

## **PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE TEST EXCAVATIONS OF TEKİRDAĞ ARCHAEOLOGY MUSEUM AT BARBAROS IN TEKİRDAĞ\***

Zeki Mete Aksan\*\*

### **Abstract**

Test excavations conducted by the Directorate of Tekirdağ Archaeology Museum between 2013 and 2015 revealed a small part of an ancient settlement near the coast of the modern harbor of Barbaros, 9 km southwest of Tekirdağ Province. The first results of these excavations yielded remains of several workshops, small workplaces, and storage rooms. Travellers from the end of the 19th century noted monuments as well as epigraphical data dating mainly to the Byzantine Period in and around the town, which is located on the coast and slopes of a hill with a commanding view of the Propontis and Prokonnesos Island beyond. The results of the soundings also give an idea about the expansion of the city to the south during the Byzantine Period. A substantial part of the excavated area has been designated as a first degree archaeological site at the end of 2015, which gives hope for a firm ground for future archaeological study. Preparation of a thorough topographical map of the terrain on which the ancient city was founded appears as a priority for future work.

**Keywords:** Thrace, Bisanthe, Barbaros, Test Excavations.

### **Introduction**

The subject of this article is the ancient city in the modern town of Barbaros in Tekirdağ. The aim is to present the recent findings of the test excavations conducted by the Directorate of Tekirdağ Archaeology Museum and try to evaluate in light of what is already known from past researches in the region.

This article comprises three parts. The first part will be a brief description of the geographical location of Barbaros and an overview of the state of research. The second part deals with the test excavations conducted by the Directorate of Tekirdağ Archaeology Museum between 2013 and 2015. The third part is a future plan of what is necessary to accomplish at the site.

### **Geographical Location**

The modern town of Barbaros lies 9 km southwest of Tekirdağ, on Tekirdağ-Kumbağ road, near the Sea of Marmara (Fig.1). It is situated on the coast and slopes of a hill with a commanding view of the Propontis and Prokonnesos Island beyond (Fig. 2). A stream flows in northwest-southeast direction at the southern part of the modern town, making it

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\*\* Asst. Prof. Dr., Sinop University, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Archaeology Department, Nasuhbaşıoğlu Mah., Osmaniye Köyü, SİNOP. E-mail: aksanmete@gmail.com.

a suitable place for settlement. The site must have been used as a trading post by ships sailing on the northern coast of the Propontis in Antiquity, since it is on the main route between the Black Sea and the Aegean Sea. Another important feature is the site's proximity to the Prokonessos Island to the south, linking southeastern Thrace to northwestern Anatolia via Arktonnesos (modern Kapıdağ).

### **History of Research**

In the 19th century and the early 20th century, Barbaros and its vicinity were visited by several researchers who made mention of archaeological remains as well as inscriptions (Dumont-Homolle 1892: 399-418; Papadopoulos-Kerameos 1886: 65 ff.; Seure 1900: 164-166; Kalinka 1926: 151-160; Robert 1948: 35 ff.). Researches on Barbaros continued from the 1980s to the present day, during which the site was visited by various scholars such as Ötügen, Ousterhout, Sayar, and Koçel Erdem.

During the archaeological surveys conducted by Ötügen in the 1980's and by Sayar in the 1990's in Barbaros, remains of a structure dating to the Byzantine Period northwest of the modern town (Ötügen and Ousterhout 1989: 144-147; Sayar 1990: 215) and part of the fortification wall to the southwest were discovered (Sayar 1993: 156). Remnants of the fortification wall southwest of Barbaros are still visible today (Fig.3). Archaeological excavations conducted by Özkan Ertuğrul on behalf of Trakya University and the Directorate of Tekirdağ Archaeology Museum in 2005 revealed remains of a possible church<sup>1</sup> and also remains of the fortification wall (Fig.4) south of the modern town (TİKE 2014: 4).

