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New coin type of Tsar Ivan Alexander (1331 - 1371) (Abstract)

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The long reign of Tsar Ivan Alexander is marked by the most intensive minting of silver and copper coins by the Bulgarian state. The mint of the capital Tarnovo became a leading monetary center in Southeast Europe. The present paper adds a new, 22nd type to the intensive copper issues of Tsar Ivan Alexander, struck by the mint in the capital Tarnovo and by mints in Eastern Bulgaria. It is attested by two previously unknown coins. The first coin is in a private collection. On its obverse, the figure of the ruler is traditionally depicted with a spherical crown with *pendilia*, *divitision* and *loros*, holding a scepter with cross in his right hand and a sphere with cross in his left one. To the left of the figure, there is a circular legend ΙΩΑΝΝ, and to the right, a monogram of the name ΑΛΞΑΝΔΡ. On the reverse, which is a novelty for the entire coinage of Ivan Alexander, his two names are

presented as a vertical monogram, a practice that was attested so far only on coins of Ivan Sratsimir (1355 - 1396), Ivan Alexander's son, minted in Vidin in Northwestern Bulgaria after 1370. The new monetary type indicates that it was used as a model for the vertical legends of the royal names and title on some of Ivan Sratsimir's copper coins. The diameter of the coins is 19 mm and they weigh respectively 1.10 and 1.25 g.

Having in mind the engraver's work and the relatively more schematic and naïve style of the issue, it could be attributed to the production of the mints in Eastern Bulgaria, such as Drastar (Silistra), Varna, Kastritsi (5 km to the north of Varna), or near Kranevo at the mouth of Batovska River. These mints issued only copper coins for the needs of the home market between 1350 and 1370.