daughter of Ivan Asen II: see I. Mladjov, The Children of Ivan Asen II and Eirene Komnenë, BMe 3, 2012, p. 485–486; Anna (not Anna Maria) of Hungary, a wife of Ivan Asen II: I. Mladjov, The Children..., p. 485; Ana of Serbia, renamed Dominica, meaning Neda (not Ana Neda), the mother of Ivan Stefan: I. Mladjov, The Bulgarian Prince and would-be Emperor Lodovico, BMe 2, 2011, p. 614–615; all three are treated as having double names in Й. Андреев, И. Лазаров, П. Павлов, Кой кой е в средновековна България, ’София 2012, p. 40–43. Constructs like Kera Tamara and Kirasa Marija are not double names, but rather names preceded by forms of the Greek term kyra (lady): Й. Божилов, Фамилията..., p. 137; the treatment of these names in Й. Андреев, И. Лазаров, П. Павлов, Кой кой е..., p. 358–360, 364–365, is misleading; as for Kerasa Petrica, p. 360, no source actually pairs these two terms: Petrica (Pettrisa) comes from a papal letter (for which see Ненидадено писмо на папа Бенедикт XII до майката на цар Иван Александър, ed. and trans. И. Дучев, ИБИД 14/15, 1937, p. 205–210), while Keraca is found in the Synodikon of Boril, ed. И. Божилов, А. Тотоманова, И. Билярски, Борилов Синодик, София 2010, p. 163, fol. 34a.

⁹ For example, А.Ф. Литвина, Ф.Б. Успенский, Выбор имени..., p. 495–496, 544–545, 591–592, 604.

¹⁰ For the Medieval Slavonic translations of the Alexander Romance, see Александрия русских хронографов, ed. В.М. Истрий, Москва 1893; also Л. Милетич, Ёдна българска Александрия от 1810 год., София1936 [＝БСт, 13].
there, too, they represent a fairly rare and late development; they do not require special explanation in each case.\footnote{For example, A. F. Litvina, Ф. Б. Успенский, Выбор имени..., p. 487, 539, 550–551, 569.}

It should be emphasized that double names were not always used consistently, especially in non-official or semi-official contexts. An early example of this comes from the Bitola inscription of Ivan Vladislav (1015–1018), who is simply referred to by the first of the two names in that text.\footnote{For this inscription, see Битолски надпис на Иван Владислав самодържавьць български, ed. and trans. И. Зайков, В. Тыпкова-Зайкова, София 1970; also Старобългарски надписи/Altbulgariischen Inschriften, vol. I, ed. K. Popkonstantinov, O. Kronsteiner, Wien 1994, p. 15–16.} Although the gold seal (chrysobull) and coin of Ivan Asen II (1218–1241) record the full double name, the two surviving charters issues by this monarch give only the second element in the signature.\footnote{A similar inconsistency can be seen with Ivan Asen II’s sons and successors, Kaliman Asen (1241–1246) and Mihail Asen (1246–1256), who appear with these official double names in some contemporary sources, but are referred simply by the first element of their double names elsewhere.}

A similar inconsistency can be seen with Ivan Asen II’s sons and successors, Kaliman Asen (1257–1277) give his official double name, some inscriptions and manuscript glosses do not, referring to him simply as emperor Konstantin instead.\footnote{Whereas seals, coins, and charters of Konstantin Asen (1257–1277) give his official double name, some inscriptions and manuscript glosses do not, referring to him simply as emperor Konstantin instead. Similarly, the second Georgi Terter.

Similarly in the more casual references, like the Stanimaka inscription of 1231, which also names him ц(α)ρ(κ)ъ цълъ кълѣгарль и гъркълъ; but

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(1322–1323) is recorded by that name on his gilded pectoral cross in the Vatopedi monastery and in the Synodikon of Boril; but in a contemporary manuscript gloss he is simply the great emperor Georghi, son of the great emperor Todor Svetoslav. The inconsistency is naturally amply attested in narrative sources: for comparison, in writing about these Bulgarian monarchs, Ioannes Kantakouzenos gives only the second element of the name Todor Svetoslav, introduces his son as Georgi Terter, and later proceeds to call him only by the second element of his name.

The same trend can be found in the more plentiful attestations of the last medieval Bulgarian monarchs. The names of Ivan Aleksandar (1331–1371) and his sons Ivan Sracimir (1356–1397) and Ivan Šišman (1371–1395) are all attested in their full double forms in the most official type of surviving documents, their charters. However, they were also frequently reduced to their second and more characteristic element in other, less formal, or more constrained places.

We can conclude that double names (Type 3 above) were common, and perhaps prevalent in the anthroponymy of the ruling classes of the Second Bulgarian State. Moreover, the great inconsistency of usage indicates that even when we find an attestation of a single name, it does not preclude the possibility that it is only part of a fuller, double name for the same individual. Given the relative scarcity of surviving native source materials, we cannot expect that the full name would be traceable in the available documentation in every case. This relatively scarce element in other, less formal, or more constrained places.

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16 For the Vatopedi cross, see Nađpušči, vol. II, p. 19–20; for the Synodikon of Boril, p. 162, fol. 2036: Προφήτης Τετερίνης; for the manuscript gloss from 1322, see Knižnica, vol. II, p. 67, № 31: впредиц ц(а)рь Георгий с(ы)нь великий ц(а)рь Феодор(а)рь Охрид(а)рь.


18 For Ivan Aleksandar, see Грамоты, p. 21–26, nos. 3 and 4 and Грамоти, p. 37–43: Иванъ и Александъ; for Ivan Sracimir, see Грамоти, p. 30, № 7 and Грамоти, p. 48: Иванъ Феодоръ; for Ivan Šišman, see Грамоти, p. 26–29, nos. 5 and 6 and Грамоти, p. 44–47: Иванъ и Шишманъ.

straightforward pattern of three types of personal names is complicated by a number of further assumptions, which have led to questionable usage in the treatment of several monarchs’ names.

II. Family Names?

One such assumption is the implicit or explicit notion that family names were used in medieval Bulgaria. Distinct names of royal and aristocratic clans are amply attested during the pre-Christian period of the Bulgarian monarchy, most notably in the so-called Imennik (Nominalia) of Bulgarian rulers, which names the royal clans of Dulo, Ermi, Vokil, Ukil, and Ugain. However, this very explicit attestation of family names, apparently carried over from the eastern origins of the Bulgarian polity, seems to have disappeared some time after the conversion to Christianity. Although familial identity obviously retained its importance, it is not possible to discern clear native examples of Bulgarian family names in the period of the Second Bulgarian State. Therefore, collective names like Asenids (Asenevci), Terters (Terterevci), and Šišmanids (Šišmanovci) are constructs that did not necessarily exist as such within medieval Bulgarian society. This is quite surprising, given earlier Bulgar usage and the widespread use of family names among some of medieval Bulgaria’s closest neighbors, including Byzantium and northern peoples like the Cumans and Pečenegs.


21 In addition to the obvious importance of Asenid descent in the succession of Bulgarian monarchs during the 13th and 14th centuries, we find occasional references to aristocratic lineages in the Byzantine sources, for example the description of the sebastokratōr Radoslav, the brother of Smilec (1292–1298), as belonging to the most illustrious family among the Bulgarians, in Georgii Pachymeris de Michael et Andronico Palaeologis libri tredecim, vol. II, ed. I. Bekker, Bonn 1835 (cetera: Γεώργιος Ράχυμερές, Libri VII de Andronico Palaeologo), p. 266: γένους ὀν τοῦ πρωτίστου παρὰ Βουλγάρους. From an earlier period, we find Georgi Vojtēh described as descended from the family of ‘kaukhans’ by the Continuator of Skylitzēs, p. 163: τῶν Κοπχάνων γένους καταγόμενος.

22 This curious dissimilarity between Byzantine and South Slavic practice is also noted by В. Сухарев, Настоящата -ов/-ев и хронологията на българската родовозменна система, ГРИМП 6, 2009, p. 176–182. For Byzantine family names see for example A. Kazhdan, Names, [in:] ODB, vol. II, p. 1435–1436, and E. Patlagean, Les débuts d’une aristocratie byzantine et le témoignage de l’historiographie: système des noms et liens de parenté aux IX–Xe siècles, [in:] The Byzantine Aristocracy IX to XIII Centuries, ed. M. Angold, Oxford 1984, p. 23–42; for some examples of Cuman and Pečeneg names (including Terteroba and Basaraba), see I. Vásáry, Cumans
It was Byzantine society that produced, by analogy with its own practice, family names for the collective identification of Christian Bulgarian-descended aristocrats within the Byzantine state. An early example of this is the Aaronios family, which included the descendants of the Bulgarian emperor Ivan Vladislav (1015–1018) living within the Byzantine Empire, and was named after his father Aaron. By the same token, after the former Bulgarian emperor Mico Asen (1256–1257) and his descendants established themselves in Byzantium, the name Asan (sometimes Hellenized even further as Asanēs) came to be applied to that family. The same dynamic can be observed in several other cases, for example the Byzantine family Kalamanos, descended from the Hungarian king Kálmán (1095–1116).

Such external evidence and the natural application of such constructs to medieval families in modern historiography notwithstanding, we should be wary of identifying any of the names of medieval Bulgarian monarchs as family names. This is not to say that inherited or assumed names such as Asen and Terter did not denote a genuine or claimed place within an illustrious lineage, something they clearly did, as blatantly demonstrated by the assumption of the name Asen by the non-Asenid emperors Mico and Konstantin in the mid-1250s, in both cases to advertise legitimate succession by marriage. In the case of Mico’s son Ivan Asen III (1279–1280), we are told explicitly that he assumed the additional name Asen when he was put forth as a candidate for the Bulgarian throne by the Byzantine emperor Mikhaēl VIII Palaiologos in 1278. Such names clearly served as genealogical and political markers, but without being Byzantine- or modern-type family names.

26 On Mico, see П. НИКОВ, Българо-унгарски отношения..., p. 51–56; for his claim to the throne, see for example Georges Pachymerès, Relations historiques, ed. A. FAILLER, V. LAURENT, Paris 1984, p. 449 (citera: ГЕОРГΙΟΣ ΡΑΧΥΜΕΡΗΣ, Libri VI de Michaele Palaeologo): And Mytζēs... was a son-in-law of Asen... and after his death he assumed the rule over the Bulgarians (Ὁ δὲ Μυτζῆς... γαμβρὸς μὲν ἦν ἐπὶ θυγατρὶ τῷ Άσαν... ὡς γούν ἐκέινος ἐτελεύτα καὶ οὗτος τὴν ἀρχὴν διεδέχετο τῶν Βουλγάρων); for Konstantin’s claim, see p. 451: But since he did not have a claim to authority through his own family, because he was not related to Asan, he took his granddaughter to wife... and thus obtained the same right to Asen’s empire as Μυτζῆς (Ὅσον οὖν ἐνέλιπεν οἱ πρὸς τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐκ σφετέρου γένους, μηδὲν τῷ Άσαν προσήκον, τὴν ἐκέινον ἐκγόνην λαβὼν εἰς γυναῖκα... ἐπ’ ἴσων εἶχε τὸ πρὸς τὴν τοῦ Άσαν βασιλείαν δίκαιον τῷ Μυτζῆ).
27 ГЕОРГΙΟΣ ΡΑΧΥΜΕΡΗΣ, Libri VI de Michaele Palaeologo, p. 557: Mikhaēl VIII, having changed his apparel, called him his son-in-law and the emperor of the Bulgarians. And he gave him the name of his grandfather Ασαν (καὶ μετασχηματίσας γαμβρὸν ἐκάλει καὶ βασιλέα Βουλγάρων. Μετετίθει δὲ καὶ τούτον εἰς τὸ τοῦ πάππου Άσαν).
An instructive case is the addition of the name Asen to that of Ivan Aleksandăr (1331–1371) in a Constantinopolitan patriarchal document confirming the alliance between the Bulgarian and Byzantine emperors through the impending marriage of their children in 1355. Here Asen is clearly used as a family name ascribed to the Bulgarian ruler in addition to his personal double name, but this is done in a document issued at Constantinople and in Greek. That the Bulgarian monarch was given the family name Asen in this source has as much to do with its Byzantine origin as with the Asenid descent of Ivan Aleksandăr. This usage, however, is apparently exceptional. As if to underscore the lack of consistency, a second document from the same source and year refers to the same Bulgarian monarch by adding the family name Asen again, but this time omitting Aleksandăr. Even if we might say that the addition of the name Asen to that of Ivan Aleksandăr in a Byzantine source seems to reflect its interpretation as a family name, this does not seem to occur in Bulgarian sources. In those rare cases where Ivan Aleksandăr’s Asenid descent was advertised through his name in Bulgaria, the name Asen seems to have simply replaced Aleksandăr.

