

Hellenistic weights and measures in Western Asia Minor (Propontis, Troas and Aeolis)

Thomas Leblanc (UCLouvain)



Fig. 1 - Map of the cities studied

The concomitant study of these regions will facilitate the observation of similarities and differences between very ancient cities, such as Cyzicus, a Milesian colony founded in the 7th century, and others that appeared in the Hellenistic period, such as Lysimachia, founded in 309/8 BC. These cities are mostly autonomous, but they are confronted with many external influences and interferences during the Hellenistic period (e.g. Lysimachus, the Lagids, the Seleucids, the Attalids and the Bithynian kings, and eventually the Romans). The research pays particular attention to the influence of Hellenistic kings on the metrological systems of these cities, as well as to the interactions between the autonomous cities and the ruling power.

What is a weight ?



Fig. 2 - Examples of the weight of some of the cities studied

A weight is an object whose mass is calibrated for the purpose of weighing the goods sold daily by means of a scale. The study of weights is part of stathmology and aims to understand these objects in all their aspects:

- Typological: metal used, shape, iconography, legends, etc.
- Metrological: reconstruction of the weight system in which the weights take place.
- Anthropological: process of manufacture, control and use.

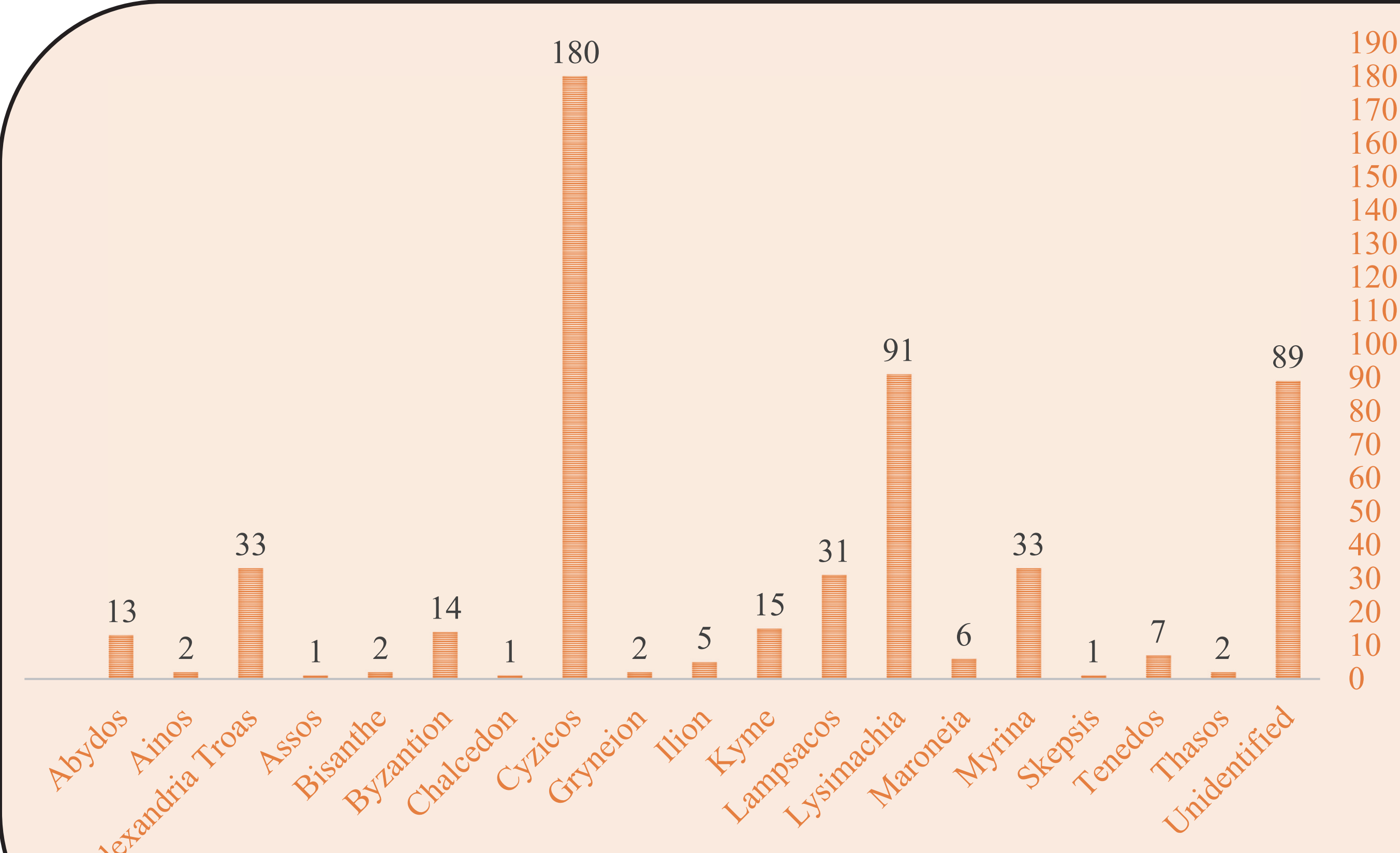


Fig. 3 - Distribution of the weights according to their issuing city

The study includes a total of 439 weights inequitably distributed among 18 cities. The origin of 89 weights is undetermined.

Of the 528 weights under study, only 36 (6.82%) are made of a copper alloy while the remaining 492 weights (93.18%) are produced from lead. This distribution could reveal a difference in status between these weights.

