The recording and precise positioning of coin finds are extremely important for the study of monetary circulation in the region to the North of the Black Sea. In recent decades progress has been made in this field and the situation in the region to the North-West of the Black Sea and the adjacent part of Eastern Europe has been clarified once and for all. Further research is required, however, with regard to monetary circulation in the north-eastern part of the Black Sea region (particularly in the Cimmerian Bosporus) in the 5th century AD. In view of the fact that Roman gold coins of this period are encountered extremely rarely and constitute only a very small coin-group, each new find is of considerable interest. We shall therefore attempt to consider the Theodosius II solidi published in this short article in conjunction with currently available information on coins from the reigns of both this and other emperors found in the region to the North of the Black Sea and adjacent territories.

In the summer of 1985 during excavations at the Zelyony Mys (Green Cape) settlement on the East-Crimean coast of the Sea of Azov (97.5 kms west of Cape Zyuk) the remains of a modest dwelling were unearthed which had a compacted clay floor and had been destroyed in the third quarter of the 6th century. In the habitation level of the 4th-5th century containing fragments of amphorae, hand-moulded pottery vessels and a red-lacquer plate bearing a stamp shaped like a fish, a glass wine-glass for receiving communion and a copper coin from the reign of Rescuporis VI (314-342), two gold coins of one and the same

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type were found under a pile of stones in the south-western corner of a room:

*Obverse*: Bust of emperor facing front dressed in a coat of mail and helmet. A spear against the right shoulder, the left covered with a shield bearing a depiction of a galloping horseman. To right and left of the bust is an inscription in the round which reads D.N. THEODOSIVS P.F.

*Reverse*: Roma seated on a throne facing left and holding an orb in her right hand adorned with a cross and a sceptre in the left. To the right there is a round shield and to the left an 8-pointed star. The inscription round the edge reads — IMP.XXXXII. COS. XVII. P.P. In the exergue there is an inscription which reads COMOB.

**Gold**

The first coin (Fig. 1, 1) is in a splendid state of preservation, weighs 4.471 grammes and measures 21 cms in diameter. The second example (Fig. 1, 2) is of similar diameter, weighs 4.463 grammes and shows slight signs of wear. Its right-hand edge is slightly bent. Identification and dating of the coins do not raise any doubts: these coins are solidi of the ruler of the Eastern Roman Empire Theodosius II (408-450). Part of the legend — IMP(erator) XXXXII CO(n)S(ul) XVII ("emperor for the 42nd time, Consul for the 17th time) points to the fact that these solidi were issued during the year 449. They could only have been minted prior to January 1, 1950, i.e. before Theodosius II assumed consular office for the eighteenth time. These coins are therefore from the last but one issue, since the coins of the last issue bear the abbreviations TR(ibunicia) P(otestas) XXXXII CO(n)S(ul) XVIII and IMP(erator) XXXXIII CO(n)S(ul) XVIII. These

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4 See: H. Goodacre, op. cit., p.30; R. Göbl, *Antike Numismatik*, 1, Munich, 1978, p. 84 and Note 369. We are unable, therefore, to agree with the suggestions put forward by V.V. Kropotkin dating them to 443-444 AD (see: Maslenikov, Report on the Work... L. 88). V.V. Kropotkin is most likely to have calculated the 42 years of Theodosius II reign, as mentioned in the legend on the coins, from January 402, when he was elevated to the rank of Augustus at the age of 9 months. Moreover, in a number of special publications (for example, Sear, op. cit., p. 352) to which Kropotkin may well have referred, the dates of Theodosius II reign are given as 402-450. Yet it would be more correct to start out from the date of May 1, 408, when Theodosius was proclaimed Emperor of the Eastern Empire, in particular because there is precise information available to the effect that he died in July 28, 450 aged fifty in the 43rd year of his reign (see E. Gibbon, *Istoriya upadka i krusheniya Rimskoi imperii* — History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire), Moscow-St. Petersburg, 1994, p. 446.