Therefore, we may conclude that whereas descendants of the original imperial lineage of the Second Bulgarian State were conscious of their membership in what we may call the Asenid Dynasty (or the House of Asen), this was signaled with the addition of genuine family names only in Byzantine sources, whose writers expected and therefore anticipated the use of family names by analogy with their own social practices. But in native Bulgarian practice a name compounded with Asen, or for that matter with Terter, Šišman, and Sracimir, should be understood as a double name. That it commemorates an honored ancestor or advertises connection to an illustrious lineage is a related but slightly different matter.


29 *Acta et diplomata* 1, p. 439, № 186: ὑψηλοτάτου βασιλέα τῶν Βουλγάρων κῦρ Ἰωάννην τὸν Ἀσάνη. Accordingly, a Slavic 15th-century translation of the document rendered this as ц(α) ие къласаркакоме… Ивановъ Асенъ: Грамота патриарха Калиста как новый источник истории болгарской церкви, ed. С. Палаузов, Санкт Петербург 1858, р. 20.

30 Ivan Aleksandăr is called Ivan Asen in the dating formula of an inscription from AM 6840 (AD 1331/1332) in the church of Saint Nicholas in Staničene near Pirot, for which see С. Гавелев, Прилог познаване живописа цркве „Св. Никола“ в Станичево, Зор 18, 1987, р. 22–36; М. Попов, С. Гавелев, Б. Цветков, Б. Попов, Црква светог Николе у Станичево, Београд 2005; И. Божилов, В. Гюзелев, История на средновековна България VII–XIV век, София 2006, р. 586: въ дни благовернаго ц(α) ие Іов(α) ие и при г(еос) ие Ек[леси]. For other possible attestations of Ivan Aleksandăr as Ivan Asen at Ivanovo and Berende, see И. Божилов, Фамилията…, р. 443–445.

31 While I agree with Н. Ковачев, Двойни лични имена…, p. 369, that names compounded with Asen indicated real or claimed membership in the family, I disagree with his contention that such names should not be considered double names. Zlatarski did not consider the implications of double names, but he did note some problems with the usage of Asenids to designate the first monarchs.
III. Patronymics?

Another potential interpretation of the second elements in double names is that they serve as patronymics, reflecting the name of the individual’s father. The use of patronymics in various forms stretches at least as far back as Classical Antiquity, and patronymics were, and remain, the chief way of distinguishing between numerous like-named Rjurikid princes in Kievan Rus’ and medieval Russia. Patronymics also became increasingly widespread in the medieval western Balkans, and are first attested in large quantity in documents reflecting the relations between Dubrovnik and neighboring rulers. In modern times patronymics have taken the place of middle names in Russia and Bulgaria, and many family (last) names are derived from the patronymic employed by an earlier generation. However, while medieval Bulgarian monarchs, nobles, and commoners alike were fully capable of indicating their parentage, did they use patronymics?

A plausible example of this can be found in the treatment of the aforementioned ruler Konstantin Asen (1257–1277) in the Byzantine sources, where the name Konstantin is associated with another, Tih (Toikhos/Teikhos). This has led to the conventional naming of this monarch as Konstantin Tih, but it has long been recognized that, as specified by Geōrgios Akropolitēs, this is to be understood as Konstantin, the son of Tih. Therefore, here we are not dealing with (1) a personal...

32 So, for example, Svjatoslav I of Kiev is Svjatoslav Igorevič, Svjatoslav II is Svjatoslav Jaroslavič, Svjatoslav III is Svjatoslav Vsevolodovič, etc. Patronymics were also widely used in the Scandinavian countries (e.g., Harald I of Norway is Harald Halvdansson, Harald II is Harald Eiriksson, Harald III is Harald Sigurðsson, etc.) and in northern Iberia and the Languedoc (e.g., the alternating names of the kings of Navarre in the 10th–11th century: Sancho I Garcés, García I Sánches, García II Sánches, Sancho III Garcés, García III Sánches, and Sancho IV Garcés, each the son of the preceding).

33 For example, Monumenta Serbica, p. 8, № 11, including patronymics like Pečenežić (Печењеци), Radoslavić (Радославић), Sočibabić (Сочибабић), Pikularević (Пикуларевић), Boleslavić (Болесьлавић), Rastić (Растић), Tihoslavić (Тихославић), and Grgurević (Гргуровић) as early as the 12th century.

34 Perhaps most famously the Romanovs, descended from the boyar Roman Jur’evič Zahar’in.


name followed by a family name, or (2) a double name, or (3) a name and an epithet, but rather with the name Konstantin followed by the name Tih (functioning as a patronymic), apparently an abbreviation for a name like Tihomir. However, it should be pointed out that in this case the use of the patronymic is found in a foreign, not a Bulgarian source. In the native sources, this monarch is invariably given the double name Konstantin Asen or is labeled more simply and less formally as Konstantin (often in a variation approaching the demotic form Kostadin). The frequently encountered historiographical variation, Konstantin Tih Asen, is a technically inaccurate modern construct.

A similar problem involves the designation Mihail III Šišman (1323–1330), which has become fairly common in modern Bulgarian and foreign historiography. The official name employed by this Bulgarian monarch was Mihail Asen, as documented in both Bulgarian and Byzantine sources. While many sources

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37 K. Jireček, Geschichte der Bulgaren, Praha 1876, p. 269–270 (repeatedly translated and republished with various additions and emendations based on the author, most recently as История на българите, София 1978, p. 315); В. Н. Златарски, История..., vol. III, p. 474; nevertheless the mistaken notion that Toikhos/Teikhos is a Greek rendering of the Bulgarian adjective тих (quiet) continues to appear in scholarship: see for example R. Macrides, George Akropolites: The History, Oxford 2007, p. 335, n. 5.

38 For a different treatment of this issue, see С. Пириватрич, Једна претпоставка о пореклу бугарског цара Константина Асена „Тиха”, ЗРВИ 46, 2009, p. 313–331. Pirivatrič advances an interesting hypothesis that Konstantin was descended from the Serbian grand župan Tihomir (1166–1167), a brother and predecessor of Stefan Nemanja, and was thus Serbian on his father’s side, not literally a grandson or even lineal descendant of Stefan Nemanja as claimed in his Virgina Charter (Грамоти, p. 15, № 2), Грамоти, p. 31: е(βά)γαγε Σιλικιον Νασανα Δήλα ι(α)ρ(τ)ν(μ)ν· and that Konstantin’s possible father or uncle Ivan Tihomir of Skopje did not carry a double-element name but a patronymic (Ivan, son of Tihomir), which would make Tih a sort of family name when used for Konstantin himself. The onomastic implications of this study seem problematic, and it remains more plausible to infer that the Byzantine writers would have identified Konstantin with his father’s name rather than with that of some more distant and surely obscure ancestor.

39 See above, an. 15.

40 For example, in Й. Андреев, И. Лазаров, П. Павлов, Кой кой е..., p. 396–400.


42 A Gloss to the Sredec Gospels from 1328/1329, in Книжнината, vol. II, p. 68, № 32: πρι τ(α)υ λιθαλικις акθις, Actes de l’Athos 4: Actes de Zographou, ed. W. Regel, E. Kurtz, B. Korabiev, BB 13: app. 1, Санкт-Петербург 1907, p. 48–52, 58–61, nos. A.22, A.23, and A.26: ό υψηλότατος βασιλεύς των Βουλγάρων και περιπόθητος ιός (και γαμβρός) τῆς βασιλείας μου κυρ Μιχαήλ ο Άσανης. See also И. Божилов, Фамилията..., p. 445–446. This official name also seems to be indicated in at least one of his coin types, for which see Й. Юрков, Български средновековни печати..., p. 109–123; note, however, the rescription of some of these coin types by С. Авдеев, Българските
simply refer to him as emperor Mihail, that is obviously a more casual usage\textsuperscript{43}. Yet no contemporary source names this monarch Mihail Šišman\textsuperscript{44}. The modern construct Mihail Šišman seems to derive from a Serbian charter, which refers to him as Mihail’ Šišmanik'. But the modern Serbian form of this would be Mihailo Šišmanić, and the Bulgarian, Mihail Šišmanov. Here we are not dealing with a double name or a first name followed by a family name, but with a single name followed by a patronymic, signifying Mihail, the son of Šišman, and might have been referred to by a patronymic (though not one attested in native Bulgarian sources), it would be more accurate to refer to him by the name Mihail Asen, a name he shares with several other monarchs, rather than the completely unattested form Mihail Šišman.

As with the attempt to discern the use of family names in the Second Bulgarian State, the use of patronyms also proves elusive. While they would be less

\textsuperscript{43} For example, some coin types (see preceding note); Ioannis Kantakouzenos, \textit{Historiae}, I, p. 207, 294, 323, 340: ὁ τῶν Μυσῶν βασιλεὺς Μιχαὴλ; Danilo II, \textit{Life of Dečanski}, [in:] Животи краљева и архиепископа српских, ed. Ђ. Даничев, Zagreb 1866, p. 174, 178, 189: цара българска-го Михаила; the Synodikon of Boril, p. 162, fol. 2036: Михаил ел(α)гнѣстѣнаго ц(α)вβ (oddly, since the same text provides the full double names of his predecessor and successor). Note, moreover, that this Mihail Asen III had, among his sons by Ana of Serbia, a despotēs Mihail, for whom see I. Божилов, Фамилията..., p. 184, No 135, and the Jambol inscription from 1356, in Надписи, vol. II, p. 70–71.

\textsuperscript{44} Avdev has demonstrated that the trident-shaped coin monogram previously interpreted as the name Šišman, is in fact a variation of the monogram for emperor, possibly influenced by contemporary \textit{tanga} usage in the Golden Horde, and that it has nothing to do with the name Mihail Šišman: С. Авдев, Българските средновековни монети..., p. 155–160.

\textsuperscript{45} Dečani charter of Stefan Uroš III, in \textit{Monumenta Serbica}, p. 100, No 83: цара българскаго Михаила. We cannot take seriously the statement that all (sic!) rulers of Vidin were named Šišman (Cysman) in the \textit{Anonymous Description of Eastern Europe} from 1308, \textit{Anonymi descriptio Europae Orientalis}, § 84, ed. O. Górka, Kraków 1916, p. 38: Imperatores autem eiusdem imperii [omnes] vocantur cysmani. Note also that all (omnes) is supplied, and that the rest of the passage contains so much confusion, that its testimony cannot be accepted at face value. Besides, it is not certain that at this point (1308) Šišman was already dead and that his son Mihail Asen had already succeeded him.
surprising to find, they only seem to occur in foreign sources. The available evidence continues to indicate that names found in pairs in medieval Bulgarian texts are most likely to be interpreted as double names.

IV. Double Names as Genealogical Indicators

Although family names and patronyms do not seem detectable in the surviving Bulgarian sources from the period under consideration, the plentiful, perhaps typical double names could be said to fulfill some of the functions of these otherwise absent onomastic forms. To begin with, names were assigned in accordance with longstanding social and cultural traditions. The most obvious of these are papponymy and theionymy – naming boys after their grandfather or uncle – and similarly with girls, after their grandmothers and aunts. Conversely, there seems to have been great aversion to naming a child after a living parent. The rare exceptions to this rule have to be explained away, perhaps through special circumstances like posthumous birth, illegitimate parentage, or later name change.

The combinations of single and double names (or the variations within double names) help explain seeming contradictions to these basic rules. Father and sons, or brothers, could thus share the same baptismal name, provided that the secular name paired with it differentiated between them: thus Ivan Aleksandăr (1331–1371) had four sons named respectively Ivan Sracimir, Ivan Asen (d. 1349), Ivan Šišman, and another Ivan Asen (b. after 1349); moreover, Ivan Aleksandăr also had a brother named Ivan (secular name, if any, unknown), who adopted the family names Komnēnos and Asanēs in Byzantine style while ruling Valona and Kanina in Albania.

