

A new Control Weight from Olbia Pontika

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Cuvinte cheie: Olbia, Grecia antică, Roma, agoranomi, greutate etalon, sisteme de greutate, mină, libră.

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A lead control or official weight from Olbia bearing a caduceus and a dolphin, weighs 868 g (with losses estimated at c. 15-25 g). This object is of major importance for Olbian metrology at the turn of the 2nd-3rd centuries AD. It combines integral values of the principal units of two weight standards (*sic*): two minas of the Euboic-Attic system (mina = 425-437 g) correspond to three librae (36 unciae) of the light Roman standard (libra = 270-290 g = 12 unciae). The legend displays orthographic features characteristic of the 2nd-3rd centuries AD in the personal name: ἀγορα/νόμοι οἱ περὶ Εἰκαδ(ι)ω/ν· Ἴτα(λική?) – “the agoranomoi under the leadership of Eikadios/Ekaddinos(?). Italian (weight)”. The ethnic attribution of the agoranomos is ambiguous: the name may be Greek (Εἰκάδιος) or barbarian (possibly Sarmatian) Ἐκαδδίνος. Evidently the same individual is mentioned as the patronymic of an archon in the inscriptions IOSPE 46 and IOlb 52. A palaeographic peculiarity is the form of *omega* as a semicircle with a radial hasta, recorded in Olbia for the first time. The weight can be dated *terminus post quem* to the turn of the 2nd-3rd centuries AD.

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O nouă greutate etalon din Olbia Pontică

Un etalon de plumb sau o greutate oficială provenind din Olbia, pe care sunt reprezentate un caduceu și un delfin, cântărește 868 g (cu pierderi estimate la cca. 15-25 g). Descoperirea acestei piese are o importanță majoră pentru metrologia din Olbia la cumpăna dintre secolele al II-lea și al III-lea d.Chr. Acesta combină valorile integrale ale unităților principale ale două standarde de greutate (*sic*): două mine din sistemul euboico-atic (mina = 425-437 g) corespund la trei librae (36 unciae) din standardul roman ușor (libra = 270-290 g = 12 unciae). Legenda prezintă trăsături ortografice caracteristice secolelor II-III d.Chr. în numele propriu: ἀγορα/νόμοι οἱ περὶ Εἰκαδ(ι)ω/ν· Ἴτα(λική?) – „agoranomoi sub conducerea lui Eikadios/Ekaddinos(?). Italian (greutate)”. Atribuirea etnică a agoranomului este ambiguă: numele poate fi grecesc (Εἰκάδιος) sau din mediul „barbar” (posibil sarmatic) Ἐκαδδίνος. Evident, aceeași persoană este menționată ca patronimic al unui arhon în inscripțiile IOSPE 46 și IOlb 52. O particularitate paleografică este forma literei *omega* ca semicerc cu o hasta radială, înregistrată pentru prima dată în Olbia. Greutatea poate fi datată *terminus post quem* la cumpăna dintre secolele II și III d.Chr.

Introduction

Control or official (inscribed) weights constitute an important component of the material culture of the ancient world. Such weights served as standards of reference, that is, as the weight norms of antiquity. Accordingly, unlike the bulk of commercial weights, the manufacture, verification, and storage of official weights were entrusted to a special board of agoranomoi (metronomoi). As a rule, in addition to information on the weight standards in use, official weights bear inscriptions recording the composition of the board of agoranomoi and the prosopography of these magistrates [Chaniotis 2026; Chuistova 1962, 59-60]. Scholars have long been studying the official (inscribed) weights of the most important ancient polis of the Northern

Black Sea region, Olbia Pontica [Krapivina 1980; 2004]. The greatest contribution to the study of these artefacts was made by the outstanding scholar V.V. Krapivina. To date, the official weights of Olbia from the Classical and Hellenistic periods are widely known. The weights bear the names of the agoranomoi¹ Kritoboulos (ΟΛΒΙΟ\ΚΡΙΤΟΒΟΥ), Aristo(...) (ΟΛΒΙΟ\ΑΡΙΣΤΟ(ΕΥ)), Apollonios and Demokon (ΟΛΒΙΟ\ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝΙΟ Δ\ΗΜΟΚΩ), as well as Philon (ΟΛΒΙΟ\ΦΙΛΩ), Dionysios (ΟΛΒΙΟ\ΔΙΟΝΥ), Charinau(t)os (ΟΛΒΙΟ\ΧΑΡΙΝΑΥ), and unidentified agoranomoi (ΟΕΥΚΑΙ\ΟΥΣΚΑΕ[...]\ΑΝΑ[...])²