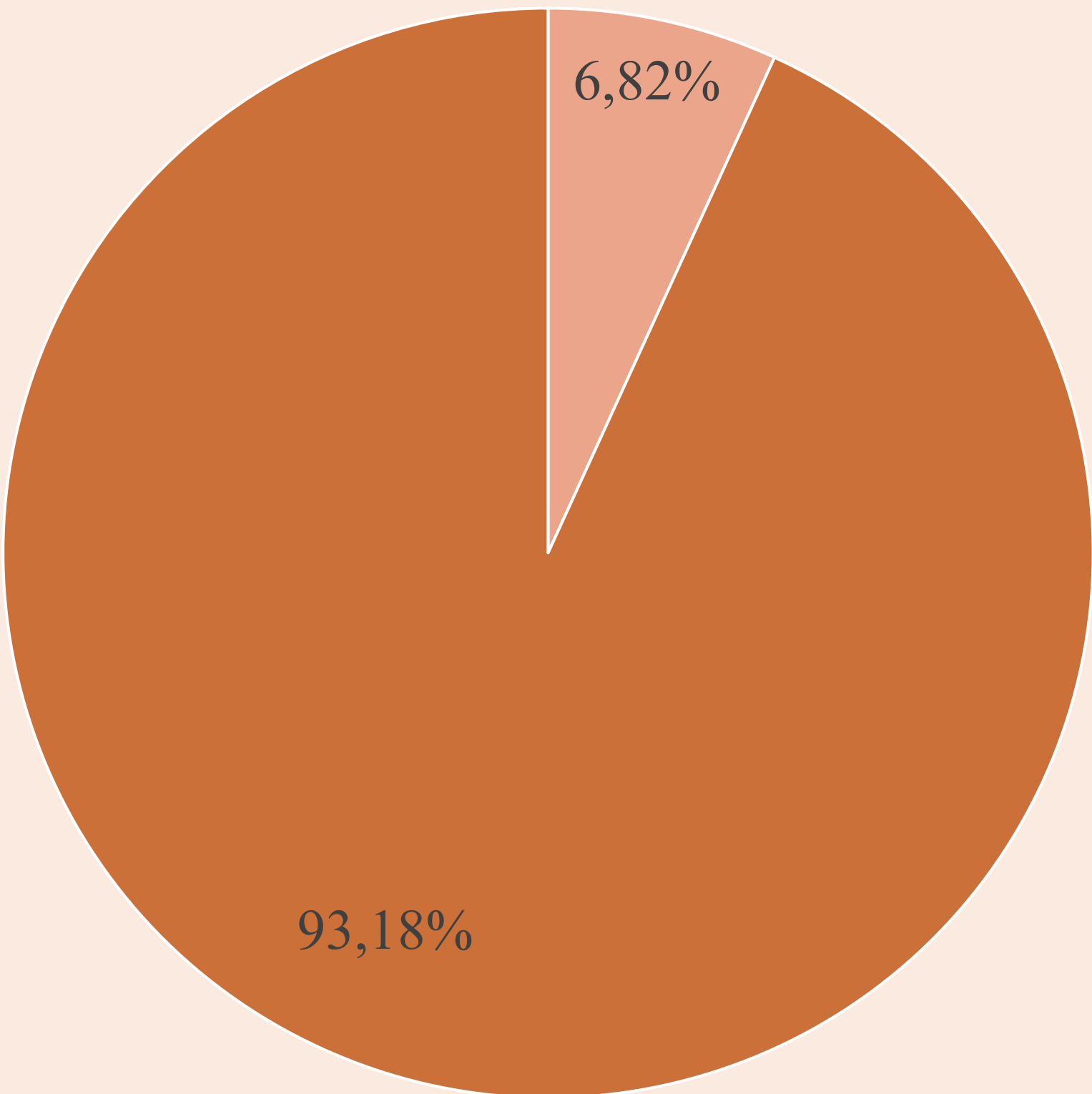


Fig. 4 - Distribution of the weights according to the metal used

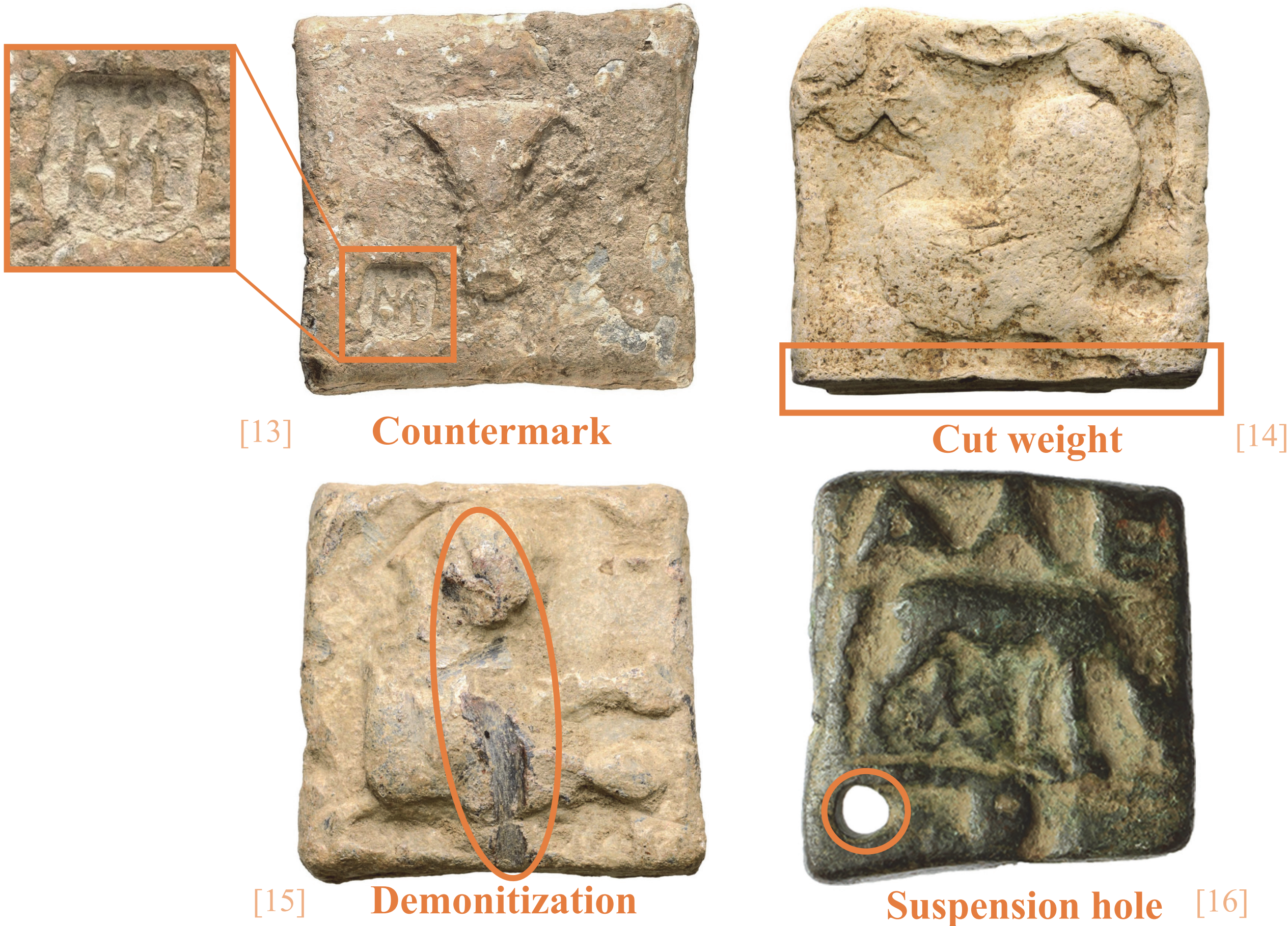


Fig. 5 - Example of elements that reflect the life cycle of a weight

Evolution of the Attic weight standard over time

Number of drachmas	Mass	Dating
105	456,75 g	c. 403 BCE
112	489,38 g	After 335 BCE
125	543,75 g	Early 3 rd century BCE
138	598,13 g	Late 3 rd -early 2 nd century BCE
150	652,5 g	End of 2 nd century BCE
162	706,88 g	1 st century BCE ?
175	761,25 g	1 st century BCE ?

Fig. 6 - Table of the various known or assumed ratios of the Attic standard