The names of Ivan Aleksandăr’s sons provide a convenient demonstration of the double name model. Although each of their respective secular names (Asen, 

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46 The funerary inscription of Ostoja Rajaković, a kinsman of the Serbian king Marko (1371–1395) and son-in-law of the Albanian župan Gropa, who died at Ohrid in 1379, included in Надписи, vol. II, p. 98, cannot be used as support for the use of patronyms in medieval Bulgaria. A Genoese document referring to Ivanko, the son of Dobrotica, uses a patronymic to express the filiation, but it is a foreign source in a foreign language: И. Божилов, В. Гюзелев, История на Добруджа, vol. II, Велико Търново 2004, Excursus 2, p. 425, № 42: Juancho Dobroticie.

47 In early medieval Russia the determination to avoid naming a child after any living close relative often got in the way of papponymy or theionymy, at least as long as grandfathers and uncles remained alive: А. Ф. Литвина, Ф. Б. Успенский, Выбор имени..., p. 11–30.

48 For an illegitimate son being named after his father, consider the Epirote rulers Mikhaēl I and Mikhaēl II, on whom see D. Polemis, The Doukai, London 1968, p. 91–92. nos. 45, p. 93–94, and 48; for a son assuming the name of his father after the latter’s death, consider Mikhaēl II’s legitimate son, the despotēs Dēmētrios, who began calling himself Mikhaēl in honor of his father: ibidem, p. 96, № 51.

Sracimir, Šišman) served as a genealogical marker associating them with illustrious ancestors and their respective lineages, none of these secular names were shared by their father. Therefore, none of these names served as a simple patronymic, and none of them constitutes a Byzantine- or modern-type family name. The same type of basic analysis confirms the names of Todor Svetoslav (1299–1322), Ivan Stefan (1330–1331), and Ivan Aleksandar himself as double names. The names of Ivan Asen, Kaliman Asen, Mihail Asen, Konstantin Asen, and Georgi Terter fall within the same typology, but issues related to some of their bearers merit further discussion.

IVa. Names associated with the House of Terter (Table 2)

Let us begin with the name Georgi Terter (or, more accurately, Georgi Terterij). The bearers of this name are often called Georgi I Terter (1280–1292) and Georgi II Terter (1322–1323) in modern Bulgarian historiography, but this is technically inaccurate. At first glance Georgi Terter could be interpreted as (1) a given name followed by a family name, (2) a given name followed by a patronymic, or (3) a double name composed of the typical pairing of a Christian baptismal name and a secular name derived from a folk tradition. It is fairly clear that the element Terter reflects the attested Cuman clan name Terteroba. It is also theoretically conceivable that it might reflect the name of the earlier monarch's father (thereby serving as a patronymic). Nevertheless, the third option, that we are dealing with a double name, remains the most likely. While we do not have any clear attestation of the name of the first ruler's father, we know that his grandson was also named Georgi Terter, and that he certainly had no Terter as his father. Therefore, at least in the case of the second Georgi Terter, we are clearly dealing with a double name. Given the widespread practice of papponymy (and the apparent absence of real

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50 Excluding the obviously propagandistic casting of Ivan Aleksandar as Ivan Asen in a few contexts discussed above.
53 A certain Arslan Terter, who could have been the father or grandfather of Georgi Terter, is said to have served as Bulgarian emissary to Volga Bulgaria sometime before 1246, according to a surviving excerpt from the controversial Бахш Иман, Джагфар тарихъ, vol. III, Оренбург 1997, p. 102.
54 The Synodikon of Boril, p. 162, fol. 2036, gives both rulers the same names, distinguishing the grandfather with the epithet the elder: Георгио Тертерев стариот.
family names or patronymics in medieval Bulgaria), it is reasonable to conclude that the same is true for the grandfather, whose name was applied to the grandson. In that case, it would be best to refer to these monarchs as Georgi Terter I and Georgi Terter II.\footnote{As already done by K. Jireček, Geschichte..., p. 279–280, 289 (idem, История..., p. 325–326, 337–338); compare I. Vásáry, Cumans and Tatars..., p. 86.}

Even interpreted as a double name, Georgi Terter clearly functions as a genealogical marker referencing the Cuman clan Terteroba. This is especially clear in the case of Georgi Terter I, who is described as a Cuman in the Byzantine sources.\footnote{ΓΕΩΡΓΙΟΣ ΡΑΧΥΜΕΡΗΣ, Libri VII de Andronico Palaeologo, p. 265: ὁ γὰρ πατήρ Τερτερῆς ἐκ Κομάνων ἦν, indicating at least paternal Cuman descent.} In the case of Georgi Terter II this might still be true, but perhaps only indirectly: his naming was predicated upon reproducing the name of his grandfather. At least one more member of the Bulgarian aristocracy bore the name Terter: a son of the despotēs Dobrotica of Karvuna, who governed Drăstăr (Silistra) in the 1370s and 1380s.\footnote{On this Terter, see Й. АНДРЕЕВ, И. ЛАЗАРОВ, П. ПАВЛОВ, Кой кой е..., p. 676; Г. АТАНАСОВ, Добруджанското деспотство, Велико Търново 2009, p. 133–149; В. ИГНАТОВ, 100 мита от българската история, т. I, София 2007, p. 343–355.} It is still debated whether or not this Terter bore the double name Ivan Terter, and whether he is identical to the Ivan (Ivanko), who succeeded his father Dobrotica as ruler of Karvuna in 1385.\footnote{The name has been seen as sufficient evidence for inferring that Dobrotica and his family belonged to a branch of the House of Terter. This is probable enough, although theoretically the name could have passed into this family through a matrilineal connection. The names of Dobrotica’s brother Todor, and of his other brother Balik’s probable son Georgi would also fit within the known onomastic repertoire of the House of Terter.} An obscure despotēs named Kuman has also been tentatively associated with this family. We are on firmer grounds with the despotēs Aldimir (Eltimir), a brother

\footnote{For the brothers Balik, Todor, and Dobrotica, see ΙΩΑΝΝΗΣ ΚΑΝΤΑΚΟΥΖΕΝΟΣ, Historiae, vol. II, p. 584: πρὸς Μπαλίκαν τινὰ τοῦ Καρβωνᾶ ἀρχοντα πέμψασα πρεσβείαν ἐδεῖτο βοηθεῖν. ὁ δὲ ἀσέμνως τε ἐδέχατο τὴν πρεσβείαν καὶ Θεόδωρον καὶ Τομπροτίτζαν τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς; for Georgi see the damaged inscription from Aksakovo in И. БОЖИЛОВ, В. ГОЗЕЛЕВ, История на Добруджа..., vol. II, p. 234, 240; Г. АТАНАСОВ, Добруджанското деспотство..., p. 153–161.}

\footnote{I. БИЛИАРСКИ, The Despots..., p. 155; idem, Институциите..., p. 74; И. БОЖИЛОВ, В. ГОЗЕЛЕВ, История на Добруджа..., p. 223; Г. АТАНАСОВ, Добруджанското деспотство..., p. 113.}

\footnote{For the brothers Balik, Todor, and Dobrotica, see ΙΩΑΝΝΗΣ ΚΑΝΤΑΚΟΥΖΕΝΟΣ, Historiae, vol. II, p. 584: πρὸς Μπαλίκαν τινὰ τοῦ Καρβωνᾶ ἀρχοντα πέμψασα πρεσβείαν ἐδεῖτο βοηθεῖν. ὁ δὲ ἀσέμνως τε ἐδέχατο τὴν πρεσβείαν καὶ Θεόδωρον καὶ Τομπροτίτζαν τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς; for Georgi see the damaged inscription from Aksakovo in И. БОЖИЛОВ, В. ГОЗЕЛЕВ, История на Добруджа..., p. 228 and 392 (Excursus 2 № 5): Γεώρ[γιος...] τοῦ Μπαλ[ι]κα... τοῦ Καρβου[να].}

\footnote{В. ИГНАТОВ, Към историата на Карвунската средновековна област (XIII–XIV век), Доб 4, 1987, p. 20. But note the objections of И. БИЛИАРСКИ, Πακ за добржджанските Тертеровци... The despotēs Kuman is attested only in the Bojana and Poganovo memorial lists; for him see idem, The Despots..., p. 149, and idem, Институциите..., p. 55–56.
of Georgi Terter I, who married Marija, a daughter of Smilec (1292–1298), and left behind a son named Ivan Dragušin, who died in Serbian Macedonia before 1340. Whether Adimir had any other issue, and whether he was related to other bearers of that name remains impossible to determine with certainty.

The name of Todor Svetoslav (1299–1322), the son of Georgi Terter I and the father of Georgi Terter II, could also serve as a genealogical marker. It is possible, but not verifiable, that at least one element of his double name reflected that of his paternal grandfather, the unnamed father of Georgi Terter I. The name Svetoslav, however, is found in a medieval Bulgarian context extremely rarely: apart from Todor Svetoslav, there is only the Russian-descended despotēs Jakov Svetoslav (d. 1276), not counting the Kievan ruler Svjatoslav I Igorevič (945–972), who had invaded Bulgaria in the 960s. Given the rarity of the name Svetoslav in Bulgaria and its ample use among the Rjurikid princes, Plamen Pavlov has proposed that Todor Svetoslav’s mother Marija was the daughter of Jakov Svetoslav by his wife, an unnamed granddaughter of Ivan Asen II.

Although this theory is based on circumstantial considerations, the case for it is actually very strong. When Ivan Asen III (1279–1280) was accepted as emperor in Tărnovo, the leading member of the Bulgarian aristocracy was the stratēgos Georgi Terter, to whom the Bulgarian people was much devoted, and whom it exalted. To safeguard the position of his son-in-law Ivan Asen III, the Byzantine emperor Mikhaēl VIII Palaiologos (1259–1282) arranged for Georgi Terter’s divorce from his wife Marija and his marriage to kira Marija, the sister of Ivan Asen III. Georgi Terter was accordingly promoted to despotēs, while his first wife Marija and their son Todor Svetoslav were exiled to Nicaea. But Georgi Terter plotted against his new brother-in-law, and Ivan Asen III and his wife fled


63 An Aldimir, son of the general Vitomir, is named as the deceased in a funerary inscription from Bojana: Надписи, vol. II, p. 38. Another Aldimir was the recipient of letters from Ivan Šišman: K. IVANOVA, Un renseignement nouveau dans un manuscript bulgare du XIVe siècle au sujet de la résistance du tsar Ivan Šišman contre les Ottomans prés de Nikopol, EB 24.1, 1988, p. 91. For both, see also Й. АНДРЕЕВ, И. ЛАЗАРОВ, П. ПАВЛОВ, Кой кой е..., p. 22–23.


65 П. ПАВЛОВ, Търновските царици, Велико Търново 2006, p. 32–33; citing chronological considerations, B. ИГНАТОВ, 100 мита..., p. 321–322, proposes Jakov Svetoslav as the brother of Todor Svetoslav’s mother Marija. For the name Svjatoslav in Rjurikid Russia as virtually limited to members of the Rjurikid dynasty: А. Ф. ЛІТВІНА, Ф. Б. УСЯНСКІЙ, Вибор імен..., p. 43.

66 ГЕОРГІОС РАХУМЕРЕС, Libri VI de Michaelae Palaeologo, p. 567: ‘Ἡ δ’ ἐν τοῖς μάλιστα τῶν προύχοντων καὶ Τερτερῆς, ὃ δὴ καὶ μεγάλως τὸ Βουλγαρικόν προσείχε καὶ παρ᾽ ἐκείνους ἐμεγαλιζέτο.
to Byzantium; the Bulgarians enthroned Georgi Terter as emperor. Sometime later Georgi Terter successfully requested the return of his original wife from the new Byzantine emperor Andronikos II Palaiologos (1282–1328), having separated from Ivan Asen III’s sister. Pakhymerēs thought that Georgi Terter did so because he was excommunicated by the church on account of divorcing his first wife. Almost two decades later, Todor Svetoslav (1299–1322) seems to have based his claim to the Bulgarian throne on his maternal descent.