1. Information on Olbian metronomoi is lacking.

2. For a proposed interpretation of the names of the agoranomoi, see [Nikolaev 2022].

[Krapivina 1980; 2004]. A much smaller number of published weights belongs to the Roman period (see below). At the same time, lots consisting of official weights from Olbia and/or its chora periodically appear on the domestic antiquities market. Such weights may represent either chance finds or the result of unauthorised searches using modern equipment. It is now generally accepted that artefacts deriving from looting or accidental discovery should not be ignored but must be studied and published. Unfortunately, information about the archaeological context of such weights is in most cases either lacking or unreliable. In recent years, a particular form of cooperation between collectors and scholars has also emerged: scholars provide expert consultation to collectors in exchange for information about the artefacts. For example, the author of the present article has repeatedly been approached by owners of private collections with requests to read and comment on inscriptions on ancient objects, in particular on official weights. As a rule, collectors supply photographs of the weights and data on their mass and dimensions. In this way, over a certain period the author has assembled a virtual collection of official weights (photographs and descriptions), part of which has already been published [Nikolaev 2022]. Thus, in addition to the well-known examples of agoranomic weights, new specimens have been introduced into scholarly circulation, including weights of the agoranomos Apaturios (ΑΠΑΤΟΥ)³ and a variant of the weight of Kritoboulos (ΟΛΒΙΟ\ΚΡΙ)⁴. In addition to the well-known official weight (ΟΛΒΙΟ\ΑΠΟΛΛ\ΩΝΙΟ Δ\ΗΜΟΚΩ)⁵, a weight of Demokon (ΔΗΜΟΚΩ)⁵ has been published, and probably also that of his brother Gorgias (ΟΛΒΙΟ\ΓΟΡΓΗ)⁶. *A weight bearing the name of the agoranomos*

Aristoxenos (ΑΡΙΣΤΟΞ) was found. A distinctive feature of recent studies of the official weights of Olbia Pontika is their integrated analysis together with agoranomic stamps on measuring vessels and abbreviations of the names of coin magistrates [Nikolaev 2024a]. *The chronological framework of such research is provided by the synchronised eponymic catalogue of Olbia, IOSPE 201* [Nikolaev 2024b; 2024c]. This approach raises the interpretation and dating of official weights to a new prosopographical (historical) level [Nikolaev 2024a; 2024b; 2024c]. In the present case, use is made of the well-known ancient practice whereby the holding of a magistracy (agoranomos, strategos, archon, coin magistrate, etc.) was chronologically close to the holding of the eponymous office.

Exposition of the main research material

The majority of previously published weights date to the Classical and Hellenistic periods. At the same time, the virtual collection of Olbian official weights continues to grow, and their chronological range is being extended. The aim of the present article is to publish a large-size official weight of the Roman period. In continuation of my previous studies, primary attention is paid to the palaeographic and prosopographical (historical) interpretation of the inscriptions on weights⁷.

The large lead weight, weighing 868 g, originates from Olbia Pontika (fig. 1). According to its owner, it comes from an old collection. It is published here for the first time. No further contextual information concerning the provenance of the artefact is available.

The state of preservation of the weight is very good. Only the upper part of the left side shows a local flaking of the metal (fig. 2b); this damage has slightly affected the frame on the upper surface and part of the relief image of the dolphin. The possible loss⁸ of weight is estimated at 15–25 g. The weight has a very rare trapezoidal shape [Chustova 1962, 14, 16]: height 10.0 cm; larger base 7.5 cm; smaller base 4.5 cm; thickness c. 1.4 cm. Such dimensions theoretically imply a weight

3. The weight bearing the legend ([ἀγορανόμου] Ἀπατου[ρίου]) supplements the corpus of measuring vessels with the same legend. The measuring vessels marked ΑΠΑΤΟΥ were published by T.N. Knipovich. [Nikolaev 2022; Orlyk 2024, 27 (ΑΠΑΤ); Glebov 2025].