SCAN ME

❖ 50 contributors

❖ 16,058 objects studied

❖ 5 PhD thesis, 2 postdoctoral research



❖ 819 collections, 48 countries

❖ 4 workshops

❖ 28 publications

- [1] Bucephalus Numismatics, Auction 4 (11-12/03/2022), no. 713.
- [2] Paris, Louvre Museum, no. Br. 3334 (Pict. : L. Willoex).
- [3] Paris, National Library of France, no. Br. 2239 (Pict. : L. Willoex).
- [4] National Museum in Warsaw, no. 142747 (Pict. : L. Willoex).
- [5] Athens, Canelopoulos Museum, no. 842 (Pict. : L. Willoex).
- [6] Ares Numismatics, Web Auction 12 (25/10/2020), no. 1219.
- [7] CNG, Electronic Auction 397 (17/05/2017), no. 908.
- [8] Münz Zentrum, Auction 176 (11/05/2016), no. 1001.
- [9] Brussels, Museums Art and History, no. A 809 (Pict. : L. Willoex).
- [10] Paris, Louvre Museum, no. Br. 3318 (Pict. : L. Willoex).
- [11] Gorny & Mosch Gies. Münz, Auction 284 (08/03/2022), no. 1177.
- [12] Paris, National Library of France, no. Br. 2241 (Pict. : L. Willoex).
- [13] Münz Zentrum, Auction 176 (11/05/2016), no. 1001.
- [14] Roma Numismatics Limited, E-sale 78 (17/12/2020), no. 346.
- [15] Roma Numismatics Limited, E-sale 79 (14/01/2021), no. 158.
- [16] Paris, Louvre Museum, no. Br. 3335 (Pict. : L. Willoex).