This is the gist of the information supplied by the sources about Todor Svetoslav’s mother Marija. Three points deserve special attention: (1) Georgi Terter I divorced his Asenid wife kira Marija to remarry his original wife Marija; (2) Todor Svetoslav derived his legitimacy from his Bulgarian descent through his mother Marija; (3) Georgi Terter was already considered the most preeminent member of the Bulgarian aristocracy before his marriage to Ivan Asen III’s sister. Bulgarian descent by itself could hardly have been the qualification for the throne, especially since Todor Svetoslav was a monarch’s son. Besides, there is an implication that Georgi Terter I, being a Cuman, was qualified for the throne through his marriage. Normally this legitimacy is seen as derived from Georgi Terter’s marriage to kira Marija, the sister of Ivan Asen III. But this marriage seems to have been expedient only during the reign of Ivan Asen III; the readiness with which Georgi Terter discarded this Asenid wife and reclaimed the first Marija suggests that his original wife was no less politically valuable. While possible romantic attachment and implied ecclesiastical pressure might have played some part in Georgi Terter’s decision, Marija seems to have provided him with as much claim to the throne as kira Marija; to do that, Todor Svetoslav’s mother would have had to carry Asenid blood too.

All this would make sense if the first Marija was the daughter of the despotēs Jakov Svetoslav by an Asenid-descended wife, and if Todor Svetoslav received his secular name in honor of his maternal grandfather. Jakov Svetoslav’s prominence was at least partly due to his marriage in 1261 to a daughter of the Byzantine emperor of Nikaia Theodōros II Doukas Laskaris (1254–1258) and his wife Elena,

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67 GEÒRGIOS PAKHYMERĒS, Libri VI de Michaele Palaeologo, p. 567, 569. Whether it was Mikhaēl VIII Palaiologos or Ivan Asen III who made Georgi Terter a despotēs is disputed, although Nikēphoros Grēgoras, Historia Romana, vol. I, p. 133, explicitly states that it was Ivan Asen III who did so. See also Б. ФЕРИАНЬ, Десноми..., p. 144–145; И. БИЛАРСКИ, The Despots..., p. 148–149, and ИДЕМ, Институции..., p. 54–55, who nevertheless attribute this promotion to Mikhaēl VIII Palaiologos. But we can interpret the evidence as Ivan Asen III implementing policies agreed upon with Mikhaēl VIII; compare И. БОЖИЛОВ, Фамилията..., p. 253–254, n. 25, and Г. АТАНАСОВ, Севастократори и деспоти..., p. 470.

68 GEÒRGIOS PAKHYMERĒS, Libri VII de Andronico Palaeologo, p. 57.

69 GEÒRGIOS PAKHYMERĒS, Libri VII de Andronico Palaeologo, p. 265: Ὁσφεντισθλαβος, Βούλγαρος ὤν ἐκ μητρός.
herself the daughter of Ivan Asen II. It is probable that Jakov Svetoslav was granted the title of despotēs precisely because he had become the brother-in-law of the Bulgarian emperor Konstantin Asen (1257–1277), himself the husband of Eirēnē Doukaina Laskarina, another daughter of Theodōros II and Elena. After Eirēnē’s death in 1269, presumably because he became the only man in Bulgaria married to a princess of Asenid descent, Jakov Svetoslav assumed the title of Bulgarian emperor. This claim eventually led to Jakov Svetoslav’s adoption and subsequent murder in 1276 by Konstantin Asen’s new empress, Maria Kantakouzēnē.

It is therefore plausible to infer a connection between Jakov Svetoslav and Todor Svetoslav’s mother Marija. If Jakov Svetoslav and his anonymous wife were the parents of Marija, we would have an explanation for the appearance of her husband Georgi Terter at the forefront of the Bulgarian elite in the late 1270s, for his legitimation as Bulgarian emperor even after discarding the sister of Ivan Asen III, for the unusual name of Todor Svetoslav, and for his claim to the throne on the basis of his maternal Bulgarian descent. We would also find a good explanation of the inclusion of the despotēs Jakov Svetoslav in the memorial lists of Bulgarian

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70 Geōrgios Pakhymerēs, Libri VI de Michaele Palaeologo, p. 243. As Todor Svetoslav’s maternal great-grandfather, Theodōros II of Nicaea could provide the rationale for the baptismal name Todor.

71 Jakov Svetoslav is not yet named as despotēs in Pakhymerēs’ mention of his marriage. Some commentators attribute the grant of the title to the Byzantine emperor: e.g., Б. Ферянихич, Деспоти…, p. 143 (who thinks it was Mikhaēl VIII Palaiologos), I. Biliarsky, The Despots…, p. 148; Iadem, Институции…, p. 53 (who thinks it was Iōannēs IV Doukas Laskaris); Г. Атанасов, Севастократори и деспоти…, p. 469 (who thinks it was Theodōros II Doukas Laskaris, deceased since 1258). Since Iōannēs IV was a minor about to be toppled from the throne, and Mikhaēl VIII was trying to get rid of the three remaining princesses of the previous dynasty by marrying them to foreigners (none of the others receiving the title of despotēs on account of their marriages), the more likely opinion seems to be that of П. Ников, Българо-унгарски отношения…., p. 117; В.Н. Златарски, История…, vol. III, p. 499–501, and S. Georgieva, The Byzantine Princesses in Bulgaria, BBg 9, 1995, p. 196, who attribute the grant of the title to Konstantin Asen.


73 This is described in Geōrgios Pakhymerēs, Libri VII de Michaele Palaeologo, p. 549.

74 For the wife of Jakov Svetoslav, see S. Georgieva, The Byzantine Princesses…, p. 194–197. If she were illegitimate, as suggested by C. de Fresne Du Cange, Familiae Augustae Byzantinae, Paris 1680, p. 224, and followed by A. Failler, Chronologie et composition dans l’Histoire de Georges Pachymère I, REB 38, 1980, p. 73 (because she was a fifth, unnamed daughter of Theodōros II, whereas other authors had named only four daughters), then Jakov Svetoslav could not have derived a claim on the Bulgarian throne through her, and he might not have been described as the in-law (gener) of the Hungarian king in 1270. Given the names of her mother (Elena) and sisters (Eirēnē, Maria, Theodōra, and Eudokia), the unnamed princess might have been named Anna: it is the most common remaining Byzantine female name in this period, and also the name of her maternal grandmother, Anna of Hungary.

75 The alternative proposed by В. Игнатов, 100 мима…, p. 321–322, is less persuasive (a sister of Jakov Svetoslav could not have legitimized a claim to the Bulgarian throne) and unnecessary.
emperors if he were an emperor’s ancestor. Moreover, the ecclesiastical pressure on Georgi Terter I to separate from Ivan Asen III’s sister would become even more explicable, if his two successive wives were first cousins once removed, and thus well within the prohibited degrees of kinship.

IVb. Names associated with the House of Asen (Table 1)

At least eleven, possibly fifteen, Bulgarian monarchs bore double names compounded with the name Asen. Among these the most common combination, attested five times, is Ivan Asen. The names of Ivan Asen II (1218–1241), Ivan Asen III (1279–1280), and Ivan Aleksandar’s sons and co-rulers Ivan Asen IV (c. 1337–1349) and Ivan Asen V (c. 1356–1388?) do not necessitate any special comment beyond what has been stated above. However, the case of Ivan Asen I (c. 1188–1196) merits some additional consideration.

It has been questioned whether the first Asen really bore the double name Ivan Asen. This is attested in the Synodikon of Boril, while Patriarch Evtimij’s Life of Saint Ivan of Rila explicitly states that Asen’s baptismal name was Ivan. However, taking into account that his younger brother Kalojan was clearly baptized Ivan, Zlatarski expressed understandable doubt that Asen could have been baptized with the same name as his younger brother. Although Zlatarski’s doubts have not been accepted by every historian writing on the period, they have left an influential legacy. A recent attempt to reconcile the sources and Zlatarski’s logic,
has led to the ingenious suggestion that Asen was not baptized Ivan, and only assumed this name later, to honor Saint Ivan of Rila. While this theory is not altogether implausible, it not only relies on evidence that is circumstantial, but it contradicts the express testimony of medieval sources, which ought to remain our point of departure. Moreover, in view of the preceding considerations about the widespread use of double names, there is no real problem with two brothers bearing the names Ivan Asen and Ivan, respectively. Although the baptismal name is the same in both cases, the elder brother is distinguished by his double name, which eliminates the imaginary problem; as we have seen in the family of Ivan Aleksandar, brothers could share the same baptismal name if the secular names distinguished between them.

We may also note that the name of the younger brother in question is very often attested in a diminutive form like Ioanica, rendered in foreign sources as Ioannitza, Iohannitius, Johanisse, etc. While this could have originally referred to his youth, that in itself could no longer have been a significant factor by the early 1200s. More likely the diminutive had been intended to add further distinction between the two brothers who shared the same baptismal name by marking the younger brother as such. The assumption of the more formal name Kalojan (on the basis of Greek Καλοϊώαννης) may well have been the younger brother’s reaction to a nickname he no longer had to suffer.

Another line of argument, not pursued by Zlatarski, would be that Ivan Asen II could not have borne the same name as his father Ivan Asen I. While it is always possible that an exception to the rule could occur, especially where monarchs are concerned, there are various unknowns that could account for this seeming problem. It is entirely possible, for example, that Ivan Asen II was originally named simply Ivan, in honor of his uncle Ivan (Kalojan), and that he adopted the name Ivan Asen to honor his father and stress legitimacy and continuity when making a claim for the Bulgarian throne in 1217–1218. As we have seen, it was in a similar vein that Mico Asen (1246–1257), Konstantin Asen (1257–1277), and Ivan Asen III (1279–1280) added Asen to their names.

There remains no serious reason to doubt that Ivan Asen was the full name of the first Asen, and this leaves us with five monarchs named Ivan Asen, as listed above.

Several Bulgarian monarchs of Asenid descent bore the double name Mihail Asen. The names of Ivan Asen II’s son Mihail Asen (1246–1256), of Shiisman’s son

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80 И. Лазаров, Владетелското име „Йоан”...
Mihail Asen (1323–1330), and of Ivan Aleksandar’s eldest son and co-ruler Mihail Asen (c. 1332–1355) do not require any special comment beyond what has been stated above. Although he is not actually attested in the surviving sources by the double name Mihail Asen, circumstantial evidence strongly suggests that a fourth Bulgarian monarch bore that name.

This is Mihail, the son of Konstantin Asen by his third wife Maria Kantakouzene. Born sometime between 1269 and 1272, Mihail was crowned as early as 1272, and succeeded as sole emperor of Bulgaria on his father’s death in 1277. He is amply attested in both native Bulgarian and Byzantine sources, but no preserved official charters or seals bear his name. His short reign as a minor reflects the adoption of Byzantine imperial practices in Bulgaria. In addition to the Byzantine-style association on the throne mentioned above, Mihail was titled *porphyrogennētos*, partly in imitation of Byzantine practice and perhaps partly to deny claims to his father’s throne by any potential sons of Konstantin Asen’s first, non-royal wife. When the empress-mother Maria Kantakouzene was threatened by the advance of Byzantine troops on the capital Tarnovo, she struck a deal with her husband’s killer, the rebel leader now known as Ivajlo, married him, and made him emperor of Bulgaria without deposing her son. This was a particularly Byzantine solution to the combination of an underage monarch and powerful political rivals, manifested most clearly in the reigns of Nikēphoros II Phōkas (963–969) and Rōmanos IV Diogenēs (1068–1071), both of whom associated themselves on the throne with minor emperors by marrying their respective mothers.

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82 For him see И. Божилов, Фамилиата..., p. 118–119, № I 25, and Andreev in Й. Андреев, И. Лазаров, П. Павлов, Кой кой е..., p. 474–476.