4. The weight with the legend ([ἀγορανόμου] Κρι[τοβούλου]) coincides with the coin legend ΚΡΙ on the first series of minted copper coins of subgroup Ir(Mo), which dates back to 345–337 BC. Moreover, the agoranom and coin magistrate Kritoboulos is probably mentioned in the magical inscription SEG 50:702, IV (circa 352–347 BC) [Nikolaev 2023b, 164].

5. Δημοκῶν Εὐβιότου, Olbian eponym of 349 BC. Mentioned, probably, in a magical inscription IGDOlb 106 [Nikolaev, Piunov 2025; Nikolaev 2025].

6. Γοργίας Εὐβιότου, eponym of 334 BC [Nikolaev 2022].

7. Unfortunately, in violation of the main rule of epigraphy, visual inspection of weights is usually not available.

8. Obviously, it is promising to use the technique of V.M. Orlyk and O.D. Shvets for calculating the exact value of the lost weight of the kettlebell. However, this requires de visu of the artifact [Shvets' 2025; Glebov 2025].



Fig. 1. Control weight from Olbia.

of about 950 g. However, its actual mass is 868 g. First, traces of metal removal for fine adjustment of the weight (fig. 2a) reduce the theoretical value; these were observed on the lower vertical face. Secondly, the presence of a frame on the obverse increases the height and thus affects the calculation of volume. Thirdly, the reverse is not flat but contains a funnel-shaped depression caused by the solidification of lead during manufacture (casting in an open mould). Incidentally, a small circular protuberance (diameter c. 5 mm) is preserved on the reverse (upper right): this marks the point where the molten metal was poured into the open mould (fig. 2c). Fourthly, some reduction in weight is also due to local flaking of the metal. Thus, the original weight must have been slightly higher than 868 g. Taking into account the losses from metal flaking (fig. 2a), the initial mass may be estimated at approximately 880-890 g. In the ancient world, a considerable number of official and commercial weights of comparable mass are known⁹. Traditionally, they are identified as two

minas of the Euboic-Attic system [Chuistova 1962, 154]. This weight system originated in the 7th-6th centuries BC and remained in use in the ancient world, including the Northern Black Sea region, until the 1st-2nd centuries AD. Weights of similar mass are known both in the Northern Black Sea area and in Olbia Pontica. In the Euboic-Attic system, one mina corresponded to 425-436 g [Chuistova 1962; Krapivina 1980]. Accordingly, an analysis of the metrological characteristics allows the hypothesis that *the weight under publication corresponds to two minas of the Euboic-Attic system*. However, the object also bears inscriptions; further study of these inscriptions makes it possible to advance a hypothesis that the weight simultaneously belonged to another weight system as well (see below).

The obverse of the weight bears relief images and inscriptions. Both the images and the inscriptions are enclosed within a frame 1.5-2 mm high. In the centre of the upper part of the obverse is a vertically oriented staff of Hermes – the caduceus. The depiction of the caduceus is known on weights [Chuistova 1962, 71; Pondera]. To the left of the caduceus is a relief image of a dolphin, shown head downwards. The dolphin image is slightly damaged (fig. 1).

The publication of this inscribed official weight aims to examine not only its metrological characteristics but also the palaeographic features of the inscription. Beneath the caduceus there is an inscription arranged in five lines. The height of the letters ranges from 11 to 6 mm. The inscription contains thirteen letters of the Ancient Greek alphabet. Its palaeography is characterised by a mixture of angular and cursive scripts. The text begins with a large *alpha* (with a broken crossbar). *Alpha* occurs three more times in the inscription, but in these cases its size is approximately half as large. A characteristic feature of lead as a casting material is a certain loss of sharpness in the lettering; consequently, it is impossible to determine whether the remaining *alphas* had horizontal or broken crossbars. The letters *mu* and *nu* are executed with vertical strokes; the size of *omicron* is comparable to that of the other letters. *Rho* has a slightly increased height. *Epsilon* is rendered with equal horizontal strokes. *Delta* is distinguished by its small height and broad base. The unique feature of the inscription is the use of a peculiar cur-