Numerous potsherds and pieces of glass vessels dating to the Classical, Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine periods and several coins were found during the surveys of Koçel Erdem in 2008 (Koçel Erdem 2009:413, fig.4). A grave stele from the town dating to the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC was studied and published by Delemen (Delemen 2004a:189-195). There are also remains still visible at the modern town of Barbaros. One of them is a marble lid of a sarcophagus (Fig.5) at the harbor. All these finds demonstrate that the ancient settlement in Barbaros dated from the Classical Period to the Byzantine Period (Koçel Erdem 2009:413).

### **Sounding Excavations of the Museum**

In 2013 the Directorate of Tekirdağ Archaeology Museum began to conduct sounding excavations at the area (Fig.6) west and northwest of the location where the construction of a private port had begun back in 2006. The excavated area between 2013 and 2015 revealed architectural remains of an ancient settlement. At the end of the excavation it was possible to distinguish three separate layers based on architectural finds.

The first layer which is usually very close to the surface, consists of walls built of rough stones in one or two rows with crude workmanship (Fig.7). Tile

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<sup>1</sup> Researchers were able to observe several churches in the town of Barbaros in the 19th century. For further information see Ötügen and Ousterhout 1989: 146.

graves are also included in the first layer (Fig.8-9). These graves concentrate at the eastern part of the excavated area, linking them to the numerous tile graves revealed during the excavations conducted by Ertuğrul back in 2005 to the south-east, which all may point to a necropolis. It is noteworthy to add that the modern graveyard of Barbaros is very close, immediately south of the excavated area.

The second layer is characterized by large *pithoi* that were found throughout the excavated area (Fig.10-12). Presses built of irregular stone blocks covered with thick white-pinkish mortar were also revealed (Fig.13-14). They were most probably used for wine or oil production. The interior faces of the presses are plastered and they have an entrance with three to four steps. A round hole is observed at the center of the press. In addition to presses, large *pithoi*, water wells, and kilns (Fig.15) were found very close to each other throughout the excavated area, which may show that the structures they belong to might have been used as workshops and storage spaces. Alongside these structures a bronze melting pot, iron tools, bone pins and a marble pestle (Fig.16-18) were recovered from the second layer demonstrating that there might have been more than one workshop in the area.

Walls revealed in the second layer are usually built of regular stones and bricks placed both vertically and horizontally (Fig.19). Workmanship is much better compared to the walls of the first layer. Cist graves (Fig.19) that are rectangular in shape and covered with stone slabs and tile graves are also observed in the second layer again at the southern part of the excavated area. Spolia such as columns, capitals, column bases, stele fragments and a threshold were observed to be used as construction material in the walls.

Below the architectural remains of the second layer was found a third layer defined by walls built of stone blocks in regular rows and horizontally placed bricks (Fig.20-23).<sup>2</sup> Mortar was used as construction material. In addition, remains of white-pinkish plaster on some of the walls could be observed. General characteristics and building techniques of the walls together with the recovered ceramic fragments point to Late Antique Period. Architectural remains that belong to the third layer were revealed in numerous test trenches (Fig.24-26), especially concentrating at the eastern part of the excavated area. The walls revealed may belong to one or more building complexes. This is important because it shows the approximate extent of the layer. The function of the building or buildings in layer three cannot be understood yet, but they may be related to the harbor of the ancient city due to their location by the coast.

## Results

Results of the soundings conducted by the Directorate of Tekirdağ Archaeology Museum south of Barbaros between 2013 and 2015 demonstrate that

<sup>2</sup> For architectural remains of Layer 3 see also Fig.11-12. Below Wall No. W2089-17.1 and the pithos at the southern corner of the sounding, there are two more walls (W2089-17.2 and W2089-17.3) and a pavement made of *terracotta* bricks.

the excavated area was extensively settled from the Late Antique to Late Byzantine Period. These results are also compatible with the findings of previous research conducted in and around Barbaros.<sup>3</sup> In addition to the preliminary observations on the ceramics, glass vessel fragments and coins<sup>4</sup>, the architectural features of the structures point to three distinct, superimposed layers. Preliminary observations on the finds, especially on the coins, indicate that the first layer can be dated to the Late Byzantine and Ottoman periods; the second layer can be dated to the Middle Byzantine Period; while the third layer may be dated between Late Roman Period and Middle Byzantine Period. Workshops, presses, and numerous *pithoi* indicating the presence of storage facilities, as well as the geographical position of the settlement by the coast, demonstrate that the excavated area was probably a part of the harbor or functioned in close association with the harbor of the ancient city.

