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TSAR IVAN SHISHMAN'S LAST WAR (1388–1395)

(Summary)

This article deals with the last years of Tsar Ivan Shishman and the medieval Bulgarian state. The author has launched a view that differs radically from what been said so far and is based on a critical study of Turkish sources. According to the hypothesis, the Ottoman chronicles artificially blended events that occurred at a different time. Comparison of Turkish sources and the existing scarce Christian evidence revealed that the even in question was a lengthy war that, with small interruptions, continued from 1388 to 1395. This can provisorily be divided into three periods. Grand Vizier Ali Pasha's march of 1388–1389 ended with the conquest of the region around Shoumen. Between 1390 and 1393 the conflict was expressed in interminable skirmishes on the border. In 1393 the Turkish sultan marched against Turnovo Bulgaria as a result of Tsar Shishman's renewed actions in alliance with the Wallachian voyvode, Mircho. The greater part of the country was conquered, leaving the Bulgarian ruler with a small demesne around Nicopol. During the dramatic third stage of the war (between 1393 and 1395) Tsar Shishman made desperate attempts to organise the resistance. Everything ended at the avenue of approach to Nicopol, in June 1395, when Ivan Shishman was captured after an attempts to help Mircho in the decisive battle with the Turks at Rovine.