83 The association on the throne is described by Geōrgios Pakhymerēs, *Libri VI de Michaele Palaeologo*, p. 547: Maria, having crowned her son Mikhaēl in spite of his age, raised him and educated him as emperor, including her child among his parents at acclamations (Ἡ μέντοι γε Μαρία, Μιχαήλ τὸν παῖδα καὶ παρὰ τὴν ἡλικίαν στέψασα, βασιλικῶς ἔτρεφε καὶ ἀνήγε, τὴν εὐφημίαν μετὰ πατέρας τῷ παιδὶ παρέχουσα). Mihail is included with his father and the Bulgarian patriarch Ignatij in a gloss from 1272/1273, for which see Книжнина, vol. II, p. 65, № 28: цар Михаил порфирородномъ цар Михаил цар Михаил..., and the Rojak inscription names the ἅγιος Михаил, in a year that has been restored as 67[6]1 (1252/1253), in the reign of Mihail Asen I: Надписи, vol. II, p. 118–119. Nevertheless, see Й. Андреев, Кой е “багренороднит” цар Михаил от скалния надпис при село Рояк, Провадийско?, [in:] ТКШ, vol. V, p. 441–454, who convincingly identifies this as a record of Mihail Asen II from 68[1]1 (1302/1303), when he attempted to reassert himself in Bulgaria in opposition to Todor Svetoslav.

84 The earlier association between Petăr IV (1185–1196) and his two brothers Ivan Asen I and Kaloyan did not follow contemporary (or for that matter earlier) Byzantine practice, in which brother emperors (a phenomenon limited to the Heraclian and Macedonian dynasties) succeeded to the throne together.


This Mihail, who on account of his minority and his short tenure on the throne has been almost universally ignored in the enumeration of Bulgarian monarchs, was probably also given the double name Mihail Asen. This can be inferred from his father’s official name Konstantin Asen, which was applied in charters, seals, and coins alike, and also from the obvious precedent of the earlier Bulgarian emperor Mihail Asen, who seems to have been regarded as Konstantin Asen’s most recent legitimate predecessor. Although it has been surmised that Konstantin Asen and Maria Kantakouzēnē’s son was named in honor of his maternal great-uncle, the Byzantine emperor Mikhaēl VIII Palaiologos, this plausible inference, even if partly correct, need not conflict with the explanation suggested above. The remaining possible objection, that Mihail is never explicitly named Mihail Asen in the preserved sources is not compelling: the sources in question are informal glosses that similarly omit the element Asen from the name of his father and co-ruler as well. They do not and cannot prove that the son of Konstantin Asen and Maria Kantakouzēnē was named simply Mihail, as opposed to Mihail Asen. In fact, the circumstantial evidence suggests the contrary. It would be curious indeed, if the father legitimized himself with the assumption of a name that he would have later denied his son and intended heir. Therefore, between 1277 and 1279, Bulgaria was governed in the name of yet another Mihail Asen. Retrospective bias cannot excuse the omission of this ephemeral monarch from the list of Bulgarian rulers or from the numeration attached to their names.

This is perhaps all the more significant, because there is good reason to doubt whether the name Ivajlo, now commonly attributed to the killer of Konstantin Asen, who later married the widowed Maria Kantakouzēnē and became the co-ruler of her son Mihail Asen, really belonged to this rebel. The only source to provide

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87 See for example В.Н. Златарски, История..., vol. III, p. 550–551, who recognized that in 1277 Mihail had remained sole emperor, but omitted him in the count, skipping from Mihail II Asen (1246–1256) to Mihail III Šišman (1323–1330); as a further example of this inconsistent treatment, Zlatarski did present Mihail as a Bulgarian emperor by printing his name in bold type and followed by the regnal years 1277–1278 in his genealogy of Bulgaria’s Asenid monarchs – ibidem, p. 608.

88 The same cannot be said for Mico Asen, whom Konstantin Asen had driven from the throne, or for Mico’s immediate predecessor Kaliman, who had briefly seized the throne through murder. An Armenian gloss suggests that Konstantin Asen (Kat’and) was indeed presented as the legitimate successor of the murdered Mihail Asen (Ker Mixayl) – A. Margos, Deux sources arméniennes du XIIIe siècle concernant certains événements historiques du second empire bulgare, EB 2/3, 1965, p. 295: (in the time of) the Bulgarian ruler Kat’and, who succeeded Ker Mixayl, the son of Hawan, murdered by Kalaymann, the son of his uncle.

89 See for example Andreev in Й. Андреев, И. Лазаров, П. Павлов, Кой кой е..., p. 474.

90 See the glosses in Книжнината, vol. II, p. 64, № 27: ц(а)ръ Костадин; p. 65, № 28: царъ Константинъ; p. 279, № 84: ц(а)ръ Костадинъ; compare the building inscription from 1355, apparently naming Ivan Aleksandăr and his son Mihail Asen simply Aleksandăr and Mihail, in Книжнината, vol. II, p. 285, № 90.
this name is a 1278/1279 gloss from the Svrlig gospels by Voisil the Grammarian. The text’s mention of *Greeks under the city of Tărnovo in the days of the emperor Iвail* was interpreted, plausibly enough, as referring to a Byzantine attack on the former rebel in the Bulgarian capital by Konstantin Jireček, whose opinion has dominated Bulgarian and foreign historiography ever since\(^91\). This was not, however, the original interpretation of the passage, and recent studies have reopened the question, showing that another possibility, that *Iвailo* (as Iвail has been rationalized in modern usage) is simply an informal reference to the Byzantine protégé Iвan Asen III (1279–1280), is as likely, if not more likely an inference\(^92\). If so, we are left with the nicknames Lакhанas and Kordокoubas, attested only in Greek form\(^93\), to designate the man who was once hailed as the leader of the first anti-feudal peasant revolt in the history of Europe\(^94\). For all that he was a minor eclipsed by others, his stepson and co-ruler Mihail Asen at least provides a named and legitimate head of state to span the period between 1277 and 1279.

This leaves us with four monarchs bearing the double name Mihail Asen: Mihail Asen I (1246–1256), Mihail Asen II (1277–1279), Mihail Asen III (1323–1330), and Mihail Asen IV (c. 1332–1355).

There are two additional cases where, in the absence of sufficiently explicit formal sources, circumstantial considerations strongly imply double names compounded with the name Asen. The first of these cases is that of the cousin and

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\(^92\) For the original publication of the Svrlig gloss, see M. Milićević, J. Šafarik, *Сведршнички од-ломци еванђелија и запис од 1279 године*, ГСУД 3, 1866, p. 244–264; the authors assume that Iвail is a reference to Iвan Asen III, as do M. Дринов, *Исторически преглед на Българската църква от самото й начало и до днес*, Wien 1869, cited here as published in M. Дринов, *Избрани произведения*, vol. II, Софиа 1971, p. 110, n. 7, and B. Макушев, *История болгарь в труде К. О. Иречека 2, ЖМНП 197, 1878*, p. 69; support for this earlier interpretation has been advanced recently by К. Господинов, *Съвършението на Иречек като исторически извор*, ИП 61.3/4, 2005, p. 151–175, and B. Игнатов, *100 мита...*, p. 280–283; this criticism has also been accepted by К. Кръстев, *Българското царство...*, p. 15.

\(^93\) Геōргios Pakhymerēs, *Libri VI de Michaele Palaeologo*, p. 549: *called Kordokoubas... and therefore named Lакhанas* (Кордοκουβας κεκλημένος... καὶ Lαχανᾶς ἐντεῦθεν φημίζεται).

murderer of Mihail Asen I, Kaliman\textsuperscript{95}, the son of Ivan Asen II’s brother Aleksandar\textsuperscript{96}. In spite of the circuitous language of our main source, Georgios Akropolites, there is no need to doubt that this prince seized the throne in 1256, at least long enough to marry his predecessor’s widow\textsuperscript{97}. His unusual baptismal name was shared by his first cousin, Mihail Asen I’s older half-brother and predecessor Kaliman Asen (1241–1246). This first Kaliman Asen was apparently given his baptismal name to honor his maternal uncle, the Hungarian prince Kalmán (d. 1241), second son of the Hungarian king András II (1205–1235). It is unreasonable to postulate that, like his brother Ivan Asen II, the sebastokratōr Aleksandar, had also married a Hungarian princess (and an unattested one at that)\textsuperscript{98}. Therefore, the name of Aleksandar’s son Kaliman cannot be dissociated from that of his cousin Kaliman Asen. Perhaps Aleksandar’s son was born only after Kaliman Asen had become Ivan Asen II’s heir apparent, probably no later than 1237\textsuperscript{99}. If so, it is natural to conclude that Aleksandar’s son Kaliman was named in honor of his older cousin and bore the same double name, Kaliman Asen\textsuperscript{100}. Thus, two Bulgarian monarchs bore that name: Kaliman Asen I (1241–1246) and Kaliman Asen II (1256).

\textsuperscript{95} For him see И. Божилов, Фамилията..., p. 113–114, № I 22. The doubts about the name Kaliman and his erroneous identification with the sebastokratōr Kalojan of the Bojana inscription by В. Н. Златарски, История..., vol. III, 468, n. 1, have been long dismissed. The sources say little: GEΩRGIOΣ ΑΚΡΟΠΟΛΙΤΗΣ, Annales, § 73: Mikhaēl... having been mortally wounded by his first cousin in Kalimanos... died immediately (Μιχαήλ... πρὸς τὸν πρωτευδότητα ἀυτοῦ Καλιμάνου καριάν πληγείς... εὐθὺς ἐτεθνήκε); the Armenian gloss from 1258 that confirms this presentation of the events, in A. Margos, Deux sources..., has been quoted above.

\textsuperscript{96} For him, see И. Божилов, Фамилията..., p. 92–93, № I 8.

\textsuperscript{97} With П. Ников, Българо-унгарски отношения..., p. 17, И. Божилов, Фамилията..., p. 113, and idem, В. Гозелев, История на средновековна България..., p. 507–508; contra R. Macrides, George Akropolites..., p. 335, n. 3; GEΩRGIOΣ ΑΚΡΟΠΟΛΙΤΗΣ, Annales, § 73: Kalimanos, having taken his (Michaël’s) wife, expected to make the sovereignty of the Bulgarians his own (Καλιμάνου τὴν ἀργαβόν γαμετὴν ἔδωκε τὴν τῶν Βουλγάρων ἀρχὴν σφετερίσαι). See also C. Георгиева (Тодорова), Дъщерята на Ростислав Михайлович и събитията в България от средата на XIII век, ИП 45.2, 1989, p. 52–56, who convincingly interprets the intervention of the bride’s father Rostislav Mihajlović as an attempt to bolster the positions of his new son-in-law Kaliman, rather than to make himself ruler of Bulgaria.

\textsuperscript{98} That the sebastokratōr Aleksandar married a Hungarian princess was proposed by П. Ников, Българо-унгарски отношения..., p. 17, n. 1, on the basis of his son Kaliman’s Hungarian name.

\textsuperscript{99} At that point Ivan Asen II’s Hungarian wife Anna and one of their children died: GEΩRGIOΣ ΑΚΡΟΠΟΛΙΤΗΣ, Annales, § 36: αἴφνης ἐπήγαγα μήνυμα τῷ Λαάν, ἃς ἢ οὐγιγος αὐτοῦ ἢ ἔξ Οὐγιγον ἕξ ἀνθρώπων ἐγένετο- τετελεύτηκε δὲ κατὰ ταῦτα και παιδίον αὐτοῦ καὶ ὁ Τρινόβος ἐπίσκοπος. That the child in question was male and possibly named Petar has been inferred on the basis of now lost evidence by Lazarov, in Й. Андреев, И. Лазаров, П. Павлов, Кой кой е..., p. 553, but is doubted by others, e.g., И. Божилов, Фамилията..., p. 104, № I 17.

\textsuperscript{100} The first element of the name is attested in this fashion in Bulgarian and Greek sources alike, and, with И. Божилов, Фамилията..., p. 105, n. 1, and A. Margos, Deux sources..., p. 296, n. 3, there is no good reason to prefer a form based on the Latin Colomannus, as done by П. Ников, Българо-унгарски отношения..., p. 13, and В. Н. Златарски, История..., vol. III, p. 420, following a papal
The third and last case, in which a double name compounded with Asen can be inferred with great probability from the circumstantial evidence, involves the last ruler of Medieval Bulgaria, Ivan Sracimir’s son Konstantin. Various sources record the existence and political station of this monarch both as his father’s junior co-ruler and after his father’s death or deposition. Recent re-examination of the evidence has suggested that for most of the period from 1397 to shortly before his death in 1422 Konstantin remained in possession of at least some portion of Ivan Sracimir’s Vidin polity, and therefore he was rather more than a merely titular emperor of Bulgaria. Ioasaf, the metropolitan of Vidin, refers to Konstantin as his father’s co-ruler and as a New Constantine, on the occasion of his successful mission to translate the relics of the Saints Philothea, Petka (Paraskeuē), and Empress Theophanou from Târnovo to Vidin. Konstantin’s status as monarch is also attested by no less a potentate than Sigismund of Luxemburg, king of Hungary (1387–1437), future emperor of the Holy Roman Empire (1410–1437), and king of Bohemia (1419–1437), who refers to Konstantin as the magnificent emperor of Bulgaria in a letter from 1404. The son of an emperor, the brother of another, and a future emperor himself, Sigismund is not likely to have conceded imperial status to someone who did not have a convincing claim to it. Similarly Konstantin of Kostenec recorded the death of the emperor Konstantin, son of Sracimir, the Bulgarian emperor in September 1422, in his Life of Stefan Lazarević.