Although there were not any architectural layers revealed earlier than the Late Antiquity, spolia material encountered in various test trenches in the excavated area may indicate the presence of a settlement dating back to Roman and even earlier periods.

### Discussion

Based on the epigraphical research of Papadopoulos-Kerameos and Asdracha, Ötügen and Ousterhout suggest that the name of the Byzantine town at Barbaros is Panion / Panados, while the ancient town was known as “Vizante” (Ötügen-Ousterhout 1989: 145-146).<sup>5</sup> There is however, another view where Bisanthe is associated with Resisthon / Rhaidestos, which is situated in the modern town of Tekirdağ (Oberhummer 1897: 500-501; Meritt et al 1939: 475; Kahrstead 1954: 21; Taşlıklioğlu 1961: 23ff.; Taşlıklioğlu 1971: 88ff.; Schönert-Geiss 1977: 3ff.; Erzen 1994: 94; Archibald 1998: 110).<sup>6</sup> Based on the information from Plinius (Plinius 4, 11, 43-48) Sayar interprets that Rhaidestos and Bisanthe are two separate cities (Sayar 1993: 155). He further suggests Rhaidestos to be located at the modern town of Tekirdağ based on the information provided by Plinius, regarding the distance between Rhaidestos and Apri (modern Kermeyan Village of Malkara district), and as for Bisanthe to be located at Barbaros (Sayar 1993: 155-156; Sayar 1998: 62, Karte V). Bisanthe was probably known as “Panion” or “Panados” in the Byzantine and post Byzantine periods (Ötügen-Ousterhout 1989: 145-146; Sayar 1993: 156).<sup>7</sup>

The ancient city Bisanthe was mentioned in various ancient sources. According to Mela (Mela 2, 24), it was founded by the Samians. Herodotos states that it is located at Hellespontos (Herodotos 7, 137). Apparently the city

<sup>3</sup> Especially see Koçel Erdem 2009: 413.

<sup>4</sup> Coins recovered from various trenches during the excavations are being studied by Dr. Arif Yacı. He is preparing a detailed publication of the numismatic material found in Barbaros excavations.

<sup>5</sup> For Vizante as the old name of Barbaros see: Papadopoulos-Kerameos 1886: 87-88; Robert 1948: 54-55; Asdracha 1988: 248.

<sup>6</sup> For a different view that places Bisanthe east of Tekirdağ, see Külzer 2008: 288.

<sup>7</sup> For the localization of Panion at Barbaros see Schmidt 1949: 601.

was in the limits of the Odrysian Kingdom in the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C. Seuthes II of the Odrysian Kingdom tried to convince Xenophon for his military support by offering him the city as present, where Bisanthe is stated as his most beautiful *khora* on the coast (Xenophon 7, 2, 38).

The modern town of Barbaros lies immediately on the coast and on the skirts of the hill to the west. This geographical location that provides a strategically defensible spot for settlement and a convenient point for commercial activities, was probably also favored by the colonists in antiquity. Archaeological remains unearthed south of the modern town of Barbaros by the Directorate of Tekirdağ Archaeology Museum have probably revealed the area where the ancient city expanded after the Roman Period.

