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In Memory of Varbinka
Novae and the Barbaric Incursions in 238- 251

Kamen Dimitrov

Sofia

As a center on the Roman and Early Byzantine Danubian Limes, Novae was situated 4 km east of the modern city of Svišov, Bulgaria. The locality was one of the most convenient places to cross the Danube, used even by the Russians in 1877. This geographical particularity related Novae to many of the barbaric incursions which affected the Roman provinces of Moesia Inferior and Thracia in Antiquity. The years from 238 to 251 are featured by numerous barbaric raids. They worked serious havoc with the Roman provinces, leaving destructed and burned layers in many archaeological sites. In the modern studies, however, they are mostly considered to be a result of the big invasion of the Goths of Cniva in 250-251. The explicit review of the written information itself provides milestones on the path to detect different incursions in different years, to reveal their connections with the domestic troubles of the Empire and to establish which territories have been affected. A strict adherence to the facts as transmitted by the ancient authors should be recommended. Within this context a precise dating of some coin hoards on the territory related with Novae should be inevitably required. So has to be the treatment of the single coins, excavated in the villa extra muros Novae (square VIII A) as well. Thus the precise dating of the numismatic finds, compared to the written evidence, may shed new light on the problem in which incursions and related processes in 238- 251 and how active Novae was involved in them.

**I. NOVAE AND the incursions under Gordianus III and Philippus I
(238- 245).**

Under the rule of Maximus (Pupienus) and Balbinus the Carps waged a war with the Moesians, The city of Histria was destroyed (Hist. Aug. Max. et Balb., 16, 3; ЛИБИ: 58 note 6; Dexipp. 1; ГИБИ: 3)). This happened in 238. The „Moesians“ were actually the „population and the legions“ in Moesia Inferior. In the following one or two years (Иванов 1999: 110- 111: 239- 240) the Carps were driven back by the provincial governor Menophilus (Геров 1952: 28). In Summer 242 (RIC 4, 3: 11) Gordianus III passed through Moesia en route against the Persians. His army was enormous and he brought much gold. „All the enemies residing in Thracia“ were „annihilated and driven away“ (Hist. Aug. Gord. 26, 3; ЛИБИ: 57; Геров 1952: 28). By that time the province comprised the lands bordered by Haemus, the Black, the Propontic and the