PART TWO

CONVERSION, EXPANSION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY, AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS DURING THE FIRST BULGARIAN TSARDOM, 864–1018

Seals

Lead seals of Prince Boris-Michael (864–889, 893, + 907).
The seals document the newly converted ruler’s dedication to Christianity by referring to him by his Christian name only and underscore the territorial concept of the Bulgarian polity as opposed to earlier references to people rather than land. Both the name and the invocation of the Mother of God stress the link to Byzantium. Especially interesting is the last seal, which might be attributed to the time of Michael’s brief (and illegitimate) return to power to suppress the pagan reaction under his son Rasate and re-establish Christianity and the pro-Byzantine orientation of Bulgaria by putting his younger son Simeon on the Bulgarian throne. Editions: Nikola Mushmov, Monetite i pechatite na Balgarskite tsare (Sofia, 1924), 157; Jordanov, Korpus, 31–36.

(v) + Christ help your servant Michael ruler of Bulgaria.
(r) + Mother of God help your servant Michael ruler of Bulgaria.

(r) + Mother of God help Michael ruler of Bulgaria.
(v) + Lord God help Michael, ruler of Bulgaria.

(r) ΘΕΟΠΟΘΟΤΟΧΟ
(v) Mother of God help your servant Michael the monk, from God ruler of Bulgaria.

Seals of Tsar Simeon (893–927).
The seals reflect the progressive growth of Simeon’s political aspirations within the framework of the Byzantine political theology, from a prince and a ruler of a friendly country technically acknowledging Byzantine overarching authority, to emperor (basileus or tsar), to emperor of the “Roman” Empire, to guardian of the universal peace. Edition: PI, 330, 332 (#88–90); Jordanov, Korpus, 40–54.

(v) + Mother of God help Simeon ruler of Bulgaria.
(r) + Lord God help Simeon ruler of Bulgaria.

(v) + Mother of God help Simeon ruler of Bulgaria.
(r) + Christ help Simeon ruler of Bulgaria.
36 **Lead seals of Tsar Peter and his spouse Maria.**
Tsar Simeon’s universal claims were not accepted as legitimate by Byzantium, but the political sovereignty of his heir, Peter (927–969), was acknowledged in a compromise that left him with the title of *basileus* of the Bulgarians, a return to a non-territorial definition of his authority. The legitimacy of the title was buttressed by his marriage to the Byzantine princess Maria Lakapena (911–962). She appears on his official seals of which a large number (about 50 so far) have been found in a Preslav workshop. Edition: Jordanov, *Korpus*, 58–63.

37 **Seal of Ioan bagatur, tenth century.**
The seal records two titles of a high-ranking Bulgarian; their exact meaning and hence his position in the hierarchy of the Bulgarian court is still unclear. Ioan could have been a *bagatur* in service of the heir presumed, the *kanartikin,*