9. For example, see Pondera: An Online Database of Ancient and Byzantine Weights: <https://pondera.uclouvain.be/>

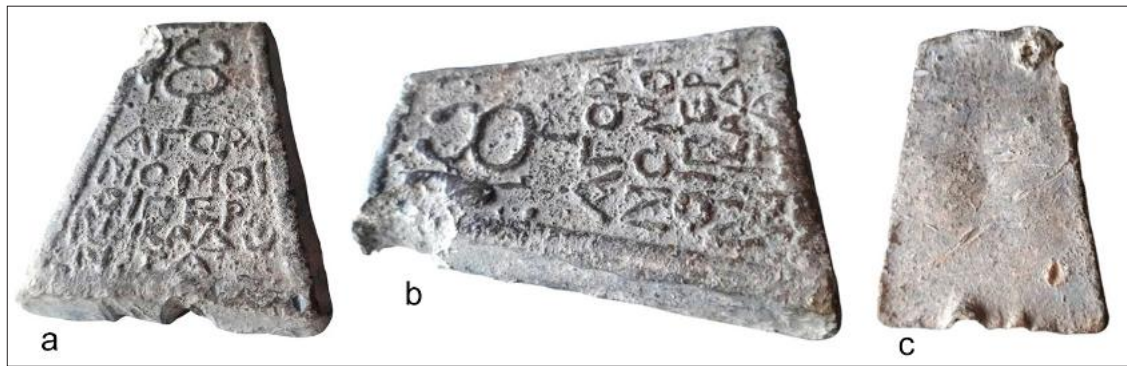


Fig. 2. Control weight from Olbia: a) metal trimming to adjust weight; b) localised metal loss; c) reverse side.

sive form of *omega*. This letter is executed as a semicircle with the convex side facing downwards; inside the semicircle there is a vertical radial line $\cup$. In the lapidary, magical, and ceramic epigraphy of Olbia, an *omega* of this form is attested here for the first time¹⁰. This fact is confirmed by the fundamental study of Olbian letter forms by T. N. Knipovich, in which such an *omega* is not represented [Knipovich 1966, 3-30]. At the same time, in the lapidary palaeography of the Bosphoran Kingdom of the 4th century AD, this form of *omega* is attested [Boltunova, Knipovich 1962, 11]. In Olbian numismatic epigraphy, from the reign of Septimius Severus (AD 193-211), two cursive forms of *omega* are recorded: the traditional (ω) and $\cup$ the variant described here [Anokhin 2011, nos. 555, 559]. In general, for the palaeographic dating of the inscription on the weight under publication, the principal diagnostic feature is precisely the use of this distinctive cursive form of *omega* $\cup$. This allows the inscription to be dated no earlier than the time of Septimius Severus: *terminus post quem* AD 190.

It should be noted that the publication of this inscribed weight coincides with the renewed debate on the period of use of cursive script in the Northern Black Sea region. A.P. Bekhter has proposed a hypothesis that cursive script was already in use from the first centuries AD, in particular on the Bosphorus and in Olbia Pontica [Bekhter 2025]. Undoubtedly, the high scholarly authority of A.P. Bekhter and the arguments she advances require the closest scrutiny of these new hypoth-

eses. As far as Olbia is concerned, some support for A.P. Bekhter's hypothesis may be provided by the absence of cursive script in Olbian numismatic epigraphy of the Late Hellenistic period [Nikolaev 2023c]. At the same time, the hypothesis of P.O. Karyshkovskii concerning the parallel development of lapidary and numismatic epigraphy in Olbia has recently been refuted [Nikolaev 2023c]. The ceramic epigraphy of Late Hellenistic Olbia likewise offers an excellent example of graffiti executed in cursive script (SEG 45:1005). I do not accept Bekhter's hypothesis that the catalogue IOSPE 201, written in a developed cursive script, could have been produced in the first centuries AD. In the lapidary epigraphy of Olbia at the end of the 2nd and the beginning of the 1st century BC, there is evidence for a process initiated by Mithridates VI Eupator in preparation for the transition of Olbia to the Pontic era. It was precisely at this time (on the occasion of the 300th anniversary of the maintenance of the catalogue) that the need arose to produce the catalogue IOSPE 201 [Nikolaev 2024a; 2024b; 2024c]. The need to use this catalogue in the first centuries AD also appears improbable, since there is virtually no continuity between the Late Hellenistic and the Roman social history of Olbia. Further arguments likewise confirm the existence and development of cursive script in Late Hellenistic Olbia. In general, A.P. Bekhter's article timely raises an important problem concerning the chronology of cursive script in the Northern Black Sea region and will undoubtedly stimulate further discussion. At the same time, it cannot be excluded that the use of cursive script in Olbia and on the Bosphorus followed different regional chronologies. This problem, of course, requires further study.