There is one more important feature regarding the ancient site in Barbaros and its immediate vicinity. Naip tumulus is located approximately 5 km southwest of Barbaros. 18-21 m in height and 84 m in diameter, it is one of the largest burial mounds in southeastern Thrace (Delemen 2006: 252). Investigated by Delemen (Delemen 2004b: passim), the single burial within the tomb was dated to the last two decades of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC (Delemen 2006: 267). Delemen has also proposed that Teres, an Odrysian prince, may have been the deceased individual inside the burial mound (Delemen 2006: 268). The relationship between Naip tumulus and the ancient settlement at Barbaros cannot be determined exactly yet. In addition, it would be too early to suggest that Naip tumulus should be within the *territorium* of the ancient city at Barbaros, since a thorough topographical and archaeological survey aimed to determine the boundaries of the ancient city has not been undertaken yet. Nonetheless, existence of such a large burial mound in the near vicinity increases the significance of the ancient settlement at Barbaros.

### **Conclusions and Questions for Future Research**

After the test excavations of the Directorate of Tekirdağ Archaeology Museum were terminated in 2015, the site was registered as a first degree archaeological site. The next step for future work would be an archaeological survey of the site. A topographical map showing all the architectural remains so far revealed in different times by the Directorate of Tekirdağ Archaeology Museum must be prepared in order to understand the layout of the ancient city and distinguish the remains dating to different periods.

### **Acknowledgements**

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Museum who participated at the test excavations. Illustrations were successfully executed by Yusuf S. Sefa (Sinop University, Archaeology Department, Undergraduate). My cordial thanks to Asst. Prof. Dr. Hazar Kaba for his support on the execution of the illustrations. Many thanks to Dr. Gökçe Bike Yazıcıoğlu Santamaria for proofreading of the English text and her constructive criticism, and finally to my wife, Gülşen Bilici Aksan for her everlasting support and love.

## Öz

### Tekirdağ Barbaros'ta, Tekirdağ Arkeoloji Müzesi'nin Gerçekleştirdiği Sondaj Kazıları Hakkında Ön Rapor

Tekirdağ ilçesi'nin 9 km güneybatısında, Barbaros limanının yakınlarında, 2013-2015 yılları arasında Tekirdağ Arkeoloji Müzesi Müdürlüğü tarafından yürütülen sondaj kazıları, antik bir yerleşimin küçük bir bölümünü açığa çıkarmıştır. Bu kazılardan elde edilen ilk sonuçlar birkaç atölye, küçük işlikler ve depo odası kalıntılarını içerir. Propontis ve daha ötedeki Prokonnesos adasına bakan, çevresine hakim bir tepenin kıyısında ve yamaçlarında bulunan Barbaros ve çevresinde 19. yüzyılın sonundan itibaren gezginler, Bizans Dönemi'ne ait epigrafik verilerin yanı sıra çeşitli yapı kalıntılarında da bahsetmişlerdir. Sondaj kazılarının sonuçları da, Bizans Dönemi'nde antik yerleşimin güneye doğru genişlemesi hakkında bir fikir vermektedir. Kazılan alanın hatırı sayılır bir kısmı, 2015 yılının sonunda birinci derece arkeolojik sit alanı olarak koruma altına alınmıştır. Bu da gelecekte gerçekleştirilecek arkeolojik çalışmalar için sağlam bir zemin oluşturmaktadır. Antik kentin kurulduğu arazinin kapsamlı bir topoğrafik haritasının çıkarılması, gelecekteki çalışmalar için bir öncelik olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Trakya, Bisanthe, Barbaros, Sondaj Kazıları.

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### List of Figures



**Fig.1:** Barbaros and Tekirdağ on the northern coast of the Propontis.





**Fig.2:** South of Barbaros, the new harbor and the island of Prokonessos in the background. Courtesy of the Directorate of Tekirdağ Archaeology Museum.



**Fig.3:** Remnants of the fortification wall southwest of Barbaros.



**Fig.4:** Excavations conducted by jointly by the Directorate of Tekirdağ Archaeology Museum and Trakya University. Courtesy of the Directorate of Tekirdağ Archaeology Museum.