The sources always seem to refer to this ruler by the single name Konstantin, but none of them is an official document issued by his chancery; no seal or charter of his is preserved to indicate that he did not bear the double name Konstantin Asen like his 13th-century predecessor. Given the use of the element Asen in the names of three of Konstantin’s uncles (Mihail Asen and the two Ivan Asens), as well as the historical precedent of the earlier emperor Konstantin Asen, it is probable to infer that the last medieval Bulgarian monarch also bore the double name Konstantin Asen. Such a conclusion seems to be supported by the memorial lists

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letter from 1245, in *Codex diplomaticus Hungariae ecclesiasticus ac civilis*, vol. 4, pars 1, ed. G. FÉJER, Buda 1829, p. 365: *Illustri Colomanno, in Bulgaria imperanti*. Nikov and Zlatarski’s notion that the Bulgarian form Kaliman was influenced by the Greek rendering Kalimanos seems implausible.


102 For the reassessment of the evidence, see П. ПАВЛОВ, И. ТЮТЮНДЖИЕВ, Българите и османското завоеване (краят на XIII – средата на XV в.), Велико Търново 1995.


105 В. ЈАГИЋ, Константин Философ и његов живот Стефана Лазаревића деспота српскога, ГСУД 42, 1875, p. 314: царь Константин сын Брацилира царя кългарскага.
(pomenici) of the Bojana and Poganovo churches, where the name of emperor Konstantin is followed immediately by that of emperor Asen towards the end of the listing of Bulgarian monarchs. Needless to say, no Asen could have followed Konstantin, who had at any rate lost his lands by the time of his death. On the other hand, the memorial lists sometimes inadvertently divided up double names, creating two entries out of an original single entry106. While there is no guarantee that the original texts of the memorial lists would have included both elements of a double name107, it is likely that the otherwise unexplained Asen at this point in the list is nothing more than the artificially or accidentally separated second element of the double name Konstantin Asen108. The circumstantial evidence therefore points to the existence of a second Konstantin Asen at the very end of the medieval series of Bulgarian monarchs. Thus, there were two rulers of that name: Konstantin Asen I (1257–1277) and Konstantin Asen II (1395–1422).

The assumption of the name Asen by Mico (1256–1257) has already been discussed. Whether Boril (1207–1218) assumed the name is less certain, though possible109. Since neither name occurs more than once on the Bulgarian throne, there is no potential for error or confusion.

106 This is most obvious in the division of Gavril Radomir into the successive entries of Radomir and Gavril, and of the first Georgi Terter into Georgi and Terter: Поменици, p. 222 (Bojana) and 224 (Poganovo, where the despotēs Kuman was inserted in-between Georgi and Terter). For the Ζώγραφου memorial list, see Κнижнина, vol. II, p. 198, 201, № 69, but here the listing is even more confused. It is possible that some of the seemingly superfluous rulers named Asen in the memorial lists are also elements separated from the remainder of their double names.

107 In fact double names are often reduced to only one of their elements in the lists, for example those of the first Konstantin Asen, of the second Georgi Terter, Ivan Aleksandăr, Ivan Sracimir, Ivan Šišman, in both the Bojana and Poganovo memorial lists.

108 И. Билирски, Погановският поменик..., p. 67–68, suggests that the Asen who follows Sracimir in the Poganovo memorial list is to be identified with a son of Ivan Šišman. But the existence of such a son of Ivan Šišman has been questioned by Й. Андреев, България през втората четвърт на XIV в., Велико Търново 1993, p. 147–152, who argues that the two Asens of the Synodikon of Boril, p. 166, 356, are actually the two sons of Ivan Aleksandăr named Ivan Asen, rather than any otherwise unattested sons of Ivan Šišman; Андреев (Ibidem, p. 145) would rather identify the last Asen of the memorial lists with Ivan Šišman’s son Fružin, who is included in the Bojana and Ζώγραφου memorial lists, though not in the one from Poganovo. But while Fružin is indeed attested in a foreign source as Frusinus Asan – see И. Божилов, Фамилията..., p. 244, № I 54 – the inversion of the names, with Asen coming before Fružin, is most unlikely.

109 A charter of the Hungarian king Béla IV (1235–1270) issued in 1259 names Boril as Assenus Burul, imperator quondam Bulgarorum: reproduced in П. Николов, Цар Борил под светлината на една нов паметник, СБАН 3, 1912, p. 133. Since several of Boril’s kinsmen, all of them bearing the name Asen, had succeeded him by 1259, it is not impossible that the Hungarian source ascribed the name Asen to Boril by mistake.
IVc. Names associated with the House of Šišman (Table 3)

Although the last monarchs of the Second Bulgarian State have long been designated members of the Šišmanid Dynasty (Šišmanovci), this convenient but modern designation should technically cover only those in patrilineal descent from Šišman of Vidin. In other words, strictly speaking, the House of Šišman encompasses only two Bulgarian monarchs: Mihail Asen III (1323–1330) and his son Ivan Stefan (1330–1331). Ivan Aleksandăr and the members of his family are only matrilineal descendants of the House of Šišman, and technically belong to what we should term the House of Sracimir. The two families shared matrilineal descent from the Asenids, and were, in this way, offshoots of the House of Asen.

The names of the few known members of the House of Šišman provide little to go on in the context of this study. The two monarchs are attested with double names; of these the secular names Asen and Stefan pointed to Asenid and Nemanjid ancestry, respectively. The baptismal names of Mihail Asen III and his son the despotēs Mihail reflected their Asenid descent through a sister of Mihail Asen I (1246–1256). The names Mihail Asen and Mihail were brought to the House of Sracimir through the marriage of Mihail Asen III’s sister Petrica to the despotēs Sracimir: one of her sons was named Mihail, and her grandson, the eldest son and co-ruler of Ivan Aleksandăr, Mihail Asen IV (c. 1332–1355).

Only the name Šišman seems truly particular to this family, and is well attested among its members: Mihail Asen III’s father, Šišman of Vidin, and Mihail Asen III’s son Šišman. Mihail Asen III’s sister Petrica brought the name Šišman into the House of Sracimir, where it is attested for two of her grandsons: Ivan Aleksandăr’s son, the emperor Ivan Šišman (1371–1395), and Mihail’s son Šišman, known only from the Jambol inscription. Ivan Šišman’s son Fružin was the father of yet another Šišman.

Of the known onomastic repertoire of the male members of the family, there remain only the names of Mihail Asen III’s son Lodovico and of Mihail Asen III’s brother Belaur. The name Lodovico appears to have been assumed by the

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110 For Šišman see Й. АНДРЕЕВ, И. ЛАЗАРОВ, П. ПАВЛОВ, Кой кой е..., p. 707–708; К. КРЪСТЕВ, Династията на Тертеревци..., p. 25–27, 144–151, 243–246; the main primary source is Данило II, Life of Milutin..., p. 117–119.
116 Ibidem, p. 244.
Bulgarian prince as a catechumen (and later convert) to Catholic Christianity. This opens up the possibility that Lodovico could be identical with another son of Mihail Asen III, known by some other name. For various reasons this is not possible for Ivan Stefan or Šišman, but the despotēs Mihail remains a theoretical possibility. As for Belaur, his unexpected name has been explained as Hungarian in origin and traced to a hypothetical Hungarian sojourn of Šišman's Cuman ancestors; alternately it might have entered the onomastic repertoire of the family through the second marriage of Šišman, to the daughter of the Serbian grand župan Dragoš.

IVd. Names associated with the House of Sracimir (Table 4)

As we have seen, the House of Sracimir was a matrilineal offshoot of both the House of Asen and the House of Šišman through the marriage of Mihail Asen III’s sister Petrica to the despotēs Sracimir. It arrived on the throne with Sracimir’s son Ivan Aleksandăr (1331–1371) and encompassed seven monarchs (including three who never became senior or sole rulers), all of whom have been mentioned above. The family’s onomastic repertoire is characterized by the perpetuation of Asenid and Šišmanid names like Ivan Aleksandăr, Aleksandăr, Ivan Asen, Mihail Asen, Mihail, Ivan Šišman, Šišman, and, among the females, Elena, Tamara, Teodora.

Apart from the remarkable frequency of Ivan as a baptismal name (Ivan Aleksandăr, one of his brothers, four of his sons), it is the name Sracimir that seems most characteristic in this lineage. We find this name attested for Ivan Aleksandăr’s father, the despotēs Sracimir, and for Ivan Aleksandăr’s second son, the emperor Ivan Sracimir (1356–1397), an example of papponymy, especially if the despotēs also bore the double name Ivan Sracimir. The name Sracimir is also attested for two or three additional members of the clan, although their precise relation to Ivan Aleksandăr and his immediate family remains unknown. These are the great epikernēs Sracimir and his grandson Sraco (evidently another Sracimir), mentioned in the inscription commemorating the visit of Ivan Šišman (1371–1395) to Šumen. That they were related to the ruling family is confirmed by a document

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118 I. Mladjov, *The Bulgarian Prince...,* p. 615; see also И. Божилов, Фамилиите..., p. 148–149, № 1 32.

119 I. Mladjov, *The Bulgarian Prince...,* p. 609. But it is just as possible that Mihail was the baptismal name of Šišman, in which case there would be no possibility for identification with Lodovico.


122 For Sracimir see Й. Андrees, И. Лазаров, П. Павлов, Кой кой е..., p. 620–621.

123 As suggested, on the basis of circumstantial considerations, by Pavlov in Й. Андrees, И. Лазаров, П. Павлов, Кой кой е..., p. 708; compare Г. Атанасов, Добруджанското деспотство..., p. 84, n. 16.

issued by the Byzantine emperor Iōannēs V Palaiologos (1341–1391), in which the *epikernēs* Sracimir is named as the emperor’s *beloved uncle and in-law*125. This would only be possible if the *epikernēs* were related to Ivan Aleksandār, who was indeed a relative, by marriage, of the Byzantine emperor126. Thus at least two more Sracimirs were somehow related to the Bulgarian imperial house in the second half of the 14th century. A further member of the family who might have been named Sracimir is the monk Samuil, described as the *uncle by blood* (γνήσιος θείος) and *ancestral uncle* (πρόγονος θείος) of the emperor Ivan Aleksandār on an icon of the Virgin of Mercy (*Theotokos tēs Eleousēs*) from Mesēmbria (Nesebār)127. The monastic name Samuil is suitable for a layman named Sracimir, and the phrase *ancestral uncle* might identify this individual as an uncle of the *despotēs* Sracimir and great-uncle of Ivan Aleksandār, although the precise relationship remains uncertain128.

The name Aleksandār, which recalls that of the aforementioned *sebastokratōr* Aleksandār, brother of Ivan Asen II, was used for three members of the family: Ivan Aleksandār, his nephew Aleksandār of Valona129, and Ivan Aleksandār’s grandson, Ivan Šišman’s son Aleksandār130.

The *Synodikon of Boril* mentions two brothers of the *despotēs* Sracimir, Radoslav and Dimitār131. Although the name Radoslav could possibly point to a connection with the family of Smilec (who had a brother named Radoslav), the names are unexceptional enough and in the absence of additional evidence they cannot be used to draw sufficiently plausible conclusions132.