10. The fact that the letters *omega* is located at the edges of the fourth line, i.e., with some claim to symmetry, allows us to put forward a cautious hypothesis: *the two letters omega are a symbolic designation of the weight of a two-mina weight*.

I now turn to the reading and interpretation of the legend on the weight:

ΑΓΟΡΑ	ἀγορα-
NOMOI	νόμοι
ΟΙΠΕΡ	οἱ περ-
ΙΩΙΚΑΔΩ	ἰὼϊκάδ(ι)ω-
NITA	ν. Ἰτα(λική?)

Translation: “Agoranomoι under the leadership of Eikadios(?). Italian (weight).”

The legend on the weight is very close to the standard formula with which Olbian dedications of boards of agoranomoι begin, for example: “... οἱ περὶ Διογένη(ν) Μακεδόνοσ ἀγορανόμοι – the agoranomoι under the leadership of Diogenes, son of Makedon” (IOSPE 128), also “...οἱ περὶ Ποσειδῆν Ζήθου τὸ γ ἀγορανόμοι... – the agoranomoι under the leadership of Posideis, son of Zethos, for the third time” (IOSPE 129) or “...οἱ περὶ Διονύσιον Ἀλεξάνδρου ἀγορανόμοι... – the agoranomoι under the leadership of Dionysios, son of Alexandros” (IOLb 90). This pattern is stable: οἱ περὶ + Acc. (*personal name*) + Gen. (*patronymic*) + magistrates (ἀγορανόμοι). A closely related formula is used in the legend on the weight: ἀγορανόμοι οἱ περὶ + Acc. (*personal name*). The patronymic is absent in the legend of the weight.

First of all, the “low sharpness” of the text is striking. Thus, in the word ἀγοραμόμοι, *mu* appears instead of *nu*. This is neither a dialectal nor a chronological feature, but an obvious epigraphic orthographic error typical of Roman-period inscriptions: ἀγοραμόμοι → ἀγορανόμοι. The error was probably caused by the phonetic convergence of ν / μ and by the graphic non-differentiation of the letters. However, an alternative reading without an error is also possible: ἀγορανόμοι.

The inscription contains the name of the first agoranomos; as noted above, the name is given in the accusative: Ὠϊκάδ(ι)ων¹¹. The name is unique and displays certain peculiarities. At this stage, it is advisable to adopt an alternative hypothesis: the agoranomos bore the very rare name Eikadios¹² (accusative Eikadion). The name

Eikadios has not previously been attested either in Olbia or in the Northern Black Sea region. It is likewise very rare in the ancient world in general. The name is recorded in Attica (IG II² 8946; IG II² 2332; IG II² 10423), in Delphi (FD III 2:25), on Delos (ID 2619), and in Ionia and Caria (Miletos 118; Lededos 12), among others. Chronologically, the name is attested in the Hellenistic and Roman periods. The name Eikadios has a transparent Greek etymology and is connected with calendrical vocabulary. Its base is the noun εἰκάς, εἰκάδος, “the twentieth day of the month”. This day was of particular importance in the calendar cult of Apollo¹³.

I shall, however, return to the actual form of the name as it appears in the legend in the accusative: Ὠϊκάδ(ι)ων instead of the form I propose, Eikadion. As can be seen, the name shows the replacement of the initial *epsilon* by *omega*. In addition, the *iota* is omitted and the final *omicron* is replaced by *omega*¹⁴. These are neither dialectal nor chronological features. The specific spelling of the agoranomos’ name is connected with the ethnic composition of the Olbian elite in the first centuries AD and, most probably, with the use of perceptual phonetics in recording non-Greek names¹⁵ (see below).