**Fig.5:** Marble lid of a sarcophagus near the old harbor.



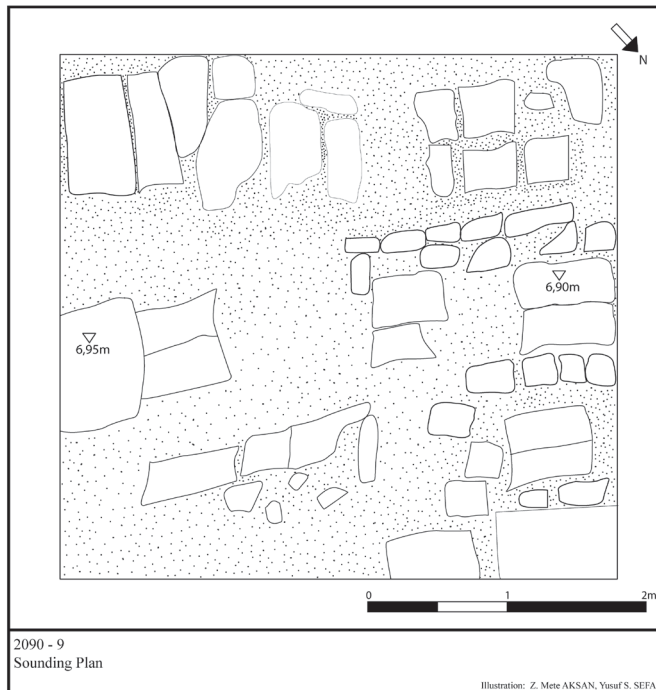
**Fig.6:** Excavated area south of Barbaros town. To the north modern town of Barbaros, to the southeast the new harbor.



**Fig.7:** Above: Architectural remains of Layer 1. Below: Architectural remains of Layer 2. Courtesy of the Directorate of Tekirdağ Archaeology Museum.



**Fig.8:** Sounding 2090-9. Tile Graves in Layer 1.



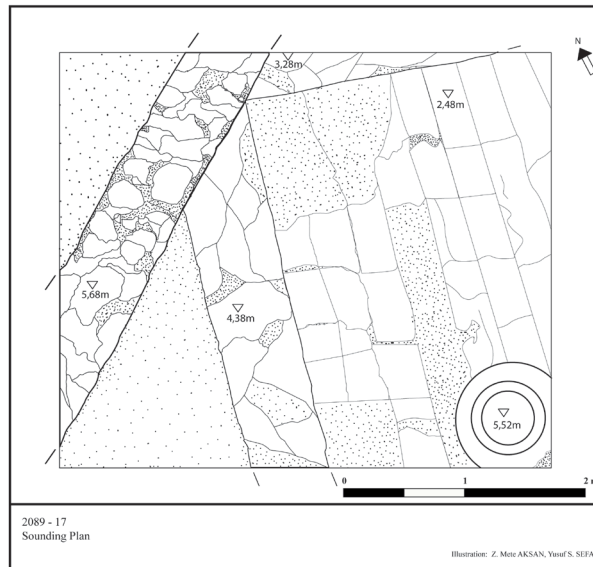
**Fig.9:** Plan of Sounding 2090-9.



**Fig.10:** Architectural remains and the large pithoi in Layer 2.



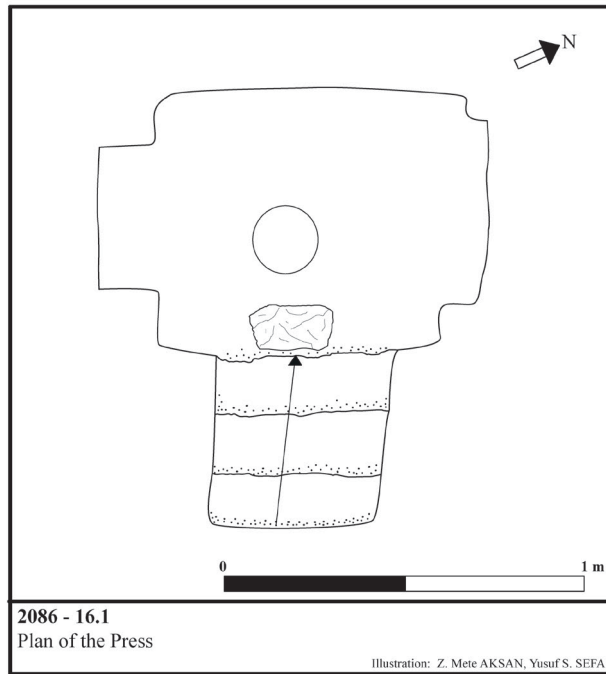
**Fig.11:** Sounding 2089-17.