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126 That the court title of *epikernēs* was conferred upon the ruler’s kinsman is unsurprising, given the attestation of the ‘*epikernēs*’ Petăr, the emperor’s cousin, on a ring discovered at Ajtos: И. БИЛЯРСКИ, Институциите..., p. 174.
127 Т. ГЕРАСИМОВ, Новооткрит надпис върху иконата „Богородица Умиление” от Несебър, ИНМБ 1, 1950, p. 253–256.
128 Compare И. БОЖИЛОВ, Фамилията..., p. 170, n. 18. Г. АТАНАСОВ, Добруджанското деспотство..., p. 79–80, thinks that the monk Samuil was a brother of the *despotēs* Sracimir, but in that case he should have been simply the uncle (θείος) of Ivan Aleksandār. For comparison, note that the great *epikernēs* Sracimir appears to have become a monk under the name Silvestăr, as attested in the *Synodikon of Boril*, p. 167, fol. 33a, but note the caution of И. БИЛЯРСКИ, Институциите..., p. 174–175.
129 И. БОЖИЛОВ, Фамилията..., p. 236, № I 48; В. ИГНАТОВ, 100 мита..., p. 362–368.
131 *Synodikon of Boril*, p. 162, fol. 203b: ΟΤΡΑΙΩΝΙΚΟΙ ΔΕΣΠΟΤΗ ΑΙ ΡΑΔΟΛΑΚΙΚΙ Ν ΑΠΑΙΤΟΥ ΒΡΑΤΑ ΑΥΤΟΥ. For Sracimir and his brothers, see also И. БИЛЯРСКИ, Институциите..., p. 67–69; idem, *The Despots...*, p. 152–153.
132 The same is true for a possible additional brother, the *despotēs* Vladislav, attested only in the memorial lists at Bojana and Poganovo: *Поменици*, p. 222 (Bojana): ΟΤΡΑΙΩΝΙΚΟΙ Σ(Α)ΑΡΕ, ΒΛΑΔΙΣΛΑΒΑ ΒΡΑΤΑ ΑΥΤΟΥ, and p. 224 (Poganovo): ΟΤΡΑΙΩΝΙΚΟΙ Σ(Α)ΑΡΕ, ΔΕΣΠΟΤΑ ΒΛΑΔΙΣΛΑΒΑ ΒΡΑΤΑ ΑΥΤΟΥ; see also the comments of И. БИЛЯРСКИ, Погановският поменик..., p. 65–66; idem, *Институциите*, p. 71–72;
V. Regularization and Systematization

The foregoing considerations indicate that the majority of monarchs (22 out of 27) of the Second Bulgarian State bore double names. This both necessitates and makes possible a regularization and systematization of the nomenclature of Bulgarian rulers. Fortunately, with very few exceptions, this would result in little ostensible change, thereby minimizing the potential for confusion. It is easiest to demonstrate this reassessment with a concise list of monarchs (some of the dates are approximate):

**House of Asen (and successors)**

1185–1197 Petăr IV (originally named Todor), with
1188–1196 Ivan Asen I, brother of Petăr IV, and then with
1196–1207 Ivan I (called Kalojan), brother of Petăr IV
1207–1218 Boril, sister’s son of Petăr IV
1218–1241 Ivan Asen II, son of Ivan Asen I
1241–1246 Kaliman Asen I, son of IVan Asen II
1246–1256 Mihail Asen I, son of IVan Asen II
1256 Kaliman Asen II, son of Aleksandăr, son of IVan Asen I
1256–1257 Mico Asen, married Anna/Teodora, daughter of IVan Asen II
1257–1277 Konstantin Asen I, the son of Tih; married Eirēnē, granddaughter of IVan Asen II
1277–1279 Mihail Asen II, son of Konstantin Asen I (associated 1272?), with
1278–1279 Ivajlo (name uncertain), married Mihail Asen II’s mother Maria
1279–1280 IVan Asen III, son of Mico Asen

**House of Terter**

1280–1292 Georgi Terter I, married Marija, daughter of Jakov Svetoslav
by granddaughter of IVan Asen II; also married Marija, daughter of Mico Asen

**House of Smilec**

1292–1298 Smilec, married niece of the Byzantine emperor Mikhaēl VIII
1298–1299 IVan II, son of Smilec

idem, *The Despots...*, p. 154–155. Although Vladislav appears in both the Bojana and Poganovo memorial lists, these share enough common and unexpected features to be traced back to a single source. Therefore, we cannot be completely certain of the existence of the despotēs Vladislav independently of or in place of the Radoslav named in the Synodikon of Boril.
The revised arrangement of the monarchs’ names and numbers improves upon current practice, while largely conforming to it. Insofar as this practice is consistent (which is debatable), the only potentially confusing departures are the corrected names of Konstantin Asen I and Mihail Asen III (treated above), and the numbering of Petăr IV, Ivan I (Kalojan), Mihail Asen I and II, and Ivan II.

The name of Petăr IV (instead of II) takes into account the temporarily successful attempts at liberation from Byzantine rule under Petăr II (Deljan) and

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It is unclear whether he bore a double name, whether Deljan was a nickname, or whether the original name was Deljan, replaced by Petăr after he claimed the throne. For this see B.H. Златарски, История..., vol. II, p. 48–49, and 48, n. 2, who thinks it was a double name, like those of Gavril Radomir and Ivan Vladislav. Ioannis Skylitzès seems to have thought that Deljan was a nickname: Petros, a certain Bulgarian, Delianos by appellation (Πέτρος τις Βουλγαρος, Δελεάνος την προσηγοριαν) – Ioannis Scylitzæ synopsis historiarum, § 23, ed. I. Thurn, Berlin 1973. Mikhaēl Psellos shows ambiguity: his name was Dolianos, and I do not know whether this appellation came from his father, or whether he himself declared the name (Δολιάνος τὸ ὄνομα, οὐκ οἶδα είτε πατρόθεν τῆς τοιαύτης προσηγορίας κληρονομήσας εἴθ’ ἑαυτῷ τὴν κλῆσιν ἐπιφημίσας) – Michel Psellos, Chronographie ou histoire d’un siècle de Byzance (976–1077), 6, 40, ed. É. Renauld, Paris 1926–1928. Psellos’ uncertainty might be influenced by the apparent similarity between the name (as he rendered it), and Greek δόλος, craft, cunning, treachery. The information is insufficient for a definitive conclusion, but it might be significant that no source provides a simple pairing of the names Petăr and Deljan.
Petăr III (Konstantin Bodin) in the 11th century; the corrected usage has already been introduced in Bulgarian historiography.\(^{134}\)

The name of Ivan I (Kalojan) takes into account that this is the first Bulgarian ruler to bear the name by itself, as opposed to his predecessors Ivan Vladislav and Ivan Asen I, both of whom had double names. The form Kalojan itself is nothing more than an ornate and flattering version of Ivan, by analogy with Greek Καλοϊωάννης.\(^{135}\) Kalojan did not bear the name Asen, since that would have made him Ivan Asen, like his older brother.\(^{136}\) There is, of course, no inherent problem with retaining the designation Kalojan, even if it seems to obscure the standard name form.

Mihail Asen I (1246–1256) has long been called Mihail II Asen, on the basis that Boris I (853–889) had been baptized with the name Mihail and that Asen was used here as a family name.\(^{137}\) That the latter assumption is flawed has been demonstrated above. That Boris I was baptized Mihail, and was sometimes referred to by his new Christian name alone, is clear enough.\(^{138}\) Yet the new name did not completely displace the old one, as shown by contemporary documents and by the naming of Boris II (969–977).\(^{139}\) In fact the name Boris was preferred as the single

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\(^{134}\) Especially by Andreev, most recently in Й. АНДРЕЕВ, И. ЛАЗАРОВ, П. ПАВЛОВ, Кой кой е..., p. 548–550. Although this ruler was originally named Todor, the name was changed to Petăr upon accession; therefore we cannot speak of a double name (containing two baptismal names!) Todor Petăr, contra H. КОВАЧЕВ, Двоини лични имена..., p. 368.

\(^{135}\) This numbering of the ruler generally referred to as Kalojan is not unprecedented: e.g., C. ПАЛАУЗОВ, Уния в царуването на Йоанна I Асеня, БК 1.2, 1858, p. 51–63; similarly М. ДРИНОВ, Исторически преглед..., p. 80.

\(^{136}\) The only source to ascribe the name Asen to Kalojan is the late-14th-century Aragonese version of the Chronicle of Morea: Libro de los fechos et conquistas del principado de la Morea, Chronique de Morée aux XII et XIV siècles, § 59, ed. A. MOREL-FATIO, Geneva 1885, p. 16: vn emperador de Burgaria, el qual auia nombre Caloy(a)nni Assan. The chronicle was translated from Greek at a time when the Byzantine Asenids (who used this name as a family name) were both well-known and present in the area. It seems clear that the name Asen was ascribed to Kalojan on this basis.

\(^{137}\) See for example В.Н. ЗЛАТАРСКИ, История..., vol. III, p. 428; И. БОЖИЛОВ, Фамилията..., p. 106–110, № I 19. The usage is not universal, for example J.V.A. FINE Jr., The Late Medieval Balkans..., p. 156, uses simply Michael and Andreev in Й. АНДРЕЕВ, А. ПАНТЕВ, Вългарските ханове и цар от хан Кубрат до цар Борис III, Велико Търново 2004, p. 200–206, uses Mihail Aсен.

\(^{138}\) The seals of Boris I, inscribed in Greek, read Κ(υριε)/Θ(εοτό)κε βοήθη Μιχαήλ άρχοντα Βουλγαρίας, i.e., Lord/Theotokos, assist Mikhaēl, the king of Bulgaria: Й. ЮРУКОВА, В. ПЕЧЕВ, Български средновековни печати..., p. 24–25; the letters of Pope Ioannes VIII to Boris I are addressed to Michael, king of the Bulgarians, in Johannis VIII papae epistolae passim collectae, ed. E. CASEN, [in:] MGH.E, vol. VII, p. 1–33: Letter 66 from 878: Michaeli regi Vulgarum; letter 182 from 879: Michaeli regi Bulgarnorum; letter 184 from 879: Michaelem regem Bulgarnorum; the Balši inscription from 865/866 reads [ὁ ἄρχων Βουλγαρίας Βορής ὁ μετονομασθείς Μιχαήλ, the king of Bulgaria Borēs, renamed Mikhaēl, in Πυροβολαργαρικας ναδηνις, ed. and trans. B. БЕШЕВЛИЕВ, София 1979, p. 139–140, № 15. I translate arkhôn as king rather than prince here on the basis of the Latin use of rex.

\(^{139}\) The monk Hrabăr dated the invention of the Slavic alphabet to the time of the Greek emperor Mihail and the Bulgarian king Boris (Μιχαήλ ζ(ες)φ ρωματου και Βοιων Βοιων Βουλγαρικα),
designation of Boris I even in the later memorial lists of the church. More recent royal nomenclature has confirmed this preference, in the official style of Boris III (1918–1943). But even if we were to treat the first Boris as the first Mihail, the later medieval rulers are not named simply Mihail, but rather Mihail Asen. It is preferable, therefore, to abandon the usage Mihail II Asen in favor of Mihail Asen I, which is not only more accurate, but also places the last legitimate Asenid within a whole group of monarchs who hearkened back to his name as a way of highlighting their link to the founding family of the Second Bulgarian State. This leaves the often ignored son of Konstantin Asen I as Mihail Asen II, and Mihail III Šišman becomes more correctly Mihail Asen III, retaining the ordinal number assigned to him, although now in reference to his full double name.