According to prosopographical theory, *the higher the status of a historical figure within a civic community, the greater the number of personalised epigraphic monuments that he or she leaves behind* [Nikolaev 2025a]. In view of this principle, the search for other epigraphic monuments of Olbia Pontica that mention a historical person bearing the probable name Eikadios is of particular interest. The status of agoranomos confirms that Eikadios may also have held other offices. As already noted, this name is otherwise unattested in Olbia and in the Northern Black Sea region. At

11. The accusative form of this name also has an alternative variant: Νικαδων. However, I am much less inclined to favour this variant; the distance between the letters *nu* and *iota* in the fourth line is unrealistically large; the letter *omega* is clearly visible in the fourth line.

12. There are some well-known names with similar meanings, such as Οἰκιάδης, with the clear etymology “Domestic, Noble” (accusative – Οἰκιάδην). There is also the rare name Ωκιδίας, with the etymology “Swift” [LGPN].

13. In Greek mythology, Eikadios was a hero mentioned in the list of Arcadian kings. According to Lycian tradition, Eikadios was the son of Apollo and the founder of the city of Patara. In addition, Eikadios is said to have been the initiator of the cult of Apollo at Delphi.

14. The interchange of *omicron* and *omega*, and vice versa, is frequently attested in “popular” language.

15. A similar process is attested in Olbian numismatics of the 5th century BC and is connected with the appearance in coin legends of the sons of the Scythian king Ariapeithes: Orikos, Timnos, and Oktamasades [Piunov 2024; 2025; Nikolaev 2026; Orlyk 2024].

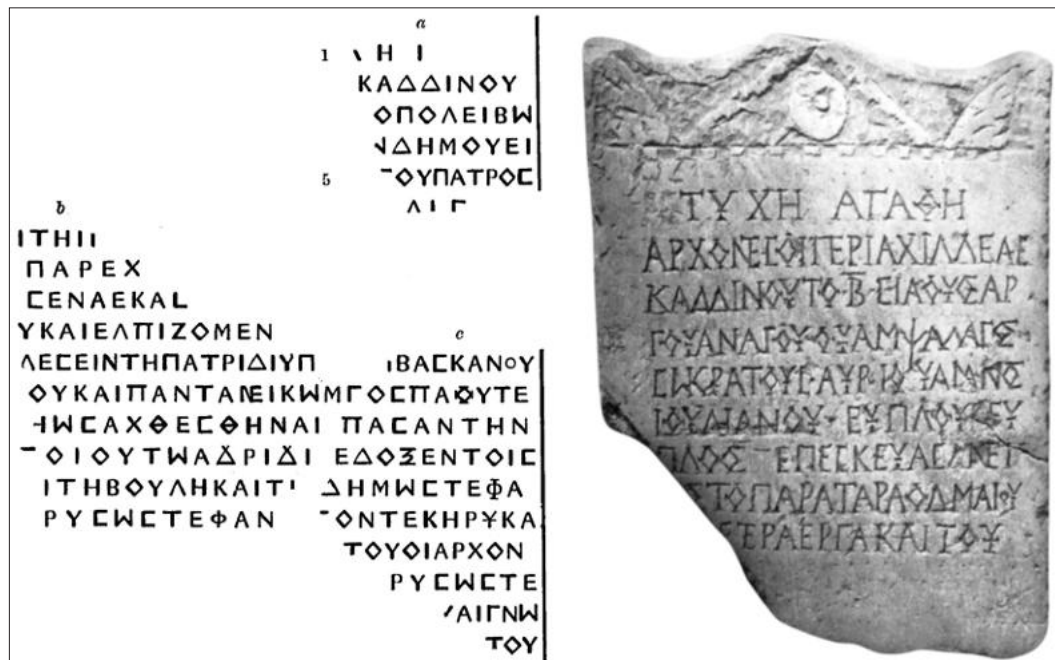


Fig. 3. Inscriptions from Olbia: left) decret IOSPE 46; right) dedication IOlb 58.

the same time, the historical situation in Olbia in the first centuries AD is highly specific. This refers above all to the peculiarities of the ethnic composition of the civic body, notably the presence of a large number of Iranian-language names among the elite. Therefore, a study of the lapidary corpus of the Roman period may make it possible to formulate a hypothesis concerning the identity of this agoranomos.