**Fig.12:** Plan of Sounding 2089-17. The wall no. W2089-17.1 and the large pithos at the southern corner of the sounding belong to the second layer, while the walls nos. 2089-17.2 and W2089-17.3 and the pavement made of bricks in between them belong to the third layer.



**Fig.13:** Press. Courtesy of the Directorate of Tekirdağ Archaeology Museum.



**Fig.14:** Plan of the press.



**Fig.15:** A kiln and a water well nearby a possible workshop.



**Fig.16:** A bone pin. Courtesy of the Directorate of Tekirdağ Archaeology Museum.



**Fig.17:** A bronze melting pot. Courtesy of the Directorate of Tekirdağ Archaeology Museum.





**Fig.18:** A stone mortar. Courtesy of the Directorate of Tekirdağ Archaeology Museum.



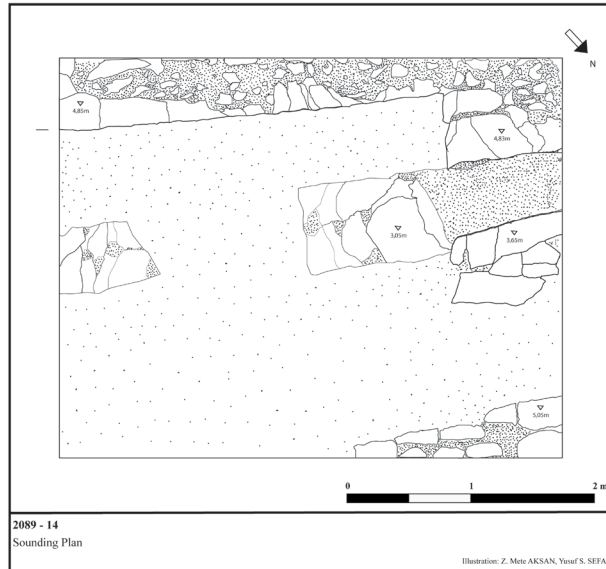
**Fig.19:** Wall built of regular stones and bricks and a rectangular cist grave covered with large stone slabs immediately to the south of the wall. Layer 2.



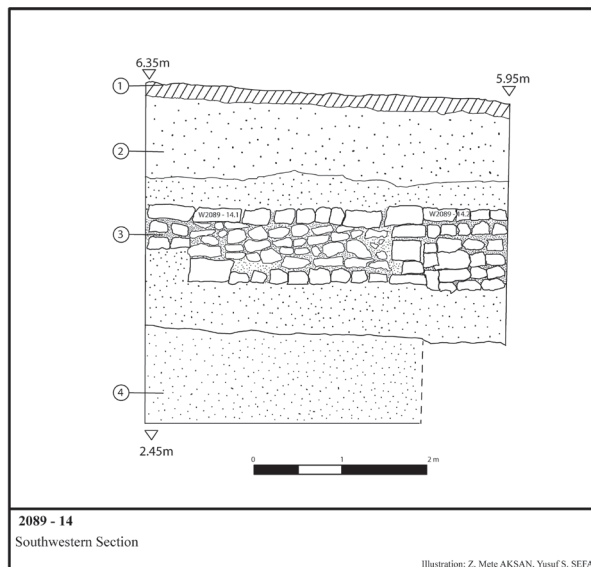
**Fig.20:** Wall built of stone blocks in regular rows and horizontally placed bricks.