The obscure Ivan II (1298–1299) has been designated Ivan IV Smilec by his discoverer, Ivan Božilov. Although based on rational considerations, this designation is not a particularly fortunate one. Božilov surely knew that no source used the name Smilec for this ephemeral ruler, and he must have intended it as a marker indicating that this Ivan was the son of Smilec (1292–1298). But Smilec is not a family name, not a second element of a double name, and not even a proper patronymic; the designation Ivan IV Smilec thus becomes analogous to the problematic Konstantin I Tih and Mihail III Šišman discussed above. It seems best to abandon the artificial designation altogether; this monarch does not need yet

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140 See above for the Synodikon of Boril; the Bojana and Poganovo memorial lists simply have Борис; християнское же имя пояснил Mihail… Се Борис, болгары кр...: Стара българска книжнина, vol. I, ed. И. Дуричев, София 1944, p. 76. № 15. The Synodikon of Boril, p. 149, fol. 201б, treats Boris I similarly: to Boris, the first Bulgarian emperor (sic!), named in holy baptism Mihail (Борис пръвъ въ българския наречени въ с(в)тъ кръжъ въ Михаилъ).
141 The modern designation Boris-Mihail for the ruler as a saint of the Bulgarian Church is very similar to the double names we have observed, but it reverses the elements, placing the Christian baptismal name second. Moreover, unlike later rulers sporting double names like Mihail Asen, Boris I did not bear a double name from the start, since he was baptized long after his birth and accession to the throne. The sources cited above also show that while he could be identified by either name, the names are not attested as a simple pairing. In similar non-Bulgarian cases, only one of the two names, pagan or Christian, is preferred: for example, István I of Hungary (997–1038), who was originally named Vajk, and Vladimir I of Kiev (978–1015), who was baptized Vasilij.
another name (least of all an artificial one), considering the long string of family names he adopted in Byzantium after leaving Bulgaria.\(^{143}\) As for the numbering of this ephemeral ruler, Ivan IV seems to reflect Ivan I Asen, Ivan II Asen, and Ivan III Asen, designations used by Božilov elsewhere in his work.\(^{144}\) But if we were to break up the double name Ivan Asen and count each resulting Ivan as such, we ought to include in this count Kalojan (see above) and also to break up and account for the name of Ivan Vladislav. By this logic Božilov’s Ivan IV should become Ivan VI, and several of the other aforementioned rulers should be renumbered too. On the other hand, maintaining the distinction between single and double names demonstrated in this study would allow the simpler solution of designating this last 13th-century monarch of Bulgaria Ivan II as in the tabulation above. Given the ephemeral duration of his rule and his status as a minor, this correction is perhaps more likely to pass unnoticed than to cause confusion\(^{145}\).

\(^{143}\) The former Ivan II is named by his maternal aunt, Theodōra Synadēnē, in her typikon for the monastery of the Virgin of Safe Hope (Theotokos tēs Bebaiaς Elpidos) as my beloved nephew, the lord Iōannēs Kōmnēnos Doukas Branas Palaiologos, the son of the most exalted lady of the Bulgarians, ... monk Iōasaph (περιποθήτου μου ἀνεψιοῦ κυροῦ Ἰωάννου Κομνηνοῦ Δούκα Αγγέλου Βρανᾶ τοῦ Παλαιολόγου, υἱοῦ τῆς υψηλοτάτης δεσποίνης τῶν Βουλγάρων... Ίωάσαφ μοναχοῦ): Typicon monasterii Theotoci Bebaiaς Elpidos, 24, 142, ed. H. Delahye, Deux typica byzantins de l'ère des Paléologues, Brussels 1921, p. 93, and similarly at 23, 122, p. 84.

\(^{144}\) See И. Божилов, Фамилията..., p. 27–40 (№ I 1), 77–92 (№ I 7), 249–255 (№ II 1).

\(^{145}\) The existence of this Ivan II (1298–1299) has been called into question by К. Кръстев, Имало ли е български цар Йоан IV „Смилец”?, Pbг 34.1, 2010, p. 55–60; idem, Българското царство..., p. 210–211, 232–233. Krăstev points to the absence of any indication that Theodōra Synadēnē considers her nephew a Bulgarian monarch and adopts the traditional interpretation of a passage in a letter of Theodōros Metokhitēs (Presbeutikos, [in:] L. Mavromatis, La fondation de l'empire serbe, Le kralj Milutin, Thessalonikē 1978, p. 982–1035), by Nikov, according to which Smilec’s widow ruled alone and was ready to make the Serbian king Stefan Uroš II Milutin (1282–1321) ruler of Bulgaria by offering him her hand in marriage (see П. Ников, Татаробългарски отношения през средните векове с оглед към царуването на Смилеца, ГСУИФФ 15/16, 1921, p. 37–41, 44, 46–48, 91–93); Krăstev concludes that her son Iōannēs Kōmnēnos Doukas Angelos Branas Palaiologos must have been born of a second marriage to an unknown husband after she returned to the Byzantine Empire. While Krăstev has proposed a scenario that is not implausible in and of itself, he has not disproven Božilov’s identification of Ivan II as Smilec’s son and heir. On the other hand, if Smilec’s widow had no son, it is difficult to see how she could have kept her son-in-law, the despotēs Aldimir, or Smilec’s brothers, the sebastokratōr Radoslav and the despotēs Voisil from the throne; as for the marriage alliance she sought to arrange with the Serbian royal family, this appears to have involved one of her daughters, as proposed by Pavlov in Й. Андреев, И. Лазаров, П. Павлов, Кой кой е…, p. 349–350, and by В. Игнатов, 100 мита..., p. 307–316; both Pavlov and Ignatov see the intended marital alliance as the marriage between the future Stefan Uroš III (1321–1331) and Smilec’s daughter Teodora, which they date before the accession of Todor Svetoslav in 1299/1300. С. Михит, Српско-бугарски односи на крају 13. века, ЗРВИ 46, 2009, p. 333–340, thinks this marriage cannot have been contracted so early (opting for c. 1305/1306 instead), in part because he follows Nikov’s interpretation of Metochites. At any rate a later date for the marriage between Stefan Uroš III and Teodora need not necessarily negate Pavlov and Ignatov’s interpretation of the intentions of Smilec’s
An additional issue pertinent to this discussion is whether rulers who were associated on the throne but did not survive to become sole (or senior) monarchs themselves should be assigned ordinal numbers. This is not generally done in historiography, as can be seen from many examples from around Europe. The history of the Byzantine Empire provides particularly numerous examples, of which only the last, Mikhaēl IX Palaiologos (1294–1320), is generally assigned an ordinal number. It is by analogy that we may assign ordinal numbers to Mihail Asen IV, Ivan Asen IV, and Ivan Asen V, all of them sons of Ivan Aleksandăr who were associated on the throne but never became sole or senior rulers, unlike their brothers Ivan Sracimir and Ivan Šišman. Mihail Asen IV and Ivan Asen IV fell in battles against the Ottoman Turks (in 1355 and 1349, respectively), while Ivan Asen V might have survived in the shadow of his full brother Ivan Šišman into the 1380s. Since numbering Mihail Asen IV and Ivan Asen IV and V would not conflict with that of any later Bulgarian monarchs, it does not present a problem.

The considerations above indicate that medieval Bulgarians and their monarchs typically bore single or double names, but did not seem to employ family names in spite of pre-Christian and contemporary Byzantine practice, and also did not seem to pair patronymics with their personal names. Medieval Bulgarian monarchs also did not assume ordinal numbers. Reviewing the names and numbering of the Bulgarian monarchs with this in mind, it becomes apparent that there is room for improvement upon pre-existing practice. And since that practice is neither completely consistent nor entirely universal, it is not unfeasible to propose its revision. The main effect of such revision would be to eliminate patronymics (like Tih and Šišman) from the formal nomenclature, and to treat double names as such, rather than as personal names followed by imaginary family names or patronymics. The imaginary family names themselves could still be used to group monarchs together in genealogical groupings for convenience (e.g., House of Asen, House of Terter, etc.). The resulting revision in the naming and numbering of monarchs seems relatively minor and, on the whole, unobtrusive. It improves our understanding of an aspect of medieval Bulgarian society, and

widow in 1298/1299. It thus seems best to agree with Božilov that Smilec’s widow ruled Bulgaria in the name of her son in 1298–1299.

146 For example Philippe, the son and co-ruler (in 1129–1131) of Louis VI of France (1108–1137); Henry, the son and co-ruler (in 1170–1183) of Henry II of England (1154–1189); Heinrich, the son and co-ruler (in 1147–1150) of Konrad III of the Holy Roman Empire (1138–1152).

147 Not counting the purely titular Andronikos V Palaiologos, who was associated as a minor with his father Iōannēs VII Palaiologos, while the latter was governor of Thessalonica in 1403–1408. On Andronikos V, see G.T. DENNIS, An Unknown Byzantine Emperor, Andronicus V Palaeologus (1400–1407?), JÖB 16, 1967, p. 173–187. Since neither a Mikhaēl nor an Andronikos reigned after Mikhaēl IX and Andronikos V, the numbering is in each case equally unproblematic.

148 For him see Й. АНДРЕЕВ, България..., p. 285–297, who also points out that the depiction of Ivan Asen V with his parents and brother in the London gospels, while giving him the imperial title, shows him bearing the crown of a despotēs instead: ibidem, p. 41–44, 286–288.
it corrects the occasional oversights of earlier historians. Moreover, the process of reassessing the relevant data provides new opportunities in a field where, due to the relative scarcity of sources, so much depends on inference.

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The article explores the onomastic practices of medieval Bulgarians, focusing on the Second Bulgarian State, from the late 12th to the early 15th century. The collected evidence suggests that soon after their conversion to Christianity, Bulgarians abandoned the attested pre-Christian clan names. Yet, despite the undeniable strength of Byzantine cultural influence, neither aristocrats nor commoners in Bulgaria seem to have adopted Byzantine-type family names, nor, for that matter, making recourse to the use of patronymics as found among the Eastern and other Southern Slavs. Thus, for example, the name Asen became a true family name only among members of the royal family living in Byzantium. More generally, the few cases of family names or patronymics apparently applied to medieval Bulgarians, seem to be restricted to a foreign context.

While family names and patronyms do not seem to have been employed in Christian Medieval Bulgaria, many individuals (at least where males are concerned) appear to have sported double names, composed almost invariably of a baptismal Christian name paired with a folk name usually derived from Slavic or even Bulgar tradition. This practice included Bulgaria’s monarchs, most of whom had such double names that should not be misinterpreted as family names or patronyms, as often done in the past. Specific names did, however, function as indicators for belonging within a particular lineage, as witnessed by the propagation of names like Asen, Terter, Šišman, and Sracimir. Thus, while these cannot be considered true family names, we could continue to use them as expedients to designate the ruling clans of Medieval Bulgaria (e.g., the House of Terter), albeit recognizing this to be a modern label.
These considerations not only elucidate another aspect of cultural practice in Medieval Bulgaria, but also allow and necessitate a relatively inobtrusive emendation and systematization of the historiographical nomenclature of Medieval Bulgarian monarchs. Discarding the notion of family names and recognizing foreign patronyms for what they are, it becomes possible to recover the actual results of dynastic name selection, as well as the rationale behind them.

**Keywords:** Bulgaria, Byzantium, Serbia, personal names, monarchs, house of Asen, house of Terter, house of Šišman, house of Sracimir

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Table 1: House of Asen
Table 2: Houses of Terter and Smilec

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>House</th>
<th>Founder 1</th>
<th>Founder 2</th>
<th>Wife 1</th>
<th>Wife 2</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theodóros II</td>
<td>Elenas</td>
<td>Anna/Teodora</td>
<td>Mico Asen</td>
<td>Eirēnē Palaiologina</td>
<td>Konstantinos Laskarina</td>
<td>Palaiologos 1292–1298, Voisil despotēs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Todor Svetoslav</td>
<td>1299–1322</td>
<td>Anna of Hungary</td>
<td>Ivan Asen III</td>
<td>1279–1280</td>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>Stefan Uroš II 1298–1299, Teodora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euphrosynē</td>
<td>Todor Svetoslav</td>
<td>1280–1292</td>
<td>Georgi Terter I</td>
<td>1323–1330</td>
<td>Maria MIHAIL ASEN III</td>
<td>Stefan Uroš II 1298–1299, Teodora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mankous</td>
<td>Todor Svetoslav</td>
<td>1299–1322</td>
<td>Theodora Palaiologina</td>
<td>1300</td>
<td>Laskarina</td>
<td>Konstantinos Asen I 1257–1277, Eirēnē Palaiologina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgi Terter II</td>
<td>1322–1323</td>
<td></td>
<td>Theodora</td>
<td>1300</td>
<td>Voisil despotēs</td>
<td>Stefan Uroš II 1298–1299, Teodora</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Stefan Uroš II 1298–1299, Teodora</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Notes:**
- **Mihail Asen III:** Son of Noqai
- **Stefan Uroš III:** Dečanski
- **Ioannēs VI:** Kantakouzēnos
- **Helenē Kantakouzēnē:** Palaiologos 1376