At present, the long-standing debate on the origin of the Olbian elite of the first centuries AD bearing Iranian-language names has not yet been concluded. Research on this topic is extensive. A substantial contribution to the study of the problem has been made by N.A. Gavriluk, A.I. Ivanchik, V.V. Krapivina, S.R. Tokhtasev, and others. In the last decade, scholars have definitively established the historical fact that the sudden appearance of Iranian-language names within the Olbian civic community coincides with the period of activity of the basileis Pharzoi and Inensimeus. This most probably indicates that, in the second half of the 1st century AD, a group of ethnic Sarmatians was incorporated into the citizen body of Olbia Pontica. The deviations from the norms of the Ancient Greek language that are widely attested in lapidary epigraphy in the rendering of barbarian names are connected with this process. Very often, different spellings of the same name occur,

even within a single document¹⁶. Under such conditions, determining the ethnic affiliation of the agoranomos who left his name in the legend on the official weight is particularly difficult.

An alternative hypothesis concerning the interpretation of the agoranomos' identity can be formulated on the basis of a study of the fragmentary decree IOSPE 46 and the fortification (?) inscription IOlb 52. When publishing the decree IOSPE 46 (fig. 3, left), V.V. Latyshev recorded in line 2 the patronymic of the first archon as Καδδίνου ([ἐπὶ ἀρχόντων τῶν περὶ τὸν δεῖνα] Καδδίνου). In his commentary, however, he noted that the stone-cutter had probably carved ΔΔ by mistake instead of ΛΛ, and that the patronymic should therefore be read not Καδδίνου but Καλλίνου¹⁷. A few years later, a fortification (?) inscription was published (subsequently IOlb 52): “ἀρχοντες οἱ περὶ Ἀχιλλέα (Ε) Καδδίνου τὸ β ... – the archons under the leadership of Achilles, son of Kaddin, for the second time ...” (fig. 3, right). The editors dated this inscription to AD 222-235, that is, to the reign of Alexander Severus. As P.O. Karyshkovskii observed, “at the end of the line an epsilon can be discerned;

16. For example, the dedication IOlb 90, dated to the late 1st-mid 2nd century AD: Ρευρομαρος Σειπελάγου = Ροιρομαρος Σιπελάγου.

17. Similarly, in line 6 V.V. Latyshev identified an error: ΠΑΣΥΤΕ was undoubtedly written instead of ΠΛΟΥΤΕ.

if this is not a fortuitous error, the name must be Ekaddin, i.e. “Ἀχιλλέα (Ε)καδδίνου τὸ β” [Karyshkovskii 1959, 129]. In the inscription *IOLb* 52, P.O. Karyshkovskii also noted the presence of ΔΔ instead of ΛΛ in the name of the archon. Accordingly, he corrected V.V. Latyshev’s interpretation and restored on the fragment of decree *IOSPE* 46 the name Kaddin (Ekaddin?). On the basis of the identity of other names and the coincidence of palaeography, the scholar accepted the synchronism of inscriptions *IOSPE* 46 and *IOLb* 52 within a span of several years [Karyshkovskii 1959, 129–130]. L. Zgusta (see *IOLb* 52) included the name Καδδινας in the group of Iranian names.

I return to the legend on the weight. A comparison between the name Εκαδδιν(ο)ν (in the accusative) in the inscriptions *IOSPE* 46 and *IOLb* 52 and the name on the weight Ὠικαδ(ι)ων (also in the accusative) suggests a fairly plausible hypothesis: the archon Ἀχιλλέας Εκαδδίνου (mentioned in decree *IOSPE* 46 and in the inscription *IOLb* 52 from the time of Alexander Severus) was probably the son of the agoranomos named in the published weight. However, my study of the control weight is not concerned with specialised problems of linguistics; at the present stage it is impossible to determine unequivocally the ethnic origin of the agoranomos¹⁸.