**Fig.21:** Sounding No. 2089-14.



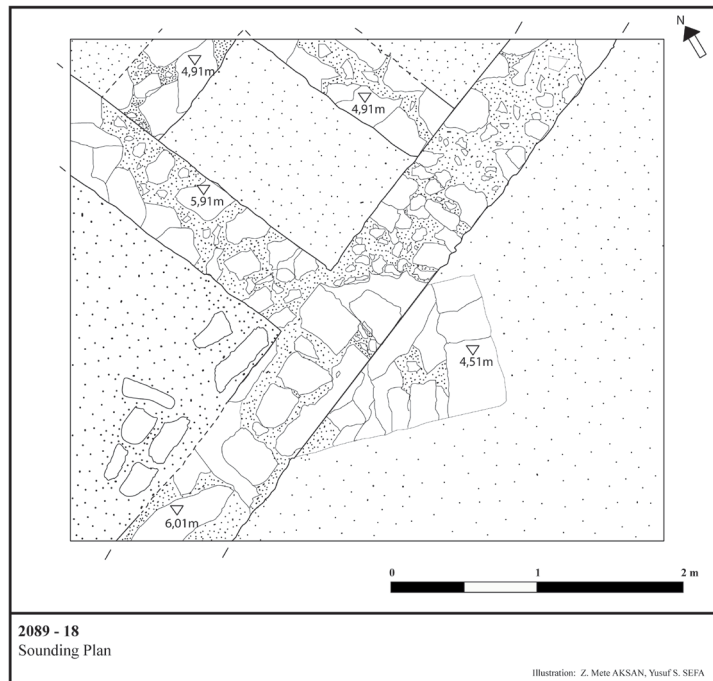
**Fig.22:** Plan of Sounding No. 2089-14. W2089-14.1, W2089-14.2 and W2089-14.3 belong to the second layer. W2089-14.4 and W2089-14.5 belong to the third layer.



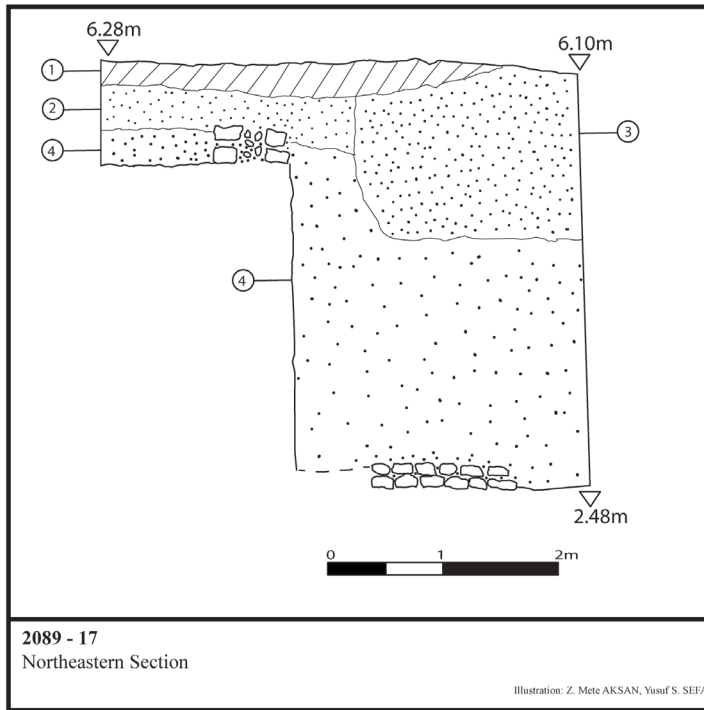
**Fig.23:** Southwestern Section of Sounding 2089-14. Compare with Fig.22.  
 ①: Brown surface soil. ②: Layer 1. Gray-brown soil. ③: Layer 2. Light Brown-yellowish soil. ④: Layer 3. Light gray-brown soil.



**Fig.24:** Sounding No. 2089-18.



**Fig.25:** Plan of Sounding No. 2089-18.



**Fig.26:** Northeastern Section of Sounding 2089-17. Compare with Fig.11 and Fig.12. ①: Brown surface soil. ②: Layer 2. Yellow-brown soil. ③: Dark gray-brown soft soil, possible pit. ④: Layer 3. Light gray-brown soil.