After the name of the agoranomos, the legend on the weight ends with the letters ITA. These letters are not connected with the patronymic of the agoranomos. The inscription ITA constitutes separate information, typical of Roman-period weights. Weights bearing the inscriptions ITA, ITAA, ITAAHKH are known [Chuistova 1962, 86]. This is an abbreviated form of the word Ἰτα(λική)/Ἰταλ(ικός). Such abbreviations on weights are usually interpreted as “Italian (measure)” or “according to the Italic standard,” that is, according to the Roman weight system. In its full form, the inscription corresponds to: Ἰταλική (στάθμη/μνᾶ/λίτρα) – Italian (measure) or Ἰταλικός (στατήρ/σταθμός) – Italian (weight). For Olbia, the significance of this inscription lies in the fact that it probably records the use of the Roman weight system. However, the exact correspondence of the weight to two Greek minas (see above), in combination with the legend ITA, makes it possible to substantiate the following hypothesis: *the*

published weight simultaneously conforms to two standards – the Greek and the Roman.

L.I. Chuistova reports that the Roman weight system became established in the Black Sea region as early as the 70s BC. Alongside weights of the Roman system, the old Greek weight norms continued in use in Black Sea cities during the first centuries AD. For example, the Attic mina weighed 425–437 g. The diversity of Greek weight systems was gradually replaced by the Roman system; the process of unification of weight standards in trade began [Chaniotis 2026; Chuistova 1962, 87].

The standard Roman libra (327 g), in relation to the weight of 868 g, does not yield an integer number of librae (or unciae). However, finds of weights with a reduced standard are known (libra ≈ 252–327 g). In Olbia and in other cities, weights corresponding to a reduced Roman standard have been found repeatedly. For example, a weight discovered in Olbia in 1908 weighs 295 g, which corresponds to one libra of the reduced standard¹⁹. A large number of weights corresponding to the reduced uncia – about 25 g – are also known [Chuistova 1962, 87; Pondera]. If one accepts a reduced libra of about 284 g, then the published weight contains exactly three librae (36 unciae)²⁰. Thus, the published weight confirms that in ancient practice not fractional, but whole nominal units were employed.

Conclusions

The published weight, weighing 868 g (original weight about 880–890 g), represents a standard weight simultaneously corresponding to two minas of the Euboean-Attic system and to three librae (36 unciae) of the Roman weight system²¹. The legend displays spelling features characteristic of the 2nd–3rd centuries AD: “ἀγορα/νόμοι οἱ περ/ὶ Ὠικαδ(ι)ων/ν· Ἰτα(λική?) – the agoranomoi headed by Eikadios/Ekaddin(?). Italian (weight)”.

19. The inscription on the weight reads: “Ἀγορανομούντος Ἀγαθοκλέους Β λειτρά – Agathokles, acting as agoranomos for the second time. Libra”. This agoranomos is evidently to be identified with the magistrate mentioned as chief strategos in the dedication *IOLb* 80: “[οἱ περ]ὶ Ἀγαθοκλῆν Δαδα/[γόν] στρατηγόν”, a dedication of the Olbian strategoi to Apollo Prostatas. The dedication is dated to approximately the middle of the 2nd century AD in Olbia Pontica.

20. The basis of the Roman weight standard from 252 to 327 g [Chuistova 1962, 85].

21. $880/286=3,07$ (sic).

18. S.R. Tokhtasiev mentioned the existence of this problem.

The ethnic attribution of the agoranomos remains alternative: either the Greek Εἰκάδιος or a Sarmatian(?) Εκαδδιος. It is evident that the same individual is mentioned as the patronymic of an archon in the inscriptions *IOSPE* 46 and *IOlb* 52. A paleographic peculiarity of the legend is the form of omega as a semicircle with a radial hasta, which is recorded in Olbia for the first time. The weight is dated with a terminus post quem at the turn of the 2nd-3rd centuries AD.

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IOb – Nadpisi Olvii. 1968

IOSPE – Latishev B. 1916. Inscriptiones antiquae orae septentrionalis Ponti Euxini Graecae et Latinae. Petropolis

LGPN – Lexicon of Greek Personal Names

SEG – Supplementum epigraphicum Graecum

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